

Beyond Evergreen



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Writing Our Way into the City

an anthology of essays written by first-year students in WR100 Effective Writing during Loyola's "Year of the City"—the 2006-2007 academic year

These essays were selected by students and faculty in the Department of Writing. The goal of the anthology is to introduce new students—and their parents—to Baltimore and to show readers how Baltimore is an integral part of the Loyola experience.

Department of Writing
Loyola College in Maryland

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To learn more about WR100 Effective Writing, the writing majors, and the writing minor, visit <http://www.loyola.edu/writing>, the Department of Writing's homepage. Visit <http://www.loyola.edu/writingcenter>, the Writing across Curriculum and Writing Center web page, for more information about writing in general at Loyola College in Maryland.

Our thanks to the WR100 instructors and students who embraced the project and ventured into Baltimore to discover not only the city but also something about themselves. Their work gave fruit to the wonderful essays collected here as well as to the many other delightful, informative, and engaging essays that we couldn't include because of the page limit.

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The book is available for purchase at <http://www.lulu.com>.

*Andrea Leary
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May, 2007*



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Baltimore: A Mural of Diversity

By Caitlyn Coady

As I walk up Light Street, it is evident that I have no clue where I am going. I feel like a stranger to this city that I have been living in for two months now. We walk past a grassy hill, which incidentally is the hill that this area is named after. The hill just off of Key Highway overlooking the harbor has a path that circles up around it leading to the small park at the top. At the peak of Federal Hill you can look out across the harbor, getting one of the best views of the city you will ever see. With my map in hand, I attempt to guide my two companions, Paul and Ashley, and myself past this hill to the American Visionary Art Museum. It comes more suddenly than I expect. A brick building stands on the right of Key Highway just before it begins to bend around the harbor. A large blue eye and the word "museum" placed vertically underneath it shout out to me. There is a leafless tree decorated with small glass ornaments between the busy highway and the sidewalk that we are walking down. "This must be the place," I say to myself. My assumptions are confirmed as we walk around to the other side of the building; I am speechless. A beautiful mural made of broken plates, bottles, and glass covers the entire side of the building. When carefully placed together, simple items such as these can create something so eccentric and beautiful. Each piece is placed on the wall carefully so that every time you look at it you see something different. As we walk by, my face becomes distorted in the broken glass. This mural paints a picture of my entire experience in the city that day.

* * * * *

10:30 a.m.: Getting on the bus. Okay, so it doesn't seem like that big of a deal, but if you have never ridden the buses in Baltimore before, then you would be shocked as well. Loyola is familiar. I became comfortable here within days. Getting on the bus is a completely different story. After waiting an hour at the "comes every thirty minutes" bus stop on the corner of North Charles Street and Cold Spring Lane, we finally climb up the stairs onto the number eleven bus. The first few stops are uneventful; Paul, Ashley and I are nearly the only riders of the bus this far out of the city. As we begin making more frequent stops and getting deeper into the center of Baltimore, people begin flooding into the area and creating the most cramped, uncomfortable ride I have ever experienced. It isn't a sea of unknown faces, however. Everyone seems to know each other, but I am out of place. "I stick out like a sore thumb," I think to myself. I take out my journal to jot down some notes and, almost simultaneously, the man sitting across from me compliments me and attempts to talk

with me: "You look nice," he says. "What are you writing for? I like your handwriting." I smile and open my mouth to thank the man when I glance behind him and see two ladies shaking their heads and mouthing, "He's crazy." I slowly turn my head and pretend like I had not heard him. I feel so insecure and vulnerable as I sit there just watching, taking everything in, and writing in my journal. By the look on Paul's and Ashley's faces, they are feeling the same way. I am overwhelmed and, for the first time since I've been here in Baltimore, a bit intimidated. The unfamiliar smell of cheap perfume and old laundry fill my head, leaving me a bit off balance as we get off at the Light Street stop.

11:30 a.m.: The American Visionary Art Museum. Everything here is comprised of the simplest objects put together to form a unique, interesting piece of art. As I walk into the first exhibit, I see a painting that covers the entire wall with an arrangement of oranges, reds, and browns. As I walk up closer, I notice that it is a painting of thousands of people all doing different things. Each face is so detailed; when I read the description on the side I am not surprised to learn that it had taken the artist years to complete. I proceed around the room to look at the other paintings, but find myself continually glancing back to the far wall. Something about it keeps drawing my attention. It isn't until I am on the opposite side of the room, almost to the last painting, that I notice the actual purpose of all those small people. They all work together to form an outline of a much larger person. As I look at the "big picture," I think to myself, "Wow, that is *amazing*."

2:00 p.m.: A snack at the Cross Street Market. We stop at "Mama's One Stop Bakery" where I purchase my first-ever piece of sweet potato pie. It is amazing, to say the least. Varsha, the Indian owner of the bakery, is the type of person whom you can talk to for hours and feel as if it has been merely minutes.

"Baltimore is always changing," she tells us. "Twenty years ago, you wouldn't feel safe walking down these streets, but now, [Federal Hill] is developing and changing, so you can even walk at night and nothing happens to you."

After we comment that we like the feel of the market place, she continues to tell us a bit of its history: "This market used to be all wooden...it burned down in 1947 and in 1957 they rebuilt it to what it is today." The huge smile on her face shows her excitement to share this with us. She points us to some pamphlets on the area, and gives us the feeling of the types of people that we might run into around this part of the city. "Come back soon!" she exclaims as we prepare to continue on our adventure. As opposed to being on the bus, I feel comfortable and welcome here. It doesn't take long for us to decide that we will be visiting here regularly after this excursion-even if it means taking the bus.

2:30 p.m.: A small but noteworthy detour. As we leave the market, we begin to make our way back to Loyola, but end up walking in the wrong direction. We are on South Charles Street, and it takes a good ten minutes before we realize that we are getting further away from our school. As we turn around, I discover the city for the first time. People are coming in and out of apartment buildings, walking their dogs, talking to neighbors and friends, and simply going about their daily lives. I try to imagine this area twenty or thirty years ago as Varsha was trying to describe it. I'm

sure I would not feel as comfortable as I do now, and probably would not have enjoyed my visit to Federal Hill at all. Throughout most of the 20th century, Federal Hill had been primarily composed of working class residents and was an area of high crime, racial problems, and low property values. According to residents in the area, by the 1980's and 90's, a new wave of young professionals crashed onto area, investing in the housing and businesses, and transforming the neighborhood into what it is today.

5:30 p.m.: Home at last. It is a long seven hours later and we finally make it back to Loyola. I am still taking in everything that has happened throughout the day. There are so many people, so many places, and so many feelings that are overwhelming my mind. I need to take a moment to let them sink in. I say goodbye to my friends and walk up the Newman Towers steps to my ninth floor apartment suite. My roommates are all out, so this is a great chance to relax and reflect.

I came to Loyola thinking it would be a great opportunity to get to know people, a place, or just anything new that I am not familiar with. It was a great idea, but within a few days Loyola had become very familiar to me; it didn't take long to get used to. The campus was small, so within the first week I knew my way around. The people I met were all different, but I grew accustomed to expecting the answer "Long Island" or "New Jersey" when I asked people where they were from. The city of Baltimore is so diverse; it is like a whole different world-or a universe rather-composed of many different, always-changing places. Each piece is different, a unique piece of broken glass, bottle, or plate, formed together to create one giant picture. I want to see this big picture.

In Loyola I see a small section, but by moving away, I can look at all the aspects of this mural and piece them together to get the complete image. Loyola can only give me so much. If I really want to learn something, I know now that it is only a bus ride away.

Good to Be Crabby

by Marie Gause

“If you're going to Baltimore, you've got to know how to peel a crab.”

Mr. Binnix, a Marylander and close friend of my grandmother's, said this to me last summer as we sat down at a newspaper-covered table to enjoy a bushel of freshly steamed crabs. If it wasn't for my natural affinity for tedious tasks (like untying stubborn knots, for example), I would surely detest the involved process of crab picking. To the impatient hardshell crab eater, the amount of food per crab is vastly disproportionate to the amount of effort required to get it. However, according to Mr. Binnix, no self-respecting Baltimorean would dream of claiming that crabs aren't worth it. When I came to Baltimore for college, I began to see just how right he was.

Driving down North Charles Street at the beginning of the school year, I noticed a vendor selling live blue crabs from the back of his truck along with a poorly-fashioned cardboard sign boasting the words "Live Crabs." Late August and early September is right at the prime of crab season for the city; locals assured me that these truck vendors are commonplace. The crabs followed me all the way to Loyola College—well, not literally. Inition Week, an annual September event sponsored by the Resident Affairs Council at Loyola, holds the promise of the \$10 steamed crab feast. The trick for all the out-of-state kids is figuring out how to peel them; lucky for me, I had gotten tips ahead of time. For Baltimore natives, it's second nature.

"No mallets or butter knives!" warns Kristin Abt, Baltimorean and Loyola student. She recommends a good steak knife to get in all the crevices. "The best way to peel it is to pull off the top and scrape all the devil and other bits off. Pull off the claws and save them for later. Cut off the rest of the legs and break each half in two." Aside from living in Baltimore, Kristin also happens to be the daughter of a commercial crab harvester, so it has always been a big part of her diet. "My parents taught my two sisters and me how to peel crabs when we were in high chairs," she says. "Crabs are a regular staple during the season. Leftovers are always in the fridge and we have them for dinner at least once or twice a week-making crab cakes and soup out of what doesn't get eaten."

Callinectes sapidus, the binomial nomenclature for the Atlantic Blue Crab, is literally translated "beautiful swimmer that is savory." Stalked compound eyes give these crabs 360 degree vision. It may have a forward blind spot at a certain point between its eyes, which would explain the species' inclination to move side to side. Sometimes they can be belligerent for no reason, giving insight to the epistemology of the term "crabby." While not a generally cannibalistic species, *Callinectes sapidus* can be seen as opportunistic cannibals. In fighting situations, when one crab

successfully breaks off one of its opponents' limbs, it will eat the limb. These crustaceans were built for speed. They have a fifth pair of appendages known as "swimming legs" used for hovering and speedy escapes.¹

Swimming ability aside, the "savory" part of the translation cannot be ignored. The large cartilage-free muscles located above each crab's rear fins are used for the most top-of-the-line crab cakes. In an interview for the travel section of San Diego's Union-Tribune, Faidley's Seafood owner Nancy Devine describes her 6-ounce jumbo-lump crab cakes as "bigger than a baseball but smaller than a softball," with a fried golden exterior to seal in all the juices and flavors. The marketplace, which is located at the heart of Baltimore's historic Fells Point, features a sign which reads "Do Not Poke the Crab." This sign is intended to promote crab safety and well-being first, human safety second.²

Baltimore and crabs go together like Dallas and a 32-ounce steak. Tourists can expect not to have to search too hard to find a restaurant serving up hard shell crabs smothered in Old Bay seasoning or the Baltimore favorite, crab cakes. The Inner Harbor alone boasts a number of restaurants claiming to do the job optimally, including The Rusty Scupper and the famous Phillips Restaurant. The tourist trap is fully stocked with crab memorabilia. Entire shops are dedicated to the sale of items linking Baltimore with the symbol and, occasionally, with a fun slogan like "Don't Bother Me, I'm Crabby." Baltimoreans and tourists alike anticipate the all-you-can-eat steamed Atlantic Blue Crabs and all-you-can-drink Clipper City beer at the annual Baltimore Crab and Beer Festival in Fells Point.³

In the Chesapeake Bay area, crabs are as historical as they are flavorful. Chesapeake Bay catch records for blue crab date back to 1890. Centuries prior to record-keeping, Native Americans led European settlers to the prime crabbing locations while taking care to include provisions in all treaties to safeguard their fishing and crabbing rights. The region has long been heralded for producing the largest and tastiest specimens of blue crab anywhere in America. Today, the blue crab has the highest value of any commercial fishery in the Chesapeake Bay. In 2005, 60 million pounds of soft shell and peeler blue crabs were harvested. However, do not be misled by this large number: there are strict limits present on the days and times when watermen can crab, and it is illegal to harvest any crab smaller than 5 ¼ inches in diameter.⁴

In Fall 2000, the Crab Restoration and the Bay project, or C.R.A.B., began as a learning cooperative between the Maryland Watermen's Association, University of Maryland's Center of Marine Biology, Phillips Foods and Seafood Restaurants and

¹ Warner, William. Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs and the Chesapeake Bay. 147-149. New York: Back Bay Books, 1976.

² Scaglione, Cecil. "Shell Game: Finding the flavor of Baltimore while in search for the consummate crab cake." The Union-Tribune. 2 May 2004. 1 April 2007. <<http://www.signonsandiego.com/travel/040502baltimore.html>>

³ Baltimore Crab and Beer Festival. 21 Feb. 2007. Baltimore Crab and Beer Festival. 20 April 2007. <http://www.mdcrabfest.com/>

⁴ "The Maryland Blue Crab." History and Lore. Skipjack.net. 26 March 2007. <http://www.skipjack.net/le_shore/crab/history.htm>.

the State of Maryland. The idea behind the project was that with improved knowledge of the crab's life cycle and needs, managers of fisheries will be more inclined to make far-sighted decisions. This would promote a sustainable supply of crabs in the Bay, meaning more Baltimore residents could enjoy the finest local crabs. Fertilized females were gathered and placed in confinement until they spawned larvae. The researchers tested the larvae in different environments to see which was the best suited for their survival. At the next phase of their lives, they are relocated to stapled rings with continuously flowing water and nutrients. The shape of the homes protects them from consuming one another. Eventually, there could be a large scale creation of similar state-funded hatcheries.

As one waterman stated on the Maryland Waterman official site, "Everyone seems to have a stake in finding out more about our beautiful swimmer: watermen-whose livelihood is nearly 50% derived from crab harvesting, the Chesapeake residents who consider blue crabs to be part of the Maryland experience, tourists...and all the Bay species whose lives depend on the delicate food web in which the Chesapeake's *Callinectes sapidus* is so perfectly intertwined."⁵

Even with upwards of sixty million pounds of crab per annum, the net yield is not large enough to meet demand. To compensate, crabs are shipped to the area from North Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida.⁶ It is no surprise that demand for crabs outweighs supply in a city whose name is so widely linked with the lively creature. Baltimoreans take pride in their city's identification with this crustacean, proven by the effort made to promote its living and symbolic presence.

Recently, a crab craving could be fulfilled aesthetically as well as gastronomically in Baltimore. The Crabtown Project was launched in 2005 as part of the Believe in Our Schools campaign. Over 400 design ideas for 6-foot by 6-foot fiberglass crab sculptures were submitted to a committee who selected the best designs to post on the project's official website.⁷ From there, businesses or even individuals could designate a design to sponsor for three thousand dollars.⁸ This amount was put toward project materials and a stipend for the artist; the money for Baltimore City public schools came from the auction of the crabs and direct donations from corporations. Noteworthy designs include "Baltimore TaxiCrab," a checkered, yellow specimen reminiscent of the city's Checker cabs and "Crab and Gown," a tribute to higher education sponsored by Loyola College.⁹

⁵Madison, Mary. "Bay crabs growing up in the big city." *Waterman's Gazette*. August 2001. 23 March 2007. <http://www.marylandwatermen.com/CRAB.htm>

⁶"Blue Crab Facts." Maryland State Website. 28 Aug. 2002. 25 March 2007. <<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/education/crab/bluecrabfacts.html>>.

⁷"Welcome to Crabtown!" Baltimore City Website. <<http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/cinvestment/crabtown.html>>.

⁸Guynn, Susan. "Local artists take part in fundraising project." *Frederick News-Post*. 17 July 2005. 28 March 2007.

⁹Kent, Sari. "Baltimore crabs crawl off streets." *The Towerlight*. 14 Nov. 2005. 22 March 2007. <<http://media.www.thetowerlight.com/media/storage/paper957/news/2005/11/14/Arts/Baltimore.Crabs.Crawl.Off.Streets-2203415.shtml>>.

"They really brightened up the city," Natasha Hochlowski, Loyola College student and Marylander who frequents the city of Baltimore, said. "They reminded me of those dog statues you see around other big cities because of their placement and variety."

Living in Baltimore has helped me come to a better appreciation of crabs in all forms. My first taste of softshell crab sandwich I made me wonder how I had managed to live without it for so long. I admit to being taken aback by the fact that the crab was still in its proper form sitting on the bun, though I probably should have expected it (they don't call it softshell crab for nothing). I have lived here for close to a year; it is clear that Baltimoreans would strongly feel the absence of this beloved amphibious crustacean. Initiatives like the C.R.A.B. and Crabtown project are important to securing its presence in the stomachs, and hearts, of citizens and visitors. As Aristophanes once said, "You cannot teach a crab to walk straight." However, in Baltimore, crabs are moving forward.

I Bring Tha Meat, He Bring Tha Fish

by Pierce Pahlow

I took the Number 3 bus downtown to the Inner Harbor. Then, I strolled down South Hanover Street until I came upon the corner of East Cross Street. Once here, I went inside a large building with a collage of signs and advertisements. This place, this building, which has no name, provides a place for many to sell their wares and their foods. Behind the slimy fish, the sweet scent of lavender, and the heat from the meat stand is the underlying idea that Baltimore is a community. This sense of community comes from a diversity of people, a necessity for strong community, and a strong sense that a community in Baltimore is inevitable. In other cities such as New York City, people keep their heads down, never talking to anyone, but in Baltimore, people talk and you can't help but feel welcomed into the Baltimore community.

Chu Ming, a wrinkly man from Taiwan, perches at his meat stand, enjoying the same bowl of rice and sweet tea that he indulges in every day. Of all of the vendors in the tall ceiling market, Ming caught my eye. Whether it was his assortment of meats, with names I couldn't pronounce, or the fact that he only knew how to scowl like a vulture looking for its prey, I was immediately drawn to him. I couldn't help but ask Ming how he felt about the other vendors, and shortly after my lips stopped moving, I got an insightful response. Ming blurted out, "I bring tha meats, he bring tha fish an' crabs, he bring tha vegetables, and that woman all tha way down there bring flowers and spices. It's very simple and it works." This straightforward answer perfectly illustrated the sense of unity that pertains to our city. In Baltimore, everyone brings something to the table; everyone is needed.

After listening to Ming's answer, I once again couldn't resist asking, "So do you like these people? Are they your friends?"

Just as before, he quickly replied, "Friends... no they are not my friends, we just work together. I need them because you can't just have meat. Who eats just meat? You need tha vegetables and tha spices to make it complete."

