

Inkspot

Medina County Literary Review

Educational Service Center
of Medina County
Vol. 30, 2017-2018



Mitchell Young
Black River High School
Grade 11

Congratulations to the artists and authors who have their work featured in this year's edition of *Inkspot*, the Medina County Literary Review! We wish you much continued success in the years ahead!

The Educational Service Center of Medina County takes great pleasure in presenting the thirtieth volume of *Inkspot*! Designed to showcase exceptional and unique pieces of prose, poetry, and artwork, *Inkspot* features the work of students from the Medina County public schools. For the 2017-18 *Inkspot* edition, more than two hundred entries were submitted for consideration of publication. That includes submissions from students who attend 19 different schools.

Many thanks to the dedicated teachers in our county who supported their students by submitting work to the *Inkspot*. Thanks also to *Inkspot* committee members Janice Kollar, Jacinda Yonker, and Brenda Zacharias for their work on this year's literary magazine.

Special thanks to Keturah Zacharias for her incredible organization and dedication to this project.

Enjoy!

Kris Rutledge
Inkspot Project Chair



Mitchell Young is the artist who created the artwork on the cover of this year's *Inkspot*.

Mitchell Young is a junior who attends Black River High School. This is his first year of taking an art class in high school. Mitchell's favorite medium is painting. According to Mitchell, "As challenging as it is, I really enjoy it. I'm not sure of what my future holds in art, but I'm excited to finish the school year in my art class. My inspiration for my piece of artwork was a spur of the moment decision over a class project. The rhino is one of the coolest animals, in my opinion, with a rugged, tough look to them, but yet they are an endangered species that struggles to live in nature."

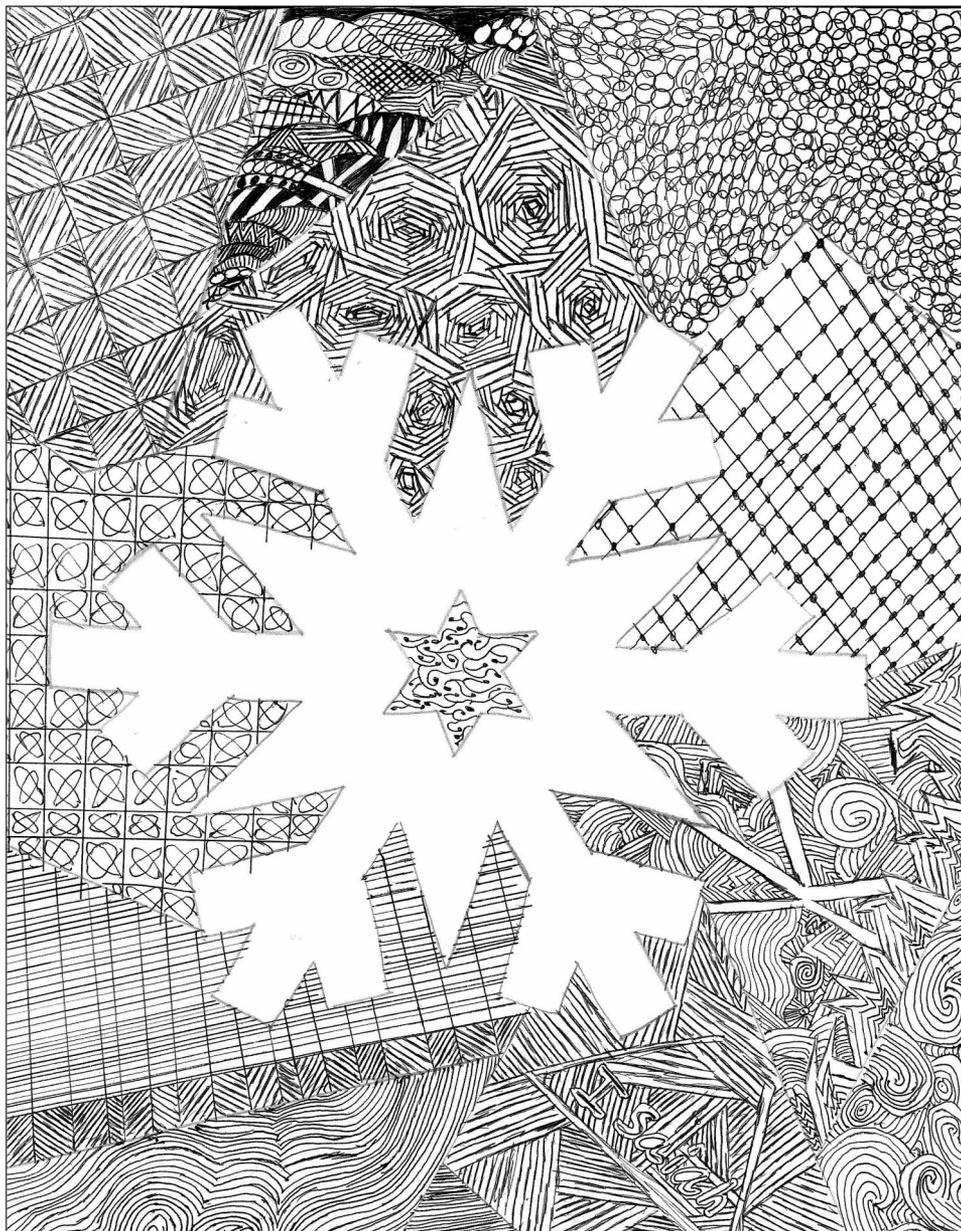
Mitchell says that his favorite school subject is anatomy. He states, "Some of my hobbies are hunting, playing sports, and hanging out with my friends. I plan to attend a four-year college and study business."

Grades K-6

Snowflake

So little t u n ls e And
 y e a n i q u t it builds
 great one each
 piece like flake
 of another is all
 art but one
 but one thing that
 It is cool to know that all sn is similar ow is really lots of snowflakes
 to all...
 they fall
 They
 melt
 away
 at
 t h
 slight e s quite g
 touch grand n HUGE
 hand art

Wyatt Kunz
 Buckeye Intermediate
 Grade 6



Isaiah Skinner
Buckeye Intermediate
Grade 6

The Story About Snow

Oh what fun you are,
Like getting above par

You are so cold and white,
Like a chilly winter night

You bring great joy,
Like getting a toy

You fall from the sky,
Just like a dead fly

You are each unique,
You are even sleek

You're frozen fun,
Like a great pun

You're powdery white,
Like a fluorescent light

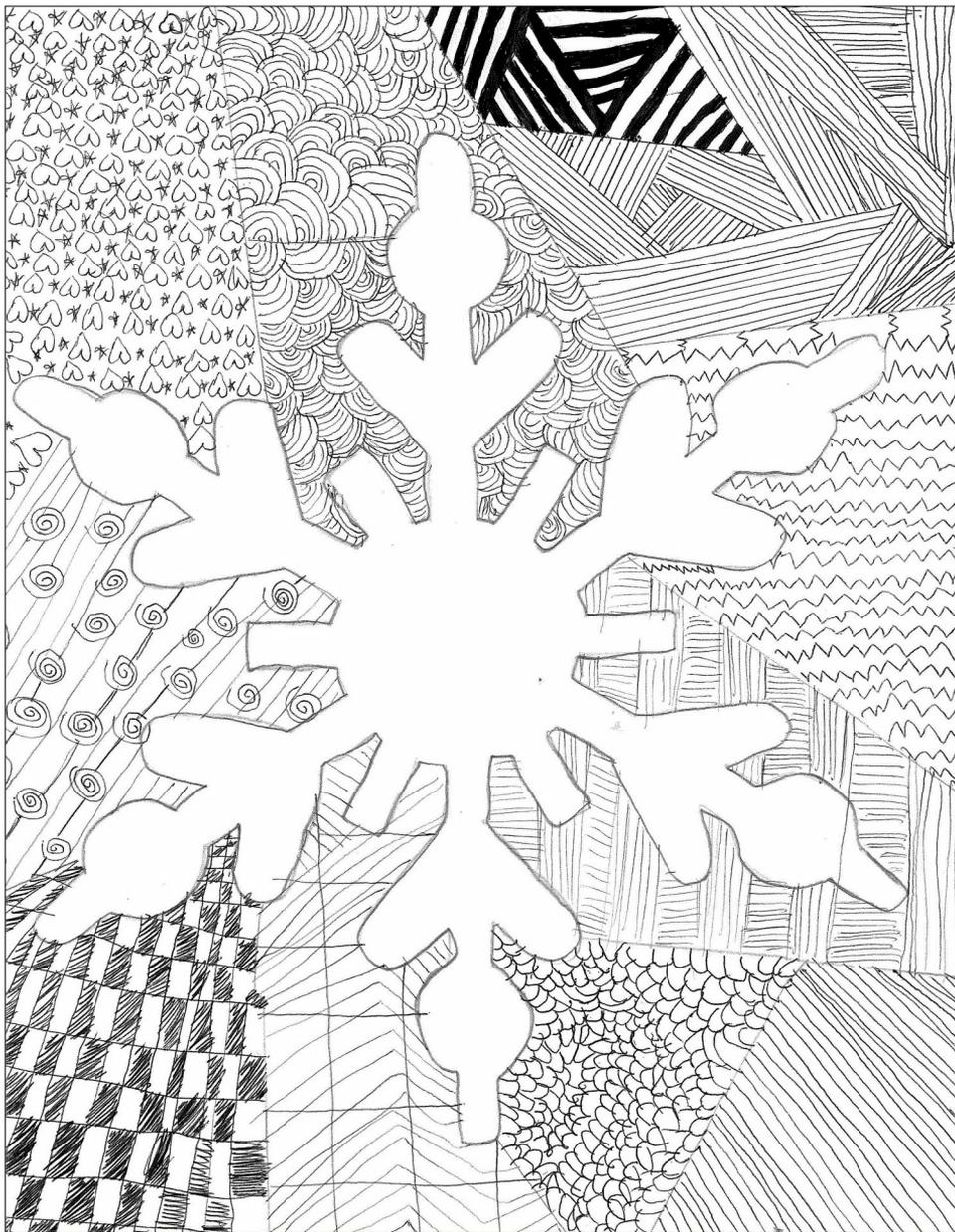
You're really quite soft,
You're even found aloft

You silently fall,
Like a rubber ball

You pile up high,
Like fifty buckeyes

You reflect the sun's rays,
Like a fire ablaze

Cause you are snow,
Don't you just know



Grace Miller
Buckeye Intermediate
Grade 5

The Bird of Song

An owl flies in the night,
The rooster cries in the light,
The summer breeze silent, not a sound.
And then the bluebird's song fills the air,
Like a melody sung
With so much care.

The crow in the field shrieks and shrills,
The crickets hushed their musical trills,
The cardinal's song need not compare,
The cardinal's voice hung in the air,
The cicadas buzzed in despair,
For no sound could match a voice so fair.

And the bird of song took to the air.

The red-and-black songbird fellow,
Flew into the sunset with a beautiful bellow.
And every creature began to sob,
Watching the bird fly out of sight,
Its beautiful song
Echoing into the night.

Joseph Maag
Central Intermediate
Grade 5



Olivia Lenz
 Applewood Elementary
 Grade 2

The Forest

The Forest is a home to many creatures

From bears to bees and moose to ants, it is peaceful

The Trees of the forest are like wise old people, they have seen a lot
 The Plants slowly swaying in the wind are like little children when they
 are playing

Thorns are like when people are just having a rotten, bad, or even just a
 miserable day

Beaches are like a person who is very calm and optimistic on everything
 about, and in, life

Swamps are like sad people who don't realize the better things about
 life or just need inspiration

These are some of the reasons that Forests are more interesting than
 they seem.

Nick Kreider
 Central Intermediate
 Grade 6



Nola Nowotniak
Buckeye Intermediate
Grade 5

The Tale of Peter Rabbit as a Poem Based on the Original Story by Beatrix Potter

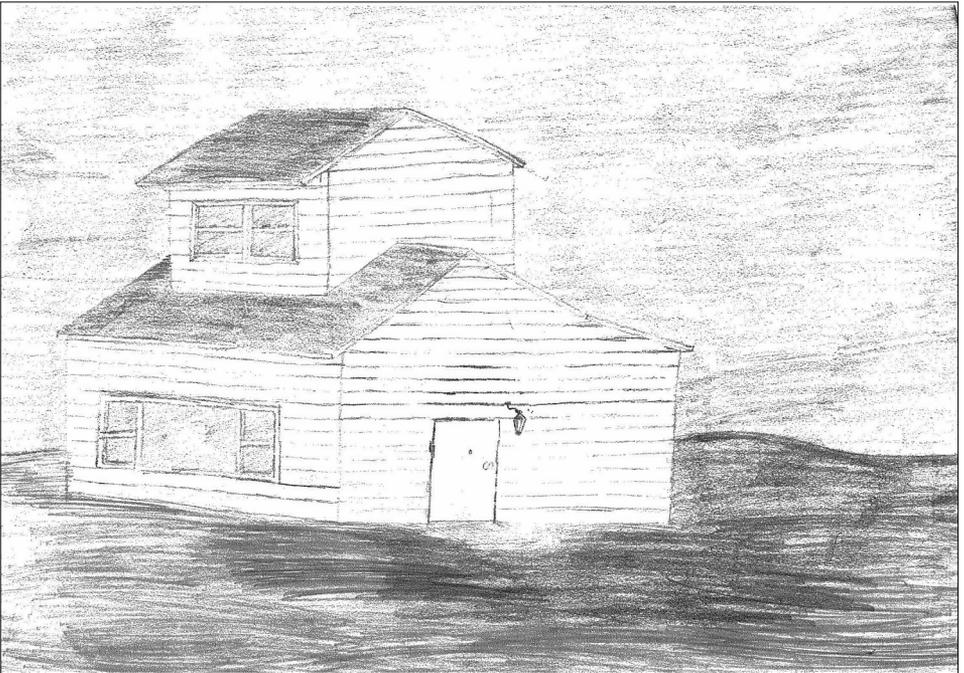
Once upon a time there were four little rabbits,
But one of them, Peter, had some mischievously bad habits.
Their mother said, "You may play in the field,
But if you see Mr. McGregor, keep yourself concealed."
She continued, "Mr. McGregor is not very nice,
And tries to hurt things like rabbits, birds, and mice."
Peter's sisters Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail
Went home with blackberries in their tin pail.
But Peter did not come home for quite some time
For Mr. McGregor's fence he had begun to climb!
Peter ate lettuce, radishes, and beans,
Turnips, carrots, cucumbers, and greens.
He ate so much he began to feel ill
And, noticing some parsley, he ran to get his fill.
The parsley made him feel better, but when he raised his head,
He was looking for more vegetables, but saw Mr. McGregor
instead!
Peter ran as Mr. McGregor yelled, "Stop, thief!"
But Peter forgot his way back to the fence, which caused him
grief.
Upon running away his shoes he lost,
In the cabbages and potatoes there they were tossed.
Away from Mr. McGregor Peter raced like a jet,
Until he ran into a gooseberry net!
He struggled until he wriggled himself free,
But his coat was left behind, unfortunately.
Peter hopped into a watering can
Hoping to keep hidden from the mean man.
But suddenly, Peter sneezed! "Kertyschoo!" he said.
To avoid Mr. McGregor, out the door he fled.
Peter could see a little old mouse.
She scurried along to deliver food to her house.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

He asked her, "Which way to the gate?"
But she had a large pea in her mouth, so she couldn't relate.
Peter wandered around till he spotted a small pond,
And there he saw a cat, of which he was not fond.
Then he heard a scratching sound,
It was Mr. McGregor hoeing the ground.
And just beyond him was the gate,
He took a big breath and ran straight!
He hopped all the way home near the roots of a tree
And his mom greeted him with a hug and some tea.
The End.

Jacquelyn Manion
Central Intermediate
Grade 5



Kalub High
Buckeye Intermediate
Grade 6



Connor Petrus
Buckeye Intermediate
Grade 5

The New Kid

Our teacher told us we were getting a new kid.

