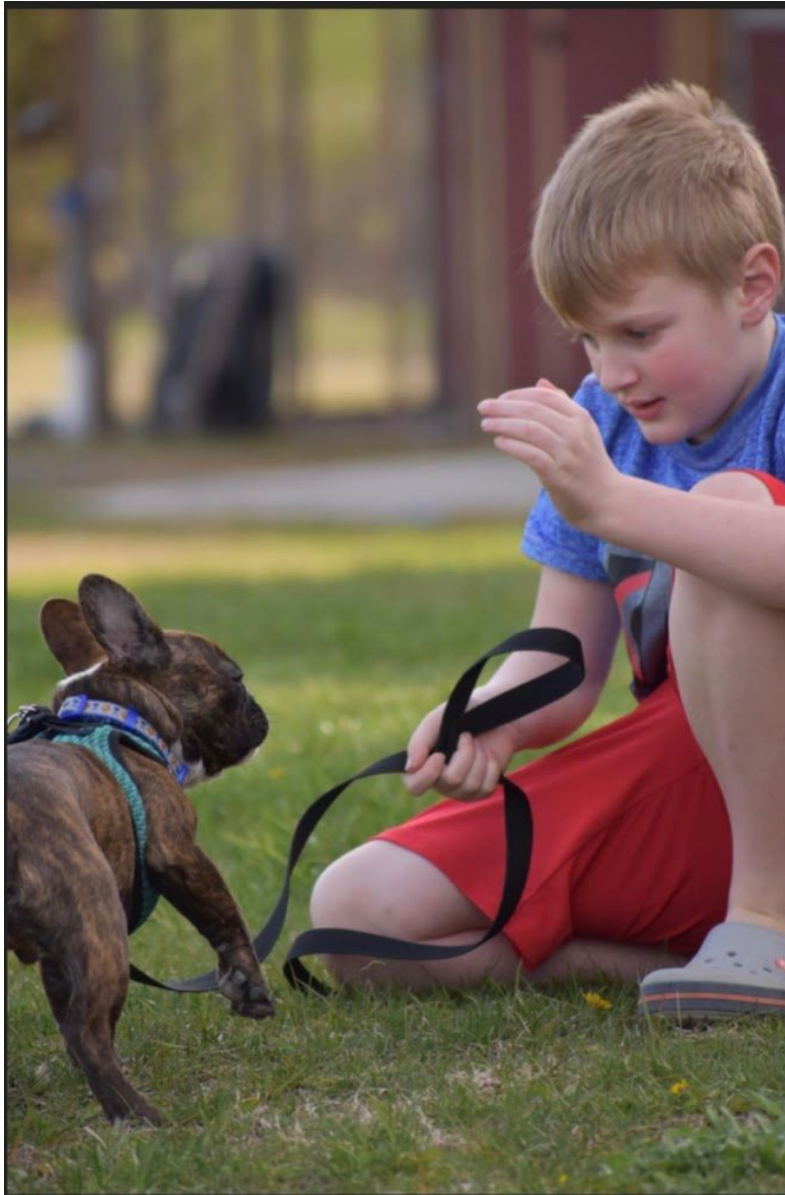


Digital Photograph and Short Story Class
Collaborative Project: Photo Narratives
Ms. Luke and Mr. Marvin



Words by Olivia Cartwright
Photo by Taylor Petroski

Mahoney wondered if purgatory was worth it.

He had felt obligated to say yes when the not-so-heavenly father descended in front of him with dark robes streaming and pitch-form gleaming and offered him a deal: a ticket out of hell and into purgatory in return for becoming the lifelong manservant to the son of the man Mahoney had killed in his first, and last, drunken, head-on collision.

It seemed like a solid investment- a lifetime of ironing linens or whatever a kid with a manservant wore in exchange for, well, not hellfire. He said yes and Mr. Deception clicked his cloven heels together twice and he suddenly found himself cradled in a woman's arms.

