



THE EDDA LITERARY MAGAZINE OF LA JOLLA HIGH SCHOOL

The Edda is named after an ancient collection of Viking poems and prose. The Vikings of Scandinavian countries collected their poems and stories in *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda*. The Vikings of La Jolla High School have collected their poems and stories from this year in The Edda.

This literary magazine has been created with submissions from students who joined a Google Classroom during the corona virus pandemic during the last six weeks of the 2019-2020 school year, while everyone was stuck at home helping to save the world by reducing the spread of COVID19 and flattening the curve. For some people, being stuck at home inspired creativity.

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Anouk Guilhemfouert Grade 10

Art Teacher: Ms Susanne Friedrich

We Cannot Go Silent

Light shining life
Once pierced through the shadows
A river flowing in abundance
Was once a silent stream
A blossoming flower
Was once a small seed

When a flame dies out
Ashes will remain
Its legacy never to be lived
Cursed to dwell in the pit of pain
Swallowed up by the hearth of darkness
Destruction conquered its soul

Crying out the wail of death
Its destiny destroyed
Frigid body growing cold
The fallen trapped beneath the shattered ice

Never to live the stream of life Ripped away by the currents

We Cannot Go Silent

Katherine Frost Grade 10 English Teacher: Ms. Mary Maycock

Anouk Guilhemfouert Grade 10 Art Teacher: Ms Susanne Friedrich

"These are just some pieces that I've done since the confinement:)," shared Anouk.



Anouk Guilhemfouert Grade 10 Art Teacher: Ms Susanne Friedrich



No One Reads

January in New York City is bone-chilling weather, so the sun, though shining, did not cause the warmth in John Reed's bones. He was bundled up in heavy overcoat and gloves like everyone in Manhattan, but inside he was radiating. An hour earlier he had purchased a rare book— a first edition, first issue of *Great Expectations*. Since his freshman year in high school, it had been his all-time favorite story.

Mrs. Knowles, his ninth grade English teacher, had told all her freshmen honors students that they'd like the story. Some of his friends hated it, others tolerated it to earn grades. He liked it so much he read it again and again once every couple of years afterwards. And because of the *Great Expectations*, he read everything Dickens wrote. And then years later, after he became an English teacher, he shared the brilliance of the story with his own students.

The doors of the subway car clanged open and a sea of men and women pressed against him. "Wait...uh...excuse me." John was being carried out of the train, separated from his briefcase, by a tidal wave of humans. "Hey...wait a minute. Hold on! ...l'm not...this isn't my stop!" He was swimming against the riptide trying to get back into the subway car. Then the doors slammed shut and the car bucked as it began to move forward.

The train moved away from him into the darkness, picking up speed. John didn't know where it was headed, he couldn't. This wasn't his home. This was New York, the edge of the universe, a city whose immenseness, whose importance, made him uncomfortable. It was too far from Southern California, too different, and he'd never had much of a desire to return, after one disastrous New Year's weekend twenty-five years earlier. But now, in his middle age, as a writer, it was where writers went to chase fame. So he'd gone there to meet his publisher, because he had finally sold his own work. And he went there to go to Bauman Books to buy an 1885 first edition, first issue of what was to him, Charles Dickens' best work.

"My book is on that train!" He shouted, "My book!"

He realized he was alone in the sea of bodies moving past him. No one seemed to hear, though more than a few passengers-in-waiting turned to stare at him, disbelieving such uproar over a book. None of the vacant faces took notice of his anguish.

What kind of a place is this? he thought. It seemed like an underground human ant colony, with thousands of people crowding each other, trudging perfunctorily into and out of metal cylinders on steel tracks, shuttling to and from destinations unseen. Are these people or robots?

John found a policeman. "Officer, my book, my briefcase; they're on a train." He pointed down a dark tunnel, a red light bending out of sight, and told the big, red-headed man how he'd set the briefcase down between his legs to hold on to the overhead handrail- how he'd been pushed out of the door as the train came to a stop. John felt pathetic, like a whining child tattling on a classroom bully. The officer listened, shaking his head.