She said he didn't like to talk
And he didn't quite know how to walk.

She said he made lots of bubbles
And got in lots of trouble.

She said he wanted to have a owner
And eat lots of leftovers.

He sounded like us, pretty cool
After all, this was a fish school.

Will Stack
Central Intermediate
Grade 6



Brooklyn Dishauzi
Franklin Elementary
Grade 1

Perched atop a window sill,
Hedgehogs show off their banded quills.

Perched atop the same window sill,
Cacti too show off their quills.

But which is which?

Who is who?

Which one is my pet hedgehog?

Oh, whatever shall I do!

Is it the one on the left,
Or the one on the right?

They're both the same sight!

Bailey Fetterolf
Central Intermediate
Grade 5



Ava Wapenaar
Franklin Elementary
Grade 1

A Hedgehog Adventure

It was a hot, arid Monday morning. Well, at least it was for Fang. He was a hedgehog, and he was four months old.

His owner had gone off to school for the day in fifth grade.

Fang was sitting in a tunnel, waiting for his owner to get back from school. After what seemed like an eternity, he emerged from his fuzzy tunnel to get a look at his cage - yet again. Same ol' litter box, same ol' food bowl - you get the point. Everything was the same.

Fang wanted a new adventure today, something exciting! Fang was still looking when he spotted something . . . his owner had left one of the doors to the cage open!

Fang climbed on top off his water bottle and out of the cage! He found his way to the warm rug, and then started to explore. There was a bookshelf, a very tall bed, a desk, and a nightstand. But, there was one more thing left. It was a closet!

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

This was something new and different! Fang waddled over to the closet and slipped under the door. He climbed up some different-sized boxes until he made it to the top. He burrowed inside the top box, only to find himself getting out again. Fang didn't realize that he burrowed into a box of Legos! Ouch!

He slipped back under the closet and back onto the rug. Fang left the room and was greeted with something very steep. It was the stairs! No! But, Fang persevered. He curled up into a tight ball and gingerly inched forward until he tumbled down the stairs.

When Fang finally made it down the stairs, he stood up slowly. He felt fine! The impact didn't hurt as much as he predicted!

Fang made his way to the kitchen and the bathroom. The last thing was the living room!

He ran as quick as he could into the living area. But, he was going too fast. He ran straight into a bucket! Some treats fell onto Fang's head. He quickly gobbled them up and looked up. He ran into a bucket of his things!

Fang pulled the blue bucket down to its side and started feeding on the different varieties of treats that spilled onto the rug.