Walking into the "Veterans Watering Hole," a small bar not far from Fort McHenry, I never expected at 2:30 in the afternoon to find a man like Ed. Ed is a 50-year-old painter in Federal Hill who spoke very eloquently. He sat across from the jukebox, which was blasting ACDC's "Back in Black," and a dozen buzzed veterans and other happy-hour-goers surrounded him. Through the smells of stale beer and Aqua Velva, Ed described his sentiments: "I have lived in Baltimore a long time, and the reason the city thrives is because we are all so different. Now that's not to say we don't fight, but, for the most part, our city grows and allows everyone to learn because we all bring something different to the table." At first it seemed odd that both Ed and Ming paralleled Baltimore's community to "bringing something to the

table," but, upon further revelation, it became clear. Just as Ed and Ming said, we are all important, we all have a purpose, and we all have a place in the jigsaw puzzle that is Baltimore. Baltimore is a community driven by its diversity.

As I left Ming and Ed, I began to apply their perspectives not only to their communities, "the market with no name" and "The Veterans Watering Hole," but also to the city of Baltimore as a whole. Baltimore, from my experience, is composed of a diverse people. As Ming said, "You can't just have meat." For Baltimore it is not only food that must be diversified, but the people as well. You need, "tha meat," you need, "tha vegetables." Like most who have ridden in a Baltimore cab, I have met some very interesting cab drivers. Eddie, with whom I rode from Loyola to Towson, knew all of the lyrics to Britney Spears' album. Sunday, named after the day of the week, has numerous stories from his life in Sierra Leone. Both of these men, though very different, create a bond with whoever rides in their automobile. For five, ten, or fifteen minutes you are given a chance to learn something that you may not have known if you hadn't stepped into their cab. These connections that you make when you step into a cab bring you not only to your destination, but also into the community because they create memories and experiences that you will remember forever.

In Costa Rica life is very simple. Someone bakes bread and pastries while others teach children to read and write. Everyone in the town has a specific purpose, and the other people will fail if one job is not executed properly. The milkman drops off milk for the bread maker at 4:30 a.m. Then, the bread maker produces food for the rest of the town. If the milkman doesn't satisfy his purpose, however, the entire town will be without their breakfast for the day. The same principle can be applied to Baltimore, just as Ming said. Some people are cab drivers, bread makers, mechanics, teachers, or storeowners. Diversity is key not only in Costa Rica, but in Baltimore as well. Each person has a position, and unless each part is moving, the city engine will stall. Baltimore is a community based on necessity.

I chose to go to school in Baltimore because of the urban lifestyle. A large city, Baltimore creates a large variety of connections and interactions. If I had no desire to become connected with my surroundings, I would have chosen to live in a cave, completely exiled from others and their different perspectives. Being a component of a city, however, provides me with an extensive community. People choose to live in a city for the certainty of being bombarded with people every day. At Ming's "market with no name," the same people buy his meats every day. Mary Shell, a homemaker in Federal Hill, buys all of her meat and fresh produce from this market. She said, "I come everyday and I always see the same people... and they see me. I'm like a local here, a total regular." This market is an intricate part of Mary's community. Mary depends on the vendors to sell her food, and the vendors depend on Mary to buy their products. Baltimore is a community based on routine.

This year, 2007, is the "Year of the City" at Loyola; the students are encouraged to go out and explore the city of Baltimore. By simply attending Loyola, for purely academic reasons, you really don't become a part of the community. Most people see the students of Loyola in some sort of "bubble"; they think that Loyola is separate from the rest of the Baltimore. With Year of the City, however, that gap is slowly being filled with adventurous and inspired students. In exploring, learning, and experiencing what Baltimore has to offer, you truly begin to appreciate Baltimore as a

city. Experience is the key to understanding and appreciating your community. Going out into Baltimore, not knowing what to expect, may be frightening, but exploring the city creates a bond; that bond is community. To fall in love with a city, to fall in love with Baltimore, you must explore it. Baltimore is a community based on exploration.

Learning things outside of the "Loyola Bubble," I realized that I would need to be more like a sponge; to experience the city for what it really is I would have to take everything in, no matter how small. So instead of "taking in everything," could you "taste everything" like a taste bud? People could either be viewed as sponges or as tongues; either way the message is conveyed. For someone to fully experience a city, he must be open to every sight, flavor, and texture of the city. Imagine someone who only eats meat because it's "the only thing he likes." If he never tries anything new, how does he know he doesn't like anything else? If Ming's market only sold meat, where would the diversity come from? With only meat in the city of Baltimore, no vegetables, spices, "fish an' crabs," the "nutrition" as well as the diversity of Baltimore would decrease. Baltimore would merely fade away.

Baltimore is a community based on diversity, necessity, routine, and exploration. More importantly, however, Baltimore is a community based on people who know their roles. Ming's role is to sell tasty meats to those who wish to buy them. Ming feeds the public not only with food, but with knowledge as well. Ed's role is to paint houses to make Baltimore appealing to the eye, as well as teaching freshmen students that Baltimore is a community where everyone contributes to the greater good. The cab drivers provide the service of transportation; they act as "ambassadors of Baltimore," showing their glowing and interesting personalities. Mary Shell satisfies her role by keeping the city alive with her shopping at the "market with no name." Lastly I, a student, satisfy my role by exploring, learning, and experiencing Baltimore for what it truly is, an amazing city.

Webster's definition of community is "a group of interdependent organisms growing and living together in a specified area." The key word of this definition is "interdependent." Baltimore is like Costa Rica, the "market with no name," and the bar that Ed drinks at, except that Baltimore is much bigger. Ming said, "I bring the meats, he bring the fish..." Ming knows his role in his community. Do you know your role? You will never find out your purpose unless you go out and explore Baltimore. If you are simply taking advantage of the city of Baltimore, but doing nothing to enrich it or leave it better than when you came, then you are not a part of the community. Living together in a city, like Baltimore, or any other place, doesn't necessarily make you part of the community; it gives you the opportunity to explore, experience, and, most of all, become a valuable asset to the community. Spend your time not only taking advantage of the sights, smells, and sounds of Baltimore, but take time out to find where, in the big jigsaw puzzle that is Baltimore, you fit because without you the puzzle will remain incomplete and useless.

Art at the Heart

by Brian Bakelaar

Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.

Stella Adler

The Walters Art Museum was created by a father and son duo, William and Henry Walters, who were "driven by their interest of art and history to assemble a diverse range of artwork from around the world."¹⁰ The two set up an art gallery in downtown Baltimore at 600 North Charles Street that contained thousands of pieces covering almost every element of man-made art. Nowadays, one can find everything from early Islamic shields encrusted with jewels to transcripts of famous speeches held inside the art gallery's doors. The Walters Art Museum is one of the rare places in Baltimore that anyone can go—for free, mind you—and observe the masterpieces of world-renowned artists, such as Gustave Courbet and Edgar Degas, who have poured their lives and souls into their artwork.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines art as a "skill acquired by experience, study, or observation." This first definition of the word "art" doesn't do it justice. Paul O'Neill, the leader of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, defines art in a more appropriate way:

To me, there's three types of art—there's good art, there's bad art and there's great art. Bad art is a painting on a wall that you don't even notice. You just walk past it as if it was wallpaper. If s a song that you hear on the radio that just becomes background noise. It's a movie that you go to that just becomes a good excuse to eat buttered popcorn. Good art will elicit an emotional response from the listener or viewer that they felt before. You see a picture of forest, and you remember the last time you went fishing with your dad. You hear a song about driving fast in your car, and you remember when you were 16 and you got your driver's license and you went over the speed limit. You hear a love song and remember the first time you fell in love. That's really, really hard to do. But great art-- and this is the hardest thing to do-- elicits an emotional response from the person who's exposed to it that they never felt before.¹¹

As I see it, the Walters Art Gallery isn't a home to art as much as it is a home to emotion. To be honest, I have never really cared deeply about art. Sure, I have taken art classes, written papers, and taken photographs, but none of those things

¹⁰ For more information on the history of the Walters see Baltimore Art Gallery

¹¹ For information on O'Neill's quote see O'Neill

really ever meant anything extraordinary to me until recently. Now, I won't lie, my trip to the Walters Art Museum didn't open my eyes to some great art revolution. Rather, my trip to the Walters Art Museum reaffirmed—to me—the beauty of my one true masterpiece. This piece that I speak of is one of the only things that I have ever created that I am proud enough to call a work of art of mine.

A two-page article that was set to be featured on the front page of *The Survey*, Warwick Valley high school's student-run newspaper, is what I consider the true work of art of my first eighteen years of life. I had worked on the article for a week and it was damn near perfect, but it never reached the students—it was never published. Now, how can I call this article that isn't featured in some great museum or even, for that matter, something that was never published a work of art? It is simple. I wouldn't allow my article to reach the masses. I pulled it upon my final reading of what I had thought was perfection. It was too personal to me. It was too soon to be pouring out emotions to those who may not have felt them. It was my article about my best friend: a triumphant story of one of the most inspirational kids ever, Don Rock.

It's weird to think that just two years ago Don was your average high school junior. He was a great student, Warwick's best 800-meter runner, and an even better friend. Nothing gravely eventful happened our junior year. I should have been thankful for that. We were just living our lives one day at a time, not really thinking about tomorrow, as if we were invincible. Then the unspeakable happened.

While driving home from a track meet, Don's car swerved off the road, flipped over the highway divider right into oncoming traffic. His 2000 Jeep Cherokee was crushed into an unrecognizable form, and the driver's side was dented all the way in. A friend of mine, Chris Miles, a local EMS volunteer who was called to the scene, told me, "At first we didn't know where his body was. We thought it was thrown out of the car. Then, someone spotted him." His entire body was condensed and contorted so that it fit in the little compartment of the car under the dashboard where the driver's feet should be. Don was immediately taken to the hospital by a MEDEVAC. I would come to find out later that week that Don would be paralyzed from his waist down. He would never walk again; he said he could handle that. He told me what he couldn't handle was that he could never run.

Paul O'Neill describes great art by the way it "elicit[s] an emotional response," in someone, and that is exactly what my article was. About a year after his tragic accident, Don Rock, who had steered clear of the school's track, had finally reemerged on its surface. Don had invited a group of his close friends down to the track to watch him, as he put it, "run again." He was essentially the same kid that we all knew and loved. He was the typical teenager. He was just as everyone remembered him, except his accident had made him a lot skinnier and he was in a fluorescent pink wheelchair. Beyond the appearance, I knew he was the same kid I grew up with. He was the same friend to me. We thought he was crazy, but we showed up anyway, still confused and a bit curious. What we saw was something that I will never forget. We saw Don take to the 800-meter race again, but, before he started his personal race, he turned to us and said, "...time me." That was one of the most spectacular moments to have ever occurred on the track situated behind Warwick Valley High School. It

wasn't so much that were glad to see him being active again; it was the notion that he got out there and simply overcame a pretty big obstacle of his. Don wasn't happy with his time. As he put it, "I ran faster than this with my feet. With wheels I should be flying."

My article focused on the courage of seventeen-year-old Don Rock. It takes a special type of person to try to take back a cherished part of his life after such a setback. I know Don Rock will never be satisfied with his time on the track, just as I will never be satisfied with my article about him. These are our two very different and ongoing forms of art. He is living his art through human activity, and I am writing mine out in forms of emotion. Our two art forms parallel and feed each other. Don's love of being out there and being involved feeds my emotion for creating the perfect essay for him.

When I sit down to write and rework my feelings in the article, everything that I have written down has been, at one point, written by me before. Very few original ideas come to mind when I am tossing around the strong emotion of my friend's story. Postmodern artist Allison Hetter said that "Everything's been done" in the world of postmodern art.¹² Every new and original angle has already occurred, and originality is not found in the postmodern art of today. Hetter also goes on to say that "Everything's been redone already." Artists, much like Courbet and his students,¹³ have always slightly altered individual pieces of work. The minor changes put onto these reflections of art can make these non-original ideas seem as completely original as the piece on which they were based.

When I go back to think about my work of art, I can see how Hetter's words relate to my piece. After Don's accident, many had the intense emotions that I felt; I am just one of the few who put it on paper. My ideas are hardly original, but what is original is the fact that I know that I will never consider myself done with the article. My article has gone from being less than a page in length to well over ten full pages. I usually sit down and work on it about once a week for a few minutes here and a few minutes there. Over time, these little sessions add up. Most of the time, I am editing and rewording my work and I hardly ever change the main focal points of the paragraphs. It is weird to think this project all started as an article for my high school's newspaper. It has evolved into a piece that I may forever be rewording and editing. This constant editing of material gives the article a new look each time I change the words within it. No two reads are ever the same. Different emotions come out at different times, and with all of the changes done to the original, it is hard to even remember where I had begun. While my article has taken on many new emotional levels through this process, it has forced me to wonder if I am writing this article using emotions that I felt right after the accident, or if I am simply putting in new emotions to appease my mind as time draws further away from that night. The few original ideas that I had put in my article have been replaced with words of appeasement and coping. The beautiful downside to my article is that no matter how

¹² For more information on Hetter's quotes see Postmodern art

¹³ For more information on Courbet's students see [Courbet and the Modern Landscapes](#)

many times I edit it, I know that I can only get farther away from the original concept that I had of perfection.

The Walters Art Gallery can be experienced in many ways. One can go there and love it for the art as the artist intended, or visitors can go there and attach their own meaning to the art. For me, certain pieces featured in the museum's section of Courbet's work brought the story of Don Rock back into my mind. Courbet specialized in painting landscapes in different seasons. He would go to the same place and paint it more than once. These different renditions of the same tree, mountain, or river would essentially look the same, but would be a little different. This reminds me of my "masterpiece." Each time I go back to read the article that I originally wrote, I end up deleting certain parts and playing around with it so that it now represents nothing of its original form. On my last check I noticed that I have random ideas where they shouldn't go, unimportant details describing nothing—and I hit the realization that sentence fragments have begun to take over. Many would say that my work is as far from art as anything can be, but to me it is just as beautiful as any sculpture of a random half-naked person could ever be.

Don't Disrespect My Hood

by Marjorie Thousand

Statistics are like bikinis. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital. Aaron Levenstein

I work at the Loyola Notre Dame Library. Every Tuesday night, between 10 and 11, I call the Campus Escort service for a ride from the library to my dorm in Lange Courts. Overcome by laziness, I felt the need to get a ride instead of walking the quarter mile. The harsh winter winds and ever-changing brutal weather conditions of this past season further championed my fight against unnecessary exercise. The Campus Escort Service has also assisted in my triumph of attaining the anticipated "freshman 15." Unlike many college-aged females, my concerns with weight and appearance have drifted to the back of my mind, leaving room for issues I feel are more pertinent. This may be the reason why I strike up the most controversial conversations with the most random people—like the kid who works for the escort service and picks me up every Tuesday.

Hopping into the front seat of the huge, dented white van in dire need of a paint job and oil change, I ignore the painful screeching of the brakes, glad to see his wholehearted smile, lifting his chubby cheeks that close up the eyes lying hidden behind the thick lenses of his glasses. Our conversations usually start out the same way: small talk about random things—how horrible work is, how horrible his driving is, or trivia questions to win holiday paraphernalia he purchased from CVS at 98% off. Meanwhile, I chow down on whatever snacks he has lying around, laughing at his jokes as the massive vehicle rattles down the access road. He calls me his "regular" as we have formed an awkward bond somewhere in the mundane darkness of our Tuesday nights.

We had talked about body image, drinking, our majors, and other countless topics. It was only a matter of time until we got to the dreaded race issue. It started when we were talking about campus police and how they "protect" Loyola students from outsiders (troublesome 13- and 14 year-olds in this conversation) as they lounge in their comfy cars, text messaging. We had drifted into the realm of racial profiling and stereotyping when he made his confession. "There's something evil about me. Well, it's not *really* evil. It's just that I like to base things upon statistics." I chuckled, awkwardly mentally analyzing his statement, trying to sort the evils and advantageous qualities of this characteristic. He explained to me that since most of crimes in Baltimore are committed by Black men, it's only right to feel anxious when a group of them walk down Coldspring Lane. Is it really? Then again, in looking at the *statistics*, why would a timorous teenager from the quiet suburbs attend school in predominantly Black Baltimore if they are going to be afraid of the Black people?

Loyola College attempts to lure its students into the city in various, more acceptable ways than we choose for ourselves. Its Jesuit foundation makes sure we "learn, lead and serve in a diverse and changing world." In my short time here, I

have become aware of the various opportunities I have to get into the city for service and other miscellaneous activities. Yet, I still feel like I do not know Baltimore as profoundly as I should. Teachers are given the difficult task of incorporating diversity into their lesson plans, and while they are extremely thoughtful, well-planned, extremely beneficial, and eye-opening when students actually attend the programs, we are still students. Let's face it, students tend to despise the word "required." We don't like to *have* to do anything. So as teachers read their syllabi littered with "requirements," we replace our instinctual "You ain't the boss of me!" with moans and groans. And so AJ, who lives downstairs, bothers us all with questions regarding whether or not we've been to a cultural event lately that we can describe to him so that he can get class credit. I love AJ, but he's a student just as I am, and well... we just don't like requirements. Even if these efforts are referred to as "extend[ing] Loyola's helping hand throughout the greater Baltimore area, as well as to the wider national and international communities," they are what I call beautifully written bull.

The only other information provided to students shows up in our mailboxes as "INCIDENT REPORT" labeled with an envelope icon magnified by a red exclamation point. The emails bombard us with tales of double homicides down the street along with warnings for gang initiation weeks. These emails (along with the danger zones pointed out to us on a huge projection screen during orientation week) generate our Baltimore.

I am frequently bouncing back and forth between how wonderful Baltimore is and how dangerous it is. Should I go out and celebrate its greatness if I'm afraid of being shot? I bet I couldn't convince half the students I know to walk from CVS to the Family Dollar down the street just because it's on York Road. Little do they know, there is a little grocery store where they can get a huge bag of frozen broccoli heads for three dollars. They're missing out. Not only does this inhibit them from experiencing Baltimore as its residents live, it offends our Baltimorean students.

Imagine if when people spoke of your home, the only contribution they could make focused on poverty and crime rates. Home is... home. It houses an unexplainable feeling of love, admiration and belonging easily affronted with uneducated commentary and stereotypes. I've frequently heard students say that York Road is "the ghetto," horrible, and every time I do, I think of my friend Ashley saying, "It hurts. I grew up there. That ain't no hood. If they scared of that, they ain't ready for the real Baltimore." Simply put, one person's hood is another person's paradise—better yet, home.

In terms of statistics, *my* home is merely an over-populated square mile. As of the year 2000, there were a reported 18,946 people living in 1.29 square miles. Nicknamed "Sparkle City" for having the most drugs per capita in the country, Central Falls has the lowest test scores in the state of Rhode Island and a drop-out rate of over 25%. Regardless of what the numbers read and what opinions they may birth, I love my city.