"Ya not from here, ah yuh?" He made a couple of calls on his police radio trying to head off John's possessions. "Here's a numba ta col. Maybe somebody'll find it, but I doubt it."

John headed up toward street level, hoping to talk to someone who could give him some hope of recovering his priceless possession. He spoke on the phone to a transit officer who told him what he might do. His best hope was to try to get on the same train as it passed back through the city in the opposite direction. *Not much of a hope,* he thought. That wouldn't be for hours anyway. So he had to wait.

John recalled the number on the side of the train and gave it to the officer, who was able to approximate the time John should be at the subway station to catch it on its return to the city.

His plans for the rest of the day were ruined. He'd arranged to have dinner with an old friend from upstate New York. He hadn't seen Mike Wilson since his wedding day eighteen years earlier. But he'd tracked him down, and they were going to meet for dinner and then catch a Knicks game at Madison Square Garden. That wouldn't happen now; he wasn't in the mood.

He called Mike to tell him what had happened.

"Man, I'm sorry to hear that," said Mike. "You want me to come over and see what I can do?"

"That's all right. There's not much to do, except to pray for a miracle. I'll either get it back or I won't. I'll call ya later. We'll get together tomorrow."

John found a coffee shop and went in to begin his wait. He wanted to take his mind off the book so he bought a newspaper. A back page advertisement caught his eye. Dropping literacy rates among teens was the sales pitch. It was the same problem he'd dealt with his entire career. Adolescents and teens struggled to read or flat out chose not to. They played video and computer games, or watched TV. For \$295 a computer software program guaranteed that your child would improve four grade levels in two months or your money back. *Not possible,* thought John. Kids gotta read to become better readers.

He looked around the coffee shop at the New York crowd. Except for the accents, it could have been California. Everybody was talking. Two young girls were having lunch and both were talking. He wondered how either of them heard the other. No fewer than ten businessmen were shoveling food into their mouths while simultaneously talking on cell phones. Talk, talk, talk. People just didn't know how to be quiet.

It was the same out West. Everyone talked, few people listened, and even fewer people read. When he'd called his best friend Stan in Montana to tell him about publishing his first book, Stan was excited for him, but his words really stuck with John: "Yeah, send me a copy; it'll be the first book I've read in twenty years." He remembered making excuses for his high school pal. Why would Stan need to read, he's in law enforcement? But he knew that in justifying his friend's actions, he was giving every man, woman, boy and girl a free pass. He knew the truth. He's researched the statistics. One in four adults Americans hadn't read even a single book in the last year. And these were U.S. born citizens. How could that be? Time? Apathy? What was the problem? How could seemingly intelligent people do without reading stories?

He couldn't remember the last person he'd talked to who had actually read anything by Dickens.

"It's an excellent story," he'd told his Honors English students every year. "It's got everything in it: Ambition, greed, love and lust, murder, friendship, dishonesty, revenge. You'll like it."

"This book is boring," some said.

"I can't even understand the words," said others.

"You want us to read this? It's too long," exclaimed another non-reader.

This is what they said, about Charles Dickens. Not only had most of them not liked the story, but also many of them didn't even bother to read it. They'd bought notes to help them understand, found illustrated or retold versions, or watched films. Like most adults, it seemed

most students didn't read much of anything. Textbooks they scanned for information because they had to. No one read the great stories by the great authors anymore. The classics? Once, that collection of literature had defined an education. Now, most students had no idea what the term meant.

The train and the book were forty miles and two hours away.

A thousand thoughts were going through John's head. Why didn't people read? New York was so big. What he would say to Susan? His wife was a reader, but not a lover of books as he was. She thought he was crazy to spend so much money on a book.

"It's not just a book, Hon, it's Charles Dickens, one of the greatest authors in the history of the English language. It's a priceless work of art. I'm buying it. It will be worth ten times that much later on." John had stretched the truth on that point. The book was an investment, and it would increase in value, but he certainly wasn't buying it to sell it later on.

"Why don't you buy that old Ford you've been looking at? That would be a good project for you. Or fly up to Alaska and see Gerry and Glen and fish for a couple of weeks."