Once Fang was too full, he made his way to a cream-colored blanket that was strewn across the floor. He shut his eyes and dozed off.

~~~~~

A couple hours passed when Fang was abruptly awoken from his sleep because of a high-pitched shriek. It was his owner! Every day when she got back from school, she went up to check on him. This time he wasn't in his cage!

A sudden pain of guilt struck Fang. His owner was now crying, dashing up and down, until she made it to the living room where she was met with the mess Fang made. His owner's frown turned into a slight smile.

She slowly lifted up the blanket that Fang was hiding under to see Fang, alert and ready for anything. She picked him up and brought him upstairs to his familiar territory, his cage. His owner filled up his food bowl, even though she knew he would be full on treats.

*(Continued on page 18)*

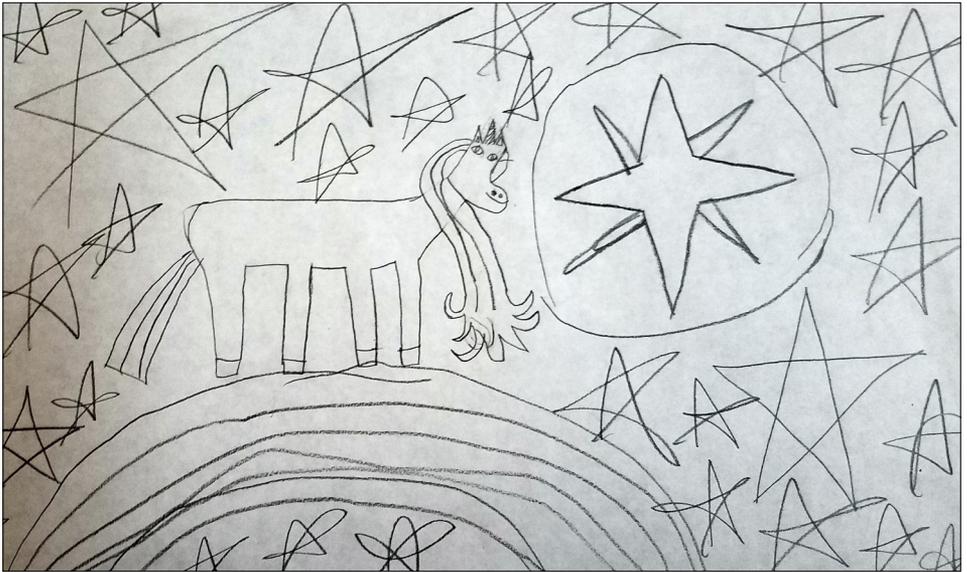
*(Continued from page 17)*

She put him down onto the fleece that lined Fang's cage. Fang, feeling very sluggish, finally got into his tunnel and, yet again, dozed off into a peaceful sleep.

Fang dreamed about adventure and excitement, but also about how he was perfectly fine being in the cage for now.

**Bailey Fetterolf**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

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**Katelynn Bendel**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

## **Lone Wolf**

Wolf awakens in the dark,  
With a single tiny bark.  
On the mountain all alone,  
Fierce and savage to the bone.

When midnight strikes, begins to howl,  
Only to be heard by the owl.  
Killing so many things makes her vicious.  
Living on it is almost rapacious.

Was once inside of a dominant pack,  
Wishing she could just go back.  
Thinking about the young and gray,  
Causes sadness and dismay.

One last time to howl at the moon,  
As she looks at her old home's ruins.  
In the darkness, in the rain;  
Never to be seen again.

**Savannah Mitchell**  
Crestview Elementary  
Grade 5



**Stella Smith**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **In December**

In December is when I can feel cotton balls fall from the sky and inside is a fire like a red rose. The floor is like frosting that feels like squishy bread. Every day starts with a hot chocolate taste. With the warm covers over my head as cats cuddle and dogs huddle into the warmth. Where bears sleep to the end of December. I'm out there in the freezing cold weather while I wear a sweater.

Frost sprinkles glow across the grass. In the night I can't see the stars, and in the day I wish the sun was there to go out to play. But I like the food on my plate all cooked and baked for me to eat. When a mouse runs by, my mom screams like the mouse squeals. I scream, "Kill it! Kill it!" as my brother gets a broom and I am running away! Bears hibernate and humans sleep, making no peep while they sleep. It's so quiet, so peaceful. In my opinion it's so great. The trees try to dance with their stretching leaves to the sky. I eat pumpkin pie every day.

**Antonio Ortega**  
Cloverleaf Elementary  
Grade 3

## The Flames

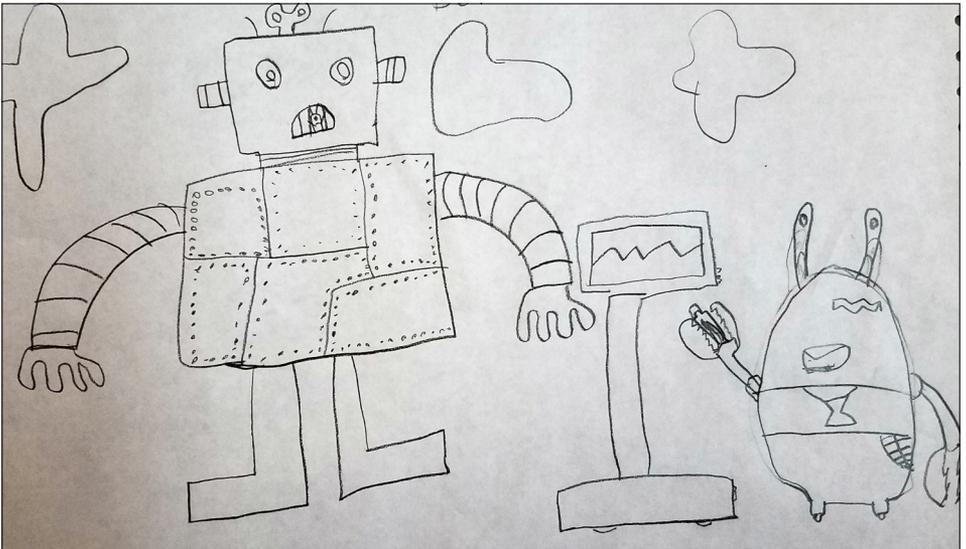
Into the room I pranced  
Because I saw the flames that danced

I felt the heat against my face  
And the heat that I did embrace

As I watched the log on the fire char  
I heard the crackles of the fire that seemed to be far

As I walked away  
I saw that the flames still did play

**Michael Baepler**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Devon Andrews**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 2

## **The Mountain**

Your journey to success is like climbing up a mountain.

The weights on your back are your friends that always waste  
time.

Being thirsty is your family that you need to stop and pay  
attention to.

The ridges and cracks are your emotions that can get the better  
of you.

And the fear of falling

is being afraid of failing.

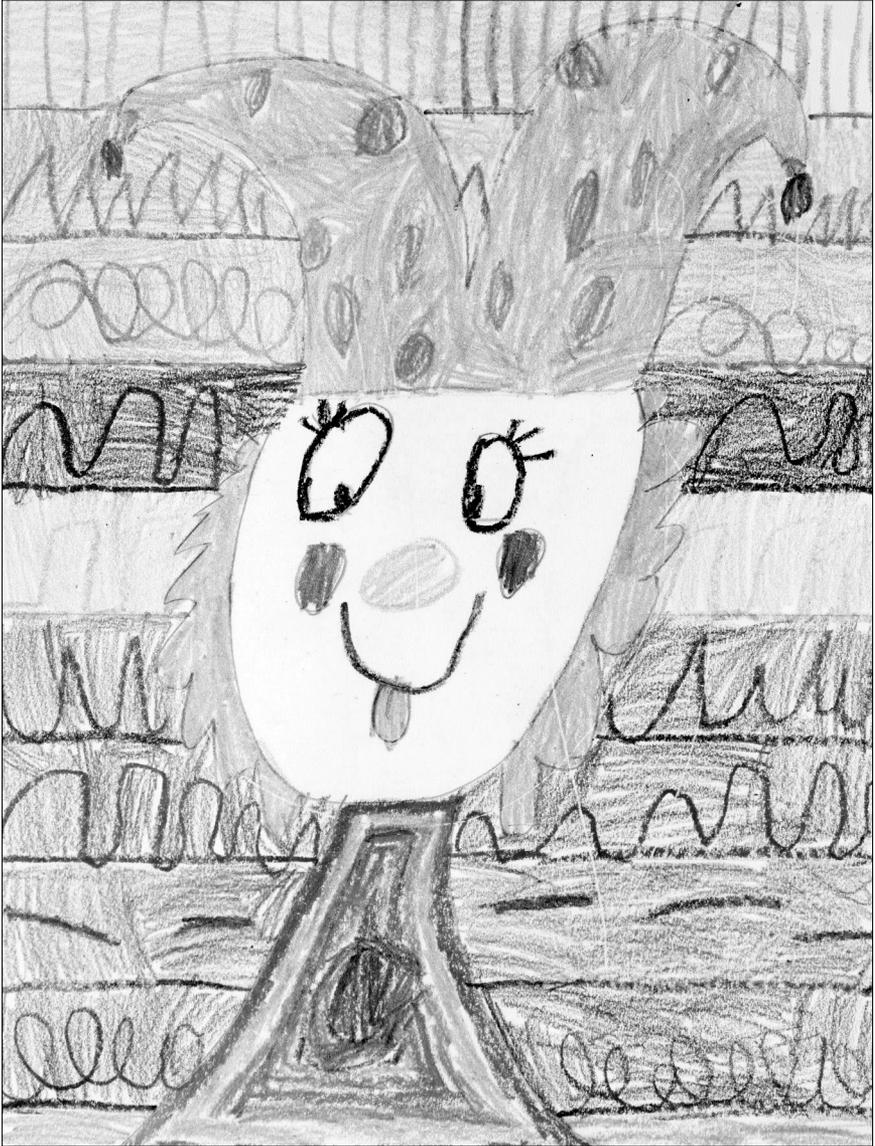
However, with faith in the grips,

the hope in your pick,

and the trust in the line supporting you,

you will soon reach the mountain top.

**Abigail Karim**  
Crestview Elementary  
Grade 5



**Aria Thomas**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Happiness

Happiness is a friend's funny laugh, that brings a smile to your  
face.

Happiness is like winning first place.

Happiness is like eating a bunch of cake.

Happiness is what you make, not take.

Happiness is a ray of sunshine, that brightens your everyday life.

**Chloe Pistone**

Crestview Elementary  
Grade 5

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## Hope

Hope is a feeling some people ignore  
A feeling they've never felt before  
While others are always expecting more  
Of this curious feeling called Hope.

A feeling that holds their hopes and dreams  
That dance inside the moon and sunbeams  
From withering away between the seams  
This is the feeling of Hope.

A feeling of light on the other end  
On their own dark, glum, and twisted bend  
In desire to stop their gloomy descend  
They wish upon this feeling called Hope.

**Lily Smith**

Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Rya Fitzgerald**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

**Poem: Wisdom**

**Wise  
Ideas  
Shine  
Down  
Over  
Me**

**Dean Reddish**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

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**Strength**

Strength is . . .

running sprints even though I'm tired.

not being hurt by people's words.

getting through the tough times to get to the good times.

admitting you're wrong and fixing the problem.

helping someone else, instead of yourself.

**Kadence Washington**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Grace Netherton**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6



Sarah Thomas  
Highland Middle  
Grade 6

## Rhyme

My teacher said you don't have to rhyme  
but I said I got the time  
You see rhyme has rhythm not a certain algorithm  
You can make things silly or say dilly dilly  
Say you have a dog you can make it made of fog  
Or maybe a log, now say you have a cat you can make it really fat  
Or a kit-kat now how about that? Maybe you have a bird  
You can say it purred but nobody's going to believe a word  
That's all I've got say so now you can go play, what do you say?

**Simon Kilker**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Sarah Damon**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Forever

I was in my room solving a puzzle,  
 And there was one that I was stuck on.  
 It was a question that would help me understand my life better.  
 The answer would help me know why things happen the way  
 they do.  
 But as hard as I tried, I couldn't get it.  
 I fell asleep thinking and concentrating on what the answer  
 would be.  
 I woke up on the cold concrete at the bottom of a set of stairs.  
 The stairs had two directions,  
 Up and down.  
 I walked up the stairs first.  
 After the first flight of stairs, I saw a locked door and a sign.  
 It said, "NO ENTRY."  
 I decided to listen to the sign, not wanting to get in any trouble.  
 I walked down the steps and there was this painting of an axe.  
 I didn't know why, but it was just there.  
 I walked down another flight of stairs, and found the same  
 painting.  
 Walked down another flight of stairs, same painting.  
 Walked down stairs, same painting.  
 Went down again, same painting.  
 I figured that this was some kind of an illusion, that went on  
 forever.  
 This time, I went up the stairs and saw the sign that said "NO  
 ENTRY."  
 I wondered how walking down four flights of stairs,  
 Then going up one, put me back at the same spot.  
 I walked down again, and sure enough, there was that painting of  
 an axe.  
 I reached out and touched the painting.  
 I closed my eyes.  
 I concentrated real hard.

*(Continued on page 32)*



## Clouded

You look at the newborn sun.  
Its feelings radiate around you as you go about your day.  
The next day you awake surrounded by clouds,  
Not the pink fluffy kind.  
The clouds almost make you sick to the stomach.  
You search for the sun trying to find the small bit that shines  
through.  
You can't find the sun,  
almost like it's gone entirely.  
You go through the next days thinking the clouds will go away.  
It only rains harder each day.  
One day you look past the rain and see a shadow passing  
through.  
Something you never saw when you went that way.  
You walk towards the figure.  
It was a hand reaching through the clouded gray.  
Lightning strikes next to the hand.  
You sigh as you walk from the mist into the opening.  
It appears to be raining less than before,  
Maybe it was a sign of hope.  
Your eyes slowly open as you see a hand grabbing your  
shoulder.  
You set down your hands and sit yourself upright.  
You look around to see your bedroom.  
And someone waking you to your left.  
Light is shining through your open window.  
You know things are different now.

**Reagan McDuffee**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

# Fire's Life

The warmth of the fire hits my face as the fire crackles nearby. The logs on the fire are charred and burned. As I sit and watch the fire smoke starts to fill the air as the fire's flames start to fade away leaving only ashes.

**Michael Baeppler**  
 Buckeye Intermediate  
 Grade 6

## Hot Chocolate

d  
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As the temperature begins to drop,  
 grab a mug and heat up some hot choc  
 olate. Pick up a friend or two and grab some  
 marshmallows on the way ba ck home.  
 Turn on some winter music a nd play  
 Some games. Enjoy the steam y cream  
 y hot chocolate and the prese nce of y  
 our loved ones. As it gets later and la  
 ter and friends and family start to le  
 ave, as the aroma of the delic ious  
 hot chocolate leaves the air, yo u  
 know for sure that these memories will  
 be with you wherever you go

**Olivia Wolford**

Buckeye Intermediate

Grade 6



**Nicki Vorell**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Valentines

Millions of Universes

One Milky Way

Eight Planets

One Earth

Seven Continents

One hundred ninety-five Countries

And somehow I met you

You are the only one for me

You opened my eyes, you let me see

You are my light, in the dark

You even gave me a Noah's Ark

But the sad thing is, I hate to admit it

I haven't got a Valentine

These are the things that I would say

On that sad, sad day

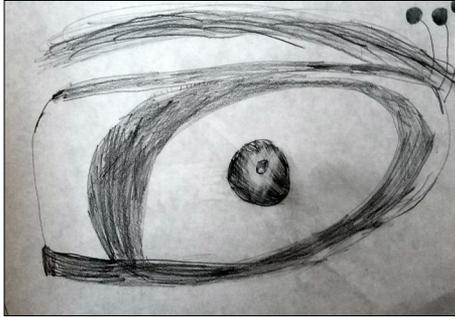
The one I love will never be mine,

Thus I have no Valentine

**Haley Reedy**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Gia Horner**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

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**Soft**

I feel soft,  
My brains are . . .  
My whole life contains soft,  
My heart is scared,  
I feel like no guts,  
Inside I'm gutless and shy,  
My legs are like straws,  
My heart contains sorts of shy,  
And this is why,  
I'm  
Not  
Sly,  
Of cowardly fear.

**Zach Shepherd**  
Hickory Ridge Elementary  
Grade 5

## Dreams

Something you find every once in a while  
Something to laugh about and even make you smile.  
Every so often I come up with a dream  
Some are scary, and some are supreme.

The things we accomplish every so often  
Some are impossible, like a vampire in a coffin.  
Among all our wildest craziest ones  
Sometimes they're normal, like watching the sun.  
