The Editorial Staff

*Editor-in-Chief: Xara Natasja Davies*

Xara is a second-year English major from England who joined the Jefferson Society during her first semester at the University. Xara has loved working with her incredible Pen and Ink Committee and is excited for you to live vicariously through this Jefferson Journal.

Kristen Rochelle Barrett is a second-year from Nashville, TN majoring in English and minoring in Drama at the University. She joined the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society in the Fall 2017 semester and looks forward to many more semesters of supporting Pen and Ink in the Hall.

Mackenzie Frances Williams is a first-year student from Seattle who hopes to pursue degrees in English with a concentration in creative prose and Political and Social Thought. She looks forward to spending the summer under the tutelage of the New Yorker’s Jia Tolentino in Brooklyn. Ms. Williams most enjoys reading and writing fiction, her lovely family, and exploring.

Katherine Louise Viti is a first-year English major and a proud member of Team Daddy Diamond’s Dirty Thirty. She is also interested in Russian language and literature and works as a TA in the Computer Science Department. Katherine’s hobbies include writing, going to concerts, and obsessively following Star Wars.

Akshay Pulavarty (left) contributed to much of the photography featured in this Journal. Ben Burke and Grant Oken also graciously shared many of their photographs. Chase Browning, an invaluable member of the Pen and Ink Committee, is unfortunately not pictured but we do appreciate all of his hard work this semester.
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In loving memory of Mr. Evan Thomas, 1979 - 2018.
Dearest Regular Members and Alumni,

I’d like to start off by offering my most sincere congratulations to all those who worked so hard to create The Jefferson Journal, which serves as a magnificent showcase of the talents and treasures of The Jefferson Society. It was my absolute honor to serve as the President of the Fall 2017 semester of The Jefferson Literary and Debating Society. I am immensely grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from each and every one of our impressive, enthusiastic, and talented members, both during my time as President and beyond. The Fall semester was filled with rigorous debate, intellectual engagement, and productive discourse. I was fortunate to work alongside a passionate and dedicated slate of executive committee members, without whom the progress made during the Fall semester would not have been possible. Over the past semester since my tenure as president, I’ve had the chance to reflect on the achievements, challenges, and joint successes that our organization underwent this past Fall. When I started my term as president, I aimed to help make our Society as welcoming and as accessible as possible to all, and I would like to extend my most sincere gratitude to each and every one of our beloved members who helped to create a Society filled with warmth and compassion, as well as an incredibly genuine culture of growth and support.

I’d like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the points of progress that we worked towards during my time as president, and the ways in which I have witnessed our beloved organization grow as a result. Throughout the Fall semester, the executive committee and I engaged in several initiatives to further the welcoming culture of the Society. For the first time ever, we had an executive board that was Green Dot trained. We also heard our first ever Unpacking Privilege presentation. Through these initiatives, we helped expand the culture of acceptance within our organization in a tangible and meaningful manner. We also made a concerted effort to facilitate the engagement of our newer members, many of whom I have proudly witnessed grow into highly dedicated more veteran members in the months since. With the help of the D&O and P&I committees, we worked to create our first ever installments of Newly Crossed Content Night and Probationary Content Night, which helped to welcome the voices of our newer members both at the Essence and beyond. I was pleased to notice that many of these presentations helped embolden our fledgling members to share their fascinating opinions with their peers in a confident and engaging manner. We also worked to facilitate engagement outside the Hall. I worked with our D&O Chair, Mr. Weiss, to set up a debate co-hosted with the Honor Committee, on the topic of the Single Sanction, which brought new and diverse viewpoints about this compelling subject to center stage. We forged new connections outside of the UVA community as well. For the first time in several years, we re-established ties with the Philodemic Society at Georgetown University, where we participated in an inter-collegiate debate and soiree. At this event, we were able to showcase our unique debating style, while making connections with colleagues at peer institutions across the nation. Here in Charlottesville, we established a connection with Albemarle High School, by showcasing our organization at their annual College Resource Fair. Furthermore, we worked to construct new pathways with our alumni membership as well. I’m pleased to say that the Fall semester marked the launch of our first ever Alumni Networking Campaign, which resulted in the creation of a networking database of over one hundred alumni members from a variety of industries and fields, which I hope can serve as a resource for our members to establish a variety of meaningful professional connections.

Ultimately, the sense of pride and gratitude that I have experienced through my time as president does not stem from the accomplishment of any singular task or initiative. Rather, it results from the fact that each and every one of our members is so willing to sacrifice their time and talents for the sake of the development and betterment of our beloved organization. During my term as president, I was so fortunate to witness the variety of ways in which the Society has grown and has provided that same opportunity for growth to each of its members, myself included. As my time at the University begins to wane, I rest content knowing that the Society is in the best of hands. I know that our progress has just begun, that our next generation will be even more dedicated and passionate than our own, and that the Society will always serve as my first and most beloved home here at this University.

Haec Olim Meminisse Iuvabit,
Victoria Farris
Dear Regular Members and Alumni,

I am at this time both pleased and proud to introduce the Spring 2018 edition of the Jefferson Journal. This publication was put together through the hard work of the Pen and Ink Chairwoman, Ms. Xara Davies, and her committee. They are owed an immense debt of gratitude for the work that they put in to documenting the past year of the Society’s history. This Journal will give you a glimpse at Society life for the past year, complete with pictures, reports from our committees, and original works from our members. For my part, I am honored to have been president of this organization for the past semester. The Spring semester was a very successful one, in which we continued to advance the ideals that we hold so dear. It was to this end that every meeting was filled with fantastic content from both our probationary and regular members. The Hall saw panels on the #MeToo movement, debates on the funding of NASA, a discussion of the littoral strategy, and speeches on topics from the problems of the Internet to board gaming. We also had readings from authors from around the globe, with each week focusing on a different region or continent. These presentations are just a few brief examples of the topics which filled the Hall each week during the lively meetings.

The Society also was engaged intellectually around Grounds this semester. We were very pleased to be declared the winner of the annual Smith Simpson Debate on Foreign Policy against the Washington Society. We also were able to participate in the first Debate on Religion and Democracy, alongside the Washington Society and The Parliamentary Debating Society at UVa. These debates helped to further grow the community of debate societies that this University is so privileged to have, and hopefully laid the groundwork for more debates and discussions in the future. The Society also hosted the JefferSlam Poetry Contest, which featured many incredible works, all of which were performed beautifully. All of these efforts demonstrate the continued engagement that the Society has with the rest of the intellectual community at the University.

The Society also was very pleased to host several incredible speakers, many of whom have connections to the Charlottesville community itself. These include the former Vice Mayor of Charlottesville Dr. Wes Bellamy, and Dogulas Blackmon, Pulitzer Prize winning author and Director of Public Programs at the Miller Center. We also hosted Professor Michele Elam, Professor of American Studies at Stanford, and Dr. Andre Perry, David M. Rubenstein Fellow at the Brookings Institute. I want to thank Mr. Rohan Alluwhalia, the Vice President of this Semester, and Ms. Megan Routbourt, the Vice President of the Fall, for their hard work in creating and executing this series.

The Society also was able to see success in several internal elements. The Hall is now proud home to a portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette, donated by an anonymous friend of the Society. We also were pleased to see the successful end of the Archives digitization process, which was begun two years ago this spring. These changes speak to the continued work of the Society to honor its past, and to build for its future. Finally, the Spring brings with it several events that occur as the semester draws to a close. The Society celebrated Mr. Jefferson with our annual vigil, followed by the Dawn Pilgrimage. The Society also had the great honor to lay a wreath at Monticello at the official Jefferson Trust Ceremony the morning of April 13th. The Society also hosted the 55th annual Restoration Ball, which raised a significant profit for the continued advancement of the University and its communities. Both of these events reminded me particularly of the rich history and tradition the Society has, which we celebrate in unique ways each semester.

As my semester draws to a close, I want to say a brief word of thanks to my executive committee, whose dedication and hard work allowed for the semester to run smoothly and successfully. Without them, the Society could not have functioned, and to have been able to serve with them was a great joy. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as President of this unique community, which gave my time at the University focus and direction. I know that my time on Grounds would have been far less if not for the people I met in the Society, and those who will continue to join. Every week I looked forward to Friday, when I would get to see members old and new and hear from the great minds that make up this Society.

I know that the Society’s brightest days still lie ahead, and I look forward to the continued work that it will do to advance discourse, as well as intellectual, social, and personal growth in its forthcoming 194th year of perpetual existence.

Forsan Et Haec Olim Meminisse Iuvabit,
Daniel Durgavich
Dear Society,

As this year comes to a close, I’d like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the supreme honor of allowing me to serve as your Room 7 Resident. Many of you will know that most of our Sippers events this year were hosted by Mr. Henry Knight in Room 3, West Range. We all owe an immense debt of gratitude to Mr. Knight who, in his startling generosity of time and space, managed to embody so much of the essential spirit of Room 7. I encourage everyone reading this letter to thank Mr. Knight for his immense service to the Society.

I have truly treasured my time in Room 7, West Lawn. It has been a privilege to host fireside chats and handle Jefferson Hall’s room reservations and to work with the Executive Committee for another year. And it has been an even greater and more personal privilege to live in a space so near and dear to the heart of the organization I love most at this university. I have done my best to steward Room 7 for the future, and I feel very blessed to have had that honor.

Along with my Room 7 responsibilities, I’ve also spent much of this year working with the Society’s archiving team to finish our Jefferson Trust-funded project to organize and to digitize the Society’s historical records. I hope you’ll forgive me, then, if I ground the following reflections on the Society in a story I recently found in some archived articles. The year is 1832, and our seven-year-old Society has not yet held a single public speech. But we are holding our first Founder’s Day celebration, and so we select one of our members – a man named Merritt Robinson – to speak to the University. And in the Society’s first public speech, Merritt Robinson delivers a ringing endorsement of the abolitionist cause, pleading for the emancipation of slaves and condemning slavery on stern moral grounds. The faculty are so distraught by Robinson’s speech that they prohibit any student organizations from taking any public political stances. The Society, it seems, used its first public address to take a stance on abolition and, more broadly, on the right to free speech and open political discourse.
This is an incredible story, and it represents the best of this organization that I’ve grown to love over eight semesters. The Society’s historical record is by no means flawless. It’s stories like these, though, that could and should remind us that this has never been an organization committed only to itself. That, as Karl Saur has written, “The history of the Jefferson Society is, in large measure, the history of the University of Virginia” not only for its failings but also for its great successes and its greater good nature and enduring altruism. We should never forget that what is inside the Society – warm evenings in Hotel C, laughter, hard conversations, wisteria-scented walks down Poe Alley in the moonlight – is precious. But we must also never forget that our precious organization has a proud tradition of engaging with its community and contributing meaningfully to progress at this university.