For a moment, Mahoney believed that he was a baby again; the woman was holding him close to her and murmuring sweet-nothings as she carried him up the front steps to her home. It was strange- Mahoney had assumed that he would begin his life as a butler, or whatever a manservant was, to whomever that kid was, not as a kid himself.

However, he discovered His unrighteousness had left out a key detail: his lifetime of servitude was to be spent as a dog, and an ugly dog too- a French bulldog. Man's best servant, apparently. He figured that out as soon as the woman opened the door and a swampy toddler ran, jumping and sliding, up to them shouting "Puppy! Puppy! Puppy!".

Against Mahoney's wishes and struggles, the woman put him down and left him at the mercy of the tail-pulling, ear-twisting, eyegouger. Mahoney wondered if hell would have been easier.

Damian was the kid's name, and he was everything Miles Mahoney has not been: blond haired, blue-eyed, whiny, weak, blubbing, needy, and, worst of all, a tug-toy-teaser.

He treated Mahoney like a rag doll: picking him up and slinging him over his shoulder, dressing him in old Halloween costumes, spraying him with hoses, chasing him around the yard, and decorating him with his mother's eyeliner. To add insult to injury, he named him Mr. Pickles, Pickles for short, after his favorite food.

After three long years of systematic torture, Mahoney finally got a reprieve: Damian's first day of school. While his mother was giving the school bus a tearful goodbye, Mahoney was curled up in a sun spot in the living room, enjoying the best sleep he had had in ages.

For six hours everyday, it was blissfully silent. Claire was at work and Damian was terrorizing the school, or whatever he did there. Mahoney used the time to explore the house; he felt as though he had never really seen it with Damian attacking him day and night.

There were pictures of him everywhere: smiling at the entranceway in a suit and tie, dressed in black in the dining room next to a stunning Claire in white, holding a blue bundle in the living room that could only be Damian, and laughing with Claire in a small frame on her bedside table. Mahoney hadn't known his name until he heard Claire whisper it to Damian in the night: Bernard Broadhurst, the man Mahoney had killed.

Truth be told, Mahoney had always known his actions had consequences, and he knew Bernard was likely not the first to die as a result of them. However, based on the stories he heard while curled up at the foot of Damian's bed, he had to wonder if he was the best.

With all those pictures staring down at him, those quiet hours didn't seem so blissful anymore.

Damian and Mahoney still spent their afternoons playing in the backyard and Damian got less rough as time went on. He went from a stinking toddler, to a mischievous kid, to something of a responsible middle-schooler.

They started to see less of each other as Damian got older. He had more responsibilities; he was a paperboy, the school council secretary, and a member of the soccer team. Claire had told him that the MVP Award had been stolen out from under him that year, and Mahoney agreed.

He was getting older and he could feel the stiffness creeping up on him and old age clouding his eyes and ears. He spent most of his days sleeping, but Claire still made sure to take him to all of Damian's soccer games and Damian always took him on his daily walk, though even that was getting shorter and shorter. Most days, they only made it to the park at the end of the block and back.

Despite his original hesitation, Mahoney had to admit that he was proud of Damian. He was everything that he hadn't been: smart, honest, hard-working, fair, and *good*.

Which is why he didn't hesitate when he heard that rattle in the park. He jumped between Damian and the snake and only wished that Damian would forgive him for leaving so ceremoniously.

But, when he saw that kind face hovering over him with tears in its eyes, he knew he had made the right decision.

Maybe purgatory wasn't worth it, but Damian was.



*Words by Eva Drohobycky
Photo by Hope Allen*

The sunset falling on our beautiful district helps to relieve the feeling...

Of emptiness.

The lack of liveliness. The lack of excitement. The lack of everything.

I will never return here again and have another regular school day. I never knew that March 12th would be my last day roaming those halls as a student.

I miss it all deeply. Waving at people in the halls, greeting teachers from class to class, even staring at the clock waiting for the period to be over.