Beautiful settings, or crazy characters  
That you fight on an airplane  
While you see three more predators.

One thing for sure, no one can doubt  
While thinking and watching a flower sprout.  
I think it better seems, even though they're not real  
We all like our dreams.

**Sean Fanick**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Dreams

Step, step, and step I keep going on  
I hope, hope, and hope to not be a pawn  
I want my own story to come this way  
But all of this will come another day

So I keep on walking  
And never start talking  
For once I do I'll never stop  
For I have great ideas that no one can pop

So I step, step, and step as the days go by  
But the real question is why  
I'm still the same person so I hear  
Why, why, and why am I here

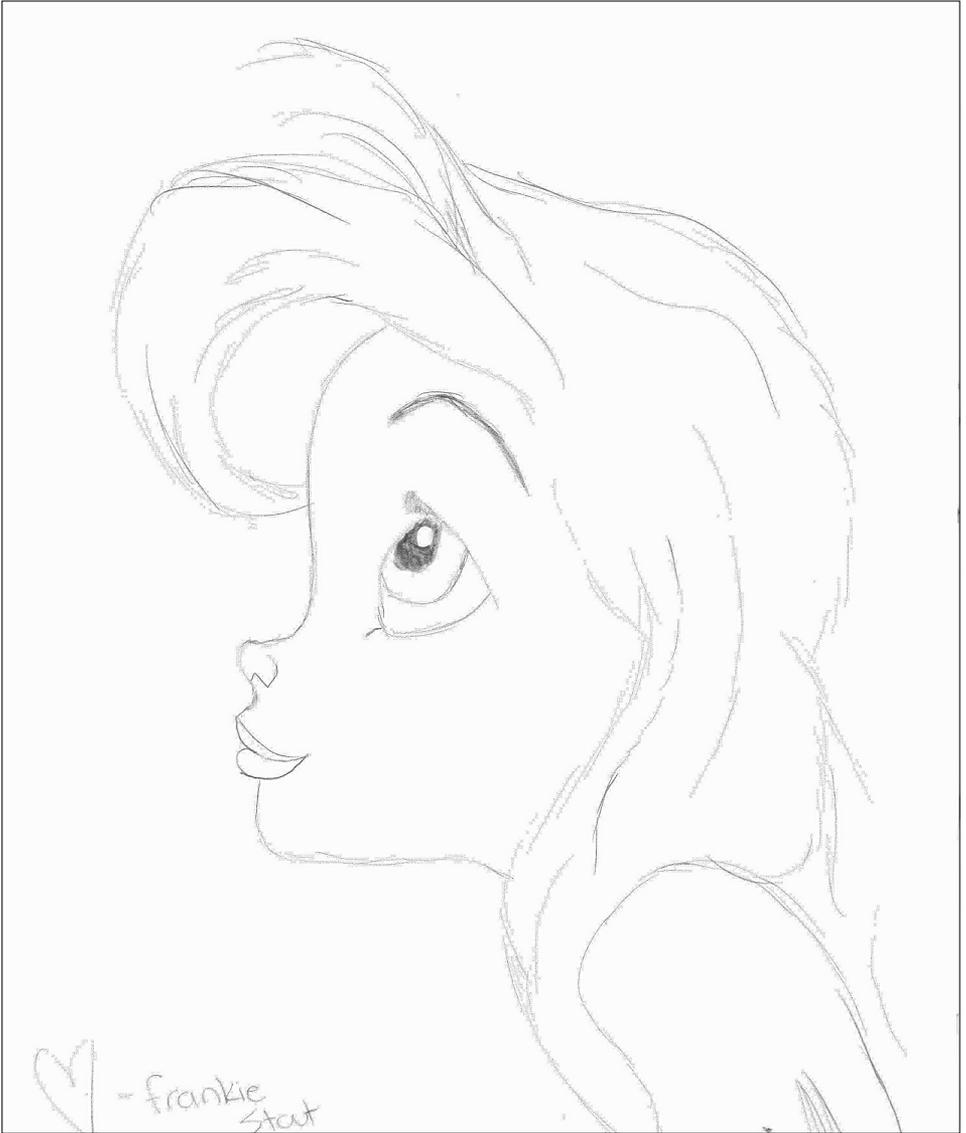
Maybe I'll be the beloved sidekick  
Or maybe I'll even save the main hero  
It doesn't really matter what I'll be . . . I'll be me  
So I will just dream, dream, and dream

The End

**Vincent Ferrell**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Kendal Kereszturi**  
Franklin Elementary  
Grade 4



**Frankie Stout**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 5

## “Synonyms For Ridiculous”

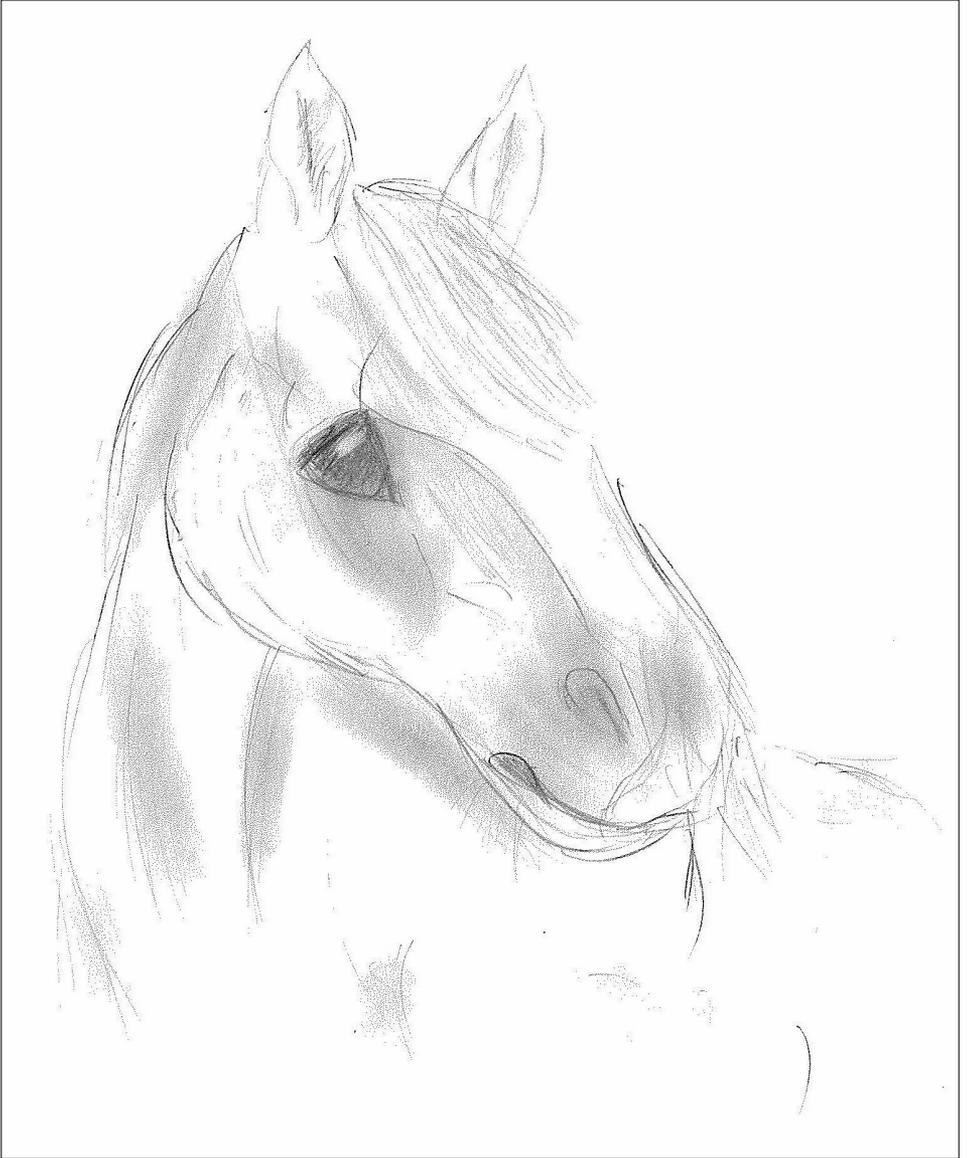
I am ridiculous  
 I feel like I am funny  
 Just as the day goes on, I feel more nutty.  
 More and  
     More  
 And  
     More  
 And  
     MORE!!!  
 Until the nut turns into a sprout  
 I am off the wall!!!! I am ridiculous!!!  
     I am  
     Goofy,  
 Laughable,  
     Hilarious,  
 Silly,  
     Wacky.  
  
 I am just plain ridiculous!!!

**Lydia Miller**  
 Hickory Ridge Elementary  
 Grade 5

## Thunder on the Ground

The sky was clear,  
The breeze was light.  
Then the rumblings began that night.  
What could it be?  
The wind blew quicker.  
I ran outside.  
You'll never believe what I happened to spy.  
Not one,  
Not two,  
Not three or four,  
but dozens of white stallions at my door.  
The largest sped to my side,  
asked if I wanted to go for a ride.  
I hopped on his back,  
He began a gentle stride,  
I lay back,  
savoring the ride.  
Suddenly began the large bouncing gallop.  
The thunder came not from the ground or the sky,  
But my horse's hooves beginning to fly.  
Up, up and away we flew to the heavens.  
Past all the planets,  
on top of Saturn's rings.  
My horse and I, we lay on a star.  
And believe it or not,  
it's where we still are.

**Bella Schoonover**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Kayla Schneider**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

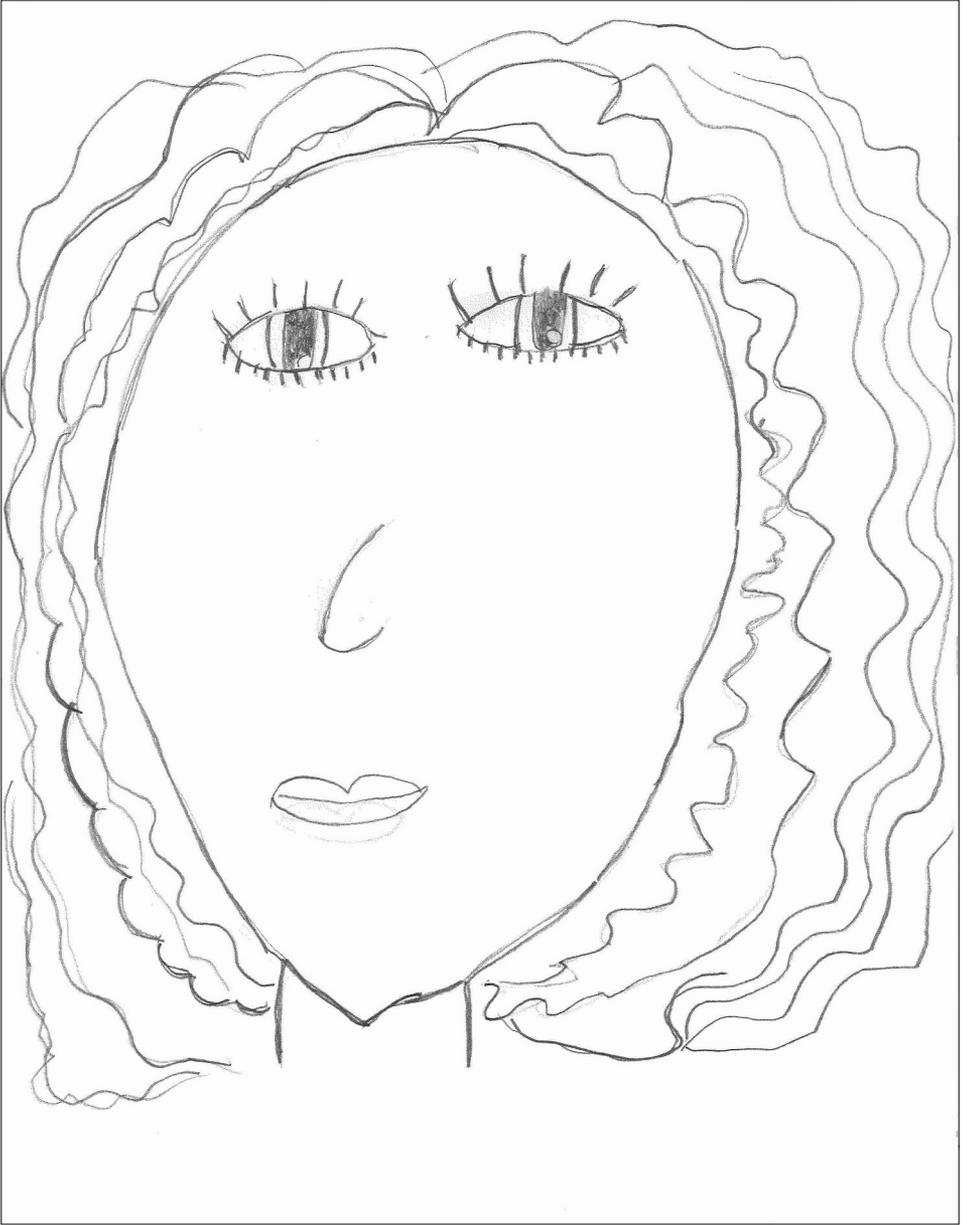
**“She’s Talking Healthy”**

She’s as blooming as a flower  
and as tough as a tiger!  
She’s in good shape to do  
anything that’s active!  
*Strong, well, athletic*  
are words to describe  
her!

She’s bright-eyed  
and bushy-tailed  
just like her rabbit!  
She’d do anything just  
to be fit and full of life!

She’s healthful  
and lively!  
Is she a couch potato?  
Certainly not!  
She’s a healthy girl!  
Oh, yes, she is!

**Kayla Libbey**  
Hickory Ridge Elementary  
Grade 5

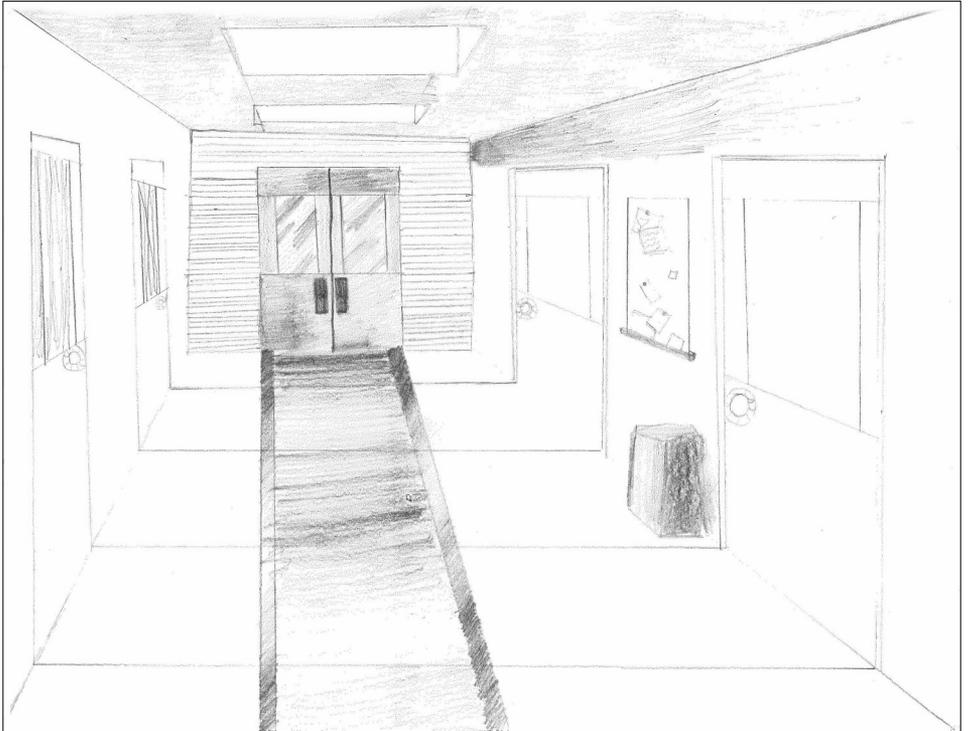


**Cayden Hudson**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 2

## Alone

I am alone in this quiet and empty room.  
My widowed heart in the dark sea.  
Just me, myself and I in this empty world.  
The hate I take in feeds on my unattended soul.  
I walk with my unconscious self along these empty streets.  
My abandoned body sits in silence.  
Oh, what is there to say.  
Oh, what is there to know.  
Anyway I am just alone.

**Jonas Hinderer**  
Hickory Ridge Elementary  
Grade 5



**Paige Easterly**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 6



**Jacob Bally Frieberg**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 4

## Conquering Fear

Traveling up the hill to the sun,  
While a nervous wait that helps none.

At the peak getting ready to go,  
But standing here I might say no.

I have the courage to face my fear,  
And then I see my mom excited with cheer.

I'm coming down from the peak,  
And I now start to freak.

Now I feel the wind on my face,  
As I travel through the empty white space.

I slow down as I reach the base,  
With a smile stretched across my face.

**Landon Wilson**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Kellan Kichurchak**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

# Mittens

soft,  
 pretty, wonder-  
 ful. The feeling of  
 the brand new wool  
 Mittens help my hands  
 stay warm every time  
 they get worn. My fav-  
 orite winter accessory. FUZZY  
 and warm as they can be. Play-  
 ing in the snow with them, fight-  
 ing in the snow with them  
 when BOOM! a snowball  
 hits my face. I throw  
 one back and make them  
 pay. My pretty mitte-  
 ns now come off  
 and I want to put them

o n.

## Snowboard

Freezing, exciting, adventure awaits,  
No time no time no time to be late.

Going right down the hill just riding,  
as your snowboard is on the ground sliding.

Flushed red cheeks, smiles and laughter,  
As you go down the tip of the peak.

Ice cold snow and laughs as we all shout hooray  
I hope we never ever leave the slopes today.

**Kadence Washington**

Buckeye Intermediate

Grade 6

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## Snowball Fight

It's time for a dangerous snowball fight,  
in the broad daylight.

It was the right thing to choose,  
but she's definitely going to lose.

She should have declined my call,  
I laugh as I watch her fall.

I helped her up to her feet,  
but then she slipped on the sleet.

When I again helped her up,  
we decided to go in for a cup

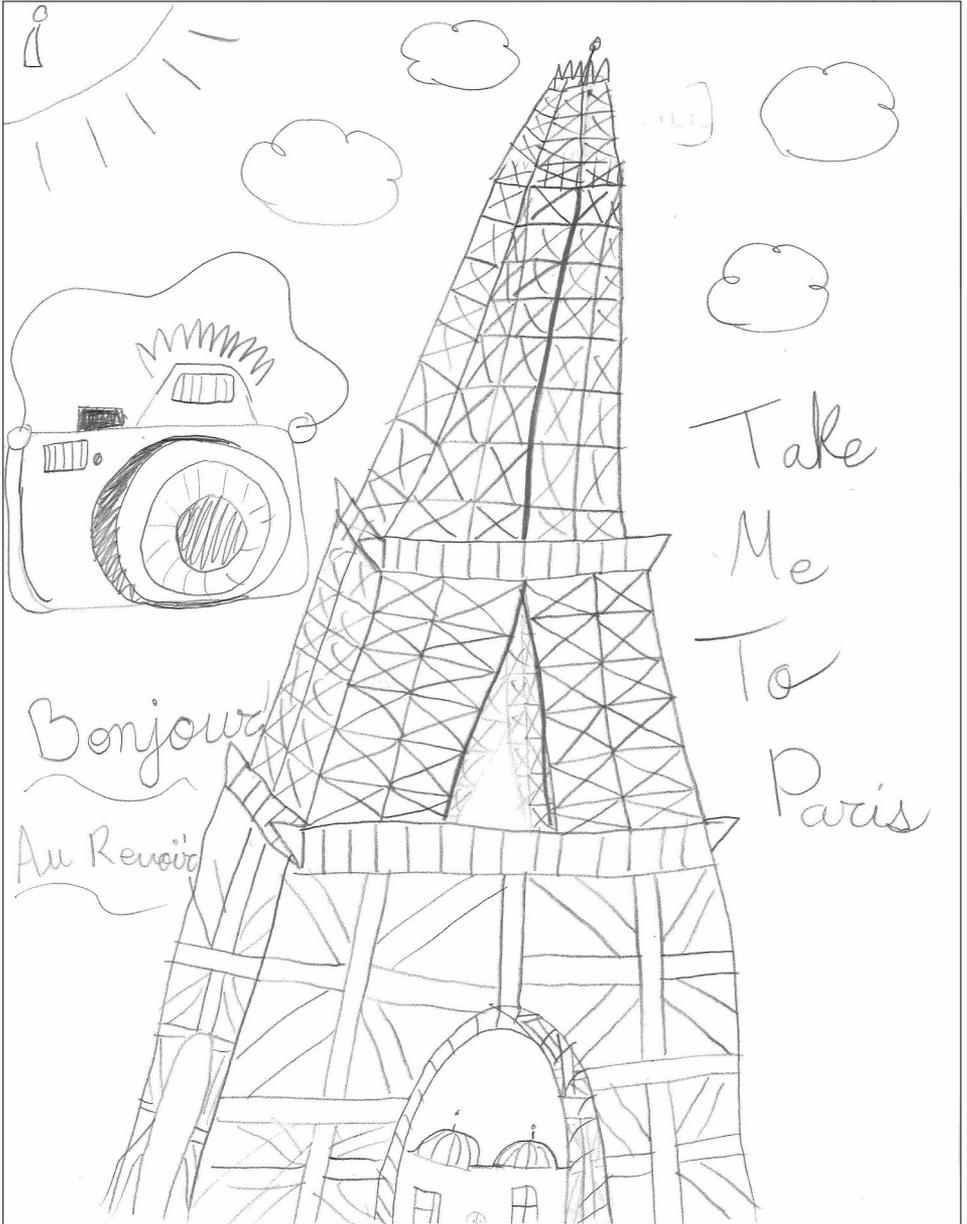
of rich and creamy hot cocoa,  
as we finished our cups she was going loco.

That was the end of our snowball fight,  
that lasted from day to night.

**Haylie Weber**

Buckeye Intermediate

Grade 6



**Kayla Wright**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 5

## **Beach Days**

If it's hot and sunny, go to the beach

Play in the water or even play ball

Collect shells

Make sand castles

The sand is everywhere in your toes and on your legs

The water is cool

The waves are nice

People are surfing

The water is clear blue

Fishes are swimming

The sun is hot

It bakes you

It warms you inside and out

The beach is a lovely place!

**Mia DeFazio**  
Crestview Elementary  
Grade 5

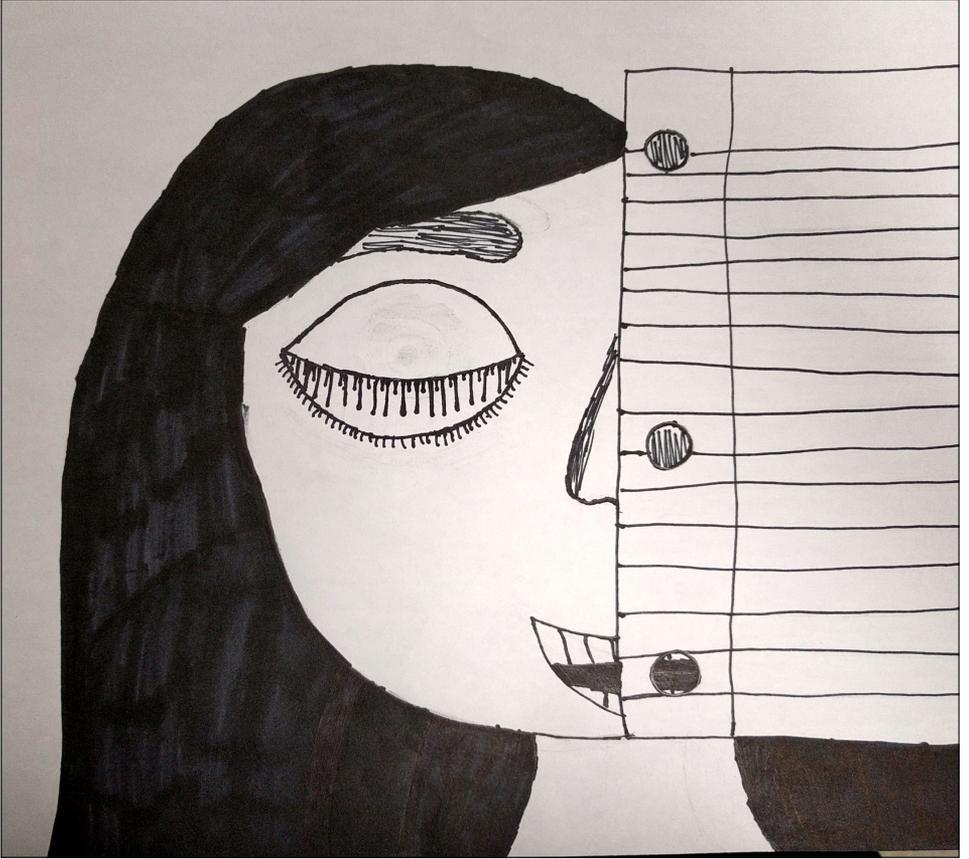
People come and go, and it's very rare if they stay. And if they stay, you should adore them in every way, shape or form.

**Kelsie Owens**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

### The First A, I Ever Got

The  
 first A, I  
 ever got  
 made the  
 whole day  
 feel like  
 I was on a  
 yacht. The party didn't stop there because  
 the trampoline  
 park was like  
 walking on air

**Chris Rynearson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Jenna Yurchiak**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## All the Reasons Why

“Why are you late to school?” my lovely teacher said. I couldn’t lie, yet I knew that I couldn’t say that I was late to get out of bed. So I told her my tale, beginning to the end, and hoped that she’d believe me and maybe be my friend. And so I told her, “Okay, ma’am. This is how it goes . . .”

“First I was abducted by aliens and I bruised my aching nose, and then a punk tried to grab me and sprayed me with a hose.”

“But you don’t look wet,” my teacher said with a great air of confusion.

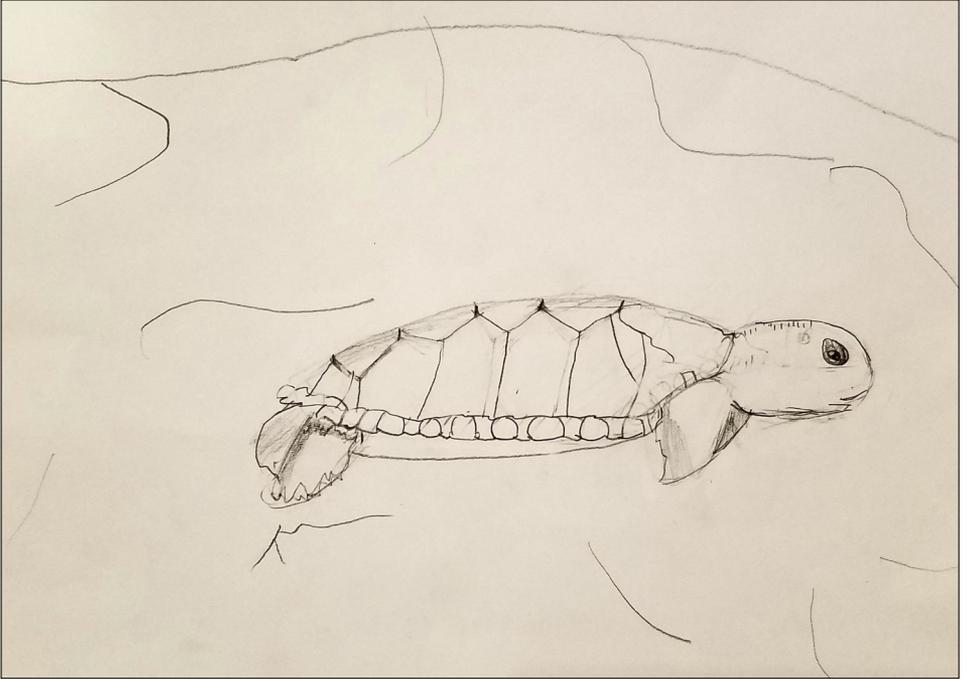
“Ah, my lady,” I continued. “You suffer from a sad delusion. I used my special powers to dry my body while I hid inside a Port-a-Potty. I blasted him with ice (I must admit it felt quite nice) and then went on with my business. I strode out to the world ready to face it once again . . . until I was attacked by a giant frog and a golden hen. I gasped, startled, but did that stop me? Oh, no! I grabbed the animals by the collar and threw them in the snow!”

“Now, now,” my teacher says, trying to interject. “I’m sure--”  
“No, no, my lady. An old woman stopped me and made me clean her floor!”

“I’m sorry, Lauren,” my teacher sighs. “But I don’t have time for any more lies. You have nothing to fear, but if you do this again, your punishment will be more severe.”

“Oh, thank you, great teacher, you are so dear--”  
“No more recess for the year.”

**Lauren Ball**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

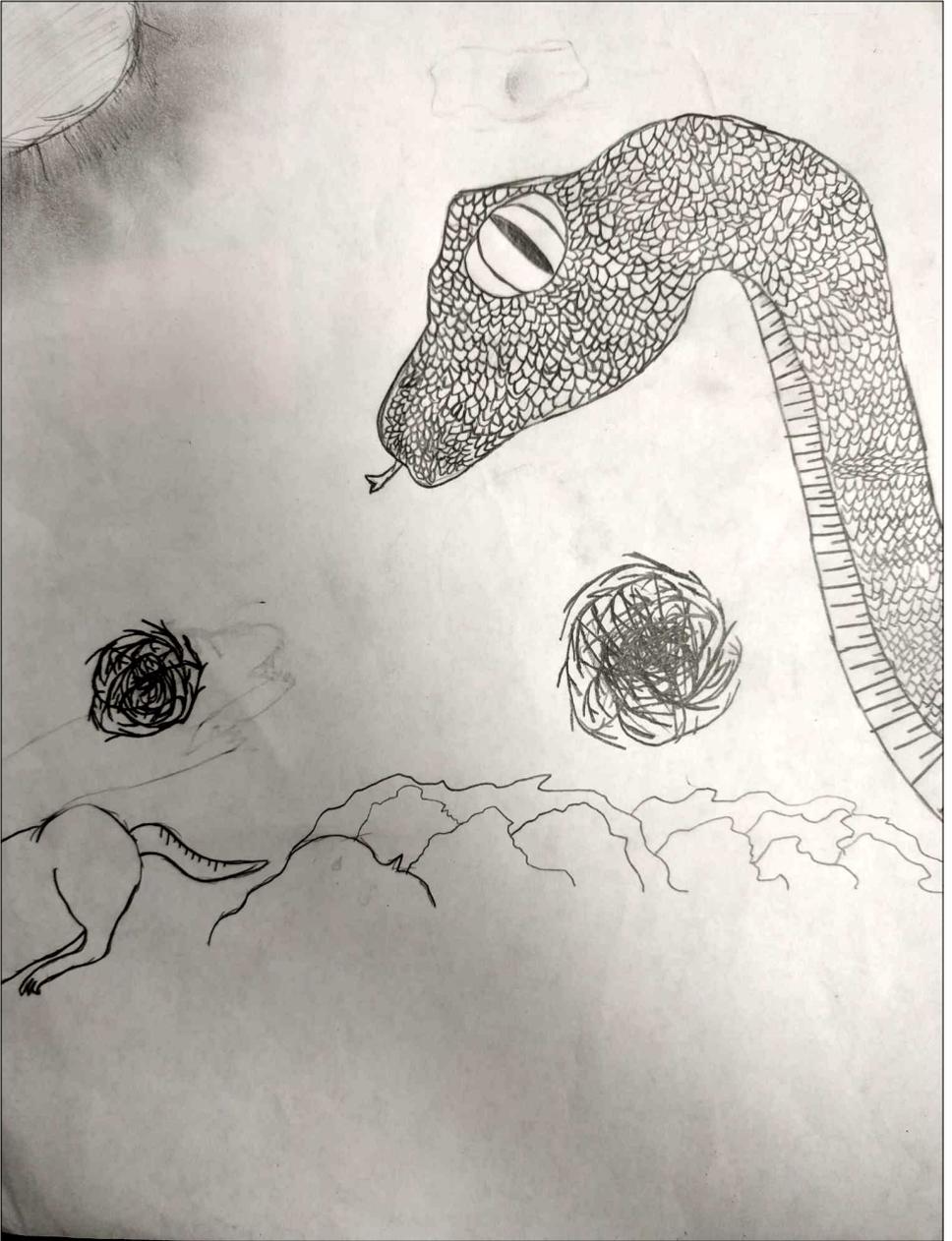


**Kaitlin McGrath**  
Franklin Elementary  
Grade 3

The monster under my bed  
He is there, I just know it.  
Keeping quiet 'til dark,  
Hiding away under my bed,  
I know it, just know it.  
I quiver as I lay afraid,  
But I know he is waiting,  
Quietly sitting, still as still,  
not making peep. Waiting.  
I try to tell my parents  
But they don't believe me;  
no one does. But I know,  
just do. But every seven nights,  
I think he leaves because  
my dad peeks under my bed  
and sees nothing. But  
the next night I can feel  
it. He is back crawling  
around, waiting.  
So do you believe me?  
Because if you don't,  
I will send my  
monster to get  
you . . .



**Allison Bartiromo**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5



**Connor Burrows**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## A Secret World

May just lived a normal life in the city. She was prepared for anything. She loved adventure. The city was always full of adventure, even in the apartment building she lived in with her mom. Her dad lived someplace far away. May never knew exactly where, but it was far from the apartment building where she and her mom lived. She loved to ride her bike around the city just waiting for a good story to tell. She loved telling stories to her friends and family. She also liked to hum and collect rocks. May didn't exactly know why, but she just did. Sometimes she thought that was weird, but she also didn't care and went for what she wanted to do.

It was just a normal Saturday, and as usual, she went for a bike ride just like she does every weekend. As she was riding, she didn't take her normal route on accident and ended up in an area she never went to and probably wasn't allowed to go because no one ever went there. But instead of turning back, the little voice inside of her head was telling her to go. It was like to May as the little voice was shouting and banging in her head at the beat of her heart, which she could hear loud and clear and almost echoed.

Then something extremely weird happened when she saw something strange. She was determined to walk away and just go home, but that little voice said to go to it. She was nervous but she did out of curiosity. She saw a very shiny rock and picked it up because it was absolutely perfect for her collection. She started humming a tune like she does always. She cupped the rock in both of her hands as she started to walk to her bike when she heard a loud sound of a door creaking like its hinges were going to fall off.

Again, instead of heading back home even though she really wanted to, she also wanted to explore. She thought to herself, *Should I go back? I don't know, I'm very nervous. Oh, come on May, don't be a chicken, go for it! Who KNOWS what is behind that door thing? Just go and remember you have the strength to run!* So she followed her heart, which was thumping even louder. It started to hurt her head like something was pounding on her, but she wasn't unconscious just yet.