As I prepare to graduate, I can only hope that our beloved Society continues in that proud tradition of meaningful community engagement. Indeed, over the past four years, I’ve seen the Society forge important new partnerships with many student and community groups. Just as the Society has played a critical role in the development of student life and intellectual culture at this institution in the past, so too will it continue to shape the University as it enters its third century.

It has been such an honor to serve as your Room 7 Resident and an even greater honor to forge such wonderful friendships in this incredibly special place.

Haec Olim,
Jack Chellman
Room 7 Resident, 2017-2018
CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Jefferson Society

OF THE

Poetry and Prose

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

Founded 1825.

Published by Order of the Society.

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Printed by Peyton & Southall, Review Office.
1860.

Society Constitution, 1860
Jefferson Society Archives
Looking back, Alex Hughelet realized she had spent most of her life in solitude. As a young girl wading through the neighbor’s creek, she found solace in the quiet hum of nature. Though at first seeming entirely frozen in time, like a painting, an idyllic scene would begin to come to life the more time she spent immersed in it. Lost in a reverie, Alex would picture her estranged mother before she left, drafting what she might say to her should their paths ever meet again. After spending a few hours on the creekbed, Alex would lose track of time watching the water striders skim the surface of the shallows, only to be interrupted by her father’s call to come indoors at twilight.

Finally, after 27 years, Alex would no longer be alone. She glanced down at the rock on her finger, watching the sun's rays bounce off her diamond through the window on Avianca Flight 1028 and cast little miniature rainbows on the seat-back in front of her. Though she never was one for flashy things, she leaned her head on the shoulder of the man beside her whom she now called her husband, resting her eyes and daydreaming of the couple’s arrival in Guayaquil in just a few short hours. Now starting to slightly snore, he leaned back towards her as the pen in his hand rolled to the floor.

Jonathan Hughelet, a young Ph.D. hopeful in the Classics, had dozed off over his half-edited dissertation on the literature of the Greco-Roman Parcae, as the couple departed Panama City earlier that morning. Knowing that Alex was an ornithologist at heart, Jonathan fully intended to kickstart the rest of his life with her on a trip to the Galapagos Islands, an archipelago off the coast of Ecuador home to Alex’s favorite two-winged creature, the blue-footed booby.

After a blissful three days in mainland Ecuador, Alex and Jonathan set sail for the famous archipelago with an American travellers group of 20 on a small motor boat. Not exactly as Darwin would’ve done it in the 19th century, but as Alex joked, “it would have to do.” In times spent together on the most remote islands in the world, Jonathan admired Alex’s ability to scout out even the most indistinct differences in each species of finch. To him, they all just looked like birds. Spending only a day on each isle, Alex spent evenings by herself on the upper deck under the stars as the motor rocked her gently towards the next island, penning down the species seen on each – first San Cristobal, then Baltra, the volcanic Bartolome, Santa Cruz, and finally, Floreana. Jonathan would rise at dawn to find the boat docked in a new harbor and Alex already awake – hiking boots and wide brim hat on, ready to repeat the process.

At breakfast on the last morning, Alex barely touched her food. “Everything alright sweetheart?” Jonathan grabbed her hand in both of his, giving it a light kiss. He didn’t seem to mind the dirt that had made its way under her nails over the week of exploring uncharted territory together. Alex’s expression was distant as she began to remember the many stories that her father had told her as a little girl about her mother’s interest in the islands, imagining that she were here to see Alex grown and taking the trip for herself. She looked up and gave a soft smile but said nothing.

“You know, today I think the naturalists have something really neat to show us on Floreana.”

“Is that so?” Alex replied, beginning to grin. “Today we dock in Post Office Bay,” explained Jonathan, who had started reading off of the day’s schedule for the group that sat by them on the table.
“Post Office Bay is one of the archipelago’s unseen little quirks. What started as a historical system for 18th century whalers to send letters home now serves as a worldwide destination for travellers and lovers of the islands to unite. On today’s hike, we will stop by the world’s only truly global mailbox. Pick up a postcard addressed to a location close to home, and hand deliver it to its recipient when you return. Leave a note addressed to yourself or to a friend to become part of this new tradition of meeting global travellers like yourself from every corner of the world.”

“Do you want to deliver something?” Jonathan asked. “Seems like a lot of work for meeting a perfect stranger. What if none of the cards are addressed to anyone in Pennsylvania? What if they don’t even answer the door?”

“We’re doing it, hands down. You never know who you might meet. Plus, we just need to find a nearby state is all. We could even make a little road trip out of it.” Alex had already torn out sheet from her journal and begun scribbling down a letter. Jonathan knew that she had gotten her eccentricity from somewhere, but it couldn’t have been from her father’s more reserved side of the family. Since the day they met nearly three years ago after Alex had twisted her ankle trying to fetch a child’s fallen baseball cap on the rocky trails at Yosemite, Jonathan knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life with this woman.

Clutching the cryptic postcard they had retrieved from the island, Jonathan squinted at the faint numbers hand-printed on the back from the passenger side as Alex drove the two up the New Jersey Turnpike. No words, no context, just three numbers, written in an indigo archival ink of some kind – 5, 11, 55.

It had to have some sort of meaning. Jonathan was checking every possibility, historic dates, perhaps a time? The card was dated 1979, so for all they knew, the sender and the recipient could have been long dead by the time they arrived. Having been home for just a day, the couple wasted no time before getting on the road again to make their delivery.

In an old townhouse in Lowell, Massachusetts, Paul Futrell prepared himself a kettle of black tea, grabbed a red ceramic mug reading “BU DEPT OF MATHEMATICS” and sat down at the kitchen table for a game of Sudoku over breakfast. Nudging his glasses toward his brow with a pointed finger and swirling the milk through his tea with the back of an unsharpened pencil, Professor Futrell was having a relatively uneventful Sunday morning when he heard a sharp rap on the door.

As the Hughelets stood impatiently in the January snow, Alex began to feel a tiny glimmer of hope that her mother might be standing on the other side of the doorway. She held Jonathan’s arm tightly with one hand, clutching the wornout postcard in the other. Jonathan, almost reading her mind, assured her of the impossibility of the situation. He had known that Alex’s mother was from Massachusetts, but since the late 70s surely hundreds, if not thousands of trips had been made by travellers from the state to the historic Post Office Bay. Even if it were the case, the chances are that she returned to her town of origin when Alex was a little girl and stayed all these years was probably an even less likely scenario. That said, Jonathan did sense the presence of a sort of change about to occur, as if stepping through the entryway into the old home could end up being a significant decision in their lives together. He had done a significant portion of his studies in undergrad on the idea of the Latin term limen, liminis, or threshold, and its meaning in Roman culture. Appearing many times in Ovid’s love elegies,
couples would step over the threshold at marriage to signify the beginning of a new life. Liminality, therefore, was a concept that toying with at this time felt strangely fitting. Perhaps he might find a way to work it into his current culminating piece.

Jonathan was interrupted as the door flung open and Professor Futrell stared back at the two through thick framed glasses. Before he could ask the intention of the couple’s visit, Alex had jumped in. “Hi sir, my name is Alex Hughelet, and this is my husband, Jonathan. This address is 1028 Dreamweaver Court, correct?” She held up the postcard clearly marked in that delivery address. Futrell leaned in, reading the postcard and its contents. Futrell leaned in, reading the postcard and its contents.

“Come in, come in, please;” Futrell straightened up, recognizing the handwriting on the card. “Would you both like anything to eat or drink? I just put some tea on, I know it’s chilly out there this morning;” Professor Futrell led the couple to the kitchen table, clearing away the mess of ungraded papers, unopened mail, loose change and his current Sudoku game onto the floor in one big swoop. The coins fell to the floor and began to roll around the kitchen. Startled, Alex and Jonathan cautiously sat down on the other side of the table.

As Jonathan opened his mouth to explain the situation, Futrell cut him off. “Yes, yes I know why you’re here. I can’t believe it has taken all these years!” Futrell picked the card up off the table and held it to the light to examine its front and back. On the front, a hand painted iconic image of the Galapagos’ Pinnacle Rock, on the back, the three fading numbers carefully inked. “Just to think about how much mathematics has progressed since the 70s, is absolutely phenomenal,” Futrell went on, clearly amused. “I know exactly what this is and who this is from. Bless the hearts of you two for making the trip out here, where is home?” As he listened to the Hughelets tell their story he pulled up Wolfram Alpha on his laptop and took out a sheet of scrap grid line paper, beginning to write out a series of equations involving various forms of the three numbers.

Alex and Jonathan looked at each other and then looked back at Futrell, who was still furiously writing. “A few decades ago it would have taken months just to take this modulus by hand, and now we’re able to do it in just seconds – isn’t that incredible.” Futrell seemed to be having a conversation with himself at this point. “I probably should explain, shouldn’t I.” He reverted into Professor mode, “The numbers you delivered to me today, I’m fairly certain are PQ, E, and our totient, (P-1)(Q-1), Phi, the three numbers needed to calculate a decryption variable for a basic RSA encryption algorithm. Invented just a year before this post card was sent out by three mathematicians I used to view as superheroes, Rivest, Shamir, and Adleman, RSA now essentially makes it possible for you young folks to ping each other every day over Facebook messenger without the eyes of a big corporation being able to spy on you. I can use these three numbers to decrypt a message that I’ve had encrypted for years simply because I didn’t have the totient piece, which I now have access to. I’m using a simple Euclidean algorithm now to get myself the private key I need. A couple more seconds here and we’ll be rocking and rolling.”

Futrell reached into the cupboard and began removing all of the mugs with a sense of excited urgency, setting them on the floor around him which was now beginning to look like a sea of academic papers and miscellaneous trinkets from the table. At the back of the cupboard he retrieved another, similar postcard from Lowell with a longer string of numbers on it that nearly filled the page, dated this time the Spring of 1992. He began to raise each number to the private key and plug the value into Wolfram Alpha to mod it by the first number on the Hughelet’s card. Taking an additional step to pull the numbers into a phonetic alphabet, Futrell began to decipher a full letter, complete
with spaces and punctuation, before their eyes.

As the couple watched in awe, Futrell finished the page of numbers in just a few minutes, brushing off the dust from the Lowell card as he finished.

Futrell paused, cleared his throat, and read.

“Paul,

I’m sorry I have remained this cryptic for so long, and I hope you understand why I did what I had to do. By the time you end up with the private key to this message whoever knows if we may be in contact. However, in leaving I knew I had to write to you first— I will never forget the times we shared exploring the patterns of this world together, it has been a pleasure being your colleague and friend and I am certain that you are destined for success in whatever field you may choose— cryptography has always been something you’ve had more of a knack for than me, so I know you should have no trouble translating this letter once you have all of the information you need.

