

## **Lucky Number Make a Wish**

By Marin Brow – The Potomac School

I find myself praying at 11:11 each day for a better me. I find myself pleading for signs, depending on a god I swear I don't believe in. The unconscious repetition soothes me. It's not planned, nor do I take any measures to stop it. Every day, I find myself succumbing to the wits of a higher being, burning for a heaven I ostracize myself from.

I go to church almost every weekend, never of my own accord, but I go nonetheless. I take this time to search for myself; I evaluate if I have been flawless. I'll never be. I find that I'll never live up to the version God made for me. I find myself in need of salvation, yet I will never accept it. I find myself relying on a welcome I'll never trust.

I was confirmed two years ago. A couple of days beforehand I worked myself up to finally denounce this God to my mother. But I got no response, only more questions left unanswered. Confirmation was a game to me; toying with the idea I could be accepted, burned by the realization I was dreaming. A dream of running naked through the gardens with Adam by my side. Life is what I make of it, yet no matter if I choose hunger or satisfaction, the ending never changes.

Death is a reverie, a cap to an overflowing bottle, pushing to contain a never-ending flow; the desire to be known. I know how God comforts, it's not a coincidence we are suddenly church regulars once my aunt and grandfather died. I just don't understand it. It's an illusion of liberty, you are always tied down – the only difference being the choice of shackles. I am restrained by my naiveties and my fault in understanding. I need to die knowing my mere existence doesn't put me on a speed train to hell. I need to live knowing my prayers are more than what I believe in. I need to look back on the past and think. Why did God make me like this?

I was ten when I knew I was gay. I was nine when I knew this entrusted me to evil. At no point was I ever allowed to live with myself without the wary shadow of hell. The stark and waiting outline of my sins. A candle can be reformed once burned, do I get the same mercy?

I lay at night staring at my clock, itching for it to turn to 11:11. The one time I can rely on a peripheral thought. One where I don't care that God knows me; only that he hears me. And as another year ticks by, the first sermon of January meets me, singing an alarm to me. Wake up. "One must bear fruit worth repenting in order to be forgiven." But I don't want to be forgiven, I want to be accepted.