He had held firm, so Susan had relented. Now he had to call and tell her the bad news. He wasn't looking forward to that. He decided to wait until the evening to call her, until it was certain that he wasn't getting the book back.

It was now one o'clock, three and a half hours since the book and he got separated. In one hour he would catch the return train. Maybe he'd find the book. But he knew, as the beat cop had suggested, it wasn't likely.

He'd worked hard and long on his own first book. Three years writing and rewriting, and then multiple submissions and rejections, rewriting to fit the publishers' requests, and finally, an offer. A major publisher had liked the story. It was realistic fiction; a baseball story loosely based on his life. It had gotten great responses from adolescent and teen boys. Now the publishers wanted to meet him.

John was too anxious to finish his food. He paid for his lunch and headed back towards the 42nd Street station. Coming upon St. Patrick's, he stopped and said a prayer inside. He didn't go to church much anymore, but he still considered himself a Catholic.

At 1:56 PM the number 18 train stopped in front of him. He walked aboard and searched the floors and seats of the sparsely populated subway car, bending down and craning his neck to inspect every inch. There was no sign of anything.

"Has anyone seen a black briefcase with the initials JPR on it?" He spoke to no one in particular, and no one answered back. One businessman carrying a black briefcase shook his head as John's gaze passed over him. It was gone. He'd spent \$17,000 on a book that morning, and he'd lost it almost immediately.

John got off the subway at the next station, and walked back up to the street. Back at his hotel room he fell onto his bed, drained. *I can't believe it. My book is gone.* He dozed off.

At 5:30 the phone in his hotel room rang. He bolted upright. He's fallen into a deep, hard sleep. "Mr. Reed. We have a beat up black briefcase that someone turned in to one of our transit officers. It might be the one you're looking for."

The briefcase was at the 57th Street station. John was anxious all over again. A jolt of energy launched him into the cold winter evening. He took notice of everything as he walked briskly toward his book. New York was not a city, it was a rushing, turbulent ocean of concrete and noise. It was all the oceans of the world come together, and everything, every possible living thing, breathing, shouting, walking, running, gesturing, moving toward him and then away.

Thirty minutes later he saw the subway entrance and scrambled down the stairs toward the transit officer manning the station. The briefcase was on the counter. Whoever had taken it hadn't been gentle in trying to get it open. The officer told him that an older gentleman had turned the briefcase in after seeing three young men toss it into a trash bin. "He said he thought it was probably stolen because they didn't look like briefcase types," recalled the officer. "It's pretty beat up. There's nothing in it but an old book."

"Ha!" John let out an inadvertent shout of joy. He looked at the damage to the briefcase. Initials were carved into the soft leather. The lock had been mangled by some tool, probably the knife used to carve the initials. His camera was gone, a birthday present, four hundred dollars. A compact umbrella and forty dollars in cash were gone too. But the books were there. His book was there, and the first edition was in immaculate condition, not even unwrapped. It's as if whoever had taken the briefcase hadn't even wanted to touch it. But they'd looked at it, because the Bauman's bag was gone. *Probably to put the other stuff in,* John decided.

"This is it." He waved it at the officer. "It's here."

"It's a book, so what."

"So what? It's Charles Dickens. A first edition, first issue."

"Who?" responded the policeman.

John waved the book. "This book. Seventeen thousand dollars."

"You paid that much for a book? You're nuts."

"Have you ever read it, Officer?" John squeezed the leather-covered edition, as if to iterate its worth.