I know that Alex is in good hands with Ethan, but at this point I fear that she will grow up having had no idea who I truly am, and I wish I wasn’t going to be that huge gap in her life. I want her to remember her mother as sharp and quick witted, not the destroyed soul that I know that this disease will turn me into. I asked Ethan to send her on the trip that changed my life one day, when she’s older, she can handle it. I don’t know how long I will be here to hopefully greet her again one day, but the doctors have told me it’s so rare that no pharma company would even dare take the financial risk to find a cure. The orphan case to end all orphan cases. I don’t know what kind of young woman she will grow up to be, but I pray every day that she thinks of me in high regards when I am gone.

All I know is that I need to give you both my parting words while I still have words, and I know that won’t for too much longer.

Much love,
Sarah”

Jonathan looked over at Alex, trying to put two and two together, and saw the tears streaming silently down her cheeks. “Finally,” she whispered, “I have answers.”
very morning, America Johnson parked her car in the student parking lot. She stared at her steering wheel, just for a moment, though out of the corner of her eye she could see the rush of students jostling by her car. She recognized the frantic energy in their eyes, the desire to do, to be, to act. Something, anything. She saw her practice times written up her arm (a Sharpie tattoo of commitment), opened the door, and swept into the rush where hearts were heavier than AP students’ backpacks.

She was one of those students, and by second period her curlicue handwriting had turned frantic between the pages of her planner. The boy in front of America handed her a hand-scribbled note – an invitation to the movies. Its desperate energy (time???????) soothed her, but her heartbeat pulsed against the ink on her arm. She shook her head regretfully and passed it along. Lunch was a half hour America didn’t think she could afford to waste (her planner pulsing in her purse, bulging with deadlines), and yet she did. She had to.

Was the world sliding by without her? Were her friends? She read emails and tweets and Facebook posts and liked Instagram photos and watched Snapchat stories and ate a sandwich and talked to her friends and the bell rang.

I should be living a high school movie, America Johnson thought in the middle of Silicon Valley High’s pep rally that afternoon. It was an extravagant, exorbitant crowning jewel (waste of time this strikethrough in her own handwriting), and she gloried in it. She screamed as her friends played their instruments, tumbled through their cheers, and gave their speeches; stood up herself as the varsity athletes were recognized; and jeered at the competition.

“GO SENIORS! GO COUGARS!” roared the overbearing, slightly overweight athletic director, and the crowd screamed back, throwing fists and streamers into the air. It rained down around her, the spiritual and physical confetti of pride.

Time seemed slowed, somehow, like it was for the heroines in those movies, the ones who always had time to profess their love in song and give each other makeovers. For America, it rooted itself in her awareness of the sweat pasting her t-shirt to her back, the boom of the bass in the gym (turned up too loud), the gobs of face paint that had dripped into her hair: the indulgence of a moment made for primal feeling, unscheduled and unscored.

She palmed her phone, to record and savor the infinity of the moment (what if it became another Vine, another drained, broken moment?) But its screen was filled not with Snapchats, but news alerts – CNN: Congress close to budget deal; Fox News: Judge returns verdict in college rape case; The New York Times: Devastating air strike kills 87 civilians in Iraq. An email from Stanford: “There is a problem with your application, America.” A call from home, a 911 text, a grade alert, a Facebook friend’s birthday… the world broke against her like a harsh Pacific wave. America’s infinity was leaking away, bleeding from her body and leaving just her, a painted shell.

America became aware that someone was calling her name, distantly. The crowd had parted around her. “America, you’re up,” repeated her coach impatiently, gesturing to the gym floor. “I’m coming,” she tried, and she took a step down off the bleacher. America was swimming forward, searching for the infinite in the moment.
As she lost it, as she fell, as she slipped away, towards the floor and an inexplicable pool of her own blood:

She had never felt less victorious.

Mrs. Johnson couldn’t say what the most horrifying part was—was it the whiteness, the tubes, the endless beeps ticking down the clock of her daughter’s life? They weren’t, actually. Counting down, that is. Beeps meant heartbeats and heartbeats meant life, however fractured and fragmented, but right now beeps meant terror (and also that strange EDM music America had did listen to, the bass reminding her of a time when technology first meant everything to her). It pulsed, ever present, as she held her hand. Crying, talking to doctors, praying—the mother held vigil. Once, furtively, she checked her phone (a blasphemously casual gesture beside a death sickbed), and found it swarmed with messages.

Karen
3:48 PM
I dropped a lasagna off for your family, let me know if I can do anything :) (delivered)

To: suzluvsherfam@yahoo.com
From: principlap@siliconvalleyhigh.edu
Subject: Plans
Mrs. Johnson,
We at Silicon Valley High are devastated to hear of America’s accident. Of course, we don’t want school to interfere at all with her recovery, but we’d like to go ahead and discuss the next steps for America academically, since she has already missed so much of her work. Please reach out to my secretary to schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible. Medical leaves of absence like this don’t generally affect college admissions here in the UC system if we handle the situation appropriately, but we must start immediately.
Sincerely,
Principal Pastore
Go Cougars!

Susie Johnson threw her phone at the wall (I designed this to be indestructible, to put us all constantly in touch with one another, not unmoved by the callousness of life), and for a moment the sound drowned was louder than the beeps of America’s life. A concerned nurse arrived in time to watch her picking shards of glass (she had patented) off the floor.

When the phone persevered (because of her), lighting up urgently through its mutilation, Susie looked at her daughter’s motionless body, the only truly peaceful presence in the room, and understood.

America swam, until up was down and down was up, through the mauve shades of her mind. It wasn’t a fog, but an unexpectedly clear pool; snatches of her world whizzed by, compartmentalized so neatly to a soundtrack by OneDirection (both hackneyed and meaningful). America wondered why she’d ever thought it meant anything put together.

Why had she ever tried to make sense of it?

America stopped fighting.
The Silicon Valley Gazette
Special Anniversary Edition
On 10 Year Anniversary of Student’s Death, Controversy Continues

By Howard Zinn

The Silicon Valley community pauses today to remember the life and death of America Johnson. Once one of Silicon Valley’s most promising young people, Johnson’s sudden and unexplained death ignited a firestorm in the community. What new evil was preying on our young people? Johnson’s death, unlike most teen deaths, could not be chalked up to drugs, alcohol, reckless driving, or mental health. Instead, she passed in the hospital a few days after a seemingly innocuous fall during a pep rally at Silicon Valley High. Bystanders described her death as peaceful.

“She was just suddenly gone, like she left her body,” remembers her close friend Megan Marshall.

The investigation into her life in search of the cause of her death revealed the typical routine of a law-abiding teen: Johnson played sports and was a straight-A student in all AP classes. After Johnson’s funeral, her mother, Susan Johnson, sold her lucrative tech firm (one she had founded while on Forbes’ 30 under 30 list) and moved to a cabin in the woods near Yosemite, refusing further requests for comment. Meanwhile, the community endured health scare after health scare as doctors and autopsies attempted to ascertain what caused Johnson’s death. Answers, to this day remain elusive. Though Johnson’s case made national headlines and sparked debate among academics, it, like her, eventually faded to obscurity.

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The colors, the shapes, the lights, the sounds, the music and laughter and dancing and weeping – the rush, the urgency, the pressure: to create, to dream, to succeed, to look beautiful and act appropriately.

The things of the world, that stream in her mind, reduced to beeps on a heart monitor, movements of a respirator. The murmurs of the hospital room were woven in, as the threads of her brain wound and unwound: a formless, unraveled tapestry.

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Her locker shone, as if in the spotlight, even after hours when the classroom lights went out. Principal Pastore’s heels clicked on the tile floor of the ghostly hallways, a last check for the night. Around the corner, America Johnson’s locker was covered in flowers and heartfelt letters from strangers. They puddled in the floor, until they became a roadblock that collected other papers: old tests, love letters, receipts, movie tickets, lost homework. The debris of life, wrapped in a memorial to death.

In her address to the school, Principal Pastore had told them that was the beauty of it, really. That life moved on, memories like candies for heartaches and rainy days. Still, as Principal Pastore walked the empty hallway, she skirted the locker memorial.

Sticky notes clumped on the soles of her heels until the clicking faded into nothing.

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This anniversary edition seeks to re-explore the life and death of America Johnson. Johnson’s mother, her only surviving family member, declined to comment on this edition.

For interviews with the doctors who searched for answers, see C16.

For a discussion of the economic impact of “The Johnson Health Scare”, see B6.

For a reprinting of the Pulitzer-prize winning photo series and essay, “Living Without America”, by Silicon Valley High Principal Pastore, see D2.

For an academic discussion of the mystery of America Johnson, see E11.
The Freak
By MACKENZIE FRANCES WILLIAMS
A Probationary Presentation, Fall 2017

From across the room, you see her with a drink that seems out of place in her childlike hands. Oversized sweater, bright hair wrangled into a haphazard braid, thick glasses resting atop a too-large nose. She’s all pale skin and bones clinging to the vestiges of an adolescent figure. Her hips move independently from her body in an awkward, exotic dance to the beat of a much slower song, one you could not, would not, hear. You catch yourself hating her – this charlatan with a Solo cup, this freak with a battered copy of Moliere under her arm – for the way her eyes size you up, envelop you, and hold you at their mercy. Not even your pulse dares disturb her: the angel with the crimson cup.

Maybe this is why you stare; why you find yourself pushing through the calamity, past the gorgeous girls moving to the music of your ears, towards the first question mark of your nineteen years. Or perhaps you had to touch her, to know her, to claim her as yours, if only for a moment. Like planting an American flag on the face of the moon.

This is the girl whose heart you will hold like ripe strawberries in your fists. The one who will stay up by candlelight stitching your swollen scars into fine, pink lines. And yet, you will delight in the cracking as you break her bones, just so she won’t have the chance to hurt you first. You’ll call it a preemptive strike, and you will be a hurricane in her eyes. But you’re a child, and you want to be wanted, so for this reason and others beyond explanation, you grasp her bony fingers and begin the demolition. “Fix me”, the voice in your head beseeches her. Make her the brick wall to your wrecking ball.

Lose her name in the pounding, resounding beat of cheap liquor flowing through your veins. Take her outside and marvel at the way she inhales her cigarette, just as your mother did that November day over a hollow gaze at your father’s bags piled outside the door. Smoking to win a war. This is a war you’ll come to know, one you’ll fight to subjugate her as she unwittingly subjugated you with her eyes alone.

You begin to cut out the rotten pieces of yourself to give to this golden girl. You hand her your parents’ expired marriage, the girls who don’t kiss you back, and the sibling in whose shadow you reside. Anyone would languish in the liberty of such lightness, but you drink her sympathetic tears like fine wine. Over your rum and coke you elicit her boundless empathy with stories of that war-torn November, of cigarette burns on your forearms, of your years spent on the outside looking in. That last part is a lie, but you will get a certain thrill from the look in her eyes when she wonders if you might be just like her. You will call this winning.