Central Falls, Rhode Island, is one square mile of beautiful, truly unique people from all over the world. My next-door neighbors are redheaded, fair-skinned Puerto Ricans whose lives vibrate to the rhythm of reggaeton and salsa that rocks the block until about 2:00 a.m. on an early night. Colombians live across the street in the newly-built Section 8 qualified duplex replacing the three apartment houses, which used to occupy the street corner. The Baptist church on the street over soothes our

souls for a good two to three hours every Sunday morning. It's a picturesque sight as the members walk to their cars dressed in their Sunday best, brightly-colored dresses topped off with elaborate hats that block the sunlight from their delightful almond faces. The men, dressed in elegant suits, usually walk off together conversing about this and that as the children run around carelessly dirtying their church clothes and scuffing their good shoes. The Cape Verdeans up the block tend to the gardens in their front yards behind the wire fence that encloses the 3x6 plot. Meanwhile, *Vavos* look after dozens of grandchildren and cook *cachupa* as its appetizing scent travels to the ends of the street. My best friends since the first grade (one is Portuguese and White and the other is White and Puerto Rican) usually spend most of their time at my house, the Dominican, Chinese, Cuban, Jamaican and Panamanian house. My house consists of the little woman, who looks Chinese with her wise, wrinkled, slanted eyes, the daughter who looks Black and the brother and sister who are the epitome of Dominican with all of the typical Hispanic features. Central Falls is a beautiful city with a racial breakdown fit to be the blueprint of what "the land of the free" should look like—true diversity, with acceptance flowing in from all avenues. The city has an infinite amount of potential and a nominal amount of assistance as does Baltimore.

I say that with all the hope in my heart while yearning to see it for myself. My hope for the city derives from the little exposure I experienced on the Mission Mobtown crusade with my Loyola classmates. We were instructed to walk around the Mount Vernon area of Baltimore, taking pictures while interviewing random people. My partner, Kristine, and I were assigned the task of finding out how Baltimore is "extravagant." Given a map of the area, I realized that it was not an outline of where to go, rather where *not* to go. Kristine and I headed towards the thick Black border.

We went into clothing stores and took pictures of the "extravagant" architecture. We also went into businesses and asked questions there. The people we interviewed gave us enough details on the city to write an epic novel. Yet, I was unsatisfied. The people talked about the politics, the drug problems, the new mayor, the harbor and the construction going on in the city. The most touching comment I heard the entire day came from the humble lips of an 11 year-old girl walking down the street with her two brothers, one older and one younger. She was the only one in the group willing to contribute to our "interview," or simply just answer the question "What do you think about Baltimore?" She looked at us and furrowed her eyebrows in confusion.

"What do you like about living here?" I asked.

"I don't know. I live here. I've always lived here," she answered.

She was dirty, to say the least, as were her siblings. Unbathed it seemed. As it began to rain, they walked the street with their soiled shoes, warmed by hand-me-down jackets with missing buttons, torn sleeves and no hoods. As Kristine and I crossed the street, heading in the opposite direction, I looked back. In that simple response, the young girl showed me why, as I looked at her now, I saw beauty. I saw myself, my siblings and my best friends. I remembered the times we had been left out in the cold. I remembered those people in my life who didn't see my potential and judged me, and those who took the time to give me guidance and a book to read. I wondered where her mother was. Was she cracked out somewhere or on her way to her second job, back aching and feet sore? I wanted to know her story. I yearned to

turn back and embrace her. I wanted to press my face against the deep almond warmth that was hers. I ached to untangle the tresses of her hair, hoping to disentangle the complexities of her life. I felt the desire to cleanse her so that she could shine through to her potential while nurturing her cuts and bruises, easing her pain and suffering.

I turned my glance away from her and kept walking in the opposite direction. I turned my back on her, along with the rest of the world.

I go to Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland. My choice in school was mainly based on the area in which the school was located. I assumed that the school would somewhat illustrate the surrounding community, at least a little bit. I should've checked my assumptions. 12.2% of the freshman class is composed of supposed "minorities." In other words, they chose to fill in the circle for ethnicity. Baltimore is 65.2% African-American. My roommates shop J.Crew online, and I frequently find price tags lying around revealing the \$224.99 they've paid for Burberry rain jackets while the median income of a Baltimore family is a mere \$41,524 and 18.9% of Baltimore families are living below the poverty line. Meanwhile, Loyola spends \$9,000 on a freshman semi-formal. To me, these seem to be opposite sides of the spectrum.

How does one effectively undertake the Jesuit values and traditions while attempting to live happily, safely and have fun? For one, we can stop focusing on color. Institutions can refrain from accepting people of "more color" or "more melanin" as Beverly Tatum, author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, might say. Darker skin does not imply a candidate with more to offer to the school. Maybe we can recruit in the "hood" so that we can stop being afraid of the people who live in Baltimore. Maybe then, Loyola students will see Black people other than the maintenance workers and food servers. I know that my suggestions are fairly, if not completely, idealistic. Our wealthy, predominantly White Loyola families and alumni fund the school.

Another route to take would be to go out into the city to do things other than service (or barhopping). Get to know people, regardless of their color or address. Go rollerblading or play laser tag. Yes, a large percentage of Baltimore City crimes are committed by Black men. Confined to our Loyola bubble, we tend to forget that a large percentage of Baltimore City *is* Black men. Theodor Billroth once said, "Statistics are like women; mirrors of purest virtue and truth, or like whores to use as one pleases." There is a right and wrong manner to use them.

The simplest method to learn about and help Baltimore may just be to remember that people live here. This is someone's home. It may not be yours and you may not care about it. But you should respect it. When you talk down on anyone's home, you talk down on them. I wouldn't want you to disrespect my hood; it probably wouldn't be the smartest idea either. Golden Rule anyone? Here is a refresher: do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. I don't even know where that's from, but it's the correct way to live nonetheless.

It'd be my pleasure to burst your bubble. We are no better than the people down the street. Not all of them are murders and rapists just as not all college students are spoiled, sheltered alcoholic druggies disfiguring their bodies under the weight of peer pressure. We are all human beings. Everywhere is someone's home.

Always Surprised By the City

by Rebecca Skerrett

It wasn't the high crime rate and "red zones," which I heard so much about in orientations, that worried me most about Baltimore. It was feeling alone and small and the nagging doubt that life here just wasn't for me. My friends all talked about how small and boring Baltimore was compared to New York and Philadelphia. Still, everything was new to me—I didn't even know how to hail a cab to get home from dinner. When a man followed me down York Road asking me to come back to his place, I absolutely panicked. My friends who had grown up in larger cities didn't even blink at situations I just froze in. But because I chose to explore, I've seen many of Baltimore's better faces. I wouldn't trade my experiences in commercial Towson, artsy Hampden, historic Fells Point, or the tourist traps at the Inner Harbor for anything.

In spite of my initial apprehension about Baltimore, I figured it was big enough that I would find something familiar eventually. In my hometown of Rochester, New York, we don't even have a Nordstrom so going to Towson Town Center for the first time was like being a kid in a candy store. Only I soon found out that the candy was so expensive I couldn't buy a single piece. I saw Banana Republic, Abercrombie & Fitch, Coach, White House Black Market, and all the other places I never had money to shop at. Stores like Payless Shoes, Old Navy, and JC Penney were nowhere to be found. As the friends I was shopping with slowly filtered off into their favorite stores, I was left feeling lost and left out.

Then I took a trip to Hunt Valley, a rapidly growing area famed for its shopping center which was thought dead just a few years ago. I was incredibly happy to find that Hunt Valley had a Wegmans, a major grocery store from upstate New York. Baltimore began to feel more like home as I found familiar landmarks like Wegmans, and even an Old Navy and Kohls. Fells Point, down by the Inner Harbor, reminded me of Alexander Street (also known for its bar scene) in my hometown. I even went back to Towson and discovered there was more than a mall. AMC Theaters is just down York Road from the Town Center, and tons of smaller shops and cute restaurants line the streets just a short walk from the mall.

Yet out of everywhere I've explored (and everywhere I've eaten), I keep coming back to a certain tiny section of Baltimore that sits between the Inner Harbor and Fells Point. Only a few streets wide, bounded on the north by Pratt Street, Central Avenue on the east, and the waterfront on the south and west, Little Italy is uniquely Baltimorean, and still I feel totally comfortable there. The honking of the cabbies and the harsh glare of the city are replaced by a soft glow from the restaurants and music

trickling from the open window of someone's townhouse. At night, the streets sparkle with white twinkle lights, which remain shining year round, giving the constant impression of a romantic night beneath the stars, even with Baltimore's light pollution. A huge, twinkling banner, appropriately colored in green, white and red, proclaims "Little Italy" in an arch over Eastern Avenue, its main through street. Stepping under that arch is like entering a portal to another place entirely, where the casual hum of life in a small community replaces the commotion of Baltimore. The community is small, hidden, absolutely unique, and entirely captivating to me.

Little Italy is a great place to go whether in groups or on dates. On a date, we usually take the free Collegetown Shuttle down to the Inner Harbor and then make the ten-minute walk. A walk is never boring, even if I'm hungry, because there is always so much to see. Peeking in restaurant windows reveals interiors like ballrooms and even ceilings like the night sky if you walk by Da Mimmo on South High Street. I know I've found the perfect place for dinner when I read a menu and my mouth begins to water. By that time, the walk has given me a hearty appetite, and I'm ready for a delicious basket of garlic bread and an appetizer.

I've been going back to Little Italy ever since my first date in Baltimore, to Amicci's. We try somewhere new every time—from Ciao Bella to Chipparelli's to Da Mimmo's to Sabatino's. My favorite part of the trip is deciding where to eat in Little Italy by walking along the streets. Restaurants conveniently post menus in their windows or on bulletin boards outside, making it easy to choose what you want for dinner. It's never as much fun to decide beforehand by looking online. By choosing on the go, you not only know what food a place has to offer but also its atmosphere and how long the wait will be!

My most recent discovery was Germano's Trattoria, a Tuscan "ristorante" on the corner of South High and Fawn Streets. On a Monday night, the place was totally deserted, but all the staff were gathered together in the main room chatting. We were immediately whisked away to a small table for two right in front of the fireplace, which was blooming with poinsettias for Christmas. Our server, Isaac, showed up seconds later and regaled us with a story about the table where we were seated. According to him, it was a "lucky table right in front of the fireplace. Here will make you very lucky with love if you are looking for a bit of romance tonight." He told us the menu in a mix of English and Italian, which my date thought was fun because he got to use his Italian classes for something. We had a great time chatting and joking with Isaac and left with huge smiles. Outside, we walked around for the better part of an hour and then stopped in at Vaccaro's Italian Pastry Shop for gelato (Italian ice cream). We headed home feeling great after four hours in Little Italy.

Walking through Little Italy, I've come to see it as a town within a city. It has residents who may buy their houses for as much as \$500,000 and who sit out on the doorsteps with their families during the day to socialize. It has its restaurants, of course, whose smell alerts you to Little Italy's presence blocks before you get there. It even has two bocce courts where tournaments are held during the summer, sometimes at the same time as "Cinema al Fresco," the outdoor movie showings that people gather in the street to watch. Little Italy's beautiful church is Saint Leo the Great, located on the corner of Exeter and Stiles Streets, where you can go to hear the Mass in Italian any Sunday at 12:30 p.m. The neighborhood is a small world unto itself in the heart of Baltimore.

Although the area is famous for its food, the residents are what make it so amazing. I didn't expect that people lived in an area so heavily populated with restaurants and pastry shops, but Little Italy is, in fact, a sizable neighborhood. Four-year-old children run around on the sidewalks, and ninety-year-old men sit and complain to each other on their stoops. Everything from junkers to BMWs line the streets as people coming home from work find parking. Italian is tossed around, whether a conversation is being carried along fluently or just a word or two is thrown in. The scene feels like something from a movie. A woman juggles paper bags of groceries on her stoop while digging through her purse for house keys. Two old friends meet up on the sidewalk and exchange kisses in greeting as a horse drawn carriage saunters by. It's easy to forget you're in Baltimore when you walk the screenplay that is Little Italy.

The appearance of the townhouses add to the cinematic flavor. This sticks out to me because Baltimore is the first place I have ever seen formstone, a kind of siding that resembles rock but is actually plastic-like. I remember noticing how fake it looked and thinking, "Do people really think their houses look like they're made of stone?" Now it seems beautiful to me because it is such an intricate part of Baltimore—it is, after all, hard to go down a city street without seeing at least one of these facades. Many rowhouses in Little Italy sport the false fronts, and some restaurants—like Chiapparelli's on South High Street—dress to match. Another easy memory jogger is to look at the menus. Back in my hometown, there was never such an abundance of seafood, especially crab. Chiapparelli's offers dishes such as "Shrimp Parmigiana," which is just what it sounds like. "Seafood Curreri," a shrimp, crab, and fettucini dish in a "creamy pink sauce," is on the menu as well with other classic Italian favorites and some unique House Specialties.

Little Italy's atmosphere comes from over a century and a half of growth as a well-established community in Baltimore. Yet, beyond the names of its restaurants, not a lot of information is readily available on Little Italy and its history. Places like Fells Point and the Inner Harbor are constantly in the news, but for Little Italy, there is a huge gap between its foundation as a place for the Italian population to gather and its life today. Being founded in 1849 makes Little Italy young compared to the rest of Baltimore, which started as a farming town back in 1729, but a lot can happen in 157 years. Knowing the story behind a place so rich in culture would only make it more interesting.

It's easy to fall in love with Little Italy. It will always have a special meaning to me as the first place in Baltimore where I felt truly at ease. I can safely navigate the few streets of Little Italy now in a way I'm not sure I'll ever get to know a mall. Life is different in Little Italy; residents don't just get out of their cars and disappear into buildings, they chat on the street like old friends. Dining is a more personal experience than at most places in the city. Every restaurant is unique, something I rarely found back home where "Italian" consisted of the Olive Garden. The formstone townhouses and inviting glow of the windows suggest refuge from the world. Somehow, the twinkle lights hanging over the streets mark it as an entirely different realm, and once you step under that first banner, the world disappears. I don't just go to Little Italy for the food; I go because I want to be a part of it.

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A Lesson Learned

By Melissa May

I've heard many things about Baltimore from many different sources: the head of campus safety called Baltimore a dangerous place, my aunt and uncle called it a beautiful place, a friend in community service called it an uneducated place, professors and faculty of Loyola called it a place of growth, and the media called it a place of decay. With all the mixed, and occasionally frightening, messages, it's no wonder that, before a classroom assignment, I barely ventured out into the city. At the time when we were given the assignment, my schedule was nearly full and I didn't know how I would fit everything in. So, it was with some anxiety and aggravation that I began to make plans with my small group. Rather arbitrarily, we decided to visit the Washington Monument in Mount Vernon. The monument, which took fourteen years to complete (from 1815 to 1829), was the first to honor George Washington. After doing a little research and seeing how beautiful the Mount Vernon area was supposed to be, I was almost looking forward to visiting the historical landmark. However, plans were botched when a winter storm hit on the day we had planned to travel. By the time another available day rolled around, I had fallen back into apathy about the whole adventure and it was with a grimace that I greeted my group.

The bus ride was uneventful and, consequently, forgettable. After getting off at our stop and walking about a block east and then a block north, we were staring it down-our first president atop a 160-foot marble pedestal. The neighborhood looked as if it had been airlifted straight from France, with its decadent Parisian architecture and cobblestone road. Beautiful though they were, the monument and surrounding buildings will not be what I remember most about the trip. I will remember the dogs. In the western portion of Mount Vernon Place (referring to the green that one finds east and west of the statue), was a group of dogs and their owners. Never before had I seen a mass doggy play-date and I was fascinated. There were nearly as many breeds as there were dogs present and they were all playing together. Immediately, I spotted an American Eskimo, two pugs, and some type of ridgeback. I couldn't identify any of the other breeds, especially since the dogs were in constant motion, clustering and breaking away from each other only to cluster again in new groups. One of the owners commented that none of them is a biter, which made it a good group. The group of pet-owners was a bit more homogenous. There was only one man among the group, one of the women's husbands it would seem, and they were all white, upper-middle-class individuals.

I spoke shortly with two of the women, neither of whom gave their names when I introduced myself. Both women had only become a part of the group recently

and both suggested I talk to Pat; however, the heavily made-up woman I presumed to be Pat either did not hear or chose to ignore the women's attempts to get her attention. When asked why they congregated in this particular place, one of the women said that in the summer bums hang around on the other side. I was surprised by this statement. There were bums in this ritzy area? Why did bums only come to the other side and not this side as well? Why not just avoid the other side in the summer instead of all year? When I actually saw the other side that had been spoken of, I was more surprised and, now, confused. It was just as nice, if not nicer, than the side of the park where we had met the dogs. Why stay away from such a wonderful area? Were the bums really that harmful or dangerous that this group felt the need to stay away from them or did they simply not want to see these bums? If they just didn't want to see them, was that because the homeless disgusted them? Did they feel bad for them and didn't want to be reminded about such things?

Upon falling silent, I noticed a subtle division in the group of dog owners. The owners who had been bringing their pets there for years formed a small core of regulars, for which the relative newcomers were satellites. The regulars had not even deigned to recognize us and, despite the amiable facades of those members I spoke to, I felt distinctly out of place. For the most part, my questions and attempts at conversation were met with a curt response or redirection to someone else in the group who always seemed to be struck deaf at the moment they were called upon. And the woman whom I had just talked to had made it clear from closed body language, such as crossed arms and posturing away from myself and the other group members, as well as reserved answers, that this group went out of their way to avoid interacting with those outside of their group. There was a stark contrast between that group and their pets. The dogs made no distinction between the newcomers and the veterans. And, although all purebred, I doubt that they would have ignored or attacked a friendly stray wandering by. Yet their owners drew lines between old and new and between classes. I couldn't stop thinking about the differences as we continued our exploration.

As my classmates and I continued our circle around the monument, we found the Mount Vernon United Methodist Church, a beautiful, hulking structure of black and green. The gothic architecture is a surprise and is only utilized in two other structures in the entire city of Baltimore. After realizing we would not be able to tour the church, which, according to a plaque on the facade, was a historical landmark, we simply studied the exterior. Original construction was finished in 1872, so it was no surprise at all to see that a few of the points were in need of repair. In fact, a few had already been repaired, visible by the sandy, new color that stood out against the black and green. Churches are, at least for me, associated with openness and readiness to offer aid in any way possible. They are places of refuge and peace, so it was with some irony that I noticed screens across the windows set up to keep creatures from taking shelter in the crevices and on the ledges they provided. However, one of the screens had slid out of place and actually aided the exact process it was trying to stop. I liked seeing the nest there and hearing the birds. It gave life to the church. I realized that keeping the birds out might have been a preserving measure, but I truly believe that the impression of warmth from the church came from the fact that it was sheltering living things.

After wandering around a bit more and yielding few new discoveries, probably because our trip had begun as many a day was ending, we decided it was time to head back. At that point, we realized that we had no idea where there was a bus stop. Luckily for us, following a somewhat desperate search, an older, kind gentleman approached, saying, you have that it's-around-here-somewhere look. We explained our plight and he pointed out the stop, which was, perhaps, a mere fifteen feet from where we stood. As we sheepishly thanked him, a rather derelict character approached, asking our nice gentleman for change. He gruffly turned the man away and only a second later politely waved and smiled as we walked off to our stop. I was surprised by this quick change of pace. I realize that his treatment of the homeless man is how many treat the homeless: my mom warned me before my first trip to New York City not to give money to any homeless person who might ask. Still, each time that I walk by a beggar, I must fight deeply against myself to do as I was taught, to keep walking and pretend that I don't hear his plea. It's hard for me to remember that not everyone feels the same.