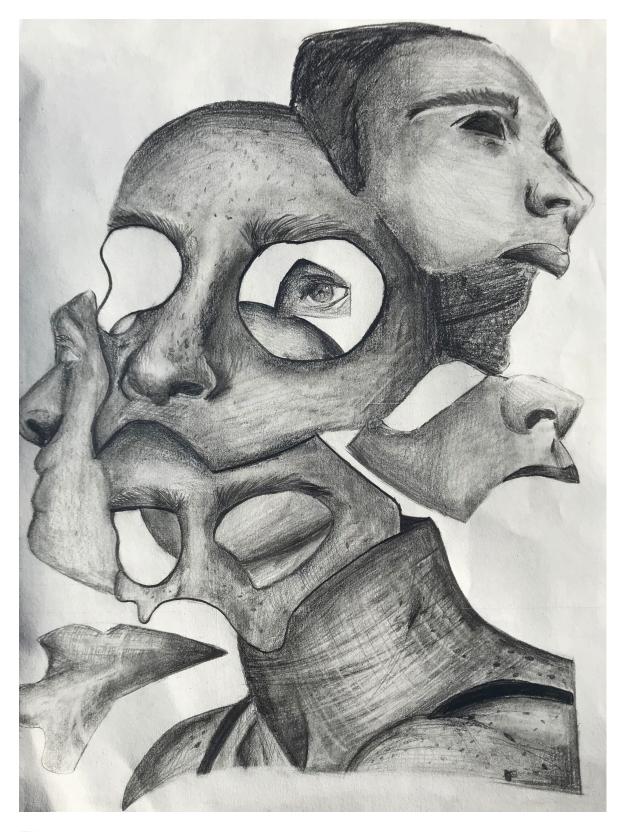
"Nah. And lucky for you not many other people have either."

"Yeah, lucky for me."

He turned the book over in his hands, feeling its worth. He smiled and thanked the officer.

John started to walk away and then stopped. He turned back toward the officer who was busy watching a television monitor. "You know," he exclaimed, "they would have liked it if they'd read it."

Mr. Sam Cisneros Staff English Teacher



Ellie Lee Grade 10

Art Teacher: Ms. Susanne Friedrich

Cooking Class Chaos

When I was a freshman, I joined a cooking class near my home. It wasn't for professional skills or learning how to make intricate dishes. We made simple everyday meals. This class was held every week on Wednesdays at 5 pm. The flyer said that the class was for ages 13-17 only. I was 14 at the time. There were people as young as 7 and there were people in their mid 20s. We had one man, who I'll call Doughboy, who was 27. He was a gangster wannabe, but in reality, my AP English Language exam goes harder than him. We had a 17-year-old, who I'll call Kenneth, who called himself a DJ. However, he was just a human iTunes playlist.

For the first three weeks, everything went well. Rules and discipline were enforced and all confrontations/fights were shut down immediately. The first time when things started to go downhill was when we were making some sort of cake, which I don't remember exactly what type. Doughboy was complaining, "Why do we have to make these granny desserts?! I don't know how to do this!" When I handed him the recipe, he threw it across the room screaming, "Get this out my face!" Since he was the oldest, however, the teacher, Mr. Gilbert, left him in charge as he went somewhere else.

"I'll show y'all how to make a dessert," said Doughboy. He then took the bag of flour and dumped it all into the bowl. "DOUGHBOY!" we all shouted at once. "Hey! It's my way or the highway! Which one do y'all want?" he replied. He then dumped in all the milk, eggs, sugar, vanilla extract, food coloring, salt, and other ingredients in the bowl. He then took a blender, turned it on high, put it in the bowl, and the batter started flying all over the place. I got some on me. Kenneth said to me in a seductive tone, "Yeah Jessica, you've got batter all over your glasses and now it's all over your clothes, girl." When Mr. G came back and asked what happened, a student responded, "Uh, we had a batter tornado." "OK then," Mr. G replied, let's just clean it up." We ended up getting a chocolate cake from a nearby Vons.

Things only got worse from there. When food fights broke out, what did the teacher do? Nothing. When water fights broke out, what did the teacher do? Nothing. When kids played around with the gas stove, what did the teacher do? Nothing. When kids played tug of war with the door knob, what did the teacher do? Nothing. When kids turned the class into the WWE Smackdown, what did the teacher do? Nothing.

One time, we were supposed to make roasted chicken. Instead of roasting the chicken, however, kids were roasting each other like El Pollo Loco. A brawl then broke out, someone bumped into the chicken, and it fell on the floor. We ended up going to a nearby KFC. A few weeks later, we were making pasta when someone started playing the song "Make it Nasty" by Tyga. The funny thing is, the pasta turned out to be nasty. I just made Ramen Noodles when I got home.