To endear yourself to her, tell her you loved Tartuffe. Clearly you weren’t reading too carefully, but we’ll come back to that. She smiles her smile and tells you she isn’t surprised.

“Yes, my brother, I am a sinner, a guilty man,” she begins.

And you go, “An unhappy sinner full of iniquity.”

You’ve met your match, my darling.

You listen when your friends torment you for chasing the freak with big hair and one thousand freckles, but take her out anyway. Tell yourself it’s only to satisfy your curiosity. But when you pick her up in your mother’s station wagon and you see that freak come tripping out of her house with one shoe untied, you know that this is a lie.
From the passenger seat, she attacks you with questions and references and you sense her winning a game she didn’t know she could play. For your great counter maneuver, you avert your gaze and make her ploy for eye contact. I suppose this will make you feel powerful. She’ll confront you about your tactics, among many other things.

You will never be able to hide from her.

She learns Debussy and practices until her fingers bleed, on the chipped keys of an out-of-tune piano. She does these things for you, if only because you once mentioned you liked Moonlight. You have good taste. You feel the marrow return to your bones with each note and love her madly for the sweat, blood, and tears she gave to sculpt you back together. Believe with every ounce of your being that this woman, this lovely freak, is the love of your life. Have faith in this moment that such things exist.

You love her because she calls your crueler days Misogynistic Mondays. Because she knows when you can do better, and tells you so. Because she drove you to the coast when your mother died and sat with you and a bottle of rum in silence, even when the sun went down. Because she frowns when she calculates the tip, because she cries whenever you fight, because sometimes she wakes herself up in the middle of the night from snoring so loudly. And she’ll love you for going out to buy eggs at two in the morning when she cooks just because she feels like it, for wearing a tie to meet her father, for trusting her with yourself. She will love you, you freak.

She’ll know it on Christmas. The first one you’ll spend with her, eating Chinese food and trying to hide the fact that you have no idea how to use chopsticks. You’ll attempt to harmonize “Baby it’s Cold Outside” and your voice will crack on the crescendo, and she’ll laugh with a laugh that is many things, but “attractive” will not be one of them. In the neighborhood of utterly broke, your Christmas tree would be envious of Charlie Brown’s and she won’t be able to afford running the heat for more than a few hours. But you will make your special eggnog recipe, which she’ll know is just regular eggnog the Irish way, though she won’t tell you this. She will put on a scratched record and you’ll dance to the same stanza of “Here Comes Santa Claus” again and again, but you won’t care. And she’ll be looking at you and all she will say is Thank God, because in that moment, none of it will matter. Not the boot on her car, not the overdue electric bill, not even her mother who doesn’t call on federal holidays.

When she describes this scene to her father, he’ll call you a catastrophe. She’ll call you a miracle, but that’s neither here nor there.

After graduation, you live with her in a one-bedroom apartment in Queens, overflowing with flowers and books that you will never read. Passages from her same copy of Moliere highlighted and waiting for you. But you don’t realize that these lines delivered between cups of black coffee and cigarettes she should know better than to smoke aren’t just literary droppings, but hints at the world inside her to which you have grown obscenely blind. Instead, come home to her and absentmindedly brush her cheek, whispering, Later, choosing not to understand the pain folded between the syllables of such a word. You don’t realize that her recited words are gifts, ones that only a privileged few have ever received. You don’t realize that she is breaking under your weight. And this shattering is what your freak will call love.

Here’s what you won’t know about her. She learned at sixteen that relationships mean cutting out pieces of oneself to give to men who love at the zeroes and the tens. Men like you. Men who come home smelling of cheap perfume, but dance with her, the freak, around the living room to the sound of something old and romantic, slowing to tell her, “This is the song they will
play at our wedding.” Men who spin verbal gold, storytellers of world travels and children raised differently from the way their parents raised them, you and her. Words reality could never match. She learned this from her mother who, like your mother, dressed for war every morning against the man who slept on the other side of her bed. She learned to excuse your indifference towards her during lessons at the dinner table, around the same time she learned to parallel park a car. In her mind, your ugly days, your zeroes, will always be swept under the rug of your tens, the moments when you appear for her in the brightest of colors. She will love you exactly as she knows how.

And she will love you, keep that in mind. She will never call you a tyrant, but as she could tell you, “Every woman adores a Fascist, the boot in the face, the brute, brute heart of a brute like you.” Everything you needed to know was ensconced in the poetry you didn’t read. No, instead you made her your Atlas, and you accepted these naively gifted sacrifices of hers without a second thought.

Fail to notice as your sinful indifference turns her hair to grey, so busy are you fixing yourself that you begin to pull her apart. Wake up on a Sunday and realize the pain, the terrible tightness in your chest, is gone. Healed by the unlovely freak sleeping beside you in a bed meant for one. Find that you no longer need her. With this, you’ll turn cruel, angry, and irrational towards her. She will, too, somewhere between your domestic invectives and absent evenings.

Begin to notice the other girls. Do more than notice them. You’ll pick them for the flashes of color in their hair, for their oddly placed freckles, for the occasional book peaking from their bags. What I’m saying is, you’ll look for her, un tarnished and new as the day you met her, in every bar, grocery store vegetable aisle, and overpriced coffee shop trying to replace that which you shouldn’t have had in the first place. Be convinced that you couldn’t help yourself. Infidelity is your second language, my love, passed to you from your father’s father in a great tradition of silent warfare.

She will ask you one night and you will tell her because you could never hide anything from her anyway. You knew this would break her, yet you marvel at the grey mass of nothingness existing in your stomach where guilt should be.

“You pernicious bastard”, she whispers. Feel your soul crack at this, for you understand what a miracle it is to be loved by a girl whose insult of choice is “pernicious bastard.”

You’re becoming human, darling.

Now as you see her smirking at you over that ridiculous Solo cup, you will recognize the loving and the loathing to be sustained from such a girl. You’ll understand this girl is not just a series of waves, but a symphony of oceans. Knowing this, you’ll nod your head, quietly put down your drink, and leave her in your first act of true humanity.
February 9, 1988
Legki, Temnastan
(near the Temna/Kazakh border and Caspian Sea)

Papa said we should keep a diary to make a story of what happens to us, like Anne Frank and Tanya Savicheva did in 1940s. He also said I have the nicest letters, so I should do it. At first, I asked him if he could—Anne and Tanya both died—but he telled to me, “No, девушка, it must be readable. It has to be you.”

It is true his letters are bad, but at least he can write English. He learns because he is professor. I learn because he says it is the language of the full powers. I very hope you who found this read English.

I think I am rude not to already introduce me.

My name is Nadya Harabreva. I have 9 years old.

Papa tells me we are Temna for one-hundred generations before me. I used to think that was nice, but now I am not sure. Not very many peoples like the Temna anymore, not since we said not to let them cut our country up like a cake for them to share. Now they are fighting over who gets to take it, and we are getting hit under their heavy boots.

Most people call them волки, which means “wolves” in Russian, but Papa says we must not call them that. He says that they fight as babies to take what they want, so we call them свиньи, the pigs.

In night, Papa tells me stories about them like we are all on a farm. They the pigs and I think we the farmers. The pigs always try to eat our corn or kill our ground but we always stop them and then have a big dinner pork. I do not much like pork but still I laugh. Maybe if we will eat pork after we win, it will not taste so like a paper—maybe it will taste like баурсак. We have not butter to make баурсак since three weeks, because now it costs for the money of two hams.

I do not know how to end this note, since I cannot know who will read it, so I hope you are fine with peace. I think it sounds nice.

Peace,
Nadya

May 10, 1991

The свиньи are getting closer to Legki but they are still enough far for me to think they are going somewhere else. When they first started their campaign (I learned that word just to tell you), they just tried to change their men for our President. But we heard on the radio this morning that a whole village outside in Moshnosit (our capital) was burned in hours because they stopped свиньи from coming in their schools to teach us that they are better than us.

Papa left the university, and I had to leave school. There are too many people there. Lots of people together means lots of people to get hurted. I have to say that I should be more upset by this news, but instead I am excited to spend every day with Papa. He can do my lessons and we can do more boxing since I do not have to make the walk to school. We started together boxing when I was very small. I am still small, but I am very good.
I suppose you will think me arrogant (another special word I learned for you), but I know it is true. We practice on the trees outside and in Papa’s old mits when it is too cold. I like to punch fast. I hit the trunk one hundred times in one minute.

“Девушка,” Papa always tells me, “slow down, make them look good.”

I do not want to slow down. I want to get faster and stronger. Sometimes I dream about punching all свиньи right in the face. I have not seen one with my eyes before, but in my mind they look like other men, except that their eyes are black, like there is only darkness on their insides.

I just realized I never explained what девушка means. I am sorry. It means young woman. It makes me feel so grown-up to be called that, like Papa’s equal.

Peace,
Nadya

August 11, 1994

The свиньи finished their blockade of northern Temnastan yesterday. Their progress been slow until now because it is expensive to run a campaign, even on a country as small as ours. I also think we are not the only country they want so that probably slowed them down too. I think they are ready just to stomp us down now so that they have fewer projects going on, fewer people to control.

How could they choose that this is right? Four people on the village died today: two little children, one sick old lady, and one brave man who tried to sneak across the block line for medicine and food.

The babies were sick already and they had no medicine left. heir mothers yelled into the street for help but no one had anything, and when they begged the свиньи, they only got spit. The man was shot immediately. They tease us in the main village road, the one that leads to Kazakhstan and freedom, with only a line on the ground in red paint. If you cross it, they will kill you from a distance as cowards, and if you stay, they will keep you like an animal.

Papa, without enough food or interesting work to do, is more tired with every day. It does not help that he always makes me take one of his rations a day for myself. “Девушка,” he says, “you are a fighter and a fighter needs food.” Of course, the rations do not taste a lot like food - they are mostly stale or rotten - but they are what we have. I still hate to think that Papa is giving most of his to me.

I have asked him many times since the свиньи arrived why we have not walked across to Kazakhstan. He always has two answers: 1) they must be watching the border so they keep control of us and 2) we have the right to be here, in the house where he married my mother, and where I was born.

I box mostly as myself now, pounding my fists into the knots of our trees. My control is much better than it used to be, good enough to hit any rib I choose, good enough to really hurt a pig if I ever see one.

Peace,
Nadya

November 12, 1997

They killed Papa today. We were in the ration line and they gave him only half of his portion. When he asked for the rest, one of the new patrol pigs dragged him into the street. I was screaming, two of our neighbors grabbed me under the arms and tried to pull me back into line.

Papa was biting and kicking and pushing, but he hadn’t eaten properly for years, and the pig was much bigger than him.
The pig threw him down on to the street and started pounding. Papa’s blood- my blood- filled the pig’s uniform like a dying rose. I kept screaming, but they kept me far away from him. It was a long time before the pig stood up, before he left my Papa as a sack of clothes, before they let me run to him. I shook but closed his eyes so I couldn’t see my wet face in them. He was gone. All that he had left in the street was blood. My blood. It burns me from the inside out.