As we waited for the bus, we all discussed the different reactions of people to us and interactions between people around us. The nice gentleman, a blue-collar worker with grease under his fingernails, had approached us to offer assistance. The dog owners we had met, members of the upper-middle class who were proud to say that they lived in the townhouses and apartments in the immediate, high-priced area, had either ignored us altogether or had seemed stand-offish. Both had disregarded the poor of the area without a second thought, which was a behavior that was unnerving for me to see, but probably was a normal reaction after the desensitizing experience of seeing these bums daily. Even the church, a place that is supposed to accept all, had made an attempt to draw boundaries, even if those boundaries were only to keep birds from marring the building. And when I sat down on the bus and received a friendly smile from a man with a ratty baseball cap, grease-stained pants and worker's boots, I quickly took a seat and carefully avoided eye contact with the man. It wasn't until later that I began to ask myself why. Why had I cringed when a working-class man had smiled at me? Why had the beggar been summarily dismissed by the gentleman we met? Why had the dog owners talked to us in only the most formal manner?

Lines were drawn and divisions were made. Labels were assigned without a second thought, simply because indifference had crept into these daily actions, actions that had never been questioned. I came to observe Baltimore, but what I discovered was an aspect of being human that we all like to ignore. It would appear that it is in human nature to sum up a person based on his or her appearance. I can't even begin to count the times that I have been guilty of this. Occasions such as walking into a classroom on the first day and avoiding sitting anywhere near the student dressed in all black come flooding back to me. The heart-wrenching memory of being told my sister seems like the type to be a lesbian simply because she prefers baggie clothes and thoroughly enjoys sports made me wonder why it is so easy to slip into this habit of instantaneous judgment when it can be so demeaning.

Through it all, I kept thinking about the dogs of Mount Vernon and the birds of the church. The dogs had played together and their differences had not mattered at all. Newcomers were welcomed and accepted. They were so open to anything, as long as they could play. I felt freer just thinking about them because if it was in their nature not to pass judgment based on sight alone, then maybe it was once a part of mine, too,

and could one day be again. The birds also gave me hope; they were able to use the screen, which had attempted to keep them out, to better secure themselves in their home. It was a demonstration that just because a wall is put up, whether physically or mentally, one cannot escape what is there. Going to the other side of a park to avoid bums so one can pretend they are not there will not make them disappear; ignoring an individual seeking answers will not stop her from questioning; putting up a screen cannot prevent a bird from finding a home; and avoiding places that reveal one's prejudices does not mean that they are not embedded in one's every thought and action. It is all there, right in front of everyone, waiting for anyone to open his eyes and see. And it is only with eyes open to what is there that a person can begin to even fathom change. My eyes were opened that day not only to the prejudices in some members of Mount Vernon, but also to the prejudices within me. I wanted to visit this place again to see what other unexpected lesson I might learn from the nature of Baltimore.

Just Another Passerby

by Michael Conti

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to grow up to, one day, know a city like the back of my hand. Memories of driving through Boston with my father, observing his knowledge of the twisty streets and secret short cuts, mesmerized me. How could he possibly remember the complexity of each turn and intersection? To the passengers, the labyrinths of one-way streets and do-not-enter signs were overwhelming. To my dad, they were second nature.

"Michael, you see up there?" he would say. "That's where your uncle and I played catch while we waited in line for tickets to that Red Sox game."

Every story had me completely hooked, amazed that my dad had actually lived in such a place. Even though I could recite each one of his experiences exactly as he had first told me, there was something about hearing old memories while driving through the city that made me feel connected.

"Oh, yeah, Dad, that was where your old apartment building burned down, right?"

"No that was where I took your mom out to dinner for our first date. You're thinking of a few streets behind us."

You can ask my dad any question about how to get somewhere in the city and he will instantly map out a route in his mind. Whether you want to go from Harvard Square to Faneuil Hall, or from the Prudential Center to Fenway, you won't stump my dad. He is a true part of the city, a real Bostonian - the kind that always says he is taking the "Pike," and never the "Massachusetts Turnpike," out of the city. As a child, one of my biggest hopes was to one day feel as much a part of a city as my father did with Boston, so it's not surprising that a major determining factor in my college decision-making process was proximity to a city. Luckily for me, the school I chose had the name of an actual city included right in its address; there was no way I wouldn't avail myself of Loyola's location within the city of Baltimore. I couldn't wait to jump right in from day one, eager to explore every facet the city had to offer.

To my surprise, the first few months at college kept downtown quests limited to the mere occasional trip to the Inner Harbor. Every time my friends and I went "into the city," I couldn't help but think to myself "Wow, so this is Pratt Street...*again*." Every event would always be capped with a short cab ride back to campus, never truly living the essence of Baltimore. For some reason, I wasn't getting

excited about the thought of telling my kids, "Okay, so here we are at the Cheesecake Factory - oh, and about two steps that way, that's the ESPN Zone and...well...that's it, I guess." To add to my disappointment, the heavy burden of cab fare on the wallet seemed to be extinguishing any chances for my friends and me to see the true side of the city. So this is what four years at Loyola was going to be like? Extended periods of time on a sheltered campus, with the occasional visit to a "yupified" area downtown, was not exactly what I had in mind for learning a city inside and out. Ironically, a lack of cab fare one day was exactly what led me to my first step in tasting the true flavor of Baltimore.

It never occurred to me before, but if you want to experience the unadulterated side of the city, one way to do it is to take its public transportation a few stops down the line. It amazes me that such a mundane activity for many can be such an enlightening experience for one individual. My first experience with Baltimore's public transit came when I boarded the northbound light rail to get from Camden Yards back to Loyola. At a ticket cost of \$1.60, you simply can't beat a vehicle that will start you at Cromwell Station and bring you fourteen miles down the road to the end of the line at Timonium in under an hour.

Boarding the light rail, the predetermined impression I held of Baltimore's public transportation system held me at strict vigilance. The recurring buzz around Loyola was of how dangerous the city was. It seemed that every other day I would receive crime-update emails regarding the latest convenience store robbery or mugging. The majority of kids on campus didn't find the stories too surprising; for a city that had the highest murder rate in the U.S. for 2005 at 42.0 (based on cases per 100,000), these sorts of stories were expected. There was a constant fixation on how problematic our city was and how we should always be ready for somebody waiting to jump out and hurt us. Walking around a city with the sense that a time bomb could be waiting to explode around every corner creates a serious issue with making connection. Scarcely hearing any encouraging stories to offset the pessimism, my own preliminary views of the city were ultimately influenced. I caught myself slowly reaching down to check my wallet every thirty seconds, giving quick, skeptical glances to everyone surrounding me. I left nothing to chance, trusting the 60-year-old grandmother with the tired eyes no more than the 18-year-old kid with the baggy clothes. It was one of those situations where you did your absolute best not to look at everyone around you, but for some reason, your eyes insisted on betraying you.

During the first few stops, I sat motionless in my seat as I monitored the people running quickly on and off the car. From behind me, I could feel countless eyes piercing through the back of my head. Sitting there in my North Face jacket and jeans, I couldn't help but feel out of place. Here I was, sticking out like a sore thumb in a place that seemed to refuse to accept outsiders. I knew they were watching me just as closely as I was watching them.

Off to my left, I stared at a black woman with her five children running up and down the aisle. She sat there in her oversized jacket with hands clenched around a *National Enquirer*, never looking more than once every four stops to see whether or not her children had gotten off the rail. A few seats ahead of me, a man, or the figure of what appeared to be a man, remained motionless for the entirety of the ride. He was wrapped in a tattered woolen blanket with his head tucked out of sight. Behind me, an old woman started having a very disjointed conversation. When I turned

around to look, I realized that no one was having it with her. Immediately, I started to regret my decision of not taking a cab back to campus. I must have looked at that rail map a hundred times, every other second glancing back up to make sure it hadn't suddenly changed. All I wanted at that point in time was to jump up, hit that yellow stop tape, and be out of this cold, strange world.

Finally coming out of my fixation on the passengers, I suddenly realized that I had no clue as to where I was. Did the light rail work like a subway, where every stop is labeled and predetermined? Or did you have to know when you wanted to get off and be ready to hit the stop tape? Despite the conductor's attempts to announce the approaching streets over the crackling PA system, it was hopeless for me to try to understand what he was saying. The only stop marked on the light rail's map that I recognized was Penn Station. This became the new prevailing thought in my mind: Think of nothing else except getting to Penn Station. As the doors opened, another elderly woman walking unsteadily with a cane boarded the light rail. We began moving before she made it to a seat and instantly fell into everyone standing in the aisles. Angry, un pitying glances were shot at her in unison from across the car. Was this a regular passenger everyone was sick and tired of dealing with? Who was taking care of this old lady? My mind digressed to these questions only for a moment before I quickly redirected my attention to watching for Penn Station. "So much for connecting with Baltimore," I thought to myself. "Okay, University of Baltimore... all right. Penn Station should be next."

After a few more minutes, however, I realized we had stopped at a place called North Avenue. North Avenue - why did that name sound so familiar? All I knew was that, somehow, I had missed the stop for Penn Station. Panic immediately set in as I studied the map I had, by this point, memorized. There it was just as before: Penn Station printed clearly between University of Baltimore and North Avenue. There was that name again: North Avenue. Thinking I might recognize the location, I stepped off the light rail. My mind scrambled to make a connection with the stop until finally, it hit me just as the train was pulling out of sight: North Avenue was the location of a brutal shooting I had heard about on the news a few days before. Immediately, I turned around to check my surroundings. Nothing looked familiar and, to my horror, daylight was suddenly fading quicker than normal.

Immediately, I jumped to the other side of the tracks, standing on my tip-toes, hoping to see the approaching light of a southbound light rail. Never before in my first few months at college had I ever felt so vulnerable and isolated. What a joke it was for me to think I could learn a city as well as my father had learned Boston. Here I was, a few miles from campus, and yet I had no idea how to get back. Off to my right, I watched as a middle-aged, raggedly-dressed black man slowly approached to my side of the track. I did my best not to direct attention his way, but yet again, my eyes found it amusing to disobey me. Before I knew it, I was staring face to face with a man looking as if he had just stepped out of hell. His hair looked like something that had just been salvaged from moth balls in an attic, and his shoes looked like they had about two hundred thousand miles on them. Close up, his face looked exhausted with a rough-looking beard sticking out in odd places. His clothing was faded and worn with numerous tears on his jacket. Then I noticed an intensity in his eyes, but one that didn't appear to have some terrible motive behind it. "You look lost," he said to me. In my entire life, I can't remember stuttering as much as I did in that one instant.

"Y...yyyyyy...yees. Yyyyyyy-yyyuuuu you could say that," I replied, followed by an uneasy chuckle. The only thought in my mind was "Oh, my God, how much is this guy gonna take from me?"

"Well, where you tryin' to get to?" He asked.

"Thank God I'm wearing my brand new Nikes - How fast is the average human can run?" I thought to myself. "Pppp...Penn Station," I replied.

"Oh, well, you missed that stop if you were on the northbound rail just now."

"But the map said it's right in between -"

"I know, U. Baltimore and North Avenue right? Yea, well, technically it is. What they don't tell you is that you have to get off the light rail at U. Baltimore - Mt. Royal and take the shuttle to Penn Station."

"Oh, I didn't realize. No one told -"

"Yeah, this system isn't always the easiest to.. hey, are you all right?"

"Mmmm...me? I'm fine."

"It's just that you're all white in the face and...oh, Loyola," he said noticing my sweatshirt. "That where you're tryin' to go?"

I didn't look away from his face. I thought I had given him an answer when after a long pause he again said, "Hey, is that where you're tryin' to get to?"

"What? Oh...oh, yeah. I go to school there."

"Oh, well, you're not too far at all from.. wait a minute.. this is your first time on the light rail, isn't it?"

Not knowing what to say, after another long pause I said, "Yeah... yeah. I go to school at Loyola."

"Well, it's real easy to get back to Loyola from here. You had the right idea going to Penn Station. It's a straight shot cab ride from here."

Disregarding all senses, I found my shoulders finally relaxing and my hands loosening their painful grip on the keys and money in my pockets.

"Yeah, I hadn't thought about how I was gonna get back from Penn Station."

"Oh, well, if the driver tries to charge you more than eight bucks, he's screwin' ya. You know, if you don't mind my asking.. Are you nervous right now because you're not sure how to get back or because you're concerned about the area you're in?"

Again, my words were simply not working for me like normal.

"Www... well...yeah, a little of both I guess," I confessed with a half-smile.

"Well, I just told you how to get back, so that's not a problem. And regarding the other thing.. man you don't have to be worried that just because you're in what people say is a 'bad area', something bad is gonna happen to you. I been livin here most of my life and yes - I could tell you bout some scary shit I've seen in the past. You just have to be alert to your surroundings, that's all. The way I see it...the more freaked out you look, the more vulnerable it makes you look to other people."

"Yeah, I've just heard about a lot of bad stories in this city, that's all. It seems like everything people tell me about Baltimore is purely negative."

"Man, you gotta understand that you are in a city that's just like any other city. No place is perfect - everywhere you'll be able to find both bad and good. It's a matter of who you associate yourself with that's important. Can't tell you how many times I've seen college kids out here like you, scared out of their minds cause they

thought they made a mistake in goin' to school here. There's a lot of good to be found in this place, and if you're not careful, you'll miss it like too many other people."

I couldn't help but take an honest look into what he was saying. The entire time I had spent on the light rail I had been dwelling on the dangerous aspects of the city. I couldn't get Loyola's horror stories or infinite warnings about the city out of my head. Finally, I was realizing that my true problem with the city was, instead, a fear that I would not be able to connect with it like I wanted to. How had my father done it when he was younger? Was Boston that much safer than Baltimore?

"All right, man, here comes the rail you want now. Just take this back one stop to Mt. Royal and wait there for the shuttle to take you to Penn Station. It's real easy, you're almost right there. See that? You already know a little more bout the city you now live in, man. Don't be scared...just be smart."

I will never forget these last words he said to me before we parted ways. "Don't be scared...just be smart." A part of me wondered whether or not this encounter had been some kind of dream all along. At that moment, I had no idea what to say to this man. Not only was I on the right track again back to Loyola, but I was also on the right track back to opening up to a city as my father had during college.

"Thanks for everything..." I began to say as I offered him a handshake.

"Nothing at all. Good luck at school."

As he walked away, I felt the need to take my first step into becoming a true part of the city. I debated with myself over whether to say something else until just before he rounded the corner and out of sight, when I yelled out, "Hey, what's your name?"

"My name's George...Yours?"

"Mike."

"Well, it was nice meeting you, Mike. See ya round."

Every time my friends now tell me they're going in to Baltimore, I think back to the time I met George. In taking a single trip on the light rail, the false impressions that I held of Baltimore had been completely reversed. I finally discovered that my original fears had been based entirely on the perspectives of others. Permitting my mind to shut out any alternative views was the deadly factor in preventing new connections. In other words, the fear to even entertain the possibility that this city is not as extreme as it's made out to be, would have paralyzed my ability to ever become truly immersed in its culture. Every time I hear the negative stereotypes about Baltimore, I just think to myself, exactly what George told me: "Don't be scared...just be smart." It had been this simple all along, yet it took a stranger to reveal it to me. Had I not taken the light rail just one stop past where I was going, I may have entirely missed out on becoming a part of one of America's great cities.

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An In Between Place

By Kimmi Quintano

Neither wholly of Earth nor wholly of Heaven, but a bridge connecting both...an in-between place.
T.A. Barron

I pick up an old photograph of my sisters and me sitting three in a row with our hair in braids on our back porch, and it sparks my train of thought. How many times have I sat on those steps—to play a game, to read a book, to wait for a friend? How many other purposes has my back porch served in my life as I grew up? What purposes have others found their porches to serve? My back porch was a gateway to my back yard; what about those people whose front steps lead to concrete, not grass? My mind turns to the city. Porches are found on homes located across the country in rural and suburban residential areas; stoops, their cousins, remain primarily, if not solely, in urban areas. So then, what about a city stoop? What purpose does it serve? It is a place to sit and observe, a place from which one can make a profit, and a place where friends can gather together. It is a place from which young children laugh, run, and fool around, a place where grumpy old men sit and yell with raspy voices at the people who pass. It is a place where one can settle down in peaceful solitude yet never have people out of one's sight. It is a place where one can be surrounded by others, be visible, and yet, never feel more invisible. It is a liminal space, a place in between, serving as a transition from the home to the outside world, a part of one's own property while belonging, almost equally, to the surrounding community. A simple city stoop: home to all these places.

Historically, stoops entered into American architectural culture by means of the Dutch who settled in New York. "A small porch," a stoop serves as an entranceway, from the street and into the home. According to Tony the Tour Guide, a representative of NYC & Company, the official tourism campaign of the city, "the major contribution of the Dutch to our city's architecture, a New York stoop is far more than a series of stone steps leading to a house. To millions of working-class New Yorkers, it has been a place to relax, socialize, people-watch and play street games."

I grew up in Eastchester, a great town with porches galore, in the suburbs just outside New York City. I had a bicycle, a basketball hoop, and a backyard, complete with sandbox and swing set. What I didn't have was a stoop. Growing up in the suburbs, I have not had the same firsthand experience with city stoops that many of my friends, born and bred in cities, have. The thing is, however, I'm not in Eastchester anymore. Leaving home for college has opened up a world of opportunities for me. I'm in Baltimore, now. "The real Baltimore," as declared by Carol L. Bowers of the *Washington Post*, "where people drop the 'T' in their

hometown name, do their dishes in the 'zinc,' have pastoral scenes painted on their window screens and, in the hot summertime, sit on the marble front stoops of their rowhouses praying for a cool breeze." While I never had a stoop to call my own, I intend, through my own "porch experiences," the stories of my friends, some research, and my new experiences here in Baltimore, to attempt to piece the multi-faceted life of a stoop together.

What is one use of a city stoop? A stoop is a gathering place; it is a site of social rendezvous, where one can interact with countless people: neighbors, friends, and relatives. "In the city in the summer, it is too hot to stay indoors, so everyone would go out and sit on their stoop all day," a friend of mine who has spent nearly her entire life living in lower Manhattan, with her very own stoop, tells me. Passing through a residential urban area, you cannot miss it; walk far enough and you will not only find a stoop, but you will discover that it is occupied.

