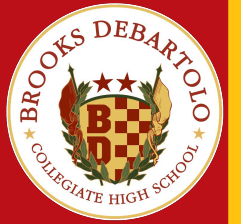


The *Phoenix*

A Literary Magazine



The *Spring*



Edition: Journey Down The Path



Nerissa Stokes - Editor/Artist
Design Artork and Poetry



Mckale Samuelsj-Editor/Layout
Editorials, Layout, and Design



Kate Murdock-Staff Writer
Senior Class Correspondent



Shalise Kindred - Staff Poet



Madyson McDonough
Staff Poet

Since its inception *The Phoenixle* has been a student-published creation that blends literary creativity with school-wide current events, sports, and of course an endearing focus on our amazing Arts Department here at Brooks DeBartolo Collegiate High School. The Editors and Staff who have contributed to this labor of love have created a legacy that we hope to continue for many years at BDCHS. Although others have contributed to content that has been published, and some of our founding students did graduate last year, the seniors who are second-year editors, writers, and correspondents for the magazine are indeed the heartbeat of the publication.



Please join me in congratulating our staff, as without their intentional dedication to keeping this publication alive, we would not have been able to continue producing this digital literary magazine. From the very onset of this year, Nerissa and Mckale were committed to this being a legacy that they would leave to the rising classes at Brooks, and hopefully a day will come when this publication is looked at as a staple in the student life of the school. Deservedly so, I hope when that day comes these students who have been so vital in the success of this product and its original content, will be recognized for their creativity and dedication to excellence.

The Four Nobles of the Forest

Ethan Huynh



Long ago, in the forests of Canton, there lived a boy and his father. The father took his son out to the forest and told him what his father had once told him. “Son,” his father began, placing his hand on his son’s shoulder. “There will come a day when I am gone, returned to the earth, and one with the forest. Life will give you many uncertainties. When faced with such, I will speak to you through the forest.” The boy began to weep. “Why is it that you must go? Why must you speak through the forest? Can’t you speak to me as you speak now?” His father smiled softly and turned to face his son. “You will come here in the future with your son and he will ask you the same question.”

When the day came that the boy’s father reunited with the earth, the boy came out to the forest as his father had told him to. The air was thick and rain poured down, threatening to drown the boy in sorrow. In his mourning, he cried out, “Forest! What am I to do now?” The boy did not expect to hear anything. All that spoke was the howling summer rain. The bamboo shook, swayed, and then bent as

the wind blew by. As the boy turned to walk away, a voice called out to him. The bamboo had begun to speak straightforwardly. “Every year, the summer storms shake the forest. Many trees fall and snap. But when faced with the unforgiving wind, I do not break, but bend.” The boy understood and stood himself upright. “When faced with life, I will be like the bamboo. Bend, but never break.”

The winds continued to blow, until summer passed through the breeze, and autumn took its place. The forest began to lose its leaves and flowers began to wilt.

The boy, having to fend for himself now, began to bring less and less food home from each forage. Soon, it was hardly enough to live, and his sadness had made him grow weak. “Forest! I have bent as far as I can go. With every challenge, I have let it happen and adapted. But what can I do when I can bend no further?” Just then, as he spoke, a breeze blew by that shook him to his core. He watched as the dead leaves blew by, following them with his gaze, until they led him to a bush of chrysanthemum. The chrysanthemum then spoke, voice humble, yet bold. “Every year, when autumn’s cruel breeze blows, I stand against it and bloom regardless. There are times in which you must stand your ground and be resilient.” The boy understood and crouched down to the level of the bush. “When life challenges me, I will bend to what I cannot change, but fight against what I can.”

And so the winds grew still, as autumn froze over to frigid winter. Snow began to cover the forest floor, and the boy was forced to survive on what he had foraged in the autumn.