Nadya

November 15, 1997 (Afternoon)

It happened this morning. I walked to the village and I saw him, the monster who killed my father in the street. I ran at him and threw him to the ground. I waited for the other soldiers to pull me off- but they didn’t come. I squeezed my knees under his arms to keep him still and smashed my fists into his face over and over and over again. As soon as I could be sure his nose was broken, I stood up. My hands were more blood than flesh but at least now he would have a scar, something to remind him every day that he is a killer. I was ready for them to arrest me now or hit me too. I stood patiently with my hands stinging at my sides. I wouldn’t surrender to them, but I couldn’t keep beating the pig, who was still moaning on the ground. I do not want to be a killer. Then there was a bang and the man I had been hitting was dead. Blood poured from a small hole in the left side of his head.

Nadya

November 15, 1997 (Night)

I cannot stop seeing it. They killed their own man. I screamed at the time, and inside I feel like I am still screaming. The pig who shot him looked me right in the face while his countrymen on the ground stared up at him. His message was clear: the weak deserve to die. Until now, they had only killed Temna, after driving us to physical weakness through their blockade and propaganda.

Today, I showed that I wasn’t the weaker one. Maybe it was my boxing, maybe it was the element of surprise, and maybe I just got lucky, but today, it was me who lived and the pig who died. He died because he was weak. A little girl beat him. The other pigs will never let that happen again.

Nadya

November 22, 1997

Before Papa died, he read this journal one more time.

“Good, девушка,” he told me, “keep writing to keep fighting.”

I said I would. Today I am ready to act on that. I have heard rumors for a week now that the village is making a police team. They have to be quiet about it but, since we still can’t leave, we have to do something here. Tonight, I am going to another house to sign up. I want to be clear, I used to want to hurt the свиньи like they were hurting my people. Part of me still wants to, but now I am ashamed of it. Now that they have taken my Papa, and I have felt the horror they bring, I believe that to be stronger than them means not to hit them back, but to make them accountable for all they have done- the right way. I have decided to believe in justice, not revenge. Papa taught me to box, yes, but he also taught me to think. I think he would prefer I stay as different from the свиньи as I can. I also know he would want me to stay alive. I cannot do that if I don’t control my fists.

Peace,

Nadya

February 23, 1999

We got 7 more people across the Caspian last night. That makes 43 total. It’s beautiful really, the свиньи, in their ignorance, think the young and sick and injured are dying off, when they are really in Kazakhstan as breathing evidence of our continued
survival. Soon, we will have powerful allies across the border, and the world. Soon, we will be free.

Peace,

Nadya

February 24, 2000
Moshnost, Temnastan

I have decided that this will be my last writing in this journal. It’s time for Papa’s idea for a record to be carried out. I spent the whole day today pulling those entries most critical to my story and revising them, bringing the details to the forefront. Tomorrow I will bring them to the head court in the capital, to be submitted as evidence in the свиньи trials and to be published for the rest of the world to see. I know that it may be a long time before these words reach outside of Temnastan, but I hope that, eventually, our story will be shared, and everyone will know how we fought great power, won, and won’t ever stop fighting.

The Peace Accords have been in effect for nearly two months now and, at least according to the news, they are working. The process of rebuilding has already started, with the extra responsibility of creating dedications to decorate the graves we hurriedly threw together to get our loved ones out of the streets. The new government is still learning how to operate, but it let us who fought the blockade be trained as real police. Now it is our job to walk the streets, to help the injured, and to pursue the guilty. We are doing well too, rounding up the men who tortured us. We are chasing them all around Temnastan and across its borders. In the end, all of them will have to face what they did for so long. But that doesn’t always make it a nice job. My fellow officers don’t appreciate having me among them, particularly now that the conflict is officially over. All the men are called сотрудник, officer, but they call me девушка. They want to show me that I am less than them. They forget that I lived through that already.

Peace always,

Nadya

THE AUTHOR OF THESE ENTRIES HAS BEEN VERIFIED AS NADYA HARABREVA POBEDA, PRESIDENT OF TEMNASTAN.
The Fish Tank

By GEORGE MESSENGER
A Probationary Presentation, Spring 2018.

Classic Narcissism

I am Narcissus.
I am drunk with the Bacchus
Of my own geometry.
The Minerva of my mind,
And the Mars of my body
Swim in the reflection,
A slave to my movements.
The twisting hands of the clock's face
Caress my own
Like Hades' wicked judgement,
Waiting for my hour.

I am Narcissus.
My own reflection infatuates my being
Repurposing the lens of transparency
For a cloned self, a symmetric bilocation
Of whatever I am.
Of whoever I might be.

I am Narcissus,
Trying to escape when I cannot.
It is more than just drowning now,
A quick suffocation.
But the glance at my reflection
Endures not even a second.
It runs from me
Into a world I will never know.
What lies behind the Iron-Cold,
Prison bars of bouncing light
Is a mystery to those who struggle
With life on the other side.

We are all Narcissus at some point,
Calling back to our refugee reflections.
But how can We forget
The utter vanity of time and leisure?
Reflections are simply self scripted
Poems of our human experience.
They are
The closest thing to
And the farthest thing from
Truly knowing ourselves.

Looking Outside, Inside

I greet the window with a glance,
And a double-cheeked soft kiss
To look inside out.
But instead I see my own face,
Which did not want to be seen.
Now it occupies the whole
Obsidian page with the pane-staking
Burden of my Medusa-granite
Countenance.
Looking out and looking in—
Transparency of function,
Repurposed for refraction,
Murdered to the narcissistic laugh;
Van Gogh's psychotic dream
Of a drowning self portrait.
The retina-black cave
Resides in a twice-measured frame
Juxtaposing me over
The world on the other side.
But what else is poetry,
Than a twice-measured placement
Of me
Over the world on the other side?
**An Old Man on the Camino of Santiago**

Towards the top of his walking stick,  
The wood has been worn down.  
The oils of his pilgrim hands are captured,  
Held within the splits of the injured staff.  
In his left hand he carries drawings for sale,  
Bearing a message of peace,  
Or perhaps a mental struggle.  
He likes to talk—a lot— but he wont be  
The one to start the conversation.  
When I spoke to him, although he stood alone,  
I merely entered his discussion.  
I didn't know how long he had been on this Camino,  
But when I asked he had already forgotten my ques-  

The dirt which had been planted  
In the seams of his bright orange jacket  
Counted the miles travelled for him.  
I don't think this man was a pilgrim of St. James,  
Though his long white beard was rather pious.

The old man on the Camino walked his own mind  
Over confused cerebral hemispheres;  
His piety was an internal suffering,  
fighting to finish the over-trodden trail.  
His prayers were a conversation with himself,  
And his almsgiving an exceptional effort to finish a  
rocky trail,  
To reach a church incensed with his heavy breath.

**On El Greco's Toledo**

The face of our city has a long gray beard  
Pursuant to its wisdom.  
The youth of its wrinkles is something one  
Can only know by living there.  
A thrashing sky kisses our church steeples,  
The sounds of thunder marrying those metal  
Sheathings in the gothic halls of the blacksmith's shop.  
Nature prides itself in our walls—  
The blue, green, silver, white scurries across the scape  
Like a rabbit running from the hunter.  
Don't forget our history.  
Its moral green is there to remind you  
Of the things we have done in the past.
In The Closet
By SAVANNAH HORTON
First Place for the Annual JefferSlam Poetry Contest

I can't believe he put you in the closet
You and I know the term all too well

However what I once knew to be a fear for acceptance,
a fear for tolerance

Has changed now to a fear for life.
The closet wasn't an unfamiliar place

As a gay man you spent your adolescence building up
the courage to step into the

light

We all thought that once you came out, the closet door
would shut forever

I wish we were right.

Because in the early hours of January 28th you were
massacred in your own home

In a tiny town that is praised for its safety year after year.

Across the street from the high school we had spent so
many hours together,

Where I twirled your hair and prodded you with pencils
just to giggle about God knows what to stay awake in
class.
As much as I couldn't stomach the harrowing details of
it all
I couldn't believe where they found your body.
You were out, proud, loved, and accepted
The closet was just supposed to be a blip in time.

I thought if you could survive being a queer kid in rural
Virginia you could survive
anything.
But I was wrong.

It was in that same closet that I kissed the lips of my
highschool girlfriend

that became your sepulchre

For as much as I was bound physically, metaphorically,
and symbolically to that

phrase

So much so that I could not utter the words “I am in
love” to my own grandmother

You were bound to that closet eternally.

It plasters every police report and headline
and is glued into my mind for all of perpetuity.

But despite your final moments being constrained to
nothing but a room and a
clothes rack

The world will never know the monstrous how and why
of your demise

But I won't let you perish a second time.

We live in a world where people have the audacity to
declare that we are

Post-lynching, post-homophobia, post-racism

Like a single Supreme Court decision and a black
president erases hate from our
But trans women are four times as likely to be killed on average. And unarmed black men are shot in their own backyards. And a gay man is murdered in his own bedroom. I remember when you came out of the closet And I laughed because it had been so blatantly obvious

Because in the eighth grade you were much more preoccupied with boys than

Over the years we had so many sleepovers We drank tea, tried to outsmart each other in Jeopardy, And raided your grandma's cabinets to create the most rudimentary facemasks.

I did your makeup for the first time And watched as you emphatically posed for over the top selfies, searching for only

the most pristine Instagram lighting.

I remember going to the Salvation Army for homecoming outfits. You gossiped with the employees while I tried on dresses. After our date your grandmother delivered flowers to the high school.

Now I deliver flowers to her door.

I know it wasn't always so easy for you.

I know what the boys said when you walked into the bathroom.

With your long hair and feminine idiosyncrasies you were not deemed man enough to even piss in peace.

I am sorry. I'm sorry I get a free pass

Because queer women are fetishized in today's society. That while you were ostracized for who you loved Two girls kissing at a frat party are admired and applauded.

I'm sorry that I feel safer depending on the gender of my partner at any arbitrary moment in time.

I hate that they ask how it happened. I hate how they ask if your blood was clean.

I hate how they say this was God's way of punishing you for who you loved.

I hate that I can't see you anymore.

I hate that I can't kiss your cheek or lay my head on your shoulder after a long day.

I hate that I only have photographs. Today, I am hyper aware of the events I attend That any venue with a rainbow flag could make me a target. Because it's not a hate crime in Virginia to kill someone for their sexuality. This isn't Stonewall, this isn't Pulse, and you weren't Harvey Milk.

But you are not to be forgotten.