Groggily doing the pledge of allegiance each morning, going to sporting events rooting on my classmates to victory, applauding someone after a presentation.

The smell of a favorite lunch in the cafeteria, doing nothing in study hall, running out of school each day to leave the parking lot before the buses.

Riding with teammates to away games, having meaningless conversations with friends in between bells, wishing a teacher a good weekend on Fridays.

I was supposed to have a last of all of these. When I left school that Thursday I never knew that was it.

And even though our fate, class of 2020, has been sealed by powers beyond our control, what will those after me face?

Will they ever get to enjoy a crowded hallway and being late to class because of slow walkers? Or a crowded gym where you are not able to stand next to your best friends because the bleachers already have three too many people on it?

Experiences I would gladly take back in a heartbeat, have been taken away just as quickly.

Will this somber silent school ever hear the laughs, the cries, or the casual conversations between classes again? Or will it succumb to a distance so great, there is no more laughter, or cries, or conversations to be shared? Every senior class has said "not to take your high school experience for granted". Class of 2021's prom: Canceled. Class of 2022's sports & extra curriculars: Canceled. Class of 2023's freshman year: Cut Short.

They will never take for granted the years and experiences they have left after this. And when it comes time for the Class of 2023 to advise the Class of 2026 how to be a successful student, they will unify and say, "Never forget when the lights were shut off, the doors were locked, and

we were told to learn from home. Never forget that these halls did not wish the Class of 2020 goodbye. Never take these moments here for granted.”



Words by Kaela Ellis

Photo by Brielle Burke

Bailey Pugh had been crying since the day she was born. She had the ‘I’m hungry’ cry- it was a low-pitched, rhythmic one, during which she would souse her fingers in drool. Dean always wondered where all the drool came from. Bailey also had the ‘I’m tired’ cry- Dean thought this was the most annoying one, as it was whiny, nasally, and he did not understand why she couldn’t just fall asleep without waking everyone up to tell them she was tired. Finally, she had the mystery cry- nothing was wrong: she wasn’t tired, she wasn’t hungry and yet she would continue to cry. Dean used to try to convince her to stop the wailing, playing peek-a-boo and singing songs, but after everything failed he would leave her alone in the house and go play with his pogo stick in sweet silence.

Dean Pugh hated his half sister. Uncle Reuben would beat him when Bailey cried. Aunt Bonnie had turned to the sleeping pills and now was in the hallucination stage of the addiction, at least that's what Dean suspected after her slurred ramblings became complete gibberish. His mom left three days after Bailey was born, and Dean knew it was not a coincidence. His father used to visit, but like his dad's brother Reuben, he could not stand the crying either. Dean had every reason to hate Bailey and he wholeheartedly did. He even put an ad in the newspaper once, asking for the mysterious father to reveal himself, but knowing his mom, the father didn't know and wouldn't care.

After five months, the crying finally stopped. It happened on a Tuesday in mid-June. Uncle Reuben was at the lumberyard and Aunt Bonnie at the gas station, begging for her job back. Dean had left Bailey on the rug in the living room with the fan blowing so she wouldn't overheat on the first 90 degree day of the year. When Dean left her she was doing the 'I'm tired' cry, the most annoying one in Dean's expert opinion. Dean spent an hour on his pogo stick and then went to have a drink of water from the hose. However, the dark green hose had spent the day baking in the sun, and was now filled with scalding water, so Dean entered the oddly quiet house and stuck his head under the cool tap water. He casually walked into the living room and found Bailey's abdomen detached from her lower half. There were no blood splatters or corkscrewed limbs. Rather there was a small pool of blood around the tiny body. A huge fan blade sat in the middle of Bailey's tiny tummy and fan bits scattered the room.

