

The Aftermath

The 2004 Presidential Election is over, leaving the 40% of America who voted for John Kerry and John Edwards in dismay.

In what was called the "most pivotal election of our time," the voters came out in record numbers totaling over 100 million ballots cast, the highest number of votes since 1968. Even my sister, who I thought possessed no political opinion, took her turn at the polls. Some devoted people took the time to wait for more than six hours to vote. This flurry of determined voters kept the polls open until 3:00 a.m., in some cases.

One of the main issues that made this such an important and emotional election was the War on Terror. George Bush led us into what Kerry called "A war at the wrong place and the wrong time." The candidates couldn't be farther apart on the war issue than they were, or on any issue, for that matter. Kerry is a liberal who is pro choice (didn't help him too much with the religious voters) and also strongly supports stem cell research.

Bush is a conservative; he doesn't believe stem cell research is necessarily morally right. Bush also doesn't believe in abortion.

The war and these controversial domestic issues seemed the main fuel for the election.

I, for one, will strongly miss the near slanderous commercials portraying Bush as a spoiled, evil oil tycoon, and Kerry as a spineless flip-flop who's a danger to our safety.

It doesn't matter if you voted Republican, Democratic, Independent; for Kerry, Bush, or even Nader. As long as you voted, you're doing your part to keep the fire of democracy burning.

I'm sure many of you, especially the losing 40%, have given up on "the best man winning." Send your condolences to Sen. John Kerry and your congrats to our new President, George W. Bush, at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, in Washington, D.C.

-Erin Friedrich

Poem I

Blank eyes
Shining dully
Staring ahead without comprehension
Living selfishly, a conscious coma.
Smiling happily,
But it's not true.
Ignorance disguised as happiness,
So unaware of the worthless toils
Of the world.
She doesn't fear death
She never says the wrong thing.
So lucky
Turning a corner she waves.
Snapped back to the hallway,
The angry elder looking at me,
Telling me, "I expect more."
More what?
More effort?
More A's?
More than what I have?
No, I have what you want.
New challenges, unwelcome.
Never before did I have to try.
Among the gifted
I'm not special.
I'm average.
Just an average genius.
I'm better, but not best
Among the talented...so
Is she the lucky one or am I?
The answer lies in her vacant smile
And unwavering bliss.
I couldn't go back
To unknowing,
But if I had the chance
To lay the petty questions of this life behind,
Would I?
Would you?
Open and brilliant
pulling everyone in,
She smiles.

-Erin Friedrich

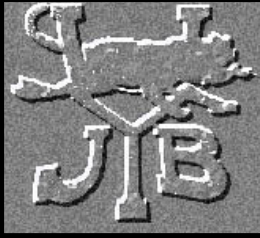
Poem II

Where will I be,
When the sun has set more times
And risen
Until days and years
Have passed
And I'm
Out in the real world
Just over eighteen
And out on my own
In a world
Lacking mercy
Will all the gifted classes
And lectures help me
Will I be walking in
The door to
The most prestigious college
With timid pride
My father looking
at my partially emptied room
Joyful sorrow welling inside
His aged heart
Please, God,
Let that be me
Or can the grades
And motivation
Keep me from
Begging to stay
Just one more month
Don't make me leave
Will I be bluntly telling
The boss
This is my last chance
I need to eat
My son needs to eat
Oh, God, Please
Give me the wisdom
To know
What lectures
To actually listen to
Or the ones that will
Make a difference
Or the ones that
Waste my precious
Valuable time

Tick Tock

-Erin Friedrich

Erin is an 8th
Grade Student in
Mrs. Searle's
English Studies
Class.



A Thousand Masks

Cold as the arctic; hard as steel,
I face myself.
In the cold dark night,
I cry my sorrowful cry
begging for something more.
Dark and desolate words
hang mute.
I build a thousand masks.
To hide myself,
To suffocate myself.
Inside these masks I see my path
covered in blood.
As I walk this path
My soul seeps.

I build a thousand masks.

Every time you think
you're helping me,
You lash out at my soul instead...
I build a thousand masks.
For God's sake, don't listen
What they tell is only a lie.
They say I'm calm and in control,
That I control the mighty storm.
I'm the one controlled,
I'm the one bruised and battered.
My "friends" hold the whip
Each lash destroying me.
A scream of desolation
A bloody talent used to cry out.

I build a thousand masks.
You have the power
To wipe the cold stare
of the living dead
Off my face.
Breathe into me—
make me whole again.
Bandage my battered soul,
make my soul heal and be strong.

Where are you?

—Sarah J. Uher

Choices

Truthfully, how many times have you complained about how our school looks? You've probably said it's raggedy because of the heat not working all the time, the graffiti decorated textbooks, not having good basketballs for gym class—the list could go on. It seems that the people who do complain about that are the ones who actually make those "problems" in the first place.

We are getting more than a 6 million dollar renovation to our school, and still we see vandalism. Why complain about it if you are the one who just stepped in the new cement the workers just poured? Why complain if you are the one writing on the freshly painted walls just because you are bored?

What we need to realize is that apparently nothing is going to get better unless we stop making it worse. Before this big renovation, the only reason our school looked bad is because we made it that way. Unless we start deciding to make the right choices, our school is still going to look the exact same way. We still will have the reputation as the "raggedy" school. That's not what I want MY school to look like.

—Mallory Cross

Average

It's a gift
The ability to cut to the chase
Intuition on overload,
My talent,
A shy ghostly shadow
I do have it...

Lost in a never-ending darkness
Looking for the light switch
My very best
No longer good enough for "them"
Mental snapshots illuminating the dark corners
I can't reach that level
I know I'm not up to anyone's standards
Accepted as a smart-alecky teenager
They don't know me
The difference of an A+ or an A?
NOTHING

Cut off easy?

No not me
A perfect middle
Non-existent
I don't give up
Neither should they
—Mallory Cross

Sarah, Mallory, &
April are in Mrs.
Searle's English
Studies Class;
Allyssa is in Mrs.
Searle's Lan-
guage Arts Class.

Rumors Bad; Compliments Good

People in this school are good students, just bad mouths. People hear a rumor and have to say something to the person who started it. This year, I got suspended because of rumors.

Instead of waiting for it to blow over, I got in "her" face. She felt offended, and she hit me.

That's why so many parents think this is a bad school. Guest teachers come and see how we act, and they don't want to come back.

Our school would be better if we all thought about the following: Those who live by the rumor get hurt by the rumor—both physically and mentally.

—Allyssa Bedford

My Reality

Swirling colors in my mind,
My ideas form images on paper—
The simple sketches that come to me inside.
The image of Escher's "Hand with Reflecting Globe."
These distorted illustrations
Are the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.
I see a beautiful flower
Then snap back to reality.
I'm so disappointed I can't quite clench
The disappointment in my heart
When I see the real world return to me.
I can't stand it so much that I go back inside,
And I keep drawing. It becomes part of me.
Pride, happiness—I can't believe this really is
My reality.
But soon I remember what the world's really like.
I'll never go back,
No matter what you say.
I really, truly do feel this way.
I've already returned home.
I'll go back in a while, where I feel home.
Someday I'll look back at this,
And I'll think it's crazy.
But for now
I'll just stay in my reality.

—April Anderson