Your name is Cole Allan Rinaca and you were my best friend. And I can't believe he put you back in the closet.
What would it mean to be thoughtful about sexual intimacy? People have sex for different reasons. When a person tries to justify why they are being sexually intimate with another other person, they usually give at least one of seven explanations as to why it’s o.k. or good or right. These seven rationales for or “ethics” of sex are:

1) It feels good
2) The other person consents to it
3) I like the person
4) I love the person
5) I’m married to the person
6) I’m/we’re trying to make a baby
7) We are having sex to glorify God

These seven ethics of sex may operate independently or in combination with each other. Often, one ethic alone is not enough (for the civilized and humane person). Having sex because it feels good physically does not eliminate rape (where one participant feels good but another does not consent). Having sex with someone who consents could include prostitution, or a hookup, or a marital partner. Most people want sexual encounters that include feeling good, and consent, and many people want to be married to, or love, or at least like their sexual partner(s).

In any sexual event, it’s important for people to be clear about why they’re doing what they’re doing (and what it is they think they’re doing). Getting drunk or otherwise chemically altered and dumping responsibility is a popular tactic, but it doesn’t play out well in the end for either sex emotionally or physically (and many women face the added jeopardy of possible pregnancy). It is also important for people to be clear with a sexual partner about what it is they think makes having sex with that partner right, or good, or “ok.” Is this sex for sport and “we’re both just having fun”? Or is this simply mutual consent? Or is this an expression of my love for you and/or your love for me? To lie about these things is to treat another human being badly – to do him or her wrong. It’s not that ‘if you don’t want your feelings hurt or your heart broken, or your body harmed, or your expectations blown,’ then you shouldn’t hurt other peoples’ feelings, break their hearts, harm their bodies, or blow their expectations. It’s that doing things like that to other people is unloving, and therefore unethical.

If we put the sex ethics into a diagram, this is what we see:

V.V. Peterson Sex Ethics Diagram:

The “I’m/we’re trying to make a baby” rationale for sex is not included in the diagram because it differs in kind from the others; procreative motives are caught up in a whole different set of meanings and needs. People have children because they seek a unique nurturing opportunity, a shared cause, new social connections, a way to link to the cosmos, ego gratification, immortality, and more. Because of this, the “I’m/we’re trying to make a baby” ethic could be located in any part of any
of the ovals in the diagram (a friend helping a friend get pregnant, a husband and wife getting pregnant, a woman finding a one-night-stand to use as an unwitting sperm-donor, rape with the intent to impregnate, etc.). The “We are having sex to glorify God” rationale for sex is not included because the model offered here is a humanistic model designed to work for people regardless of their faith tradition. Also, once you bring God into the equation, you also bring debates over who knows God’s will (and whose God is the real God, if from differing religions). If one person knows God’s will, then the other person’s will might be disregarded in light of God’s will. Such an orientation too easily justifies rape (and does in some cultures). In the model offered here, human free-will is essential to consent. The spiritual/metaphysical aspect of sex is therefore subsumed under “Love” (a person expresses their love of god by loving their partner).

Love and liking are nested ovals because they share a family resemblance. “Liking” has the potential to condense or transform into “love,” or it may be its own thing, as between friends who may think of sex as a pro-social act. Because love is rarer (a taller order) than “liking,” it is a “subset” of that broader ethic. Both the love and liking ethic exist “inside” the consent oval, because if you like or love someone you wouldn’t have sex with them without their consent.

The other two ovals are “feels good” and “married.” The spaces that overlap describe the “place’ you might be in any sexual encounter: In love, the sex feeling good, but not married; or married and the sex feeling good; or married and the sex not feeling good; or liking someone but not married and the sex not feeling good, etc. There is no significance to the relative size of each part of the oval. The diagram, like other Venn diagrams, does not reflect proportion.

Some people are not on the diagram. They are not sharing their sexuality with a partner. Others are in the middle of the diagram – married, in love, feeling good during sex and maybe even trying to have a baby. Their type of sex is the ideal in U.S. culture. Social, cultural, and religious ideals of sexuality are worthy goals, but can be difficult for some people to reach (e.g., marriage may be necessitated by pregnancy prior to love) or problematic in circumstances (e.g., marriage may be inadvisable for financial reasons). In addition, mandates about “sex for procreation only,” or characterizations of married sex as a means of containing the ugly practice of fornication, ignore and undermine the social and humanizing aspects of sex and sexual intimacy. The response to such realities should not be to adopt a posture of ethical relativism. It is no good to simply throw the ‘responsibility’ baby out with the ‘ideals’ bath water.” The difficulty of achieving ideals does not remove the difference between better and worse behavior in real and complex situations, nor does it remove a person’s responsibility to do right by their sex partner(s).

So where are you in the sex ethics diagram? Are you having sex with barely any consent? Should you wait until you’re married? Does sex feel good or does it feel like a duty? Are you really in love? Are you in the “friend zone” or the “one-night stand” mind-set and are you being clear about that with the other person (or persons) with whom you’re involved? Are you using the best possible precautions against unwanted pregnancy and disease? Are you doing what you can to make sexual activity pleasurable for your spouse/lover/partner/friend/pickup? Are you being honest with your partner about where you are in the diagram? How can you be more ethically responsible to your sexual partner(s)? How might you be more ethically responsible to yourself?


For more on this, see Baker and Elliston's discussion of Thomas Aquinas in their introduction to Philosophy and Sex, 1975.
A Prayer for Fallen Eagles
By DR. JOHN CHILDREY
Alumnus of The Jefferson Society

We thought them fledglings
Still in the down of protected nest
Still feeding from parental safety.
How could we have been so wrong?

We thought them testing selves
Trying wings and talons as sport
Learning algebraic lessons of flight,
Heady complications of community
Living knowledge, watching an adult world.
How could we’ve been so naïve?

We believed them perched for greatness
History unknown, ready to soar beyond
What we thought imaginable, higher
Farther than we have travelled
How could we not believe for them?

We now collapse in brief awareness
That explosions evaporate promise
Leaving us bereft but resolved, strong
To celebrate lives, remembering 17 fallen Eagles
Can we not breathe again with those surviving?

“I wrote the attached poem not as a poet, per se,
but more a grandfather whose eldest wrestled for the
Douglas High School team and for the younger brother
who attends the middle school in the adjoining lot and
is affected by the event(s).

The Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School emblem
is the Eagle, therefore the central image.”

Committee Reports
Officers

President  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Historian  
Keeper  
Room Seven Resident  
Probationary Chair  
Alumni Relations Chair  
Membership Chair  
Pen and Ink Chair  
Debate and Oratory Chair  
Restoration Ball Chair  
Public Service Chair  
Parliamentarian  
Sergeant-at-Arms  
Ways and Means

Fall 2017
Ms. Victoria Farris  
Ms. Megan Routbort  
Mr. Robert Bork III  
Mr. Preston Rouleau  
Ms. Maddie Shaw  
Ms. Monica Sebastian  
Mr. Jack Chellman  
Mr. Zach Diamond  
Mr. Grant Oken  
Mr. Daniel Durgavich  
Mr. Rohan Ahluwalia  
Mr. Olivier Weiss  
Ms. Kirsta Hackmeier  
Ms. Grace Erard  
Mr. Henry Knight  
Ms. Soleil Reed  
Mr. Alex Heyer

Spring 2018
Mr. Daniel Durgavich  
Mr. Rohan Ahluwalia  
Mr. Daniel Jachim  
Mr. Varun Sharma  
Ms. Maddie Shaw  
Ms. Lorena Tabrane  
Mr. Jack Chellman  
Ms. Anne Greenberg  
Mr. Matthew Diasio  
Mr. Alex Heyer  
Ms. Xara Davies  
Mr. Michael Marrow  
Ms. Kirsta Hackmeier  
Ms. Elizabeth Fadl  
Mr. Henry Knight  
Mr. Sudhir Shenoy  
Ms. Monica Sebastian
The Debate & Oratory committee has pursued multiple successful initiatives this semester, and the Society has participated in several lively and informative debates. We participated in the Smith-Simpson Debate on diplomacy with the Washington Society. The resolution was “Resolved: The United States should take steps to unilaterally halt the persecution of the Rohingya people in Myanmar”. We were represented by Mr. Henry Knight and Mr. Olivier Weiss, and the Society was victorious. We also participated in a brand new debate, concerning religious liberty, one that involved the Washington Society and Parliamentary Debating Society. The resolution for the debate was “Resolved: For-profit businesses should be exempt from generally applicable laws.” Since the debate involved three societies, each sent a representative to both teams. The Society was represented in the affirmative by Mr. Tyler Hess, and in the negative by Mr. Daniel Jachim. The negative won the debate, and the debate was judged by Dean Allen Groves, Micah Schwartzman (former member of the Society), Ashon Crawley, Rita Koganson, and Coach Bronco Mendenhall. Coach Mendenhall, in announcing that the winning team was the negative, remarked that our very own Mr. Jachim, who performed the rebuttal for the negative, had the most compelling speech in the debate.

We also formalized a debate agreement with the Washington Society that will govern our future debates. It was signed by myself and Mr. Daniel Durgavich, as well as our counterparts from the Washington Society: Thomas Conger, the Special Debates Chair for the Wash, and Austin Root, the president.

The Debate & Oratory Committee hosted the March Madness contest, and the winning team was Mr. Henry Knight and Mr. Alex Gregorio, who debated the affirmative of the resolution “Resolved: In the future, it will be pleasing to remember these things.” We also hosted the Great Orators series, and Mr. Knight was also successful in that as well, reading the speech of Eugene Debs statement to the court in response to his conviction of being in violation of the Espionage Act.

The D&O committee has also been very pleased by the enthusiasm of regular members to give content this semester. It takes time and hard work to put together a speech, and the committee would like to give a small token of appreciation by recognizing the best regular member speech. The committee is pleased to announce that honorable mentions are the speeches of Travis Elliot, who talked of overcoming racism in a multiracial family, and Omeed Faegh, whose speech was entitled: “The End of the Islamic Republic.” The best speech was one that was concise, insightful, and generated discussion and resulted in a productive Q&A. Therefore, at this time the Debate & Oratory committee is both pleased and proud to announce that the best regular member speech was given by Mr. Vincient Arnold, for his speech “Littoral Strategy in East Asia.”

It has been an absolute pleasure serving as the Debate & Oratory Chair, and the content that regular members bring to the Hall routinely impresses and humbles me. The depth of knowledge that all of you display makes this place very special, and I encourage everyone to take the Essence and share your ideas and insights with the Society. But more importantly, we come together to share these ideas as friends. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to making the Hall an intellectually stimulating environment that constantly engages and excites the faculties of the mind.

