

TONY RYAN

by Blair Hakimian

The loudspeakers blare and screech as the announcer attempts to elevate his voice over the rumble of the crowd. He declares that the race will commence in five to ten minutes. The various varsity teams begin to congregate behind the starting line as our team returns from our warm-up and walks over with our racing spikes on. We pick a box and continue with drills and stride-outs. After we have our team meeting/pep-talk we squeeze our way back behind the line.



I glance to the left, to the right, and back again. I am drowning in a sea of sweating, nervous runners expectant of the pistol shot signaling the beginning of the short, grueling journey. A man with a long beard and overalls walks out in front. He briefly explains the course and wishes us all luck in the three-point-one mile trek that awaits the pounding feet of hundreds of runners hoping to pass one more girl, one more girl, one more girl. He continues on with his miniature speech and our coach gives us some last words of wisdom.

Finally, the old geezer concludes and the coaches are required to leave the premises. We're on our own now. Its up to us to stick together and finish strong. We are then asked to take one large step back from the line.

A loud whistle explodes from the mouth of the starter and the mass steps up to even their toes with the glowing yellow stripe. Anticipation thrives as the girls all wait for the blast of the pistol. Then it comes. The sound bursts in our ears like an over-filled balloon. It invades our brains, signaling the start of the race. The minds of everyone race to inform their muscles and compel them to take off.

The feeling of running in a herd of so many striving for the same goal is indescribable, yet the feeling slowly fades as the race draws on. At the end, our coach, Tony Ryan, is standing at the finish line cheering us on in the last yards. It's overwhelming and should be experienced by all.

A Moment of Optimism

by Zara Day



The candy-puff clouds danced a slow, magical waltz along the skyline as the sun dipped closer and closer toward the horizon. And then, for a moment, all was right with the world. There was no pain and no suffering in this beautiful, bewitching moment. There was only hope and blessed happiness as the orange and pink hues languidly melted together along the fading blue horizon, silent melodies singing through the clouds of delicate, pastel colors.

As the red sun faded into the horizon, the feeling of bright optimism gradually followed suit and reality took over. Staring off into the twilight, the sounds of

crickets fused with that of harsh gunshots. For a moment, there had been hope. There had been something worth believing in. And that moment was what kept me standing, immobile against a dark, starry backdrop until long into the morning hours. Amazing what a beautiful sunset can do, isn't it?