For the first time since winter’s beginning, the boy left his hut to walk to the forest. “Forest! I have remained both flexible and strong. However, I do not know how much longer I can continue to try. My persistence feels futile.” For a moment, it seemed winter had finally silenced the once-vibrant forest. But then, a gentle voice called out to him. The boy turned his head to see a single tree full of

blissful, pink, blossoms. The plum tree then spoke. “Every year, in the deepest part of winter, I sprout lovely flowers. I do not face the winter only with flexibility and strength. Any effort is for naught without hope.” The boy gazed in awe at the tree’s beauty, before nodding in understanding. “When I have lost everything else, hope will guide me through any adversity.”

The breeze had returned as the snow melted, heralding the spring. Birds began to chirp once more, and the forest was filled again with life.

After a bountiful harvest, the boy walked out to the forest. The sunshine filled his eyes and the voices of the many trees filled his ears. He laughed, before kneeling in gratitude before the forest. “Forest! I have survived the cold of winter! I feel invigorated once again!” The forest did not seem to respond, only continuing its previous energy. However, the trees began to quiet down, making way for a softer voice to call out to the boy. Still knelt, the boy looked around, before finding the orchid. The orchid then spoke. “Every year, in the bright light and brilliance of the spring, I do not bloom with a shout of triumph. As good things happen, you must keep your humility.” The boy listened, understood, and bowed low to the forest. “Even when faced with life’s many luxuries, I shall remain humble.”

And so the years went on and passed. Through spring, summer, autumn, and winter, the boy remembered what the forest had told him. Soon, he never needed to take advice from the forest again. Still, the forest watched over him. And when the time came that the boy became a man, raised a family, and returned himself to the forest, he understood why it is he must go.

Moral: The answers to life can be found in nature.

2 Characters: The boy (the innocent) and his father (the wise elder)

Theme: Coming of age

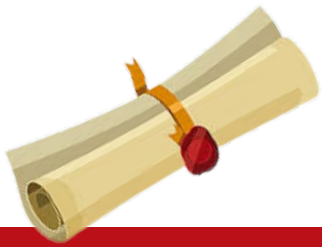
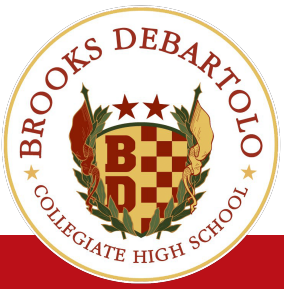
Setting: Forests of Canton

Symbols: The Four Nobles:

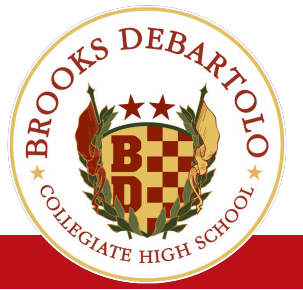
- Bamboo- Flexibility
- Chrysanthemum- Resilience
- Plum blossom- Hope
- Orchid- Humility

About the Author: Ethan Huynh

"I am currently a sophomore at Brooks DeBartolo Collegiate High School. I am the president of the BDCHS Mock Trial Club and the BDCHS Chess Club. I received the Outstanding Instrumentalist Award in the 2024-2025 school year. I am currently aspiring to become a law student and pursue it as a career. I welcome any future opportunities and have those who support me to thank."



Poets



LOVE

By Shalise Kindred

Because of you, in gardens of blossoming
Flowers I ache from the perfumes of
spring.

I have forgotten your face, I no longer
Remember your hands; how did your lips
Feel on mine?

Because of you, I love the white statues
Drowsing in the parks, the white statues
that
Have neither voice nor sight.

I have forgotten your voice, your happy
voice;
I have forgotten your eyes.

Like a flower to its perfume, I am bound to
My vague memory of you. I live with pain
That is like a wound; if you touch me, you
will
Make to me an irreparable harm.

Your caresses enfold me, like climbing
Vines on melancholy walls.

I have forgotten your love, yet I seem to
Glimpse you in every window.