HOMI,

Michael Marrow, Debate and Oratory Chair
Public Service

Over the course of the past semester, the Public Service Committee organized many service events with a myriad of organizations around the community. Every Wednesday, we sent volunteers to the tutor students at the Boys and Girls Club. We also helped facilitate their Big Gig, which is their largest annual fundraiser. Personally, I have been volunteering with the Boys and Girls Club since my first year at the University of Virginia, and it has meant a lot to me to send people from the Jefferson Society so they can see the impact that the Club has on the students. Volunteers from the Jefferson Society regularly went to Clark Elementary School to run debate workshops for students in a variety of grades. They explored fun topics while learning some basics about debating. We aided the James Madison Regional Library in their annual book swap where card holders bring in books they no longer want and exchange them for books the library is giving away. The Public Service Committee arranged for the Jefferson Society to help out with their Big Event, which allowed for us to interact with both the University community and larger Charlottesville community in constructive ways. This semester was an incredibly productive one in terms of public service, and I have been honored to chair this committee.

Ms. Elizabeth Fadl, Public Service Chair

Treasurer

Over the past two semesters, the Jefferson Society has made tremendous strides towards achieving a transparent, accountable, and effective financial management system. Last semester, under the guidance of Mr. Rouleau, we were able to re-design the treasurer's record keeping process; as a result of his ingenuity, the percentage of undocumented transactions identified by the Appropriations Committee decreased significantly.

During my tenure, the Society implemented two major changes to its financial management system that I believe will have significant, long-standing impacts on the organization's financial health. First, we created a new day-to-day bank account for the Restoration Ball, thereby ensuring that all funds raised from the event are either saved for future years or donated to community partners. Second, we further improved upon Mr. Rouleau's record-keeping process by implementing Wave, an online receipt tracking platform used by a number of small businesses. This cloud-based platform has made the transaction documentation and authentication process significantly easier; I look forward to seeing how future treasurers will benefit from the platform's continued usage.

This semester's audits were conducted by the Appropriations Chair, Mr. Borenstein, and the Society has continued to operate with the open-books policy laid out in the Constitution. This semester, Mr. Borenstein was assisted by the rest of the Appropriations Committee: Ms. Kothmann, Mr. Arnold, and Mr. Rouleau. It was a privilege having the opportunity to serve as the Society's treasurer over the past semester; I am optimistic about the state of the Society's finances looking forward.

Mr. Varun Sharma, Treasurer
Alumni Relations

This year has been a transitionary year for the Alumni Relations Committee, and I hope we have laid the groundwork for better communications with the alumni for the years to come. This semester we restarted the newsletter from last year, now on a monthly basis, to better inform alumni of what goes on in the Hall and also as an opportunity for alumni to communicate with each other. My committee, Mr. Rob Schwartz and Mr. Cameron Brandon, has also undertaken the large task of reconciling our alumni records (especially those from our aging website) with those of Alumni Hall to better improve communication efforts. Part of this work has been to prepare for the Society’s bicentennial donation campaign.

We have been looking at what needs the Society has as we approach our third century and how to sustainably support them. Several of you have been in touch with the Alumni Relations Committee this year about your thoughts on donations and I hope my successors will continue to seek your input and ideas.

With the Pen and Ink Committee, we will be hosting an event for the Jefferson Journal in the DC area in the fall. We know the launch event for the Journal has traditionally been in the summer, but Ms. Davies and I think this time will provide a new opportunity for alumni and regular members to get to meet each other as more of the regular member contributors can actually come to the event during the academic year. I hope this can be the start of many such opportunities to help enrich the Society.

Mr. Matthew Diasio, Alumni Relations Chair

Pen and Ink

It has been an incredible year for the Pen and Ink Committee! We had two successful contests, both the Poe and JefferSlam annual events. Ms. Horton’s poem, as I am sure you have read by now, was our JefferSlam winner and it is an extremely powerful piece of work.

We also had a very successful Reading Series this semester, featuring Professor Kinney, Professor Griffin and Dean Cole. All three brought unique pieces of literature to the Hall for us to read as a Society. I would highly recommend reading “The Husband Stitch” if you haven’t already!

This semester, I personally focused on bringing a diverse range of literature to the Hall by asking the Society to travel with me (metaphorically) to a new region or continent and to share work from there each week. We explored everywhere from Persia, to South America to Australia in the Hall this semester!

I would also like to quickly pay tribute to our incredible JefferSlam Judges, Mr. Peter Miller and Ms. Chiquita Melvin. They very kindly gave their time to the Society, along with our Reading Series Faculty and we are incredibly grateful.

Ms. Xara Davies, Pen and Ink Chair
Restoration Ball

The 55th Annual Restoration Ball was a resounding success! On the evening of April 21st, almost 500 attendees gathered at the IX Art Park in Downtown Charlottesville for a night of dancing under the stars as the Suit & Tie band played a mix of soulful classics and new hits. When guests were in need of a break, they could grab a bite to eat and lounge on couches in the indoor portion of the park, or stroll past the ivy-coated arbors and abstract sculptures that adorn the property. The change of venue from the usual location in the Amphitheater is not the only thing new about this year's Restoration Ball. We reached out to UFUSED, a CIO that advocates for low-SES students, and the Disability Advocacy & Action Committee, part of the office of the Vice President of Diversity and Equity, to increase the financial and physical accessibility of the Ball. While a portion of the money raised will go to the Jefferson Grounds Initiative, as it has in the past, we will be specifically earmarking it for the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. The rest of the proceeds are being given to UVa's Morven Garden to restore their beehives, which are vital to the health of the garden. Both of these programs embody the spirit of the Restoration Ball while acknowledging the changing role it can play at the University. We are looking forward to planning next year's Ball and finding more ways we can continue to improve upon this cherished tradition.

Ms. Kirsta Hackmeier, Restoration Ball Chair

Sergeant - at - Arms

It was an absolute delight to be the Sergeant-at-Arms this semester. We had an exciting and competitive football game between the probationary members and the regular members on March 18th. With a great turnout on both teams and lots of pizza to go around, the event went smoothly with regular members winning the game 79-21. Then we challenged the University Guides for a Field Day with various athletic events lined up. Probationary members stepped up and threw down the gauntlet to the U-Guides. The games were tough and well fought but in the end we lost to the Wash by 3-1. Soon enough, it was the night before Mr. Jefferson's birthday which brings us to Defense of the Hall. This year we were well prepared to face anyone challenging our sacred Hall. We started the night by reading aloud the Declaration of Independence and signing our names under the document. We then proceeded to guard the hall with plenty of water balloons which ended up being used for fun duels between regular members the next day. We also participated in an intramural dodgeball league against various teams from across the university, with varying levels of success. Outside these events, it was business as usual, doors and windows were barred appropriately and effectively when required. All state and federal laws were upheld throughout all the meetings. The Field Day t-shirt design was well received. A personal thank you to Mr. Kru Trivedi, Ms. Grayson Katzenbach, Mr. Greyson Jones, and Ms. Savannah Horton for helping out with various events and bringing athletic spirit to our society. We look forward to more opportunities to showcase our society’s athletic abilities in a healthy, competitive way.

Mr. Sudhir Shenoy, Sergeant-at-Arms
It’s time for the most worthwhile committee report: the Secretary’s committee report. Seeing that I have neither a committee nor much to report, I will instead just say random stuff. I ran for this office based on three tenants: being funny, making serious logistical promises, and being unopposed. With regards to the first, I’ll leave that up to you to decide. With regards to the last, being unopposed was probably for the best. The only real thing to talk about is thus probably the serious promises that I made. The promise was twofold: First, I wanted the regular membership to be more aware about their standing, be it good or bad. As such, I sent out updates before every major voting opportunity (first membership, second membership, elections), and also timed with the first audit. I also worked closely with the treasurer to ensure that people had both signed the roll and paid dues and any debts they may have accrued. We had a well built spreadsheet, combining Varun’s Comm School prowess and my mania for denying people things. As a result, we were in constant communication about whether people were in good standing, and even denied people from voting who were not in good standing, a first in living memory. Second, I wanted to work with people who wanted to change the constitution and bylaws via amendment. I think this was done. As anyone who spoke to me about amendments can attest, I bothered them endlessly about when they wanted to submit it and if they needed any help. With regards to minutes and orders, they both have been done and posted to the website with something resembling haste. They were also assembled with something resembling quality. Throughout the semester we launched a coup, undermined the Catholic church, and tracked down the Sully portrait. We also may have crossed a line or two, but that’s what they pay me for.

Overall, it has been a wonderful semester. It was far more work than I expected, and I caught a lot more flak than expected. That being said, I have cherished the opportunity to, at best, make some people chuckle once a week. I hope you all enjoyed this semester: I certainly did.

Mr. Daniel Jachim, Secretary.
Parliamentarian

This semester the Society continued to actively engage with its Constitution, Bylaws, and abiding traditions. There were several productive conversations, both in Jefferson Hall and outside of it, about how our organization is structured, and how we might reimagine that structure. While none of these conversations produced any changes to our governing documents, it was heartening to see regular members of the society take an active interest in how our organization functions, and parliamentary procedure. As I prepare to graduate, I have nothing but confidence in the next generation of Society leadership to preserve our traditions, while producing innovating new ways of creating a more perfect Society.

Cheers,
Mr. Henry Knight, Parliamentarian

Historian

The Historical Committee had an exciting and action-packed year! The Archives Project, first started by Mr. Chellman three years ago, is finally coming to a close. Throughout the project, we have had the pleasure of rediscovering the treasure that is the Society's history, and the new website for the project will be a place where other people can come to learn about our history and explore the contents of the archives. This past semester the Historical Committee also implemented a successful new initiative to begin the process of entering new materials into the archives, the Archives Box. In another exciting development, the Society will be transitioning to a new website over the next several months, built by the incredible HooThinks team, that will present a modernized interface between the Society's members and alumni, as well as the University and Charlottesville community at large. As always, we had a wonderful Wilson Day dinner this past fall, where we had the pleasure of hearing from Professor Philip Želikow how Woodrow Wilson had (and lost) the opportunity to bring a swift end to WWI. Several weeks ago, we had a lovely Founder's Day dinner with Dean Kirt von Daacke, co-chair of the President's Commission on Slavery at the University, who helped us reckon with Thomas Jefferson's complicated and rich legacy. We also continued our longstanding tradition of the Dawn Pilgrimage to Monticello, and we were greeted by a beautiful sunrise in front of the house after leaving our floral spray in front of Mr. Jefferson's grave. As an additional honor, Mr. Durgavich and I attended the official Monticello wreath-laying ceremony to present yet another wreath in Mr. Jefferson's honor. The Society sponsored the annual Moomaw contest this past March, and Ms. Hackmeier took home first place. Finally, I must give a big thank you to my fall and spring historical committees for all of their hard work. As I reflect on my final few days as Historian of this truly historic Society, I can only say that it has been my great honor to have served this organization. The Historian has many jobs, only some of which have to do with the Society's history, but this position has only deepened my respect and love for this organization.