*(Continued on page 63)*

(Continued from page 62)

She saw a door which was definitely not ever there before and which had light glowing from inside of it. It was only a tiny bit open, and of course, May just had to open it. As she went closer, the rock grew brighter and she saw it wasn't a rock. It was a jewel. She went into the door and was delighted by a beautiful world of greenery and magic. It was almost as if she was in a fairytale. She just had to see more. The door stayed open and she made sure it did. She saw fluttering wings and thought she was in a dream. There were beautiful flowers she had never seen before and a rainbow that just appeared before her very eyes.

She saw a unicorn and was sure she was in a dream. But she wasn't. This was real. She just had to tell her friends about this story. She knew they would love it. She was so amazed she wanted to see more and stepped inside. The grass was very vibrant and soft. It was like stepping on pillows. She floated slightly and was starting to get sleepy. But she was forced back into the real world, but didn't want to leave the world she was in. She expected to wake up now, but she didn't because she wasn't in a dream at all. She thought, *This is amazing! I want to go back. Maybe tomorrow night, just maybe.* Then May headed back to her apartment.

The very next day she went again and cupped the jewel and sang the exact same tune, and the door opened and she explored the world. This kept happening for about a week. Then she showed her friends and a lot of people in the city started to know. But then, all the wonders in that secret world started to disappear. May wondered why and her friends were upset. But then May knew why. The secret world had to stay a secret! That's why it's called a secret world.

She had it. The next day she didn't take her friends or anyone. She went by herself. The jewel powered the world and it was starting to fade. She knew she had to do it quickly. She opened the door, threw the jewel in it, closed the door, and the door disappeared. May hoped the world would get its wonders back, and it did. All of the wonders returned. Even sometimes May would go there in her dreams. It was her happy place. May knew she did the right thing. After all, it's a secret world.

## The Craft Room

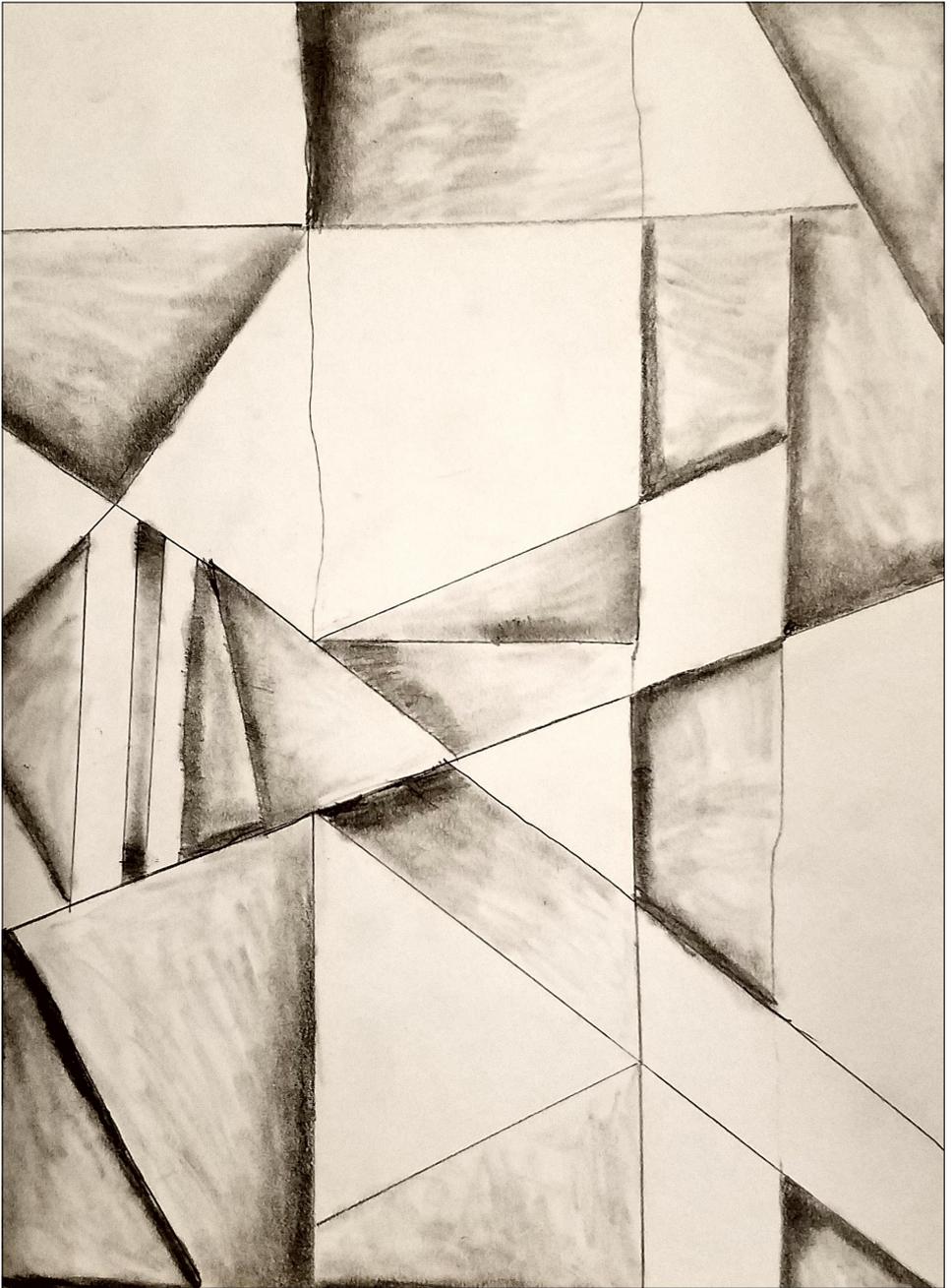
Glue is dripping on the desk; the markers' tips don't look their best. The paper's bent in awkward shapes, while beads still hang down from the drapes. Feathers are strewn here and there; the crayons are laying everywhere. String is hanging off the wall; the scissors teeter, then they fall. Why is the craft room such a mess? When will this place look its best? Why doesn't someone clean it up, there's murky water in the cup! The paint is starting to dry up; pretty soon it's just a chunk. This place needs help, this place needs care, everything is everywhere!

**Maddie Saunders**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## After I'm Gone

I think often,  
 What will happen after I'm gone.  
 Will there be people who can fly on the lawn,  
 Or will there be burning after I'm gone.  
 Will there be a cure for every disease,  
 Or will there be plagues with no decrease.  
 Will there be no more fighting,  
 Or will there be smiting.  
 Will there be creatures everywhere,  
 Or will there be death and despair.  
 Will there be cities that float on the sea,  
 Or will there be cities empty as can be.  
 Will there be equality among all,  
 Or will there be slaves at every call.  
 Will there be machines for every task,  
 Or will there be machines behind a mask.  
 But all of this would affect me none,  
 because that would be after I'm gone.

**Alex Bozigar**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Landon Lanham**  
Franklin Elementary  
Grade 2

## Choir

I want to join choir at CIS. But the form asks for a signature. “Grandma, what is a signature?” I ask.

“Maggie, a signature means to write your name in cursive,” she answers me.

“Ok, thanks, Grandma,” I reply. I sign the form in cursive that night. The next day, I am in the music room handing in the form to Mrs. Adley. It’s empty, waiting for all the kids to fill up the room. I’m walking back to my homeroom. I’m sitting in my seat, excited about joining choir.

It’s the first day of choir and I am warming up my voice. I start to hear singing. I look around. The risers are finally full of kids, no longer empty. I see the song paper. I feel the paper in my hands. The song is Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. I’m singing the song with the other choir kids. We are having so much fun singing. I love choir so much. We are singing a song to warm up our voices. I want to try out for a solo. So I try out for the solo. My heart is full of joy. I get the solo! I am happy right now. I am hoping to do choir again next year. I will do it again in the springtime. Choir is now over for the day.

“I will see all of you on Wednesday,” Mrs. Adley says to us. “We are having a holiday concert that night.”

“Goodbye, Mrs. Adley,” we all say. We have practiced a lot for this night.

Then Wednesday comes. I have an even bigger smile on my face. I am happy I joined choir. We practiced and practiced every Monday and Wednesday for this concert.

The day of the concert is finally here! I can’t wait to do my solo. I have a lot of enthusiasm in me to do my solo. It’s my turn for my solo. I sing, “I will try, to do my part.” I nail my solo. We finish our holiday concert and have an enjoyable time. I can’t wait to sing in the spring concert.

**Maggie Martin**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Battle of Hoth

The snowy landscape not yet beaten or battered.  
As the giant walking camels walk over the frost that is squishy  
and splattered.

The rebels prepare for an ultimate and perilous fight.  
Then the giant walking camels deliver their might.

The rebels defend while the transports leave.  
The star cruiser begins to fire upon the transports, but then the  
ion cannon provides relief.

The Emperials amazing firepower has broken the line.  
But when they get inside, there is no one to find.

**Eddie Neitenbach**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

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## What a Veteran Means to Me

A veteran is a person,  
who sacrificed their time  
to defend our country's honor  
with courage in their mind.

In the air, on land,  
and through the rising tide,  
we thank you, our veterans,  
for defending our country's pride.

We thank you, dear veterans,  
for the courage you displayed,  
to help defend our country  
that veterans have made.

**Ben Moser**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



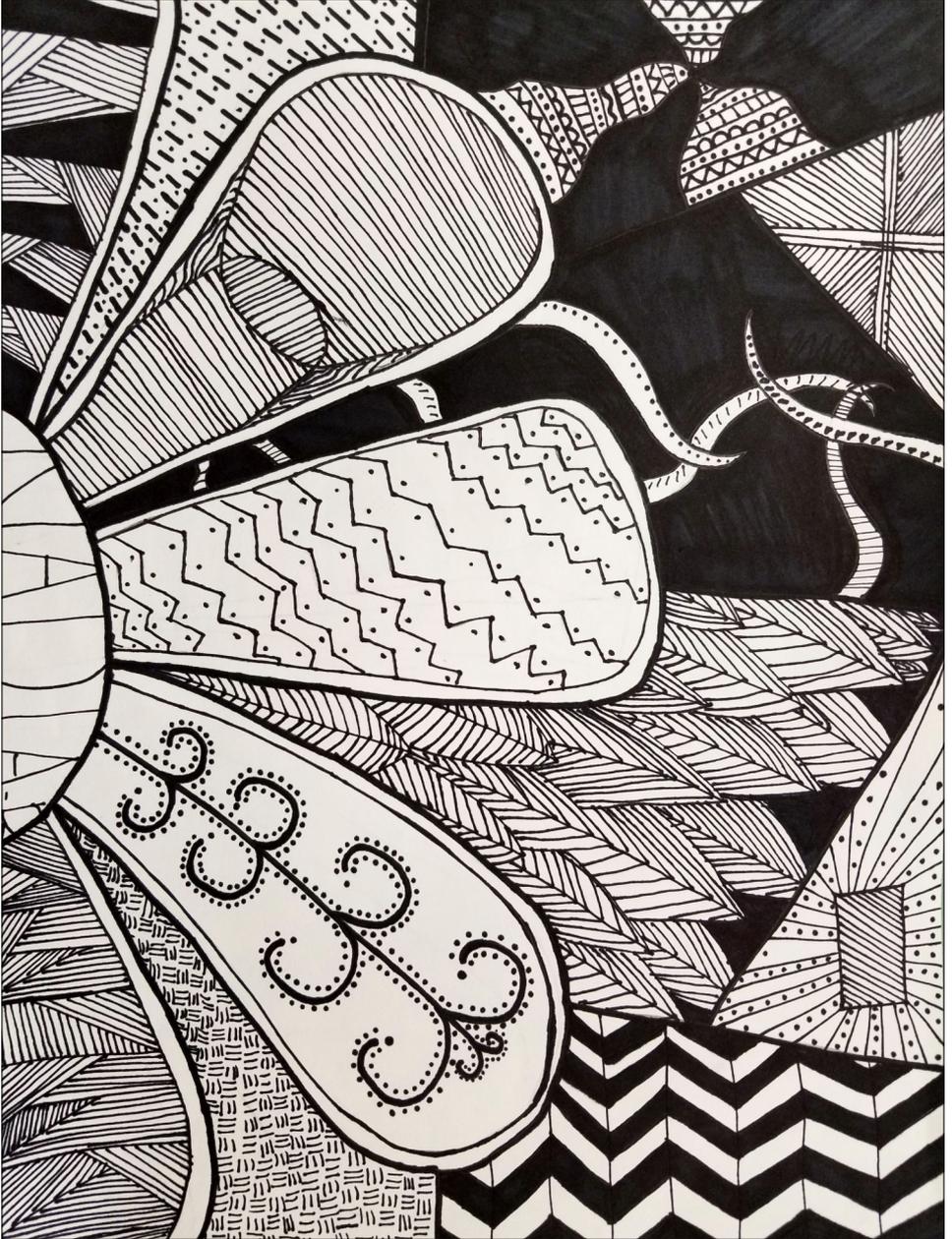
**Ana High**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Grades 7-12

### Winter Wonderland

Winter, a time full of cold, frosty fury. Icicles hang down from the roofs of houses. The snow, glistening in the sunlight. The cold, white powder that sends a shiver through your body. As you sled down the path of soft, feathery material, you feel alive. As you fly through the air, you know there will always be a fluffy pillow ready to catch you. I make beautiful angels into the snow, feeling the softness of its touch. I walk through a never-ending storm of snowflakes, trying to see the shape of its beauty. The blizzard of white rain continues to embrace me, making me feel frigid. As we throw snowballs at each other, I hear the snow hitting the ground, falling back down into what it once was. When I'm hit, I feel the cold, icy snow freezing my skin. The igloos, blowing off extra ice that didn't stick, flying in the wind. As I sit inside, I feel as if I am in a different place. It amazes me how one thing can bring so much joy to the world. I think about what a wonderful world we live in, and hope that the next day brings even more smiles. I hope that there will, once again, be another winter wonderland.

**Emma Hudock**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Nadia Bettle**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## My Forest Home

The sun had just touched the horizon  
as I sat upon the roof  
of an old abandoned stone tower  
in the middle of the woods where I lived.  
Streams of red, orange, and pink  
radiated from the source  
as the sky behind me began to darken.  
The sun continued to sink lower and lower  
beyond the horizon.  
I sat and silently watched  
as the last edge of the sun sank  
and the forest was thrown into twilight.  
I watched as the stars began to appear,  
each one brighter than the last.  
I watched as bats swooped and ducked  
through the cool night air.  
I watched as a swath of stars appeared,  
unobstructed by the artificial glow of city lights.  
I gazed up in awe  
as the entirety of the Milky Way stretched before me.  
Every night never dulled the splendor of the stars,  
and every night, I would be caught off guard at their beauty.  
I searched out familiar constellations,  
old friends, and smiled as I found each one.  
Gemini was in the sky, and based off the position of the stars,  
my birthday would be soon.  
I didn't mind.  
I closed my eyes and breathed in the peaceful night air  
only to open them again and gaze over my home.  
My forest.  
I laid down on my mattress  
as the choir of crickets and cicadas lulled me to sleep.

**Diana Strong**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8



**Gabrielle Raatz**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Flowers

It started with one.  
Then the number of beautiful flowers began to grow,  
taking my breath away.

### Lilacs.

My favorite, they sat waiting for me in my doorway.  
I found them waiting with a note filled  
with words of confessions and love.

### Orchids.

The light pink flowers  
sitting quietly in my hair on prom night,  
that magical night, I will remember forever,  
as I am sure you remember our very first kiss.

### Daisies.

Pure and innocent, daisies were next.  
The soft white flowers  
waiting for me with a ring and a question,  
for which I had a loving answer.

Roses, lilies of the valley, and carnations.

I walked down the aisle,  
roses and lilies of the valley  
strung in my hair.

Carnations blooming out of my hands  
in a burst of petals.

### Daffodils.

They sat on a table by my hospital bed,  
along with cards of best wishes.  
Our adorable son sleeping peacefully in my arms,  
only crying once before.

*(Continued on page 74)*

*(Continued from page 73)*

Violets  
 Finally, violets sat at my bedside.  
 I prayed that I would join you soon.  
 Our son cried,  
 as my vision faded  
 and I said my last words,  
  
 “Give them flowers,  
 and you will know  
 that the best things in life are free.”

**CeCe Kurko**  
 Root Middle  
 Grade 8

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### The Word Absurd

This word absurd is very foolish  
 Like Ohio's weather  
 One day it can be 100 degrees, the next is below freezing

This word absurd is very uncertain  
 Like the Browns winning a game  
 But maybe one day they can win the Super Bowl

This word absurd is very outrageous  
 Kind of like state testing and Common Core  
 They only worry about your performance

That's what I think about  
 The word absurd.

**Matt Toth**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7



**Leah Halblaub**  
Black River High  
Grade 12



**Erica Benson**  
Black River High  
Grade 12