Because of you, the heady perfumes of
Summer pain me; because of you, I again
Seek out the signs that precipitate desires:
Shooting stars, falling objects.



New

By Madyson Mcdonough

Everything feels new,
but it's not.

Same school,
year four
But it's different,

Same people,
new classes,
new freshman,
new teachers,
Same me.

Same poems,
Same faces,
but different.

I guess it fels new,
because you're not here.
You're here,
but not with me.

But new,
because I'm free.
Free to be me,
to be myself.

And it feels new,
new grade,
new me,
new us,
but separate.

I kind of like it.
The new feeling.
No more trapped.
I can be,
the new me.

And I like,
the new me.

Love Is Hard

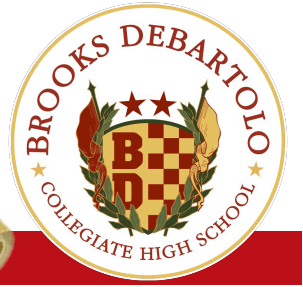
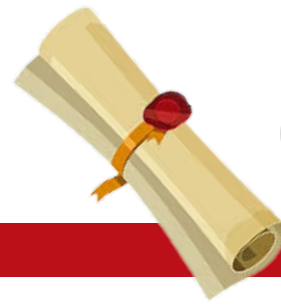
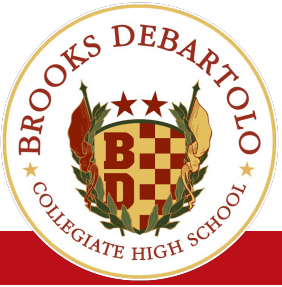
By Madyson Mcdonough

Love is hard,
because I have learned,
they only love you,
when they need
something.

They only call,
they only text,
when they need to do,
need to feel something.

Love is hard,
Love is scary,
and sometimes,
it sucks,

But loving you,
is easy,
but I'm scared,
scared it will end,
end when I'm too attached.
Love is hard.



I Understand

By Nerissa Stokes

Not like before,
When I was afraid,
Of how my body tore,
And my heart affray,

Cupid and I never got along,
I didn't understand him at first.
How one God could cause all that pain,
Oh, how comfortable he was watching us all wither away!

But now I get it,
How his bow is tied to his hands,
How it snips a target in the sand,
And doesn't question where it lands.

It's not intentional,
The pain he feels,
Nor the lives he creates ruin,
Ones that he wishes to appeal,

His stupid, glowy wings,
Flapping in the wind,
Used to mock me,
Leaving me, oh so, offended!

But I get it.
The same way my braids blow past me,
When the wind picks up too fastly,
Oh, how my tenacity wraps me.

He fears it,
Just as I,
We hear it,
And it's glorious cries,

We pierce our own hearts,
Digging for some semblance of control,
To finally be the conductor of our orchestra,
But we are mere products of our souls.

The way it tears us apart,
I get it, I understand,
Why he cannot let go of that bow,
That stupid, relentless hope,

Oh, how he pulls it tight
When it threatens to let go,
How easily the scars begin to burn,
And oh, look! The cherub starts to spur.

He feels it,
All my agony,
Not the cause,
But the root,

He feels me,
How I dig crescents into my chest,
Gnawing at a pain that doesn't exist,
A trick of my fragile mind,

Oh, how it loves me so!
How easily it can confuse faith and hope
For poison and a failure to elope,
Be gracious, I'll beg,

For Cupid may fall,
If I let my hands tear
Through the fabric of it all,
And melt into the very same sin.

Oh, Cupid, how I hated you,
All the horrible things you could do,
But I understand you now,
Your job the most gracious of all,

You, a mere god, at the mercy of mortals,
And I, a simple being, at the mercy of it all.
How we both bask in the sunlight,
And hope like Icarus, we shall not fall.

For we've seen how he ended up,
His positivity led blind,
As we hold onto our faith and hope,
Wishing not to be melted and bind.

