

# 18 Voices from the Process: Semi-Random Excerpts from the Journals of the Editors

The Tahoma West Editorial Staff

Editing for Tahoma West and editing “out in the world” are two different things right now. Hopefully, next year the staff will have more quantity to choose from.

One of the first things that has really surprised me about the process of editing and consensus is the way we drastically change our minds while choosing the pieces for acceptance. The pieces that we pick to go into the magazine must stand alone, but they also make up a whole. We never want to decide on something just because it is especially exciting. I feel each poem should be considered on the merits of itself and not in comparison to other poetry, although I understand the impossibility of doing that in a publication where there is limited space. I must make it clear that I am neither criticizing nor responding negatively to the active exchange of opinions; I am just yet a little bit uncomfortable with it. Can you really like a poem but not like the last two lines? I think it’s possible.

...we are also trying to be careful not to exclude something different that might be really good, original writing and original thought. Our first try at collaborating and expressing viewpoints about what we read was predictably a little stiff and uncomfortable. I don’t mean the technical “how” but rather the literary “how.” For the first time, our opinions were split in half. The one side wanted a lot of changes—lots more description, details, active voice; the other side wanted a few sentence patterns fixed. Does the comma really belong here? Why? It is important that the magazine survive any editor’s departure; it must be a self-sustaining entity like the school newspaper.

Doesn’t anybody write anymore? Does this page speak back?