As I walked down Charles Street with two friends on an overcast, yet surprisingly warm, spring afternoon, I couldn't help but notice the series of rowhouses, complete with stoops, which we passed. True to my prediction, before too long, we passed a stoop that was occupied, even on such a cloudy day. A man and a woman sat together, taking in the day, watching people as they ambled by, simply enjoying each others' presence. By the time my friends and I had reached our destination, an artsy little crepe restaurant, and were ready to walk back, an hour or so had passed and a light rain had begun to fall from the sky. Surely, with the rain, I wouldn't see anyone else sitting out on their stoops, would I? To my surprise, I was wrong. A few blocks from the restaurant, I again spotted people sitting out on a stoop, this time two women, enjoying their conversation together too much to go inside to escape the rain. The allure of the structure and the social interaction that it inspires, it seems, has a pull to it that people may often find hard to resist.

Countless movies, television programs, articles, and images reinforce this idea—the stoop as a gathering place. Who can deny that 123 Sesame Street stoop was a popular place for famous characters, such as the lovable Big Bird, to gather with other residents of Sesame Street? Joseph Rodrigues depicts four women gathered with their children, seven in total, sitting on a stoop. Justin Hall, the "founding father of personal blogging" according to the *New York Times Magazine*, while on a trip through Baltimore, took several photographs that also illustrate some of the several different uses of stoops. In one of his photographs, a young child plays along the sidewalk with a small toy, while three women, one of whom is presumably the child's mother, sit on the stoops beside him, reading, watching, and talking. Stoops serve not only as an escape for adults from the confines of an overcrowded, too-hot abode, but are also a setting in which countless children are raised; they play in the streets with neighboring children while their mothers sit and watch from a stoop, catching up on the local gossip.

Children in urban areas have always been very good at adapting common childhood games or sports, usually requiring large amounts of space, to the smaller, more confined spaces made available to them. After World War II, an adaptation of baseball, known today as stoop ball, became increasingly popular in Brooklyn. Rather than hitting the ball with a bat, in stoop ball, the "batter" instead pitches the ball towards the steps of a stoop. Depending on the quality of the throw,

determined by the number of times the ball bounces before being caught, the "batter" is awarded runs.

We all—regardless of who or what else we may define ourselves to be and regardless of age—take pleasure in human interaction, whether at a distance or up close and personal. Just as children in cities have learned to adapt their forms of entertainment to include the use of the stoop, so, too, have countless adults, living within the same confines. We like to people watch; we like to maintain a sense of connection with others while still remaining on our own. This, in my observances, is heightened in an urban setting as opposed to rural or suburban, because of the desire one feels to escape the extreme busyness of the city, while still not wishing to be completely isolated. With people constantly on the move to get here or there and do this or that, oftentimes a person just needs to be able to take a step back and take a moment to take in everything. Stoops serve this purpose perfectly. The same friend, an expert it would seem on the role of stoops in city life, tells me that "all the neighboring brownstones also had stoops, and their residents would also sit out on the stoops and we would yell across to them...there was nothing better to do on a hot summer day in the city than sit on your front stoop with an ice cream cone and people watch." They, like the first couple I saw on my walk down Charles Street, experience human connection without the requirement of physically interacting.

As I scour the internet, searching for images of stoops, I stumble upon an image of a sign proclaiming a "Mega Stoop Sale." Curious as to what, exactly, this may be, I research it further. Have the uses of stoops extended even further than I originally thought? Have they extended into the world of business and commerce? I look at more pictures and realize that stoop sales are much like the yard sales of suburbia. Once again, city-dwellers have adapted suburban practices and customs, such as the yard sale, to function within the more curbed spaces with which they have to work. Junk is piled up onto tables set up on the sidewalk in front of the stoop, often spilling over onto the steps of the stoop itself. "The stoop sale," according to Todd Levin, a Brooklyn resident with a stoop of his own, "is a Brooklyn phenomenon....Perhaps the finest privilege the stoop holds for its owners is the real estate mercantile birthright - the stoop sale." I add "place of commerce" to my mental list of purposes served by a city stoop. Could there be more? Now, I'm sure of it.

I think further. So far I have come to the resolution that stoops serve as countless different things: physical, transitory places, connecting the street to the home; communal gathering places; sources of recreation both for children, in games such as stoop ball, and for adults, in the common practice of people-watching; as places of commerce. What else? I think about what a stoop physically is. Neatly maintained wooden planks, polished stone, crumbling bricks, or cracked cement slabs, a stoop is a set of steps leading to the entrance of a building, typically a home—but not necessarily so. In collaboration with a local organization, my Church helped to distribute food, clothing, and other much needed supplies to the homeless in Manhattan. Our small caravan of cars drove into the city a few hours before midnight, when the homeless are most easily found, as they are not busy trying to find work. We would find them sleeping on benches, ledges, and, yes, even on the stoops of churches and other buildings. I mentally add another quality of a stoop to my list. A stoop may, in itself, be a home. I look back at the

conversation I had with my friend: "There was a gate at the bottom of the stoop and my brother and I would make friends with the homeless people on the other side of the gate, as long as the gate was closed."

Homelessness is a problem rampant in cities around the world. In 2005, two organizations, Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc. and the Center for Poverty Solutions, worked together to obtain a census detailing homelessness in Baltimore City. Employing one hundred volunteers to scour the city, counting people and administering surveys, the census revealed that a total of 2,943 individuals were living without homes in the city. Of these 2,943 people, 583 were living out on the streets. With no shelter to call home, these men and women must make do with whatever space they can find each night, whether it be a street corner, a park bench, the steps of a church, or the stoop of a rowhouse. These places all serve as homes for the homeless: until the problem of homelessness has been completely eradicated, they will continue to do so, much to the chagrin of stoop owners who would prefer that their stoops remain unoccupied at night.

The word *stoop* itself comes from the Dutch word *stoepo*, meaning flight of steps. Wanting to uncover more about the word, I look up the etymology of *step* as well. The word *step*, as a verb, is the source of the noun. To step means to take an "action which leads toward a result." Steps take you places. Thus, it would seem to follow that stoops, because they are essentially a set of steps, should lead one toward some destination. I, however, have to disagree. Although I have found stoops opening several different horizons for city dwellers, I must argue that, despite everything they provide those who own them with, stoops remain inherently limiting.

Recalling a cartoon from my childhood, "Hey, Arnold," I consider one of its characters, a boy nicknamed "Stoop Kid." "Stoop Kid's afraid to leave his stoop!" other children shout. Stoop Kid, though he has the front of a bully, finds he is unable to leave the comfort of his stoop and venture out into the world. He is, essentially, the ultimate people-watcher, spending his entire day, every day, harassing individuals if they get too close to his beloved stoop.

While people-watching can be a static source of human interaction, more is needed; dynamism is essential. We cannot just sit back on a stoop and watch as other people's lives pass us by; or, before we know it, our own lives, too, will have passed us by. While stoops can provide for a great many things, they cannot be our only place in life. A stoop needs to remain a liminal place, somewhere in between the home and the surrounding world. At some point, everyone must gather up the courage, like Stoop Kid, to leave their stoops and embrace the rest of the world. Perhaps it is time now for me, as well, to get up off of my stoop in life and to begin to really and truly explore the surrounding world. Who knows, maybe I can even coax a few others off their stoops on my way.

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Believe, right?

by Daniel Keenan

I met poverty for the first time on my birthday. It was late August, and I was in the premier section of Baltimore city—the Inner Harbor. I looked poverty in the eye. I smelt it. I became inundated with it. All of my senses were sending the same signal: *This couldn't be happening*. "Not here," I told myself. "How could a place like this exist in what the surrounding benches echoed as 'The Greatest City in America?'" Poverty was a refugee camp. Or that's what it appeared to be in a park adjacent to St. Vincent de Paul Church. Poverty reeked of urine, poverty littered the ground with syringes, and poverty barely kept hanging the tarp tents that "housed" only a few dozen of the nearly three thousand who call the concrete and cardboard of Baltimore's streets their home every single night.

The people lined up—black, white, men, women, and children. All were disheveled and filthy, but upbeat—I remember that particularly. Someone pulled out a boom box. There was some laughter, socializing, and even verbal fighting, as these people waited in line for sandwiches I had helped prepare only an hour ago. "One sandwich and one packet of crackers per person, first," we were told, "and then if there is enough we will give out seconds." Until that day I had never known what it felt like to look someone in the eye, some people twice my age, at the lowest point of their lives, and tell them we were all out of food for the evening, or that there were no seconds being handed out that afternoon. It was heart-wrenching. The cars on that busy road flew by. It was almost deafening. It drowned out some conversation. But it was not loud enough to drown out the realization, in my mind, that poverty, as I learned that afternoon, was unbiased.

Poverty and homelessness are both hidden, but they play a huge role in the city of Baltimore's daily routine as debilitating features, even if seen by only a handful of people. Tent City, as I referred to it, is only a few blocks away from the Harbor. But you wouldn't know it. City planners have done a good job in setting it off to the side—leaving these people with their only option: settling into their makeshift homes on a plot of hard-packed dirt and roots alongside the point at which North President Street becomes the Jones Falls Expressway. One of the busiest roads in downtown Baltimore becomes Interstate 83 in the blink of an eye. And if you turn your head to the right, ladies and gentlemen, you might catch a glimpse of just one of the blue tarp mounds, because from that vantage point that is all they are. It does not quite register that, yes, those are people coming out of those tents, if you can even call those shanties that. And just like that, the park is out of sight—in the blink of an eye.

In a way, I can't blame you for this fact. It is not an accident that this "reality" is kept as toned down as possible. The city administrators would not have it any other way. You see, the program I was taking part in was Care-a-Van, and we were delivering sandwiches to a group of Baltimore's impoverished. (Loyola

students have been doing this every Monday for quite a few years now). I had no idea at the time how close we were to the Inner Harbor, probably the hippest part of Baltimore nor did I know that this church that lay adjacent to the dirt lot was across the street from none other than Power Plant Live. You would not know it existed if you did not look past the brilliant neon lights of that establishment. It is like everyone is kept in the dark—literally. The lights blind you to what is behind it. And who would cross that street's freeway-like traffic? It is almost as if the road acted as a barrier to the true Baltimore city.

But what did it matter? I was an outsider, from New Hampshire, and had no idea how to handle such a somber situation. As an outsider, however, I would be expected not to see any of this. Nevertheless, as I discovered, I could be a local resident and still be in the uninformed state that I was during my service immersion trip. The trip called into question, among other things, certain arguments that different demographic groups of people were making about the city of Baltimore. Baltimore is such a diverse city with a diversity of problems to coincide with it. Yet like every city, its beauty is exploited to create facades that overshadow what lies beneath. We see the façade, but we respond to it like a tour book. We want simply to dip in quickly and then get out. We don't want to dive in, usually because we don't know what lies around the corner; we do not want to find out what lies around that corner. We see the city in the way those in charge make an argument for that city. So out of curiosity, I found, but not to my surprise, crabs, the Orioles, Fells Point, and the Inner Harbor. It could not be any clearer—the argument those in authority were trying proactively to promote included all of these things. It was so obvious. And to that end, I feel they should be commended.

I do not feel as though an argument on the city's highlights can be made (properly), however, unless an argument is made alongside for what I refer to as the city of Baltimore's "reality." But to this end there have been mixed responses. The method by which those in charge of the city have started to address the reality that Baltimore has a severe poverty problem and homelessness pandemic has been, to say the least, unconventional. In fact, you wouldn't even know a lot about the homelessness crisis. It is hard to say that a lot of Baltimoreans even know. And in a way the government should, again, gleam with pride—for they played a huge role in hiding this blemish.

It is a fact: one in three children in Baltimore live in poverty. With inadequate incomes to properly sustain families, single parents and their children barely scrimp together enough to afford even the most meager places to call home, often only for a month. The "typical" homeless family consists of a mother, usually less than thirty years old, with at least two children. And eighty percent of children under eighteen years of age live with a parent in a shelter (Nat. Health Care for the Homeless Council). The average age of these children is five years old.

The city's response? Effectively setting into motion a multi-year timetable to shrink the zone of "low-income" housing. The result? A magnificent thirty-foot billboard with an artist's rendering of the new "projects": one housing a six-figure income and an SUV parked outside. Affordable housing was the number one unmet need of all impoverished people surveyed in a "homeless census" in both 2003 and 2005. And what is something that will not change, no matter what luxury car is parked outside? The facts that the same people who were "relocated" will still

surround these new developments. But then where are all of these people going to go? It is a scary thought—but even they do not know. And the realization that more people are going to be homeless only drives city proponents to create more facades to hide this fact.

Take, as another example, the Homeless Census taken on January 30, 2005: 2,943 people were counted homeless, whether on the street or in temporary shelters (Health Department). And of that, on an average day 800 to 1200 homeless people are served a block away from one of Baltimore's busiest streets, Maryland Avenue, at Our Daily Bread. The line out the door of this soup kitchen is staggering, but not hidden to the public—yet. Down on Maryland Avenue also is the Franciscan Center, Maryland's first large-scale organization to serve the homeless. Their lines no longer process along the busy street. They have been moved out to the rear of the building. There have been other subtler yet poignant actions to clear out the homeless. Even the location of Care-a-Van was the subject of scrutiny. At one point food was given out in front of City Hall until the group was hit with an injunction to obtain a food license, which sent them to the filthy park they now arrive at every Monday afternoon.

So I find it difficult to make an argument *for* Baltimore without doing so, first, for those who have been at the lowest point of their lives, and for those who have been pushed out of areas once deemed as low-income to make way for another beautification process or high-income housing. It might seem ironic that an outsider forms such a solemn opinion about a city I am just getting to properly know. However, it shocks me to see how much residents would rather promote adding a third arm to park benches, so a person cannot lie down, or spend tens of thousands of dollars on metal staking around their library to deter loitering and continue to hide a problem so prevalent in Baltimore's day-to-day routine.

Actions touted as resolving the issue continue to divide the city and to add to the indifference that poverty faces every day. Many in Baltimore are unresponsive; others have responded swiftly—taking the side of the city's government and planners in finding ways to cover up poverty and homelessness. I would like to believe this lack of change could be altered. I would like to believe in the city of Baltimore. I would like to believe in the people of Baltimore, and I wish they would believe in themselves and their ability to alter their lack of concern and change it into innovation. Through this renunciation of their "bystander status," through formulating an argument for these issues, they could be effective in making positive and long-lasting strides in public policy regarding the ailments of poverty and homelessness in their city.

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Immigrant Toil The Lifeblood of Baltimore Industry

By Matthew Sowa

Throughout our history, immigrants have come to America, established themselves and been joined by other members of their families. That process has brought us energetic individuals and strong families who have enriched our economy and way of life.

Stewart Anderson
Director of Trade and Immigration Studies, Cato Institute
(Federation for American Immigration Reform 6)

Until I began my life as an undergraduate at Loyola in Baltimore, I always felt as though my parents and my sister cherished memories of Charm City that I could never hold. My father spent fourteen years in Baltimore; his undergraduate studies began in 1973, and his post-graduate fellowship ended in 1987. During those years, he married my mother, and she moved to Baltimore, accepting a teaching job in the city, and years later giving birth to my older sister at Johns Hopkins Hospital. As a young child I spent hours pouring over photographer Roger Miller's *Baltimore a Portrait*, a large glossy picture book my mother kept on the coffee table. Of course, my parents returned to the Star-Spangled Banner City with me and my twin sister so many times that I could become a tour guide. Our outings included multiple trips to interesting destinations: The Baltimore Museum of Art, Walters Art Gallery, The Carroll Mansion, the Shot Tower, Fort McHenry, the Baltimore Zoo, the U.S. Frigate Constellation, and the National Aquarium. However, as a native Delawarean, I still lacked the personal experience to identify Baltimore as the City of Neighborhoods, communities with strong ethnic ties, and as the Liverpool of America, an industrial harbor, until I took a taxi ride to the Baltimore Museum of Industry. After touring the Baltimore Museum of Industry, I realized the important role industry played in Baltimore's economic development, and I was intrigued by the key role immigrants played in the development of Baltimore's industry and business community and in the formation of its neighborhoods. The toil of immigrants, the lifeblood of early industry, helped catapult Baltimore to the forefront as a major center of international trade and commerce.

My assignment was to visit the Baltimore Museum of Industry with three of my classmates, but on a sunny, relatively warm mid-November day, only extreme willpower prevented me from yelling to the cabbie to let me out as we whisked past

the Inner Harbor. Once we exited Light Street and turned onto Key Highway, my restraint wearing thin, I was about to order the driver to follow the signs to Fort McHenry when my eye caught a sight that could have been one of Roger Miller's photographs: a row of brick townhouses with gleaming white marble steps. As I recalled the history of Fells Point, the concept of Baltimore as a City of Neighborhoods suddenly made sense. Many of the neighborhoods grew from pockets of immigrants, with similar ethnic and religious backgrounds, and their descendants and the offspring of slaves, unwilling immigrants, who found work in the local industries. I was now motivated to go to the Baltimore Museum of Industry, a site I had never before visited, as a sign of respect to all of the past and present immigrant workers and their families who inhabited the neighborhoods that surround the harbor. The toil of immigrant families in the nearby industries and on the harbor docks helped make Baltimore a world-class city.

As my classmates and I walked into the museum parking lot, I fixed my attention on a towering, rusty, red crane from the abandoned Bethlehem Steel Key Highway Shipyard proudly flying an oversized, tattered, but vibrant fifty-star flag. Before the plant closed in the early 1980s, the once thriving shipyard employed about 1,500 manual workers, but met financial ruin because of foreign competition. Although the workers made sacrificial wage and benefit concessions, the yard folded in 1983 (Fee 241). I recognized that the crane makes a fitting flag pole since the Bethlehem Steel plant repaired WWII Liberty Ships, but I also wondered if the industry that added to the growth and vibrancy of the city also tattered the bodies and souls of its laborers.

As I faced the wharf, I realized that another defunct industry, Allied Chemical, helped alter the view and composition of the opposite harbor. The skyline is almost divided in half: to the right are old buildings and industrial activity punctuated by the Domino Sugar plant, in the center of the far harbor is a line of riprap protecting the newly-converted industrial buildings, and to the left gleam the modern high-rise complexes, the new neighborhoods of the upwardly mobile. Unlike the neighborhoods of old, bound by ethnic and religious ties, the new neighborhoods meld many ethnicities; however, each family or individual living in a high-rise or neighborhood shares a similar socio-economic status. As I turned toward the entrance of the museum, my attention focused on several sculptures made from parts of worn, hard-working industrial machinery. The pieces of modern art, like the hard-working immigrants and their descendants, blend and join together to become part of the living renaissance of Baltimore.

Stepping into the Baltimore Museum of Industry, I noticed a large painting of a working boat, belonging to the Curtis Bay Towing Company, hanging behind the information and membership desk manned by a new employee, Charles Burkhardt. His friendly greeting, "Jes take sum museum maps frum ar torst's table," prompted me to ask if he was a native of Baltimore. When he answered, "I'm a lifelong rezdent of Locust Point: my intire famlee lives h'air," I stood dumbfounded, not because of his "Baltimorese" accent, but because I recalled the words of a Baltimore mayor and Maryland governor:

Ask a Baltimorean where he's from and he'll say "Highlandtown," or "Park Heights" or "Bolton Hill" or "Cherry Hill" or "Charles Village" or "Reservoir Hill" or "Forest Park" or "Pigtown." Neighborhoods. Places where we live with pride.