Dean stood there expressionless and then quickly began picking up the fan. He gathered all the bits and blades into a trash bag and brought it out to the curb, tripping over his pogo stick along the way. He returned to the silent room, wrapped Bailey in the blood-stained rug and placed her in a fresh trash bag. Just as he did with the fan, he took her to the curb. Finally he returned to his pogo stick.

“Our Book”

Words by Cody Fitzgerald

Photo by Alyssa White

There’s no need for a free space on “Apocalypse Bingo.” Tensions with other countries, wildfires, viruses, killer bees, what’s next?

All of this sounds like it’s coming straight off of some generic non-copyright Walmart comic book.

“Apocalypse Adam Issue #17- Join Apocalypse

Adam as he attempts to make peace with the giant killer hornets and convince them to wear a mask if they plan to sting people from less than six feet away!”

To put in more simply, this stuff seems like it came out of the imagination. Maybe, just maybe, that’s what we need to do. Children look around and see chaos every day, some of them not even understanding what’s going on.

We need to twist this story a little bit and make it a little more digestible for children, and maybe us too a little bit. Instead of looking at the fear and the numbers and the tragedies and the suffering why don’t we look at the light at the end of the tunnel?

This quarantine is not just a time to hide from a virus and some bees, but it’s a time to reflect and work on yourself. Take a walk, talk to an old friend, learn how to play that guitar your grandpa bought you eleven years ago. We can walk out of this so much better than we came into it and that’s what we should be teaching as we go through this.



Let's hope that children look back on this time and remember the days when they got really close with their siblings, or got to play a game with mom and dad every night. The world can come together right now and be more than a statistic in a history book. Don't let our book be one of numbers and tragedy, let it be one of unity.



Words by Mya Robichaud
Photo by Raven Fish

It was evening when I had to go out. Something I had been dreading to do for weeks as my supplies slowly dwindled away, day after day. I was almost out of water, I knew I could go a few days without food, but water was already in short supply and I needed to go out to get some. I had lived in a dorm, and my friends picked on me for stocking up on rations like water and dried

or canned foods. Now I see how my paranoia about the world ending had paid off. Maybe it wasn't the end, but it sure as hell felt like it.

I pulled on my combat boots, leather gloves, and leather duster coat. Before stepping out the door I pulled on my gas mask (Not one of those freaky looking world war two ones, no, one of the more modern half-face ones that only cover your mouth and nose). I grabbed my bat, the best weapon I could really get while living on a college campus. I was 25, and going to med school, only to get my last year torn away. I guess the good thing about the apocalypse is that technically student debt has been erased. Most people evacuated once the spread started getting really bad... Not me though, I stayed here. I had everything that I needed stockpiled right here, and I had already figured that when the apocalypse did come, travel would not be the safest option. Not until travel was absolutely necessary would I actually move base.

I stepped over the threshold of the building cautiously looking around. Nobody knew whether the disease was able to be transmitted through the air, so the mask was just an extra precaution. The sun was low and a thick fog covered the streets and everything else around the area, the dark silhouette of the church standing out in the abandoned horizon line. The sky was deceptively bright blue, like something you would see in some summertime drive-in movie. Abandoned vehicles sitting in driveways and on the sides of the road. In these moments it sometimes felt like I was the only person in the world, everything just felt so distant. It was almost eerily peaceful, but the abandoned town had a strange sense of beauty. This was home, I had lived in this town for my entire life and I knew the streets like the back of my hand.

I continued walking, facing the sun as I approached the area of town where all of the grocery stores were, the sun setting in my wake. Yeah, maybe it was the end of the world, but I was a survivor. Just as we humans always do we're gonna bounce back, It might take years, maybe even decades, but we will bounce back. We humans are like cockroaches, you can try to get rid of us, but even if there are only a few left they will come back stronger. Maybe it is the end of the world, but who cares? One day I'll see someone else on the abandoned horizon line, or maybe I'll have to leave town to find more resources and find more survivors. But I know, deep in my soul, that this isn't truly the end. I am a survivor and there are others like me, I will not give up hope.