## How the Wind Really Feels

Although the wind has no form, it still has feelings.

It wants to be loved and appreciated.

But instead it is rejected.

The wind provides you with a perfect summer breeze and a  
windchill to get school canceled.

But you are not pleased with it.

In fact, you get mad at it when it sometimes messes up your hair.

Why you take it for granted remains a mystery to the wind.

It tries to make you happy, yet you ignore it.

But without it, your world would not be the same.

What if one day it was gone?

What would make a child's kite, with its brightly colored  
streamers,

fly high into the sky?

What would cause the fluffy white seeds of a summer dandelion  
to float into your neighbor's yard?

What would make your majestic flag float proudly in the air  
on Independence Day?

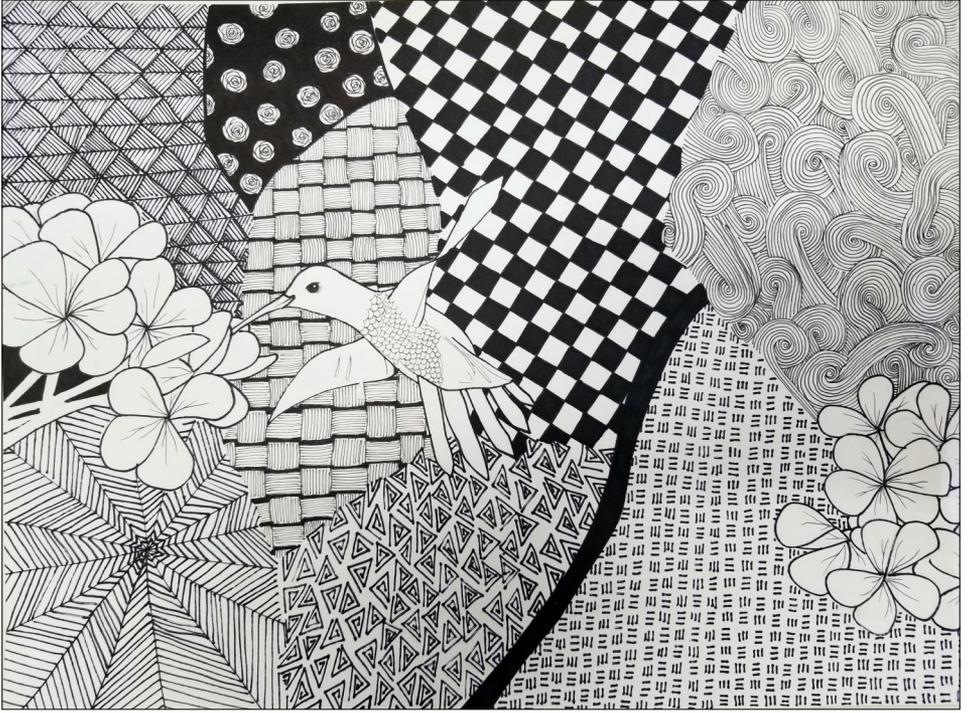
Would you miss it then?

Would you appreciate it more?

The wind just wants to be loved.

Just like you and me.

**Laura Flaker**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Skylar Barnett**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **Only in a Book**

I've been many places  
You never would've guessed  
Cinderella's palace was my favorite  
I know I'm very blessed

I've seen many creatures  
Like a winged cheetah made of stone  
Whom without his friend, the mage,  
He never could've flown

I've experienced much magic  
But the greatest of all  
Is the kind projected from the heart  
No matter how great or small

Come with me  
And take a look  
Don't ask me where we're going, but what we're reading  
For this is all only in a book

**David Berube**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Of Dragons and Dreams

In the mountains, deep and old,  
Lay the dragons, hoarding gold.  
Their fire hot, but their hearts cold,  
Ruthless killers, or so the stories have told.

But I have ventured to the mountains old,  
Expecting to see piles of gold,  
Fallen knights covering the ground,  
Their armor left to pile in mounds.

This long poem tells the tale  
Of my journey to find the dragon's tail.  
To see if they are as the stories have told,  
Sleeping atop their hoards of gold.

My journey, like most, starts at my gate,  
Unsure of the choice that would seal my fate.  
Would I dare to risk my head  
If only to see the dragon's den?

Yes, I decided with a final thought,  
Leaving my poor garden to rot.  
To see the climbing bittersweet grow taller  
Was what rested on the local young farmers.

I traveled the road 'til the forest's beginning,  
Looking behind with the small guilt of leaving.  
The young apprentice medic would serve the town well.  
She would take my place as healer, in the cottage on the hill.

I faced the tall trees, feeling determined,  
Though I would soon find the only game was small vermin.  
I traveled the path 'til the forest's end  
Where the road continued, as it twisted and bent.

*(Continued on page 81)*

*(Continued from page 80)*

I ran until my legs were sore,  
But I couldn't stop, so I ran some more.  
The only time that I had stopped,  
Was to bandage my blisters before the blood dropped.  
I stopped at the foothills of the range,  
When the sky started to look very strange.  
The clouds looked like an oil painting,  
And I felt like I was almost fainting.

My brain felt like it was melting,  
And my legs, well, I barely felt them.  
I started a fire of dry sticks and wood  
But I was so tired I barely could.

When I gazed up for a second look,  
Above me was blacker than a pile of soot.  
Lots of bright lights twinkled in the sky,  
And I looked up, dazed, wonder in my eyes.

All exhaustion was quickly forgotten,  
I felt I could stand there 'til I was rotted.  
I looked up for what felt like hours,  
Before looking down and seeing night flowers.

The flowers I saw were a beautiful blue,  
That matched perfect with the night's dark hue.  
I looked around, amazed, at the absence of light,  
I was taught since a child to fight 'gainst the night.

The cricket choir dulled my head,  
And, clumsily, I went to bed.  
I laid my bedroll on the ground,  
And fell asleep to the night's peaceful sound.

*(Continued on page 82)*

*(Continued from page 81)*

When I awoke, the world was a haze.  
I thought I'd been cursed by a witch in a craze.  
My vision cleared and I looked to see,  
Thunders of dragons, flying 'round free.

I knew at once that this was a dream,  
For the landscape around just seemed to teem,  
With berries and birds and flora and more,  
And that's when I realized the faults in the lore

Of the dragons. They lived not in a place on a map,  
But can be found if one just takes a nap.  
If you want to play with them as I do,  
All you need is a dream, and a little hope, too.

**Diana Strong**  
Root Middle School  
Grade 8

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## **Aging**

The two stand  
Sharing a cigarette  
Wrinkled hands brushing gently  
As they stare in the face of the world

**Greer Brightbill**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## **The Grizzly**

People always consider me  
A big hairy beast  
But really I'm a kind creature  
Looking for a feast

Humans try to hunt me down  
To give themselves some fame  
So I just fight to defend myself  
Why am I to blame

If I could have simple things  
That could include  
Some peaceful sleep  
And tons of food

So please think again  
In the thought of me  
I'm a kind creature  
I'm a Grizzly

**Andrew Weyand**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Introverted Extrovert

Imagine,  
 being a mute person  
 who loves to speak,  
 knows how to speak,  
 but can't,  
 and won't.

A person who loves walking alone,  
 but doesn't want to be alone at home.  
 A very loud person,  
 yet a fairly quiet person,  
 all in one.

An introverted extrovert

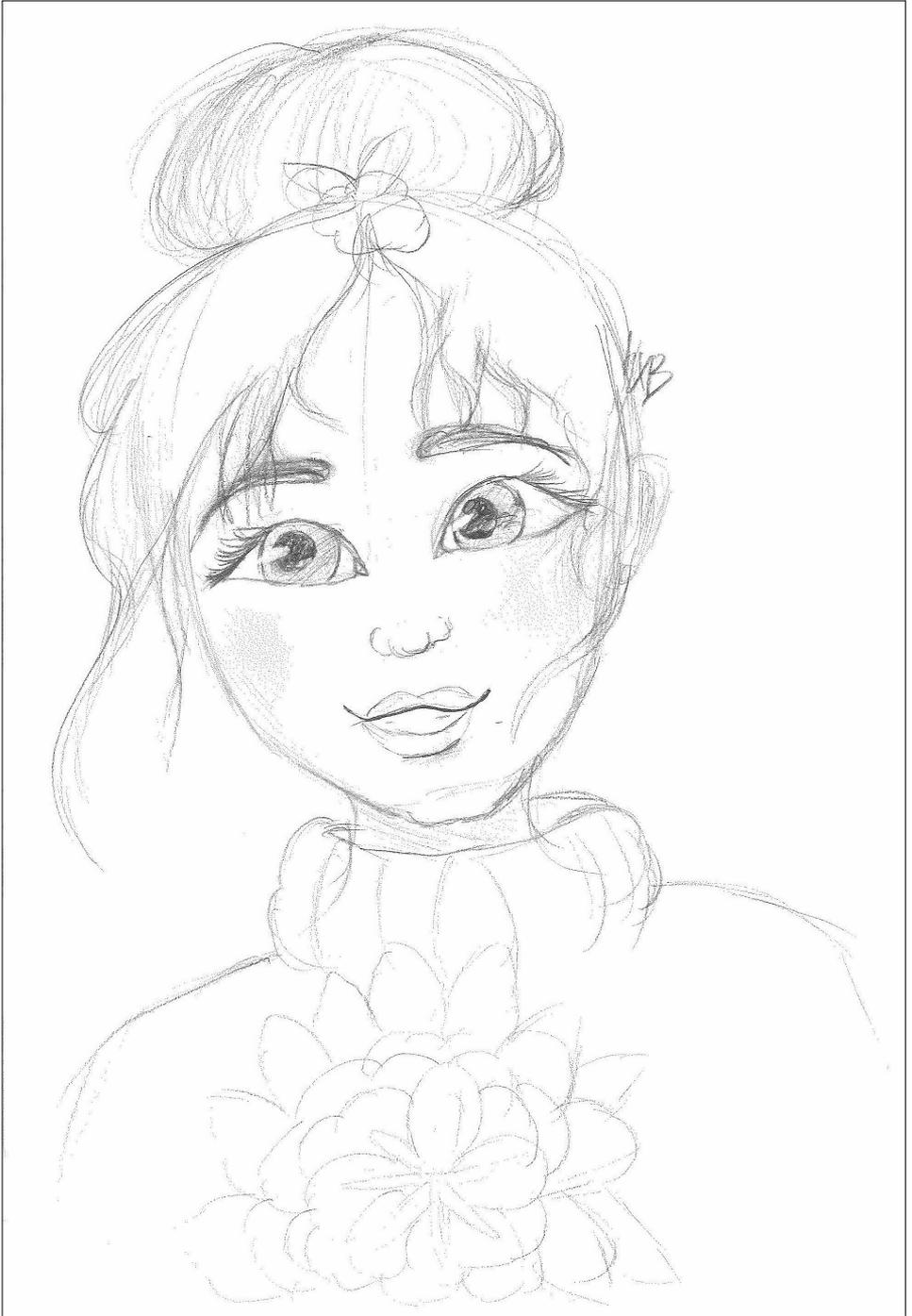
Someone  
 like me.

It's our kind,  
 we are hard to find.  
 Somehow lost,  
 yet somehow completely found.  
 Someone in great exhaust,  
 but someone full of energy.  
 Lively  
 Someone lovely

That's someone like me!

It may be confusing,  
 but no need to worry,  
 We are who we are  
 And I am who I am  
 And our lives are in no hurry.

**Leia Gonzales-Banaag**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7



**Kaliana Beranek**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

## **The Scariest Sleepover Encounter That I Ever Faced**

When I was ten and lived in Walton Hills, my friends Paul, Lorenzo, and I were having a sleepover at Lorenzo's house that started at 6:00 p.m. I was so excited, and I couldn't wait. Six o'clock came around, and I headed to Lorenzo's house. When I got to his house, Paul was already there. So the three of us played some Minecraft Pocket Edition on the iPad, and then we ate some dinner and went back to the iPad. It was late at night, somewhere around 11:00 p.m., when I realized I forgot something at my house. It was a wand I made that day. A wand that I still have to this day. I made it because I am such a Harry Potter fan. Luckily for us I lived across the street, so we didn't have to go far. So Paul, Lorenzo, and I ventured out to my house. When we crossed the street and were at the top of my driveway, we took a few steps down toward my house and we heard something moving in the bushes.

I said, "What was that?"

*(Continued on page 87)*

*(Continued from page 86)*

“Dunno,” said Lorenzo.

“Don’t look at me,” said Paul defensively.

I got a little scared because I lived near a forest that had coyotes living in it. We paused for a few seconds and we heard it again.

“I swear if you guys are messing with me!”

Paul exclaimed, “We ain’t messing with you!”

Lorenzo said agreeingly, “Yeah we aren’t messing with you.”

“Are you sure? Because if you are, I am going to flip out!!!”

Then, we heard it a third time.

“You know what,” I said scaredly. “I’m just going to run!”

Almost instantly as soon as I finished my sentence, I broke off into a run. Then Paul and Lorenzo ran after me. As soon as we got to my house, I went to my room. I found it as soon as I got there. It was sitting on my dresser, right there, front and center. So, I grabbed it and ran down the stairs and into the

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garage. I went straight to the opening of the garage door. Then we ran up my driveway, never looking back, and into Lorenzo's house. That night was sooooooo creepy, and because whatever was in the bushes scared me, I was awake until 3:00 a.m. Then I finally closed my eyes and drifted off into a dreamless sleep.

**Robert Lapointe-Papay**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

### **(Toxic) Best Friend**

My “best friend”  
Gets mad at me  
For speaking my mind.  
But tells me to.

My “best friend”  
Tries to one-up me  
In anything, good or bad.  
But says she listens.

My “best friend”  
Rants and yells about her  
Problems whenever she wishes.  
But says I’m selfish when I do it.

My “best friend”  
Yells at me when  
I can’t tell she’s depressed.  
But does nothing when I am.

Should I even be calling her  
My “best friend”?

Or should I be calling her  
My “toxic best friend”?

**Melody Johnson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## How to Survive a Day in School

All right, this is a handbook, not a story. I mean, it's *like* a short story, but not really a story. Anyway, let's start. First, you always need supplies, like pencils, pens, cupcakes . . . Don't listen to the third thing, I kind of got sidetracked. Anyway, the second thing you always should have is paper, folders, binders, and cupcakes. Ignore the last thing, again! Well, I mean I am a *little* hungry . . . Anyway, back to what I was saying, you need a lot of things to survive school. Let's talk about another topic on how to survive school.

I'm going to say this right off the bat (it's a saying they used in the old times). You need friends. Not just any friends, but *supportive and helpful* friends. Now, some of you are probably saying, "Well, I already have more friends than you!" but you are probably wrong. Because I have more friends than you! Sorry, I don't want to sound mean. It kind of came out wrong. So, you also need colored pencils, a pencil pouch to hold your pens, pencils, etc. You will also want to have pizza. Wait, what? I just ate and now I'm saying pizza? I will be right back . . . Ah, much better. Now the last thing you should know is your locker combination and where all of your classes are. I remember a time when I got lost . . . Sorry! Well, it looks like I'm running out of time, but I want to say this: remember your locker combination or you have to carry all of your books. Well, this has been Christopher Manion eating off. I mean 'signing off.' Stupid hunger.

**Christopher Manion**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Heather Brickman**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 8

I was not born an only child, although I occasionally find myself wishing that I had been. I was born the second of two children. My brother and I do sometimes agree; at other times, we have been at odds with each other. He has acted kindly towards me, offering to share toys and other possessions. I recall a time that my brother allowed me to share his lunch. He graciously offered to cook food for two, and brought me my plate. I was struck by his giving attitude and filled with admiration. However, later that evening, when it came time for chores, washing dinner dishes, and determining which of us would bite the bullet first and speak first to our long-winded grandmother on the phone, he did not hesitate to remind me that I “owed him a favor or two.”