--William Donald Schaefer, Mayor

(Baltimore a Portrait 7)

This young man proudly lives and works in the neighborhood where the Baltimore Museum of Industry stands. I then realized, without even moving past the lobby of the museum, why Baltimore is called the City of Neighborhoods.

Moving into the exhibit area, the visitor quickly learns that the Museum of Industry is housed in the historic 1865 Platt and Company oyster cannery and contains an interesting "mini-factory." The cannery moved from New York to Baltimore to be geographically closer to the fine oysters of the Chesapeake Bay. By the 1870s, Baltimore became the cannery leader of the world. Canneries, packing a variety of foods, expanded in Fells Point, Canton, Federal Hill, and Locust Point. Bosses paid oyster shuckers tokens for every basket they shucked. Freed slaves and their children and grandchildren often performed these tasks. Many other immigrant laborers such as garment and cannery workers were also paid by tokens made of metal (or cloth if the employer was cheap). The tokens were usually worth only a few cents and could be exchanged for cash or goods. Their compensation was very small for the onerously dangerous tasks they endured (Fee 241). The payment of tokens brings back my grandmother's stories about her family living in poverty because, as immigrants working as anthracite coal miners, they were paid in credits that could only be redeemed at the company store. Often they paid premium prices for inferior housing and products; thus, breaking the cycle of poverty was very difficult. As I looked at the pictures of these workers, I prayed that, like both my mother's and father's immigrant grandparents, their backbreaking work helped elevate their descendants to a better life.

Just as haunting as the African-American shuckers are the pictures of very young children working on the cannery assembly lines. These children, like my great-grandfather, a breaker boy in the coal mines at age seven, worked long hours in dangerous conditions before child labor laws were enforced. The pictures did not reveal the disfigurement of maimed fingers and limbs so often associated with assembly line work. Many immigrant children, not able to enjoy the benefit of formal schooling, often earned their keep by working in industry.

The pictures of the factory laborers gave me chills as I remembered passages from *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, a native Baltimorean. While his novel depicts the inhumane conditions immigrants faced in the Chicago meat-packing industry and canneries, his themes had universal implications regarding American immigrants living and working in American cities. His novel made me understand why immigrants and poor descendants of slaves feared unionization and ignored mistreatment. Sinclair contended self-preservation prevented them from addressing their own human tragedy: "It's difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it" ("Upton Sinclair" 3).

Without laws or unions to protect laborers, the Industrial Revolution often encouraged bosses to view human bodies as expendable extensions of the machines that needed to be driven to increase production; however, the industrial age also

created many opportunities for immigrants. Immigrants usually had an easier time adjusting to life in industrial cities because they lived and worked with other people who shared their language, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. They clustered in new neighborhoods building churches and markets that made them feel at home. Often, their children and grandchildren discovered educational opportunities that could only be found in urban settings. According to author Jo Ann E. Argersinger, Baltimore grew from a commercial to an industrial city in the late 1800s, and the city's population almost doubled between 1870 and 1900: "Residential segregation joined industrial development to give the city new shape and identity, as ethnic enclaves emerged and nascent industries redrew Baltimore's boundaries of opportunity and economic growth." As more immigrants needed houses and other goods, the local economy grew, increasing demand for even more workers. Often, immigrants sponsored other family members from their homelands to relocate in Baltimore to find jobs, and the new family members also settled in the same neighborhoods. Thus, even today, many neighborhoods have their own ethnic flair. Baltimore's neighborhood fairs are famous for their ethnic foods, music, and activities. As I explore Baltimore, I can sense that the original pride of immigrants transcends generations.

The growth of Baltimore industry not only created factory and shipping jobs, but it also fostered a new career path—engineering. Engineers were needed to design and operate a variety of machinery. As more machines were invented and manufactured, demand for engineers increased. By the late 19th century, vocational schools and university training flourished in industrial cities. Bright children of immigrants, whose families sacrificed to send them for vocational training, often found great success in the competitive industrial markets. As an industrial city, many new opportunities arose for engineers in Baltimore. A truth that my family learned as immigrants remains valid today: Education and hard work remain the keys for upward mobility.

While most immigrants found backbreaking jobs in shipping and industry, some immigrants found success in other areas. Louis Blaustein, a Russian immigrant, came to Baltimore in 1910. He borrowed funds to start the "American Oil Company," distributing kerosene from the back of a horse-drawn wagon. Unlike the other distributors who used wooden barrels to transport their kerosene, Mr. Blaustein used metal tanks. He helped educate his son, Jacob, to become a chemist, and his son developed the first premium gasoline. The Blausteins' company quickly grew and became known as Amoco. The Amoco product was so superior that even Charles Lindberg used Amoco gasoline in 1927 to fly his airplane on the historic flight from New York to Paris. In a very real way, Baltimore's neighborhoods and immigrant-driven industries extended across the ocean. Gilbert Sandler, author of [The Neighborhood: The Story of Baltimore's Little Italy and Jewish Baltimore](#), explained that Jacob Blaustein, one of Baltimore's leading industrialists, gave back to the city that allowed his immigrant family to prosper by becoming a public servant and one of Baltimore's great philanthropists. The profits of a father's and son's toil were shared on many levels.

Like the Blaustein father and son team, many immigrants found success by working as a family unit. When Charles Hoffberger, an immigrant from Poland, became an independent ice man in 1892, his family worked in the business, too.

Along with ice, they sold coal and wood. As his seven children and grandchildren worked, they expanded the business and built an ice plant and cold storage facility. The Hoffbergers understood that the advances in refrigeration would make portions of their ice business obsolete, so they further expanded the business. By 1957, the family business became an oil company, servicing many of their same customers and further expanding the business. Within years, the company founded by an immigrant would become a substantial holding of Gulf Oil. Mr. Hoffberger and his family lived the Baltimore Dream.

As each student, visitor, or resident enjoys the city of Baltimore, they should remember that many immigrants with a Herculean work ethic, but with only work-weary mortal muscles, helped develop the city. Industry and immigrants still need each other so that both can grow and prosper. Baltimore's neighborhoods became unique because of the ethnic flair that each group of immigrants brought with them. As new immigrants join Baltimore's work force and neighborhoods, they, too, will add the profits of toil and local color to Charm City.

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How to Save a Life

by Michelle Lian

The diversity of Baltimore streaks through in vast colors. It is a city full of exhilaration and excitement—unique in every aspect of the word. Much more than just the bushels of crabs and the friendly faces, Baltimore is a city of opportunity—opportunity for both success and failure. As freshmen, you must recognize and accept both extremes in the spectrum because doing so will make you better people.

"If you wind up on York Road late at night, be sure to run around and head back quickly"—our first words from the wise as freshmen at Loyola. Needless to say, you will hear these words many times as well. They made it clear to us we should not, under any circumstances, find ourselves wandering around over on York Road. But what if we lived there? What about the children without the choice to live elsewhere? The children, younger than ourselves, who eat their breakfast, and cut their hair, and go to school on York Road—how can they just "turn around and head back quickly"? The truth of the matter is they can't.

I'm tired. I'm tired of teaching children who tell me how their mothers beat them. I'm tired of seeing a child who wants so much more than he'll ever have. I'm tired of hearing the hopeless cries and the stories of destitution and impoverishment. I'm tired of hearing the fear of amounting to nothing from a five-year-old. Baltimore's Guilford Elementary School exhausts me. All the while, I can only wonder how tired are they? I'd like to think my three hours with children once a week will change all that, but who am I kidding? If they don't believe in themselves, how can they ever achieve? But I don't blame them for not believing in themselves. The feeling of hopelessness was instilled in them from the day they were born.

I ask DeArra, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Her eyes drop down, and her cheeks fill with a fiery red. Confused, I call her name. She looks up, and I see the tears welling up behind her eyes. She doesn't answer...I wait...Still nothing. "You can be whatever you want, DeArra."

Elijah spurts out, "Who the hell are you kidding. We won't even make it to high school!" (Jackson)

And that was it.

My heart sank and a feeling of nausea swept over me. What could I possibly say to that? At eight years old, Elijah was already setting limits for himself, predicting his failure. I felt myself lose them. I had no grip and they were slipping away. I wanted so much for them, but I didn't even know where to start.

Vittoria DiProspero and Marie Goff helped lead me in the right direction, and they can do the same for you. These two women lead the Community Service Council at Loyola. They give their time, energy, and love to those in need. When I was confused, I found refuge in the Community Service Council; they helped me see that these children were full of potential. Vittoria and Marie brought me into the poverty-stricken parts of the city. They showed me exactly what needed improvement. It was right in front of my eyes; it was undeniable. The children needed me. If you spend five minutes with them, you will see that too. They chose to come to Loyola because it offered so many opportunities for service. You chose this, too. By choosing Loyola, you chose the Jesuit Mission:

Loyola College in Maryland is a Jesuit Catholic university committed to the educational and spiritual traditions of the Society of Jesus and to the ideals of liberal education and the development of the whole person. Accordingly, the College will inspire students to learn, lead and serve in a diverse and changing world. (A Jesuit Institution)

As freshmen, you have a moral responsibility; it is your obligation not only to "lead and serve in a diverse and changing world" but also to cultivate your character. You have the chance to start over and to help others do the same. You can change a life; you can make a difference. Wouldn't it be great to know that you helped make Baltimore a better place to live?

You may wonder why your time matters so much to a child. It matters because these children are given nothing. Most are lucky enough to be fully-dressed when they come to school. Many don't even have a winter coat. Can you imagine your life like that? They can't imagine their lives any other way. One minute that you spend with them feels like an eternity; it gives them hope to know that someone out there cares about them. Suddenly their lives become meaningful. Without the commitment from people like you and me, the children face tremendous difficulties. When the children at Guilford struggle, the entire city of Baltimore struggles. As Martin Luther King stated, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly" (266).

Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. You helping a single child will make Baltimore a better place for everyone. Through service, you can develop yourself and others as a whole

Don't do it because you think it will look good on a resume, or because your mother said you had to. Do it because when you see the smile on that child's face you know there's nothing better in the world. Do it because when you look into their eyes you see nothing but endless miles of innocence. Do it because you care. Do it for them.

There is so much of the world that children like DeArra and Elijah won't be able to experience. A part of their life is lost and will probably never be found. Half of them experience more trauma in one year than most of us do in a lifetime. They are selfless, only because they don't know anything else. They spill heart-wrenching stories that force me to realize my time with them is well spent; I hate to see them experience so much pain. They don't deserve it, yet they have no choice. Forced into

their living conditions, they go through life the only way they know how. You can change that.

Please, change that.

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Feasting at Faidley's

by Michael Schraml

Seafood in Baltimore is much more than the catch of the day. Having been born and bred in Baltimore, I have had seafood as part of my diet since I was a toddler. It has become a staple in my eating repertoire, as well as for countless other native Baltimoreans. My favorite type of seafood dining is delving into a mound of hot, juicy, steamed crabs caught fresh from the nearby Chesapeake Bay. People from other parts of the country must find our cravings for these delectable crustaceans to be a little strange. For native Baltimoreans, the song "Crabs for Christmas" by Honky Tonk Confidential is not too far-fetched. We eat crabs all year long as echoed in the lines of the song: "Oh, I want crabs for Christmas/Oh, only crabs will do/Oh, I want crabs for Christmas/My Christmas bushel come true" (Honky Tonk). It does not take long for tourists to catch the "fever" and ask where to get the best seafood when they visit Baltimore. They are often overwhelmed by the number of choices. Seafood symbolizes the livelihood of countless watermen, distributors, and restaurateurs. It is an integral part of the economy and culture of the state of Maryland and the city of Baltimore. One of the most well-known places to sample Maryland seafood is Faidley's in Lexington Market, located in the heart of Baltimore City.

I had not traveled to Lexington Market or visited Faidley's in over a decade. The first challenge was finding someplace to park. Hoping to parallel park with more success than usual, I pulled into a spot right by the market entrance to Faidley's seafood. Many people were mulling around the area near the market on this cloudy Saturday afternoon. The crowd of shoppers demonstrates that the city is vibrant and thriving. The market was buzzing with activity despite the dreary weather. Immediately upon entering, my eyes were drawn to the awards on the wall announcing that Faidley's had been voted as having the "Best Crab Cakes in Baltimore" by *Baltimore Magazine* in 1989 and throughout the 1990's. Every kind of fresh seafood imaginable was available for sale. The seafood was carefully laid on top of the ice. However, the raw bar and the prepared food were the biggest attractions.

Just as I expected, there was a long line of people ordering food. Men, women, and children of every ethnicity and race were eagerly waiting for their turn to order. Crab cakes seemed to be the most popular item. Lumps of crab were protruding from the crab cakes that were the size of baseballs. I deliberated about what to order. Would I go with the crowd and order a crab cake even though I had one elsewhere just a few days earlier? I decided to be a rebel and order a soft crab

sandwich with a side of French fries. I reminisced about the first soft crab that I had eaten. I was only six years old at the time, and I felt trepidation about sampling the bizarre-looking soft crab whose tiny legs were jutting out from between the bread. I have been eating soft crabs ever since. Tourists and visitors are surprised to discover that the entire soft crab is consumed, shell and all, after the crab is cleaned. The Faidley's soft crab sandwich proved to be an excellent choice.

The soft crab was very crispy and firm on the outside and firm, but moist and juicy on the inside. The patrons near me seemed as satisfied as I was. I purposely picked Faidley's for my seafood dining experience, because I wanted to see the reaction of the other diners. Unlike traditional restaurants, there are no seats at Faidley's. Everyone stands at tall rectangular or circular tables. There is a certain ambience about Faidley's that people like, because it is unpretentious and comfortable. People crowded together, holding shopping bags while eating a crab cake, tend to let their guard down and make small talk with each other. This arrangement provides a glimpse of the city at its best. It shows the character of the city as a melting pot of people of different personalities, ethnicities, races, education levels, and social classes sharing an experience that is distinctly Baltimore.

I savored the food and the atmosphere, knowing that I had made an excellent choice in selecting Faidley's. There was an electric type of energy in the air. It was easy to distinguish the tourists from the locals. The locals are much more focused than the tourists. They are carrying large bags, taking advantage of the countless stands in the market to do their grocery shopping. They do not deliberate when they go to order. They have been to Faidley's many times and know exactly what they want. The tourists move much slower. They study the menu and look at what other people are eating. They ask questions of the staff, who answer hastily because they are trying to keep the line moving. Chatter fills the air. Children run away and their parents pause from eating to chase them. People exchange small talk while they pass ketchup and hot sauce to each other. On the day of my visit, the crowd was very diverse, yet very harmonious. Watching people at the raw bar, I saw no difference in how the man in his construction work clothes savored his raw oysters than the man next to him in the suit. Both were washing down the oysters with a cold beer and chatting amiably. The raw bar is intriguing. The servers open the shells of raw oysters, clams, and mussels for the patrons. The patrons remove the raw mollusks from the shell to eat them, which tends to be a little messy. People of every age, gender, race, ethnicity, and social class have been coming to Faidley's for years to enjoy this unique dining experience.

Faidley Seafood was founded in 1886 by John Faidley, Sr. The store is now run by his granddaughter, Nancy Faidley Devine, and her husband, Bill. It is located, surprisingly enough, in its original location of Lexington Market, which demonstrates the family's commitment to the city of Baltimore. Faidley's impact, however, is not felt just in Baltimore. Faidley's now ships its famous crab cakes to major cities and small towns around the United States, reinforcing the image of Baltimore as a seafood town and bringing recognition to the city. Faidley's supports tourism and economic growth in the businesses and communities in Maryland by providing crab cakes and other catering services for special events.

On the day of my visit, I was not able to interview Bill Devine, as he was very busy. He keeps a close eye on the staff and the patrons. He stays close to the

register and barks orders to the cooks. I spoke with him by phone the following week. He told me that all the seafood from Faidley's comes from up and down the east coast. Only six of the many varieties of fish that they serve come from the Chesapeake Bay, as many of the other types are not indigenous to the Bay. However, he serves Maryland crab and crab meat when in season. According to Mick Blackstone in his book *Dancing with the Tide: Waterman of the Chesapeake Bay*, Maryland waterman must remove all crab pots by November 30th each year. Devine said that he, personally, prefers the taste of the Maryland crab meat and is committed to supporting the Chesapeake Bay waterman. I was glad to hear of this support, as Blackstone's book paints a picture of the bay watermen as hardworking and industrious individuals with a passion for their profession. I mentioned the book to Mr. Devine and he validated this opinion of the watermen. He went on to explain that winter is the busiest time of the year at Faidley's. He said that they see more tourists in the summer, but the number of local patrons decreases due to vacations. Bill stressed his commitment to serving quality food at manageable prices. This strategy may explain the favorable reviews that are synonymous with Faidley's.

Faidley's has a strong reputation with local restaurant critics. The editors of the [AOL City Guide](#) write, "Critics and seafood aficionados regularly laud Faidley's crab cakes as the best in the Chesapeake—and beyond. You'll rub elbows with locals without emptying your wallet." [The City Paper](#) was equally complimentary, calling Faidley's "democratic" in that everyone has to stand and plastic cutlery is the norm when enjoying the jumbo crab cakes. I would write an equally favorable review. The price of the soft crab sandwich platter at \$14.95 was much more reasonable than I have paid at other seafood restaurants, yet the quality was excellent. Faidley's gets recognition beyond the local scene. It was featured on PBS in October of 2004 on *Coastal Cooking with John Shields*. Shields chose Faidley's because he believes that its food preparation and presentation accurately reflect the high quality seafood that is harvested from the Chesapeake Bay. It is an honor to be profiled by Shields because he is known for selecting the "best of taste" of an area on his shows. According to Faidley's website, the producers of hit TV series *Homicide* shot a scene at Faidley's, recognizing it as a local landmark. Faidley's experienced big time exposure when the director of *Sleepless in Seattle* shot scenes for the film at the stand.

Because seafood is synonymous with Baltimore, and Faidley's is synonymous with seafood, Nancy Faidley Devine was recently interviewed by the *Baltimore Sun* for her opinion on a current event: whether McCormick should change the logo of its Old Bay seasoning tins to enhance marketing. Mrs. Devine advised that the tin not be changed as it is easily recognizable and associated with a long history of quality. Mrs. Devine seems to follow her own advice, as Faidley's maintains its reputation by following the same standards that her grandfather instituted when he opened the stand in 1886. This consistency helps Faidley's thrive and reflects favorably on Baltimore and its strong ties to the seafood industry.