A few weeks later, we were making pepperoni pizza. The environment started out very chill; no fights of any kind. When Kenneth played "Careless Whisper" by George Michael, Doughboy threw a fit, complaining, "Who wants to hear that slo-mo song? Play some hardcore gangster rap! We in the hood, bro!" By the way, North Park is not the hood. Kenneth then played a song that was so inappropriate that not even Ms. LeCren, my ERWC teacher, is old enough to listen to it. Mr. G then decided to throw a party and let everyone invite their friends. We hung up Christmas lights even though it was only May. So many people showed up that we had to make another pizza. Kenneth was playing dirty rap songs the whole way through. Did I mention that there were people younger than 12 present? It may sound like I'm joking but

this is what happens when there are no rules and discipline. Other classes should start taking notes.

The final straw for me was when we were making fries. We used a wok instead of a deep fryer. When we took the fries out of the bag, they were frozen together. Doughboy took the fries and tried to make a three-pointer in the wok. The fries hit the edge of wok and made all the hot oil spill onto the floor. People were screaming like they had won a basketball championship game. I think Doughboy should take a few basketball classes next time. I was so upset that I called out everybody, including the teacher, for not acting like responsible people. When they cleaned up the mess, I put the oil and fries in myself. It took about 8 minutes for the fries to cook. When they were ready to serve, some person in his early 20s took the fries and ran out of the building. Everybody chased after him. "Share the fries!" yelled Mr. G. I just walked home and made my own stash of fries. That was my last time in that class.

Nine months later, I passed by my cooking class. The door was wide open and you could see in from the other side of the street. I saw someone throw an orange juice bottle. It was medium sized and was a little over half full. What did the teacher do? You guessed it: nothing!

Jessica Brooks-Caphart Grade 12

English Teacher: Ms. Carole LeCren



Ellie Lee Grade 10

Art Teacher: Ms. Susanne Friedrich



Mr. Ryan Lindenblatt Staff Math Teacher

Mr. Lindenblatt explains: "This is the Chewbacca I drew on my classroom whiteboard the week before we went on break. I only used three different Expo markers to create it. It is not an original drawing but a copy/synthesis of other depictions of Chewbacca, but on different media." He adds, "Stay healthy and safe."



Grade 11

English Teacher: Mr. Sam Cisneros

Quarantine

Quietly

Understanding

Another

Reality

Awaiting

News

Turning

Illness

Nothing

Exuberant

Camila Alvarez Grade 10

English Teacher: Ms. Carole LeCren

Spending Time in Nature

Take me to a place full of green,

Surrounded by plants, that shall be seen.

With a ray of sunshine

On a bright sunny day.

To take a moment to think.

As well as to appreciate God, for what gifts and characteristics he gave me.

Just think about the positives in life.

I shall then be taken to this beautiful place to appreciate my life, and suddenly go into deep meditation.

The deep meditation will guide me on the road to reaching nirvana.

Once nirvana is reached my life will be filled with happiness and prosperity.

Leili Yarpezeshkan Grade 12

English Teacher: Ms. Carole LeCren

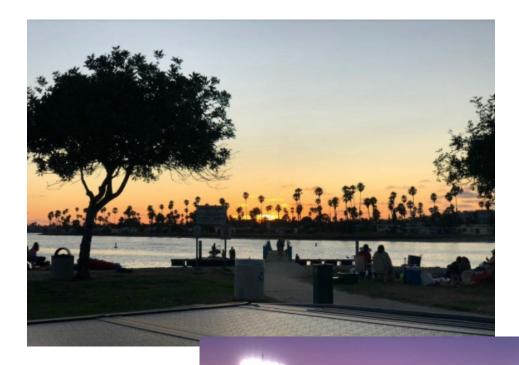


Katherine Frost Grade 10 English Teacher: Mrs. Mary Maycock

To the Seniors

Even though it ends Your legacy will live on From us: we love you

Camila Alvarez Grade 10 English Teacher: Ms. Carole LeCren



Jesus Valeriano Grade 10 English Teacher: Mrs. Jessica Figge