Since then, whenever I have been faced with a situation where an object or idea seems especially wonderful, beautiful, convenient, or too good to be true, I have paused and regarded the circumstances with a more cautious and objective eye. I stop and remind myself that there is no such thing as a free lunch.

As the years have passed, I have concluded that many individuals in our world are unfamiliar with this concept. Men, women, and children often fall victim to schemes with invisible price tags and unforeseen consequences. They make seemingly simple choices when, in reality, free lunches do not exist.

Many individuals aspire to be thrifty. They jump out of their car upon seeing a “free cat” sign, but their pockets are much lighter after neutering, shots, food, toys, and veterinarian visits. They get free candy, free body piercing, and cheap cars, but end up suffering from illness or infection, risking their safety, or pouring more money down the drain than they initially saved. They did not receive a free lunch.

A man may be untruthful to his child, quickly making promises that he does not intend to keep and offering simple answers to complex questions. He may say, “The dog just went on vacation” or “she is only sleeping.” He will eventually pay for what he believed to be a free lunch.

One may embrace an opportunity for a new lifestyle filled with what appears to be endless benefits and freedoms. But this person will sacrifice their old friends, joys, and experiences. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

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A nation will fight a war to secure its own freedom, to create better lives for its people, and to create a lasting peace. But in the process, lives will be lost, peace will be broken, and the conqueror will take the freedom of the conquered. The conquerors appear to gorge themselves on a free lunch when, in reality, no such thing exists.

In short, I have discovered that both large and small problems plaguing our society have been caused by short-sightedness. Many of us are blind to the true consequences of our actions; we do not realize that all things have a cost and there is truly no such thing as a free lunch.

**Emily Gladden**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 12

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### **Team Player**

Jay Thompson had it all. He was a talented basketball player, the most popular kid at Westville Academy with a full ride to a great college in Southern California waiting for him after graduation. Then there was Shawn Jones, who was the hardest working kid on the Westville Academy Varsity basketball team. He felt undervalued as a player; this was supposed to be his year until freshman phenom Jay Thompson arrived. Nobody cared about Shawn's scrappiness when they saw Jay Thompson making highlight dunks and crazy three-pointers. This was frustrating to Shawn.

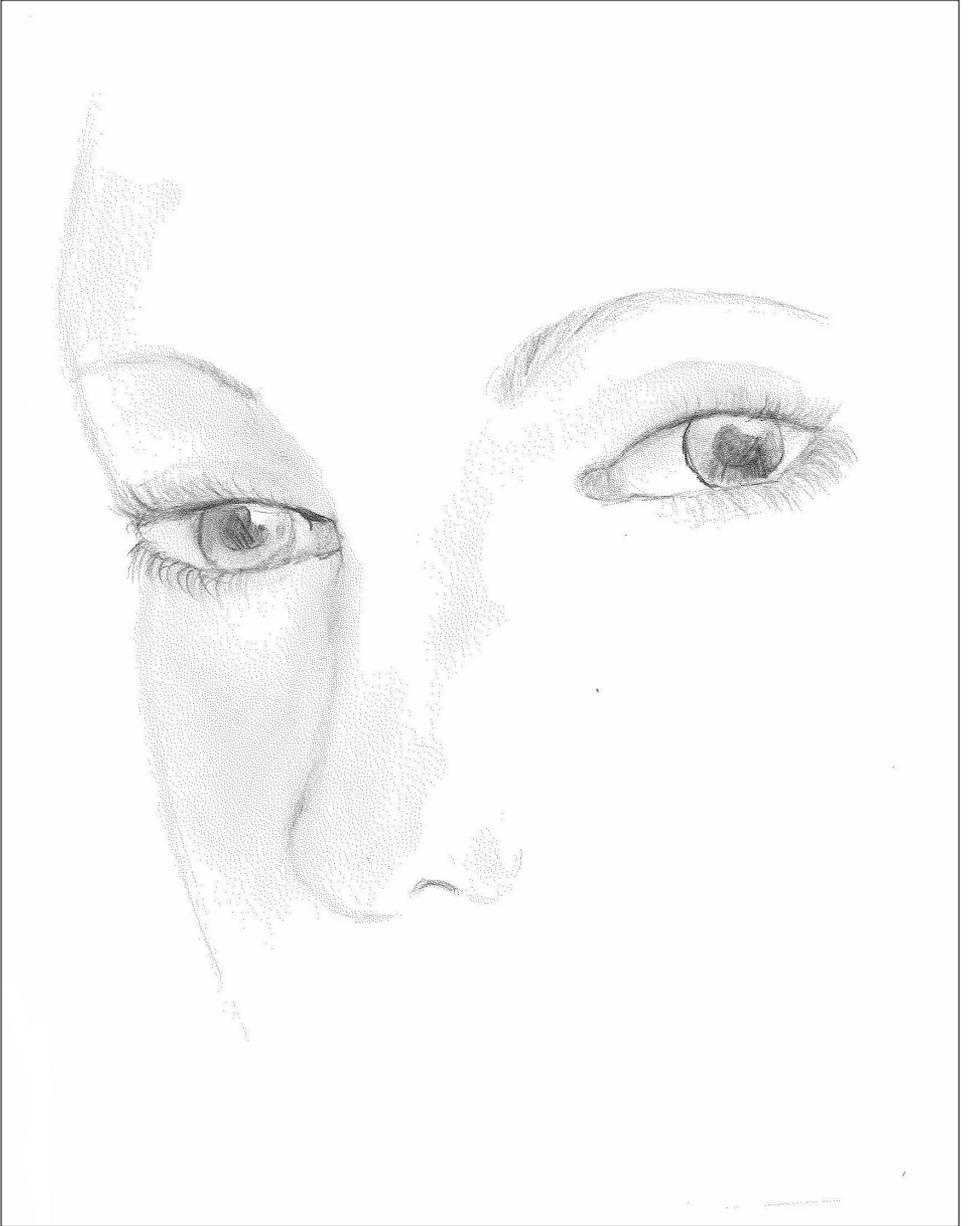
Westville was having a spectacular season. They were undefeated through the first 29 games and looking to make history. Jay was averaging 30 points a game so far, leading the team by far. Still, nobody was noticing Shawn's 15 points and 12 rebounds a game. Shawn and Jay weren't really friends at all. The only time they would talk was when Jay would call for the ball when he was open. Their undefeated season came down to their last game against Central Brooks Academy, also undefeated.

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The game took place on a Friday night at the Staples Center. Jay was lighting it up early, making eight of his first ten shots. Jay couldn't be stopped until he came down hard on his right ankle, having to be carried off the floor because it was so bad. Shawn knew it was his time. The game was tied at 60 with four seconds left. Shawn caught the pass wide open. He knew it was nothing but net after feeling the ball leave his fingertips. The game was over! Westville won thanks to the heroics of Shawn, finally out of Jay's shadow. Westville's perfect season was complete, and now Shawn will forever be known for making the biggest shot in school history.

**Alex Neville**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Morgan Campbell**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 8

## Personal Narrative

That chilly night in late September under the lights would change my life forever. I started as middle linebacker that night, just like I did that whole year. That week we were all confident and feeling a win. All week I was ready to get back out there and play a better game than I did the week before and just improve myself doing the game I love to play. One thing I was nervous about all year was my ankle. I had gotten my ankles taped almost the whole year, as I had injured my left ankle during the summer. On that night, my ankle felt great, and I did not tape it like I usually do. That was one of the worst mistakes of my life.

The game began and I was having an average game through the first quarter. We were down but our defense was always there to pick the team up. Around the middle of the second quarter, our All-Medina County Gazette middle linebacker had to leave the field with a gushing bloody nose. So there I am, running the defense all by myself, with only four games of varsity experience under my belt. About three plays go by and I experience a life-changing moment. I'm running down the field chasing the ball carrier, and as I took a bad angle to the ball, he

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cut, and the only thing I remember at that instant is hearing the snap of my ankle and seeing my foot pointing up towards my leg, as all 155 pounds of my body weight lie on my ankle. I remember laying on the ground, staring up into the lights and gloomy sky and thinking, “I really hope I can stand up.”

The trainer from both Norton and our school came over and asked what happened, and at that moment, my adrenaline was still rushing and I really could not feel anything. “I think it is my ankle,” I say, and as I go to stand, I just stumble back to the ground. Teammates end up helping me to the sideline and setting me on the bench while the game continues. I have doctors surrounding me and checking out my ankle as if they think something is seriously wrong. The only thing on my mind while sitting on that bench was returning to the game and playing with my teammates. As the doctors check on my ankle, the final diagnosis was a “sprained ankle.” That was one hundred percent fine with me, thinking I would be walking maybe by the next day or the day after that. The night goes on and I just have ice wrapped on my ankle, watching my team come so close to

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victory, and it just get taken from them while I sit by helplessly. As I crutch all night, and crawl up the stairs to go to bed, the adrenaline has worn off, and I am in major pain that seems more than a sprained ankle. The next morning I wake up, barely even able to move my whole leg, let alone walk. I spend my Saturday watching football, not being able to go to work and having to hop anywhere to get something to eat or drink. All weekend I'm icing and crutching around while my ankle is approximately the size of a softball. Monday, after school, I talk to the trainer, and she said that since I couldn't stand and the inflammation barely went down, to go get x-rays to see if any bone is broken. As I arrive to the hospital and everything gets done, the doctor gives me the news. It was a spiral fracture of the fibula bone in my leg, and I would be out for the season.

As I was told this news, I did not really know how to react. Nothing like that had ever happened to me. From my foot to about half way up my leg was put into a sling for a week to keep my foot flexed, and then was put in a boot. I didn't realize how much this would really affect me for a couple days. Realizing

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that I could not do anything but eat, sleep, and do homework really killed me. Not being able to play football, lift weights, or even walk straight really put things into perspective and destroyed me. I was thankful that I didn't need surgery, and I just had to wait for the bone to heal over time though. As I was put into a boot, I still couldn't walk for another week. When I finally didn't need the crutches, I was limping in a boot for about a month. Walking without the boot for the first time was very weird. My left leg was very weak and I felt an inch shorter on my left side. My calf also lost a whole inch in size through the whole process. Regaining strength in my leg was tough, and getting the total strength back took at least three months. Almost always having to wear an uncomfortable ankle brace under my sock every day, no matter what I was doing, was one thing I could not stand doing. I knew that I was improving myself, and it was something I had to do. And to this day, my leg and ankle still give me problems.

I learned a lot from that exact moment that I was laying on the ground to the exact moment I could confidently run and just

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overall workout. I had half of my junior year football season taken away from me, and a potential wrestling season. I learned not to take everything for granted, not to treat life like everything is always going to go my way. Right now, and probably for the rest of my life, I will have weak ankles. Every time I roll my ankle doing whatever, fear creeps into my mind, negatively reminiscing on the dark times when I could not do anything. There are times when I feel the need to wrap my ankles, or even wear an ankle brace even today. Those times of not being able to run, workout, play a sport, or even walk will always be in the back of my head when I get down on myself. Where I came from inspires me more than anything, and the lessons I have learned have made this football season, and my senior year, the funnest time I have ever had.

**Devon Stoehr**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 12

## Restricted Freedom

Corn fields blew in the wind alongside the road. The corn reminded me of the restricted dance of freedom. You are free to blow in the wind, but are held down by rules. The beautiful and talented are harvested to a higher table of society. As my family and I drove past the epic corn dance, my thoughts roaring, my eyes soaked in every ounce of detail. A silent song of hope rang a melody in my heart. The corn crop finally ended and houses stood proud. *I like how spaced out the houses are in Valley City.* As the road began to curve, my heart lept.

After the curve, my dad turned onto a street named Lonesome Pine. *Wow. The houses are so grand here. I cannot believe I get to live in this neighborhood soon.* Lonesome Pine turned into Grassy Branch Drive. Several houses later and off to the side, a house set lights off in my family's heads. Cherry red shutters and a green awning presented the house, being the first two things you notice. White siding and dark gray shingles filled the rest of the capacity of the outside of the house.

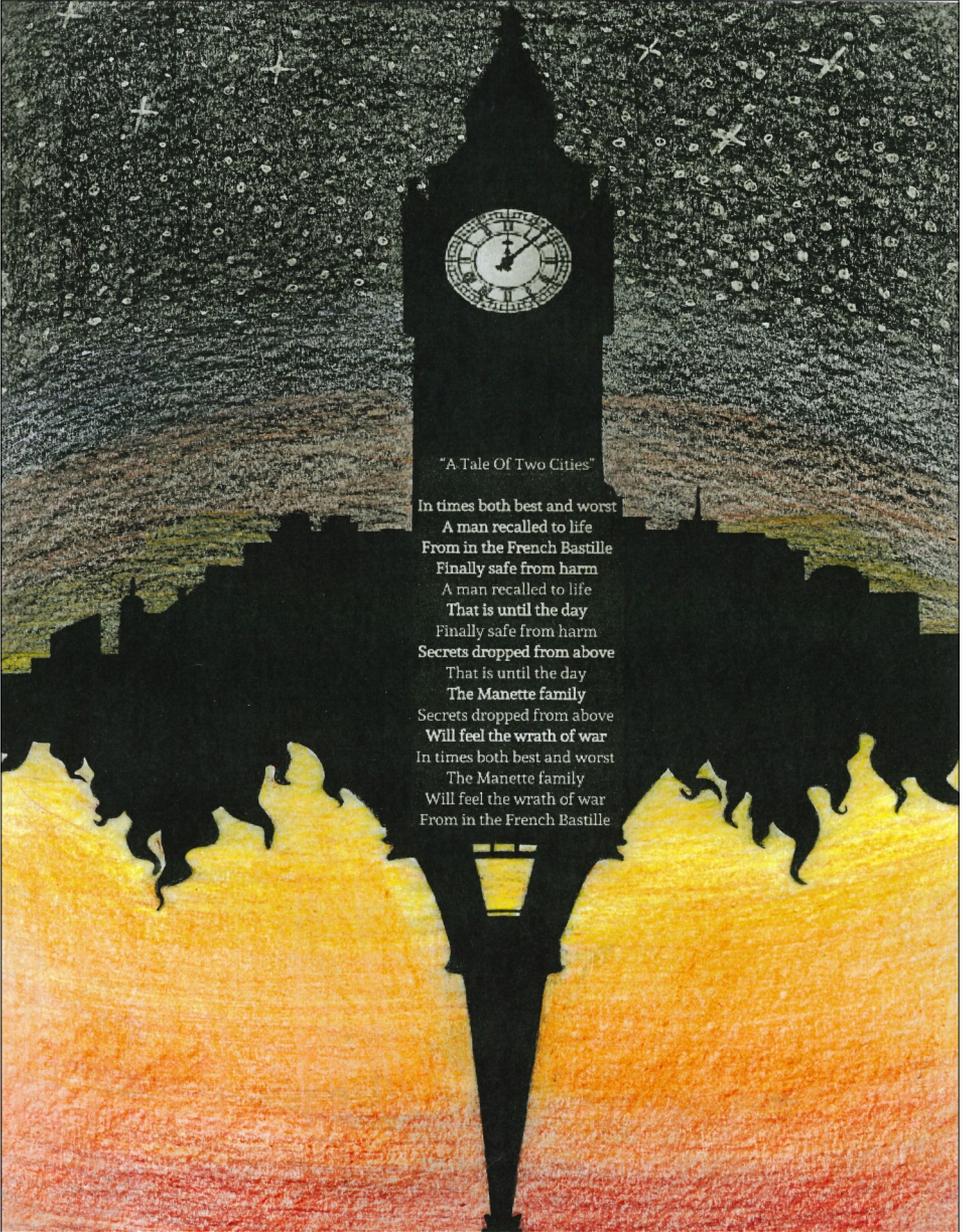
I knew that soon my family and I were going to live here. Soon we are going home. Just like the restricted freedom