My visit to Faidley's was a raging success. I would highly recommend Faidley's for a memorable Baltimore seafood dining experience. Although pricier restaurants offer linen tablecloths and real silverware, there is a certain charm and authenticity found in eating at Faidley's. The workers, patrons, and even the owner, symbolize the working-class history and ethic that are part of the fabric and greatness of Baltimore. I had a delicious lunch and learned something at the same time. Lunch

at Faidley's and my conversation with owner Bill Devine opened my eyes to the intricacies and complexity of the seafood industry and how seafood impacts not only the providers and consumers, but also shapes the reputation and workings of the city of Baltimore.

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Hippies, Hipsters, Hip-Hoppers, and Headbangers

by Courtney Haddaway

Browsing the shelves, I picked up a CD I had been looking for. *The Pink Spiders, Hot Pink*, \$8.99. Three dollars less than what Best Buy advertised, and five dollars less than Amazon.com. I put the CD back down. Having the actual disc was still nine dollars more than illegally downloading the songs. I had the good ones on my Ipod already, and I'd burn the rest from my brother. Cheap. I headed toward the used movie section, and left the store with a discounted *Snakes on a Plane* instead.

The music industry is declining. Limewire lets millions of people download intangible music all day, every day. I can't see the album artwork, and I usually have to reformat the songs to fit better onto my computer, but who cares? It's free. I'd prefer to support the music industry and to have a CD to hold in my hand, but double clicking on a song and having music pumping through my eardrums two minutes later appeals to my wallet much more than driving to a store and shelling out fifteen dollars.

Tower Records gave in. One of the industry's most notorious music stores couldn't take the online competition, and gave up. No one wants to buy albums anymore. Accessing music is so easy now and doesn't require a trip to the store or the disposal of cash at all. How, then, are the hole-in-the-wall record stores with dusty shelves, the little guys, holding up so easily? Well, it isn't that simple.

On Thames Street in Fells Point, flashy signs line the right side of road, selling themselves to natives, visitors, and wanderers. By squinting hard enough, a small, white board with "The Soundgarden" scribbled in black becomes visible between what, in contrast, seem like billboards of glittering gold. The glass door underneath is camouflaged by fluorescent posters that scream the names of bands, CDs, and venues at innocent passers-by. A bell might ring when the door is opened, but the commotion inside masks the would-be "ding!"

By the time the door had shut behind me, I was already surprised by the lack of trendiness. I've been to music stores, and I always tend to get this vague, nagging feeling that I'm being stared down and don't belong. The last time I was in Chicago, I walked into a record store with signs hanging all around warning "Vinyl

Only," and "WE DO NOT SELL CDS!!!" I lamely made sure my MP3 player was invisible in my purse and faked an interest in some "classic vinyl" in a desperate attempt to avoid being judged for giving into modernity.

The Soundgarden isn't like that at all. There is none of that offensively loud music that I usually feel in the pit of my stomach after I leave music stores. It's not particularly flashy, and it's not particularly grungy. It is just a store, a place to buy my music. And last weekend it was *crowded*.

I walked through the door, and once I had fought my way through the swarm of people at the front, a kingdom of music opened up to me. Pop and Rock to the left. Hip Hop and R&B in the middle. Soundtracks. Jazz. And then an entire wall of movies. Gigantic posters or designs on the walls didn't steal my attention away, the people did—they were so...normal.

I stood in the middle of the store, letting Baltimore's diversity unveil itself to me. In the Rock section, a middle-aged man picked up a couple of CDs and attempted to examine them as his kids badgered at his ankles, waving a Spongebob Squarepants DVD adorned with a big *DISCOUNT!* sticker. To his right, three teenagers with dyed-black hair and painfully trendy clothes browsed idly as if this was just a dull routine. The tight grey MICA t-shirt I spotted told me they were art school kids. A foreign language was being rhythmically chanted behind me. Greek? Polish? Italian? A young European-looking couple was deep in discussion in the Soundtrack section. On my way to the Alternative section, I excused myself past a group of young girls in plaid jumpers. No one seemed even remotely out of place.

Soundgarden's secret to success? The store considers itself the only "real" record store in the city. In a small, urban setting like Fells Point, there isn't room for a Best Buy, or any of the bigger, more mainstream music stores. The competitors are of a completely different standard, specializing in either vinyl or CDs and not offering a comparable variety. Since its opening in 1993 by a bartender with a lease but no business experience, Soundgarden has been the only choice for music, and Baltimoreans *love* music. The little business risk has transformed into a staple of Baltimore's culture, tying together a city full of diversity with one common love.

I talked to Brian, a five-year Soundgarden employee and a twelve-year shopper, and he helped me get a better grasp on Soundgarden's famous reputation. "We are the only option in Baltimore. Even when we get musicians to come here, it's like, they *have* to come here. We're the Soundgarden. If they want Baltimore fans, they'll come here." Recently, the Goo Goo Dolls, Ludacris, Ben Kweller, and Regina Spektor have abided this rule and paid a visit. Melting pot?

But Soundgarden, even with its infinite intrigue, is feeling the pressure of new music options. Music lovers window-shop. They browse the aisles, disheveling the rows and picking up CDs, only to put them back down and move along. They then go home to download what they've seen in the store. Still, the little-music-store-that-could thrives. Jazz, classical and hip-hop, the most undownloaded genres floating around online, help pull in some money from the older generations (which would explain the extreme groups of people I saw). Disappointingly, the used movie section is Soundgarden's fallback crutch when the

music fails; it's the main moneymaker of the store and keeps the younger generation interested.

After my conversation with Brian, I felt guilty, like I had taken the apple from the snake (on a plane!) from the Soundgarden of Eden. I gave in to the downloadable world of MP3s, and settled for giving money to the wrong industry. I, like so many other frauds, had quickly dropped my appreciation for tangible music once an easier, wireless option came around. The musical gods, however, did not ban me from their garden. The store is still open, still accepting shoppers for music or movies, and still keeping Baltimore interested in the music scene. The store will survive, because even if the profits from CDs are fading, the love of the music and the Baltimorean culture it brings is not.

A Night with Big Bill

by Patrick Buttner

My knuckles turn a paler shade of white as my grip on the arm of the chair tightens. For a moment everything seems to slow down. I can feel my heart beating heavily against my chest and a solitary drop of sweat slowly creeping down the small of my back. The subtle hum of the overhead fluorescent light is now screaming into my ear. And then a rush of pain and everything speeds back up. Welcome to Baltimore.

Standing in the doorway to my left is my new roommate Bobby and his friend Sarah, and sitting on the stool to my right holding the 12 gauge needle in my ear is Big Bill Stevenson, Baltimore's own renowned body-piercer and co-founder of the Baltimore Tattoo Museum in Fells Point. This being the first Friday of the spring semester as well as the end of my first week at Loyola since returning *from* medical leave, I decided to tag along with my new friends who were in search of a tattoo parlor. I originally intended to serve as positive support, but with Bobby starting to feel uneasy about his decision to get his ear pierced, I decided to step in. What better way to celebrate your newfound independence from home than to get a hole punched in your ear by a guy three times your size, right?

As Big Bill slowly retracts the needle from my upper ear and replaces it with a silver ring, I glance over at Bobby and Sarah to give them a confident look of reassurance, but I shift uneasily in the large leather chair and my cocky smirk instantly fades the moment I spot the sign hanging directly above their heads that reads: "Upon signing waiver, we are no longer responsible for any and all infections or illness that may occur after piercing/ tattooing... and we assure you there will be some." Sensing a sudden shift in my demeanor, Big Bill gives me a hardy slap on the shoulder that is meant to encourage me but instead almost knocks right out of the chair. At first glance it becomes quite obvious that the bearded Big Bill did not get his nickname because of his height; rather it was given to him because the man is built more like a house than a human being. As expected of a tattoo artist, both of his massive arms and calves are covered by various tattoos, the most prominent being one of the Maryland state flag on his neck. Taking a closer look at him, I find it ironic that Baltimore's leading body-piercer has only one humble diamond stud in the lobe of his right ear. Most of the tattoo designs that cover the walls of the main gallery bear Big Bill's "double B" signature, and most of the encased tattooing pens from throughout the years come from his own personal collection of artifacts from many of Baltimore's famous tattoo artists of the past. I learn that Big Bill is a Baltimore native and has been "body decaling" for over twenty years now. With

my earring now in place, I redirect my attention from my burning ear to his responses and the questions I started asking in a last minute nervous effort to stall his work begin to have more meaning.

"We used to get a lot of drunks stumblin' in here late at night fresh from the bars wantin' weird tats on their asses..."

He points to a sign above his chair that reads NO DRUNKS ALLOWED!

"But we've started closing a lot earlier recently and honestly I haven't written 'Katie' or 'Mom' on some guy's left cheek in about a month now. But yeah, we do get all sorts of people coming in here, from the real tough talking street thugs and ganstas to wannabe punks..."

His gaze falls solely on me as he says this.

"And the rebellious preppy kids wantin' to shock their parents."

Big Bill subtly nods his head at Bobby who anxiously grasps his collar to make sure it isn't popped.

The Tattoo Parlor is located a mere three blocks north of the popular bars where college students flock every Friday night in search of the perfect party, but those three blocks make all the difference. The crowded streets and welcoming neon lights of the bars give way to a dark and desolate neighborhood that seems endless from outside the parlor's doors. Aside from a run-down Getty gas station on the far western corner, the Museum provides the only light on a block mostly made up of decomposing two-story tenant houses with boarded windows and gang tags spray-painted on their plain grey stone walls. Walking from Sarah's truck to the parlor felt more like walking through a western ghost town, where the only break in the silence was the occasional screeching tires of a car that I could only imagine was trying to get as far away from the area as possible.

"It weren't always like this. When we first set up shop in '99, this was considered the heart of Fells. Not a night went by where we weren't swamped with people either getting tats or rings or just filling up the galleries."

His face hints at a smile as he reminisces.

"But it all started to go to hell the next year. Businesses started to close or relocate and the steady crowds went with 'em. It seems like every year now everyone seems to shift down a block. Take a look around outside, I gotta sandblast those goddamn walls free of graffiti once a week now. I wouldn't mind so much if I could catch one of 'em doing it cause half of it ain't that bad, but it's like some ghost armed with two cans haunts this place. Don't get me wrong, we still bring in the people, but it's just not the same as it was before."

Big Bill tightens the ring that he has placed in my ear one last time and slugs me on the thigh signaling that I'm all done and he is ready for his next victim. I attempt to stand but my leg buckles under my weight due to the blow, and I take a second or two to regain my coordination. Big Bill doesn't ask who wants to go next; he simply points at Bobby and then to the chair as if demanding him to sit. Bobby's face turns white as he cautiously lowers himself into the chair, and I immediately take this as my signal to continue asking questions, more so to distract Bobby than Big Bill, but I am cut off in mid-speech.

"You guys are from Loyola. I could tell the minute you walked in."

I immediately cock my head to the side as if to ask him how he possibly could've known that.

"You want to know how I know? Because when you walk in you walk in as if you have something to do or somewhere to be. You've got incentive. The people around here don't. They know where they oughta be and where they oughta be is where they are. And, genius, you're wearing a Loyola hat."

This time I don't even hint at questioning what he said, which for the moment sounds more like something one would read in a Chinese Philosophy book than hear in a tattoo parlor. Instead, I simply shrug my shoulders, and he returns to his work, effortlessly forcing the needle through Bobby's ear, apparently catching him off guard judging by the shocked look on his face.

"I grew up right off of York, believe it or not, but it was different back then. A lot different. I'm not saying it was perfectly safe or anything, because, let's face it, everyplace has their fair share of murders and break-ins, but at least I could go out during the day and hang out with my friends on the street. It was there that I started drawing on whatever idiot friends of mine would give me a pen and hold out their arms. You can't teach what I do, but you can learn how to do it, and it was on those streets that I became passionate about my art. Like I said, I wouldn't mind the graffiti so much if I could just talk to whoever is doing it and maybe give 'em some advice or find out what they use for inspiration, but everything is changing. This place is being forgotten while York Road is becoming a war zone. The tourists are still coming in to Baltimore, but for what? The Inner Harbor? To catch a game and then run? We wonder why business is going down. It's because we're in just another part of town that people are afraid of."

The smile that had been fighting its way onto his face as he reminisced vanishes completely as his face turns to stone and his eyes burn with anger. Bobby has turned even paler and with good reason. The giant of a man who is currently seated next to him holding a needle in his head has transformed from humble tattoo artist to a passionate soapbox politician ready to verbally strike out at a moment's notice. Bobby's eyes plead with me to drop the subject and yet something in me cannot just let it go. Whether caused by the sudden returning rush of blood back to my head or just the intense heat in the room, I become aggravated by Bill's pessimism and ask why he doesn't just pack up and move.

Bill immediately stops what he is doing.

"Move?"

Bobby's eyes appear as though they may fall right out of his head.

"Just pack up and leave, huh?"

I feel four of my knuckles crack and am suddenly aware that Sarah, who I had almost forgotten had come with us, is squeezing my hand as tightly as possible.

"You just don't understand."

His tone is surprisingly calm.

"The drunks, the violence, the graffiti, and even you college kids are just part of what makes Baltimore, Baltimore. I can't leave all this... This is my home."

A Highway Through Fells Point?

By Natasha Hochlowski

Loyola College is a diverse school, but with regard to immersion in Fells Point the students care mainly about one thing: the social aspect. Loyola students know very little about Baltimore, and what they do know about Fells Point is merely that it is an area full of bars and restaurants. But to the residents of Baltimore this neighborhood is much more—it is an area bursting with history and culture, an area that its residents have fought to preserve and protect. One place in which the social aspect of Fells can be seen is in the Fells Point Fun Festival, "a combination of a garage sale, a flea market, and an antique shop." This festival provides "a large array of events and shops for people of all ages...the best that Baltimore has to offer." These statements, made by student Raina Fields in the Loyola College newspaper *The Greyhound*, describe a yearly fall event in Fells that attracts thousands of people. The typical Loyola student, upon reading this quote, would likely be shocked to discover that there is more to the festival than its social value.

The Fells Point Fun Festival originated in response to an event that almost destroyed historic Fells Point. In 1960, a plan was proposed by the federal government to allow the East-West expressway, connecting Interstates 95 and 83, to be routed through the waterfront of Fells Point, Federal Hill, and Canton. Without this link, motorists did not have an easy way to get from 83 to 95 because of the obstructing presence of Fells Point—83 ends abruptly at Fells Point, and it is necessary to drive through the city to get from 83 to 95. The eight-lane highway, although alleviating this problem, would not only have required the destruction of numerous homes and historic buildings, but it would also have caused an incredible amount of traffic through whatever would be left of Fells Point.

According to the Fells Point Preservation Society website, "the highway would have demolished the Federal Hill and Fell's Point communities, leveled Federal Hill Park and blocked the development of the Inner Harbor." Said a Preservation Society staff member in an interview, the highway "would have gone right through Fells Point. It would have destroyed probably about 90 percent of Fells Point, at least six to eight blocks." Although the highway would have helped to diffuse the overall traffic, it would not have been at all beneficial to those who lived in the surrounding area. In a 1979 speech to the American Planning

Association, Barbara Mikulski proclaimed, "We didn't think it was right to destroy healthy neighborhoods so that suburban commuters could get in and out of the city faster."

The citizens of Fells Point would not allow this travesty to occur. In 1966, Baltimore Heritage, Inc., a non-profit architectural preservation organization, led the fight to alter the highway's route. In 1967, the organization was attracting support from across the nation and according to the *New York Times* on April 10, 1967: "A planned eight-lane elevated highway threatens to destroy Fells Point...But a handful of property owners hope to save Fells Point..." In an article in the magazine *Urban America*, the bold claim was made that Fells Point was "the only impelling aspect of an otherwise unimposing city."

In February of 1967, Murray Fisher and a group of activists created the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street, and Fells Point. On October 8 of that year, Fisher, the first president of the society, helped to launch one of Baltimore's first major fundraisers—the Fells Point Fun Festival. This festival, set up to raise money for the campaign against the expressway, was a synthesis of numerous vendors, artisans, musicians, and entertainers. The festival received an astounding turnout of twenty-five thousand people, and the society decided to hold another such festival the following year. To this day, the festival returns to Fells Point; fall 2006 marked the fortieth year of its occurrence. This past fall, over 700,000 people attended the festival, frequenting vendors including the "International Bazaar," "The Giving Place" (non-profit vendors), and a flea market.

The residents of Fells Point did not stop with just the Preservation Society; the Southeast Council against the Road (SCAR) was established in 1968 and led by future Maryland senator Barbara Mikulski. This organization held fundraisers such as bake sales to raise money so that buses could be rented for traveling to lobby Annapolis and Washington. Said Mikulski during a 1968 rally against the highway, "We didn't let the British take Fells Point; we didn't let termites take Fells Point; and we're not going to let the State Roads Commission take Fells Point." In August 1968, The Movement Against Destruction (M.A.D.) was founded, made up of twenty-five different organizations united in the purpose of fighting expressways that would run through Baltimore.

The citizens of Fells Point faced an uphill struggle in their battle against the expressway. It wasn't until 1969 that they succeeded in having Fells Point added to the National Register of Historic Places. This accomplishment, although it took many years to achieve, was a huge step for Fells Point, and for Maryland, as Fells was now the first National Historic District in the state. On May 14, 1971, unfortunately, the citizens of Fells Point were faced with a challenge—the Interstate Division of the State Roads Department submitted a report to the U.S. Department of Transportation in an effort to justify the Fells Point expressway. The Preservation Society countered this movement by creating their own report which argued against the need for an expressway through the Fells Point area. The report explained that the expressway was not essential for travel in the city and that its construction would obliterate centuries of history.

In the spring of 1973, the society finally received the attention they had been vying for—a court trial. From 1975 to 1978, numerous hearings were held about the expressway, finally ending in a trial. The people of the Preservation

Society voiced their opinion that no highway should be built, and the city of Baltimore offered the compromise that the highway should "pass under the harbor of Fells Point." After three long years, the people of Fells Point won: The U.S. government abandoned the plans to build the expressway through Fells Point. Instead, plans for 95 were moved downtown to the Canton area. Although motorists now have to take Boston Street to get to 95 from 83, traveling through Fells Point, Baltimore citizens feel this is a small sacrifice to make in order to preserve their city's history.

The dedication of the people of Baltimore to the preservation of Fells Point shows the true character of Baltimore citizens. Their city is an historic city, with roots going back to the early eighteenth century. Fells Point houses The London Coffee House—the only existing pre-revolutionary coffee house in the U.S.; it contains the nation's first African American-owned maritime railway; Fells Point's shipyard produced the *Constellation* and the *Virginia*—the first frigate of the Continental Navy. Without the efforts of the Fells Point citizens, Loyola students—and all visitors to Baltimore—would not be able to see these and other historic sights or be able to visit many of the restaurants and bars that are so popular in Fells Point and even in the Inner Harbor. Although Fells Point seems to be merely a tourist attraction, it is truly a piece of history. The battle that the citizens of Fells Point waged in order to maintain the beauty of their city shows the moral fiber of Baltimore: Baltimore inhabitants value their communities and their neighborhoods, taking great pride in where they live. They care about their surroundings and treasure their city's history and accomplishments, enough to spend decades fighting for its preservation so that the city may be enjoyed by future generations for years to come.