For the gods have no mercy,
And it's only our hearts that feel pity,
And my love, I no longer hate you,
I understand all the miserable things you do.

So, aim your staked bow,
Spot your clueless target,
And rip your heart out,
Then simply draw, aim, and shoot.

Emerie Bohannon-Chenault

Saint Leo University Commit



On Thursday, April 2nd, Brooks DeBartolo student-athlete, Emerie Bohannon-Chenault, with her very proud family in attendance, signed her letter of intent in the gym. Attended by some of her teachers, counselors, and administrators, Emerie inked her commitment to Saint Leo University, where she will play both soccer and run track, while pursuing her college degree. Best wishes, Emerie!

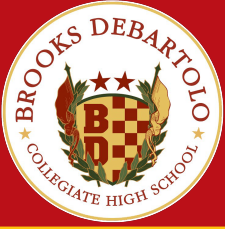
Now, one of the last sports concluding the spring sports season here at Brooks, Boys' Baseball had a bittersweet senior night as it was celebrated with grand displays and arrays of pictures featuring its senior players from as long ago as kindergarten through high school.



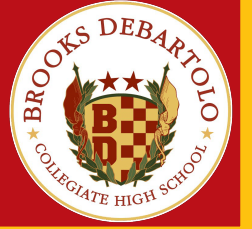
Despite the Phoenix Baseball team not moving on after their first game District Championship loss, it was a year that saw improvement in many areas on the field, and a special group of young men who have played together for nearly their entire lives closed out their high school careers, together. Good luck in the future boys!

The end of both 2026 and the season of Winter Sports flew by as Girls' and Boys' soccer, Boys' and Girls' Basketball, and Girls' Weightlifting celebrated senior nights, qualifying titles for regional and state competitions, and their time together before the holidays and the new year. The advent of the new year was marked with a huge accomplishment for the Girls' Weightlifting team, having secured second place overall in both the Olympic and Traditional divisions and many athletes receiving individual awards for their efforts that ended up leading them to qualify for States!





JOURNEY ABROAD



Over Spring Break, Ms. Mitchell led a group of students, parents, and staff to Iceland for an unique school community trip and experience! Summer 2027 is currently planned to be spent in the countryside and popular cities and capitals of Switzerland, Italy, France, and Spain, all guided by Ms. Opheim. With the Australia 2026 also trip around the corner, travel abroad experiences with BDCHS will be cherished for years to come by the school community. Pictured below are a few international trips students and staff enjoyed over the course of Spring Break, before returning to a busy week of school, including Jordan Frary's exciting trip to the UK where they attended several soccer games.

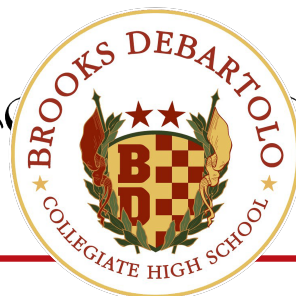


The Final Countdown

With Junior and Senior Prom just a week before spring break, students got to have double the fun and enjoy a Casino Night-themed event with each other at Hunter's Green Country Club. Ms. Spivey, Senior Class Coordinator, never fails to show out and show support for the Senior Class, as she has volunteered countless hours in order to ensure the Class of 2026 has a pleasant last quarter of high school together.



With Class of 2026's graduation also no longer as far away as it seemed, parents and students look forward to enjoying a ceremony at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts in the afternoon of May 23rd. Graduates will arrive at 8:30 in the morning and the ceremony begins at 11:00, lasting until around 1 in the afternoon. The recently confirmed and announced Class of 2026 Valedictorian, Ryan Rabon, and Salutatorian, Nora Fernandez, will be recognized during the ceremony.





Saturday, April 18th, participating seniors spent the entire day at Universal Studios during the 'Grad Bash' event. As one of the final get-togethers and first adventures of the impending graduation season, seniors spent time enjoying the attractions, hanging out with friends, and having fun until the night ended at 2 A.M!