Ms. Maddie Shaw, Historian
Membership and Probationary

Probationary Committee had 21 probationaries cross-over into regular membership in the Spring with 2 carry-over probationaries. We had 27 speeches, 4 lits, and 5 debates. This includes presentations given either a second or a third time. We had a a 38% first attempt pass rate and a 62% pass rate overall. In addition to the requirements of 8 early roll calls, 5 late roll calls, 21 SR hours, 4 PSR hours, 20 signatures consisting of 10 regmems and 10 probies, the probies also had the additional requirements of attending an alcohol module given by ADAPT and a public speaking presentation by Professor Marcia Pentz. I’m really proud of y’all and all the hard work you have put in. Thank you for making my life easy and enjoyable – majority of the time.

Membership Committee had a spicy semester. My committee and I expanded advertising efforts a lot. We flyered all around grounds in two rounds, we had a snap chat filter, we had an ad on the table tents, we were in connections, we were in the MRC newsletter, and we had various regular members advertise to specific organizations and groups like with the IRC. We recreated the Jeff Soc open events listserv and added non-members who were interested in Society events so they can be contacted. We also gathered some data on who interviewed and who became probationaries and read that information to the society. Over the course of the semester, we gained 36 probationary members, 22 regular members, and 2 carryover probationary members. We also presented two awards. Our first award for most interviews conducted goes to Ms. Greenberg with 16 interviews. Our second award for best interview cards written goes to Ms. Watwe. Thanks to my fantastic committee for a great and interesting semester.
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<td>Michael Hays</td>
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<td>Speech: The Decline of the Tech Unicorn</td>
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<td>Tyler Hess</td>
<td>Speech: Treatment of Native Americans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Ferguson</td>
<td>Speech: The Value of Architectural Review Boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devin Willis</td>
<td>Debate: Resolved: Confederate Statues are Appropriate in Public Spaces in the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Guan</td>
<td>Speech: Super Smash Brothers Melee is the Best Smash Title</td>
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<td>Haley Palmer</td>
<td>Speech: The Illusion of Swiss Neutrality</td>
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<td>Andrew Williams</td>
<td>Speech: Cicero: Defender of the Republic</td>
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<td>Muhammad Ahmad</td>
<td>Speech: Lack of Urgency by Pakistani Authorities</td>
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<td>Wells Tu</td>
<td>Speech: Against Conventionalism</td>
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## Presentations

### Speeches:
- **Avery Gagne**
  - Speech: Space Law
- **Kru Trivedi**
  - Speech: Gamification as a Learning Tool
- **Taylor Williams**
  - Literary Presentation: Little Girl Fighter
- **Michael Starnes**
  - Speech: Against the adoption of cryptocurrency
- **John P. Connor**
  - Speech: Negative Income tax
- **Schuyler Guare**
  - Speech: A Legal Disenfranchisement
- **Anna Wolz**
  - Speech: Fixing the Olympics
- **Anthony Meffe**
  - Speech: The Death of the Author and the Enlightenment
- **Peter Bautz**
  - Debate: The Govt should defund NASA
- **Simranjit Bhatia**
  - Speech: Security Vulnerabilities in Internet of Things (IoT) Devices
- **William Krag**
  - Speech: The Resource Crisis in Angola
- **Grayson Katzenbach**
  - Speech: Why Team Sports are not as Good as Solo Sports
- **Savannah Horton**
  - Speech: DIY Scene in Music
- **Noah Labs**
  - Speech: A Man of Wealth and Taste: Hannibal Lecter as Luther
- **Hadassah Muthoka**
  - Speech: Why Walmart is Bad
- **Anjali Khanna**
  - Literary Presentation: Cryptae
- **Brendan Hanley**
  - Speech: The Strength of U.S. Antitrust Enforcement
- **Tony Guo**
  - Speech: The Imperialistic Nature of Current African Elephant Conservation
  - Paradigm is an Important Reason for its Failure
- **George Messenger**
  - Literary Presentation: The Fishtank
- **Matt Poliakoff**
  - Speech: The History of Hip-Hop
- **Griffin Leach**
  - Debate: Resolved: Minimum wage should be a living wage in the United States
- **Lou'ay Hussein**
  - Speech: Why the approaching era of gene-editing should NOT be welcomed with open arms
- **Muskan Mumtaz**
  - Speech: Zia's Impact on Pakistan
Speaker Series: Fall 2017

September 22, 2017
Mr. Leonard Leo
Executive Vice President of the Federalist Society
“Judicial Selection and Virtue”

September 29, 2017
Mr. Phillip Bobbitt
Herbert Wechsler Professor of Jurisprudence at Columbia University
“A Possible Way Forward in the North Korea Crisis”

October 13, 2017
Mr. Randall Kennedy
Michael R. Klein Professor at Harvard Law School
“What All Students Owe to Black Dissidents: The Origins of Judicially Recognized Federal Constitutional Rights on Campus”

October 27, 2017
Mr. Douglas Layock
Robert E. Scott Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Virginia Law School
“The Supreme Court and Religious Liberty”

November 3, 2017
Mr. Daniel Dennett
Co-Director, Center for Cognitive Studies at Tufts University
“Are We Entering the Age of Post-Intelligent Design?”

This past year, the Vice President and the Programs Committee hosted successful Speaker Series in the Fall and Spring. Covering topics ranging from the evolution of artificial intelligence to the role of federalism in deciding environmental policy, the Speaker Series engaged all elements of the Hall. It was not always smooth sailing, as Ms. Megan Routbort adeptly navigated the Fall 2017 Speaker Series through a series of last-minute cancellations. We began some new initiatives, such as the Speaker Previews, to get an early look of the work of upcoming Speakers in advance of their arrival on Grounds. Most rewarding was hearing how each
February 2, 2018
Ms. Michele Elam
Director of the Graduate Program in Modern Thought and Literature, Stanford University
“The End of Race as We Know It?”

February 23, 2018
Mr. Cale Jaffe
Director of the Environmental and Regulatory Law Clinic, University of Virginia
“The Shifting Political Winds of Environmental Federalism”

March 16, 2018
Mr. Andre Perry
David M. Rubenstein Fellow, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institute
“Education Policy: Inequality and Reform”

March 30, 2018
Dr. Wes Bellamy
Former Vice-Mayor, City of Charlottesville
“The New Civil Rights Movement”

April 6, 2018
Dr. Douglas Blackmon
Executive Producer of American Forum, Miller Center at the University of Virginia
“Slavery by Another Name”

Speaker expressed how they appreciated the kind of discourse the Hall had around their work. From selfies to Instagram stories, the Spring 2018 Speaker Series certainly had their share of fun with the Society. Looking forward, the Fall 2018 Speaker Series is extremely promising, featuring the likes of Mr. Bruce Arena, the former Head Coach of the US Men’s National Soccer Team, to Ms. Susannah Heschel, a groundbreaking historian on the Holocaust. Ultimately, the Speaker Series continues to highlight the Society’s role as a beacon of open discourse on Grounds, continually engaging with stimulating topics across a variety of disciplines.

Mr. Rohan Ahluwalia, Vice President.
Society Recognitions and Awards

Debate and Oratory

Harrison Cup
Jefferson Society vs. The Washington Union (winner)
Jefferson Society Representatives: Mr. Robert Bork III, Ms. Cate Streissguth, and Mr. Vilas Annavarapu

Fall Ethics
Jefferson Society vs. The Washington Union (winner)
Jefferson Society Representatives: Mr. Alex Gregorio and Mr. Daniel Durgavich

Smith-Simpson
Jefferson Society (winner) vs. The Washington Union
Jefferson Society Representatives: Mr. Henry Knight and Mr. Olivier Weiss

Moomaw Oratorical Competiton
First Place: Ms. Kirsta Hackmeier

Pen and Ink

Poe Contest
First Place: Ms. Kristen Barrett

JefferSlam
First Place: Ms. Savannah Horton
Second Place: Ms. Kristen Barrett
Third Place: Ms. Grayson Katzenbach

Society Awards

Fall 2017
Best Probationary: Mr. Evan Wolfe
Best Probationary Presentation: Ms. Kristen Barrett
Joseph L. Bishop Award Recipient: Mr. Austin Waters Wingfield Thomas
Harrison Bush Award Recipient: Mr. Daniel Jachim

Spring 2018
Best Probationary: Ms. Savannah Horton
Best Probationary Presentation: Mr. Peter Bautz
Joseph L. Bishop Award Recipient: Mr. Omeed Faegh
Harrison Bush Award Recipient: Mr. Preston Rouleau

Woody Award
Recipient: Ms. Katie Poore
Dear Reader,

It is rather hard to truly convey through the written word just how much the Journal before you, either in your hands or before your eyes courtesy of a screen, means to me. This Journal envelops hours of energy, enthusiasm, frustration, and pure joy. It has been an honour to create and edit this Journal because it documents the very essence of the Hall we all cherish dearly. It shares the highs of our incredible annual events and celebrates the hard work of our two executive committees that have seen these events through to fruition. I am so proud of what this Society has done this year - from making our events more accessible, to the ever-increasing presence of original works of literature in the Hall. This Society is one that is astutely aware of its complex, and oftentimes horrific, history. It is the dialogues we continue to have week-in, week-out as we consider how best to further address our past that ultimately makes me so proud to be a regular member of the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society.

This year, I wanted to incorporate our current membership and the Hall's love for literature into the front cover. Traditionally, the front cover has been faceless – this year I aspired to change that. I wanted to bring life to this Journal and celebrate the progress we are making as a Society, as I’m sure many of our alumni remember the Hall as a place that only welcomed men. I also wished to make sure that every single committee and member of the executive board was included in our “Committee Reports”, because each of them work tirelessly to sustain this Society that we have all called home at one point or another. Their astounding work deserves to be documented. I am so grateful to each of you that served alongside me on the Spring 2018 Executive Board - it has been a true privilege to get to know each and every one of you.

Finally, there is one group that I absolutely cannot thank enough - my dear Pen and Ink Committee. Ms. Kristen Barrett: thank you for always being a ray of sunshine in my life this past semester and for being willing to work on this Journal with me at all hours of the night. You are a true blessing. Mr. Chase Browning: thank you for always surprising the Hall with unique content and for pushing people out of their comfort zones. You have brought many a smile to my face during our weekly meetings. Ms. Katherine Viti: thank you for always being there and willing to help me in any capacity you can. You have constantly challenged yourself this semester and it has been a joy to work with your tenacious and ever-positive attitude. Ms. Mackenzie Williams: thank you for always being able to make this committee laugh. You have brought such a vivacious presence to our meetings and it has been a pleasure to work with you.

Thank you to every single regular member that I have been able to work with over the last two years. You have all contributed to this Society in so many ways and I cannot thank you enough for your dedication to this great Hall.

Haec Olim Meminisse Iuvabit,

Xara Natasja Davies
Pen and Ink Chair, Spring 2018
“No need to hurry. 
No need to sparkle. 
No need to be anybody but oneself.”  
- Virginia Woolf