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Treading Between Two Worlds

by Michael Mennis

Millions of little suns brighten up the night sky and rain iron razorblades down on the defenders below. Many people huddle under barricades or in shelters listening to the crackle of man-made thunder resonating through the brick star that lies below. Men stand at their positions, leaving the guns silent. The wooden invaders sitting a few miles out, throw little suns and stars at the red brick star, too far away to be engaged. All this plays in my mind's eye as I sit peacefully under a tree looking out on the bay where the National Anthem was written. Behind me stands the red brick star that became a symbol of America's fight for freedom.

I sit in the shade of this tree, feeling the ground below me, wondering what emotions were felt by the men as the British ships sat just outside the range of the fort's gun. I see men running and screaming orders while the barrages of cannon fire and rockets begin to fly overhead and explode in air.

I stand up and begin to walk toward the fort. I see an image of the red star-shaped fort standing in a cool autumn day and another image of the fort standing strong and resolute on a September night. That night lit up like day as the different bombs and rockets showered the fort with destruction. I move to the entrance of the fort and see ghosts running, looking for shelter and going for their positions. Spirited messengers run through me and around me, taking orders from one gun to another, an organized chaos which continued throughout the night as over and over the bombs burst in air. Translucent men run to just inside the entrance of the fort and dive down into holes blacker than the pitch that protects them from the small metal spears falling from the sky. I enter the fort, feeling these apparitions spinning around me, the sunny autumn day and long early bright September night merging into one.

I turn and walk on top of a bunker and peer out at the harbor where so long ago a wooden armada stood just in range. I can see the blasts of fire like the opening of portals to hell letting loose its demonic flame. As one of the fiery rockets flies into the air, I can just make out a little ship amongst the armada. It remains eerily silent, just an observer but with its sails limp and drooping as a man dropping his head, knowing what is to come and unable to watch. Out on that lonely ship stood the man who observed all and painted a picture in music that united the country. Francis Scott Key watched as the sun rose and wondered if the fort would continue

to stand strong or surrender. From the ship he saw the flag rise from behind the brick star. The white stars rose above the red one and flew in the wind. With each role in the wind, those stars defied every last sun fired at the fort.

So I stare up at the flag pole just inside the fort and marvel at the idea of so many men and shells coming down on this one spot. As the flag catches the wind, I turn and look out at the harbor, out toward the bridge standing far off, wondering what Francis Scott Key truly saw and felt that night when he wrote *The Star Spangled Banner*. I am amazed at the courage of such a young nation against such a strong adversary.

I come to my senses and look to my right. There, next to me, stands a man. He is looking straight up at the flag with a distant look in his eyes, his black hair lined with gray. His hard face shows wisdom and strength, yet it contains a smile that warms the heart of any who see it. Those distant eyes examine the flag and then look at his two college-age sons, reading the plaque in front of the flag. He grabs the old 35 mm camera from around his neck and stares through the light meter. He waits for the right moment—the moment when the flag unfurl and waves at him. He feels in that moment in touch with the flag, in touch with the history that surrounds him, and in touch with the nation that has born him and been his home (Mennis, Liam).

I turn to move deeper into the fort and see a woman peering in one of the windows of the wood buildings. She then walks slowly off towards the ramparts.

I walk to the window she peered in and see what was done to create a guard house. Inside stands a fire place, a table, and a few other pieces of furniture and what appears to be a long wooden shelf close to the floor. I realize soon enough that it was the bed where off-duty men could sleep between shifts. I can see a guard lying there with his long black boots and revolutionary uniform on and his gear lying by if needed at a moment's notice (Mennis, Linda).

I turn and look towards the parapets and see the woman standing on top, looking off toward the harbor heading towards Baltimore. She sees the tall ships moving back and forth through the busy harbor in amazement; she sees Baltimore turn back into the bustling seaport it was back in the days of the war of 1812. She stands in awe examining the city and looking back at the fort she is in. She wonders how in the world a fort that appears so small could protect one of the most vital seaports in Revolutionary America. With the wind blowing in her hair, she stands between two worlds, one foot in a warm September day and the other in a cold September night, small suns of fire bursting in air and steel rain falling from the sky (Mennis, Linda).

It was during that attack on September 13th, 1814, that Fort McHenry emblazoned itself in American history. In that fort 15,000 militiamen held against a 25-hour barrage of over 1,500 shells. Five-thousand British Army and Navy veterans attacked both Fort McHenry and Baltimore in an attempted to give the Americans "a complete drubbing" ("Fort McHenry"). The British failed on ground and at sea with their general, General Ross, dying in the Battle of North Point and a British landing attempted near Fort McHenry repelled. All this the Americans surmounted, taking on one of the world's top military powers of their time and raising the fledgling nation's flag in defiance of its opponent's efforts

The fort sits on a peninsula that looks like a thumb jutting out into the harbor. On this thumb, the star-shaped fort would be positioned in the middle of your fingernail. The sea batteries would make an upside-down " V" shape with the apex being at the top middle part of your nail. The area to the upper left side of the park has some scattered trees while the rest of the area is open green field with monuments scattered through out. The fort is the only park to be both a national monument and historic shrine ("Fort McHenry").

Fort McHenry was where Baltimore stood, where the city united in its defense and fought for its independence. This fort was where the spirit of America was captured in a song. Here Baltimoreans held on through shelling and a sneak attack and after twenty-five hours lifted the young nation's flag to prove to the British that we were not running from them in fear, but standing for our home, our city and our nation.

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A Shining Treasure

by Kathleen Slattery

“**B**altimore contains an unlimited supply of hidden treasures. There is always the opportunity to find something new.” I heard this phrase at orientation at the start of my freshman year during one of the many discussions presenting “The Year of The City.” I completely agreed with this phrase, but, at the same time, I ignorantly felt that somehow I had seen most of Baltimore’s hidden treasures and had at least heard about the rest. My sister had attended Loyola. Upon graduating in 2004, she moved to Federal Hill, one of Baltimore’s neighborhoods in the process of “turning over.” Since I live only an hour away, my family and I would often come to visit my sister and experience Baltimore’s gems. I thought that I had seen enough, that nothing about Baltimore could shock me or send me into a state of awe. I couldn’t have been more wrong.

When I was picking my schedule for my first semester of college, my advisor thought that I might enjoy taking her Alpha Art History Course. I wasn’t exactly sure what “Alpha” meant, but I agreed to it nonetheless. (I later found out that Alpha Courses are unique because faculty receive a special budget so that the students can experience the course material outside of the classroom.) I, for some odd reason, assumed that this class was going to be one of my easier classes or, as many students would say, “a joke class.” Another thing I had totally misjudged. I struggled with this course for the entire semester. Although I found the material interesting, it wasn’t until one December night that I realized that all the work was completely worth everything.

The semester was over. All we had left were finals and then we were free. On the night before study day, my Alpha teacher had arranged to take our class to dinner in Hampden. At 5 o’clock we all gathered behind the College Center, piled into cars, and headed to Hampden. When we arrived at the restaurant, Golden West Cafe, none of us could believe that our college professor had picked this place for our end of the semester dinner. It was, in one word, funky. The walls were covered in art, with no connecting theme. I looked to my left and saw a toy horse with the head of a baby doll attached to it. To my right there was a fake plant with painted leaves. Bombarded by our surroundings, a few of us engaged in a game of I-spy while we waited for our food. I had never dreamed that a place like this existed nor had I been anywhere that remotely resembled it.

Okay, so now I got it: Baltimore possessed more than I thought. I admitted to myself that I had been wrong, not to mention ignorant and arrogant, in assuming

that I knew all about Baltimore. Now that I had my little eye-opening experience, my teacher's goal had been accomplished and we could go home, right? Wrong.

The main event of the evening still remained a mystery. She had told us we were going to 34th Street, but none of us had any idea what that meant. So, we got back into the cars for a quick three-minute drive, parked the cars on a street with row houses, and got out. As soon as I opened the door, I could see the glow, stretching around the corner.

Never had I seen one block shine so brightly. Each house has its own way of showing Christmas. One contained a nativity and speakers emitting quiet, religious chants. Another was totally themed by *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, complete with a hand-painted Grinch, sitting atop his mountain. I walked slowly down the block, mesmerized by what I was witnessing. Some of the houses had welcome signs, telling visitors to come inside. One of them, which had a Christmas tree made only from hubcaps out front, turned out to be an art gallery inside. Who knew that the 700 block of 34th Street contained such a treasure?

The tradition of decorating an entire Baltimore city block started eighteen years ago in December of 1988 when Bob Hosier strung some lights across the street (Hiaasen). Eventually, as the entire block began to work together, this one string of lights became the phenomenon that it is today. Preparations begin in early August, with the intense labor taking place after Halloween (Rosen). For residents, the work seems completely worth the result. "We make people feel like Christmas," says Hope Johnson, who declines donations for her display, even though she knows that she will be laid off in the month following Christmas (Hiaasen).

What began as a small community building project has grown into something so much bigger. The annual lighting ceremony always draws a very large crowd, coming not only to see the decorations, but also to drink hot cocoa while waiting for Santa to make an appearance. The glow of the street is now seen far beyond the eyes of Baltimoreans. Even the Home & Gardens Channel stopped by to record this spectacular sight (Hiaasen). No one can see this awe-inspiring scene and not feel the glow. Each person walks away from the street warmed by this glow, by a feeling of joy that can only be created by something so wondrously unique.

The sight of 34th Street not only instills joy, but it also demonstrates what happens when people join together. Residents may have nothing in common but the place that they live and the basic fact that they are all humans. In a place like Baltimore, it seems that these two things are all you need to build a community and work together to make people happy. The product of this camaraderie can be something as magnificent as the lights on 34th Street.

After walking up and down the block, viewing each unique house, I couldn't help but wonder *how could I not have known this was here?* This event had been taking place since my first Christmas at Loyola, and I had absolutely no idea. The fact that I had not even heard about this tradition completely baffled me.

"So what did you think? Did you like it?" asked my professor. I didn't know what to say. Obviously I liked it, but I had no words and nothing to compare it to.

"It was beautiful," I said. "I've never seen anything like it. I can't believe I didn't know..."

"Well, I'm glad I could show you something new," she interrupted, "although I guess I can't really take the credit for it. It's Baltimore. Just look around, you'll find something new. I've lived here for years, and I'm constantly surprised."

Leaving this beautiful sight, I, just like all the other visitors, walked away with the glow—a glow that enlightened my entrenched image of Baltimore. If even the brightest light could remain hidden from me, what else didn't I know about? In a city such as Baltimore, I can never fully answer this question. There will always be something unlike anything I've ever seen before just waiting to be discovered.

Needless to say, my overconfidence had been subdued, a surprisingly exciting experience. Now that I knew that I didn't know anywhere close to everything about Baltimore, I more eagerly anticipated the next four years. Early on in my first semester, I dreaded having to do an extra off-campus event for a class, but now—I get it. I look at these off-campus assignments as stimulating opportunities. Not only do I get to discover Baltimore, but I also join this awesome community. In doing so, I am able to do my part in spreading the glow of the city while never growing bored. After all, what's more exhilarating than not knowing everything about a world you have four full years to explore?

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Colorblind

by Allison Alling

The pieces of glass reminded me of lemon-flavored rock candy. I stared at them for a while and watched the way each shattered fragment caught the light from the headlights of passing cars, and I wondered how something so devoid of life had the capacity to be so beautiful. As the pieces stared up at me amidst the flecks of dirt and scraps of fast-food packaging, I could see my reflection and the whimsical lights of the Power Plant Live sign, but it was then and there that truly I saw myself and the city together—for the first time as one. The new perspective scared me a little. No longer did the city appear as a struggle—a foreign place vs. home, my life at college vs. my life in high school, or black vs. white. It was colorful, and I fit perfectly into the spectrum.

We live colorblind.

Blinded by the monotony and routine of our lives, we tend to overlook the color, or the life, in the seemingly simple things surrounding us, things like pieces of broken glass on a sidewalk. We are blinded, color-blinded, not only in the physical sense, but primarily in the ignorant sense that limits our perception as it renders our reality. This limited perception, seeing things in black and white, keeps us from seeing things the way they are—colorful. Black and white produce shades of gray, yet contrary to popular belief, life is not shades of gray. One of these colors produces only limited color variation, where repeats are bound to happen. Crayola has devised a whole crayon box full of a diversity of colors with unimaginable variation. As in life, Baltimore is not black and white or even shades of gray because the diversity of experiences that we each live creates a unique color and contributes to the vast rainbow of colors that is life.

I live in yellow. Not only is it my favorite color, it is the shade that paints the walls of my room at home, my favorite M&M, what I see when I think of summer, and the color of most taxis in the city of Baltimore. "800 Key Highway, please," I said to Marcus, my Yellow Checker Cab driver. I liked him. I liked how he had thoughtfully fastened a beautiful collage of pictures and Hallmark cards to the dashboard of his cab. It was art. We pulled up to the American Visionary Art Museum, bedazzled by what else but millions of shards of reflective glass. Nothing I've seen rivaled its intense splendor; this is Baltimore to me. Before entering the museum, I checked my appearance in the building's brightly-faceted exterior and noticed the Rusty Scupper peering through my hair, the peak of the aquarium just over my shoulder, and the towering Legg Mason building seated at my right. This

seemed to be a strange location for a "visionary art" museum. It stood amidst ocean and land, wealth and poverty, commercial property and residential space, but I guess that's just the charming thing about Baltimore! So much color, so much diversity. All of these thoughts plagued my mind—and I hadn't even been inside yet...

The exhibits were shocking, grotesque, lurid, and brave. They scared me. When had I ever looked at something and realized that the thought it generated had never crossed my mind? Not in a million years would I ever have thought of Corvette coffins or jewel-embellished taxidermy as actual things, let alone pieces of art. The duality of this feeling was unnerving yet vindicating. I entered the final exhibit with the same anticipation I had gathered before the other exhibits. I was new to this concept of "visionary," self-taught art that critics attack artists of creating during restless highs and drunken stupors. It seems to me that people claim to either love or hate it; impressions are painted black, white, and colorblind. Opening the brushed-steel monster of a door, I immediately sensed a different presence about this particular exhibit. The lighting was dim and soothed me. The temperature seemed much cooler than the rest of the museum, and between this and the deafening silence, I felt as though I was alone in an ocean-carved cave on the coast of somewhere beautiful. There was only one other person in the room; she was seated upon one of the plush benches admiring a piece that covered the entire wall. I moved towards her, but when she was aware of my presence, she hurriedly grabbed her purse to leave. She paused one last time to take in the piece before her, and I pretended to look at something else. A tear flowed down her cheek, and she was gone.

I resumed her place on the bench and gazed into the canvas, hoping to attain the same moving perception. Both with hellish and angelic rhapsody, the paint swirled in ways so flawless that one might have sworn the human hand was incapable of producing such perfection. The painting was cluttered with thousands of faint images of tiny people grouped in hundreds of separate scenes that we've come to associate with life in its darkest or supreme moments. I saw soldiers marching to war, mourners gathered at a funeral, a wedding, murder, and the first moment after birth. I felt an almost God-like perspective. Within the span of one moment I was simultaneously witnessing death, matrimony, life, war, and suffering. The canvas was soaked in shades of orange, red, and black, which, as hues combined, created mysterious shades of green, purple, yellow and brown. As had the shards of glass on the sidewalk, its image enchanted me. I wondered why it took seven years to paint, what it was before it became paint, plaster and canvas; more than anything, I yearned to know why it hung in Baltimore.

I was eager to find out. I rushed over to where the artist's name and the name of the piece were printed on the wall. My eyes scanned the brief paragraph that was written to summarize the six panels of art work, but I found nothing about Baltimore. I re-read it with fury two, three, and four more times until I finally found what I was looking for; I just hadn't been looking deep enough. Baltimore was brought to life right in the title, "Untitled." I looked back at the painting and saw it there as well.

Baltimore can't be defined; it must be experienced. The notable feature was shown in the theme of the painting. None of the people had faces. The images

taunted me: "Can you see yourself here?" they interrogated. I went from scene to scene, person to person, color to color, looking for where I fit. I saw students sitting at desks in a classroom and felt something tug at my heart—there I was! In another scene, I watched prayerfully as parishioners praying in Mass gathered in holy reverence. I was there too. I didn't see myself in the emerald hues of a wedding party, or in the plum shades of a hospital room, or bruised and broken in the ruby shadows of a jail cell, but these shades of my life haven't been mixed yet. Baltimore is a city of death, matrimony, life, war, suffering—of overall diversity. I couldn't have had a more obvious depiction of a single moment in Baltimore even if I had, at that very moment, peered down into the city myself. I fit myself into the painting, into Baltimore, and even more clearly than that night on the sidewalk, I was able to fully understand my place in this charming city. I stood there for awhile until I heard someone opening the large steel door. I stood there for one last moment, taking one last glance at the life before me, and then I walked away. I now understood. As in life, this painting and this city are things you must experience first in order to understand and appreciate.

As children, we pawed through our crayon boxes for a zany color, and we colored things the way we perceived them even if they aren't seen this way to the naked eye. Those were the days when we felt most alive, when we enjoyed a perception we tend to lose as we age and become more and more blind to the colors that surround us. I want so badly to be that child again. To live again in a world where people had purple hair, animals had blue stripes and pink polka dots, grass could be orange and the sky just looked better yellow. We'd color inside the lines of our Barbie or Power Rangers coloring books, but never did we leave even a single picture black and white.

Black and white. They roll off the tongue as two one-syllable words and are written in a motley of different ways, in hundreds of languages, though in Baltimore they represent one thing. If you take a drive down any street in Baltimore, you'll eventually pass a sign that reads "Believe" in white letters across a stark, black background. I don't think its color choice was coincidental. The fierce contrast between the two polar colors screams out: believe that something black and white can become something colorful, believe that a foreign place can become home, believe that with struggle comes peace, believe that with death comes life, believe that with diversity comes community, and believe that when black and white are combined there is color. Baltimore: this is my home.

Consistent with a Jesuit education, which aims to educate men and women for others, Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., reminds us. "Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively" in his address "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education." Drawing on Kolvenbach's address, Loyola's President Fr. Brian Linnane, S.J., initiated the "Year of the City" during the 2006-07 academic year. This initiative was meant to educate Loyola students about Baltimore in order that they might "engage it constructively." With this goal in mind, a number of faculty in the Writing Department aligned their courses to the "Year of the City" by making the city, in general, and Baltimore, specifically, their course focus. The Department sponsored two panels of Baltimore writers and an anthology of writing from WR100 Effective Writing. Some of the best results of these endeavors have been included here.



LOYOLA COLLEGE IN MARYLAND

—1852—



Effective Writing student Caitlyn Coady snapped this photo of her classmate Ashley Vaughn outside the American Visionary Art Museum.