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dance, our lives are restricted. This journey home has shown lots of restricted freedom. You may not always get the house you want. Restricted freedom causes this. But, after hard work, you can make your way up off the ground and onto the higher tables of society. In this case, get the type of house you want after several attempts.

**Nicole Paliwoda**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 11



"A Tale Of Two Cities"

In times both best and worst  
A man recalled to life  
From in the French Bastille  
Finally safe from harm  
A man recalled to life  
That is until the day  
Finally safe from harm  
Secrets dropped from above  
That is until the day  
The Manette family  
Secrets dropped from above  
Will feel the wrath of war  
In times both best and worst  
The Manette family  
Will feel the wrath of war  
From in the French Bastille

**Rachel Deryck**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 12

## **Me - The Song of Myself, Jessica**

I am a friend, a daughter, a sister, and a student. I am the moon hidden between the nighttime clouds. I am the quiet girl in class whom others may not know. I am a goofy and fun-loving teenager. I am a warrior against the lifelong battle that is my depression. I am who I was born to be by way of my parents' guidance.

I see an endless black void that is my future. I see a small glimmer of hope in that darkness. I see a world of pain and suffering that has been formed through centuries of unresolved conflict. I see a woman who struggles through everyday life but manages to smile through it all. I see a girl in the mirror, staring back at me, unrecognizable. I see a girl who has trouble coping with the inconveniences that surround her.

I believe in having a world of peace. I believe that everyone deserves a second chance. I believe that there may always be a light at the end of the tunnel, no matter how dim it may seem. I believe that there is a chance at a better future. I believe that music expresses the words and feelings that we fail to show. I believe that every outcome, whether seemingly good or bad, has a purpose to serve.

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I am afraid of abandoning or being abandoned. I am afraid of losing everything I hold dear all at once. I am afraid for what the future might hold for me. I am afraid of never having been loved or cared about. I am afraid of how the world is turning out to be. I am afraid of not being accepted for who I truly am.

I hear a piercing silence. I hear the cries of those who have lost. I hear the internal cries for help of a girl who is lost. I hear the joyous laughter of the innocent who have yet to gain experience in the world. I hear the sounds of a never-ending conflict. I hear the muffled sobbing behind closed doors.

I speak to my best friends, my mother, and my grandmother. I speak to those who are willing to listen and truly understand. I speak to myself when no one else will listen. I speak to those who need my help. I speak to the ones I love, who love me back. I speak to anyone who can help me.

I wish to find love and happiness. I wish for the world to become a better place. I wish to be able to overcome any obstacle. I wish to be able to make my parents proud. I wish to help others and make them happy in a way they can feel fulfilled. I wish to be able to die a happy death, knowing that I have

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fulfilled my life and the life of others.

I have learned that life is not easy, nor is it fair. I have learned that there will always be ups and downs, but that everything happens for a reason. I have learned that one small action can make the greatest of differences in anyone's life. I have learned that even if things seem hopeless and bleak, it can always get better in unexpected ways. I have learned that no one is ever truly alone, despite having felt the way for so long. I have learned to live life to the fullest and to not have any regrets.

Being completely misunderstood in a way that hurts myself and others makes me mad. I am angered by deceit and ignorance, whether it be my own or that of others. This world of prejudice and hate that we live in makes me mad. I am maddened by the disrespect that people have of each other, especially when one is so undeserving of such poor behavior. I am upset by the jokes that many make of others' suffering. What makes me mad is when a group of people feel the need to make themselves feel better by taking others down.

I reach for the dreams that seem so far away from my grasp. I reach for the love and understanding of the ones that I care for.

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I reach for a life where I can be truly happy without worry. I reach for a time where everyone can live peacefully without much conflict. I reach for the stars and the worlds beyond my imagination. I reach for the hand that will guide me through life.

I struggle against myself, my mind, and my thoughts. I struggle against the pressure that society places on me. I struggle against the high expectations of those around me. I struggle against trying to be myself while trying to be what others want me to be. I struggle through the fight that my mind puts me through between what I have to do and what I want to do. I struggle between trying to be happy while my anxiety and sadness weigh me down.

I express my freedom through the limitations of my anxiety. I express my freedom through the creativity and indiscriminate feelings of music. I express my freedom through the restraint I am given by the rules of society. I express my freedom through forms of creativity in the arts. I express my freedom by expressing my thoughts out loud. I express my freedom by allowing my feelings to show through.

**Jessica Rosco**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12



**Emma Errington**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Concussion

I feel lost inside  
My friends are in the ocean and I'm stuck in the tide  
Pounding headaches, nothing to do  
But listen to the tick-tock of the clock when comes noon  
Kisses from dogs will help they say  
Turn the world bright and not so vague  
One named Penny and the other Daisy May  
Help me get through from day to day

Nothing to think, nothing to say  
That's what it's like for me today  
Missing my old life, but that's okay  
Since there is nothing to do but lay

I'm tired and feel like a pile of noodles  
The medicine they give me only helps a little  
I wish I could say I'm having fun like they are  
But it's hard when I can't even turn on the DVR

**Jaclyn Carske**  
Cloverleaf Middle  
Grade 7

## A Plea for Peace

Wouldn't it be nice  
If all the men and women in the world  
Learned to respect each other for what they are?

Wouldn't it be nice  
If no one craved destruction  
Or gave in to their evil, impure desires?

Wouldn't it be nice  
If everyone thought lovely, happy, genteel thoughts  
And kindness reigned in the hearts and minds of each human  
being?

Wouldn't it be nice  
If people cared for one another, for animals, for nature  
And strived for the well-being of the world?

Let's you and I get away from this place  
High above the skies, far beyond this planet  
And into space.

**Madeline Mascia**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 12

## The Sailor and His Dog

There once was a sailor.  
He had been long forgotten  
but his legend of love  
has been taught all throughout Dillfendire.  
The sailor was very poor and sad.  
But he never forgot his love of sailing.  
He used his small, wrinkled, and faded money  
to buy a gentle dog for his quite lonely seafaring days.

One night he was in his boat with his dog  
and sailed too far away from land.  
He was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean!  
There was little food and water left,  
but the sailor felt he still had a chance at life.  
He took the much-too-small life jacket  
and clipped it around the gentle dog.  
He found a small old pencil  
and an old receipt and wrote an S.O.S. note.  
It included a small **We Need Help** message  
and the boat's last coordinates.  
The only problem was the coordinates  
were from three days ago.  
Or last he could remember.  
Slipping the small letter inside the life jacket  
he said goodbye to the dog  
and threw him overboard.  
Landing gently in the water,  
the dog swam.  
He began to quickly gain speed.  
The sailor held on for that glimmer of hope,  
so that if he didn't make it,  
the gentle dog would.  
Several days passed aboard the small ship,  
until the dog miraculously returned.  
The sailor, happy to see the dog,  
noticed that the letter  
was still within the life jacket.  
But sadly, the gentle dog had lost a limb

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in his quest for help for the sailor.  
There would be no miraculous rescue for him.  
With that, the sailor smiled and said,  
“Well, at least my life will end with a friend.”

**Hailey Weil**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

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### **Alarm Clock**

You are asleep as sound as can be  
Nearing the end of your dreams  
It feels like you still have hours to sleep  
Until you hear that deafening beep  
You wake up not feeling right  
Then you press snooze and go to sleep tight  
After you have gone back into your dreams  
You are woken again by what seems obscene  
You accept it is time to start your day  
Because in your bed you cannot lay  
You finally get dressed  
But only wish to rest  
You wonder why no one else has started on their way  
Then you realize it is a snow day  
After that you go back to sleep  
Not thinking about that deafening beep

**Samantha Turner**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Maddie Hoehn**  
Black River High  
Grade 12

## **Acapulco Is My Paradise**

Feel the sand between your fingers  
Seagulls are like singers  
Saying no to winter  
The wind slowly whispering  
Kissing your face

Waves crashing  
Water splashing on your feet  
Collecting seashells as they pass by  
Walking along the shoreline  
Towards paradise

The sun shining on the smiling faces  
Like a long-lasting kiss  
Laughs are all around  
Watching the setting sun  
Say hello to the shining moon

Moonlight reflected on the crashing waves  
Fish going to sleep  
Silence is all you hear  
Taking a good night sleep  
Waiting for the day to arrive

Tans may fade away  
Salt may brush off  
Sand washes off your skin  
And off your hair  
But the memories will last forever

**Victoria Cuellar**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Lock the Doors

What I am about to tell you is the most chilling, terrifying event that's happened in my entire life. Let me start by saying this happened late last March, and I still get lost in my thoughts every now and then and wonder, What would've happened if I would've just listened to my parents when they told me to just lock the doors?

A little background information. I live on a quiet street in the suburbs with my parents. At the time of this event, I was 15 and very naive, never taking what my parents said seriously, or listening to what they told me to do.

Now, before I begin to tell you what happened, I am going to explain the layout of my room. My room is on the second floor of the house, located to the right of the stairs. In my room, my bed is in the far left corner, while my dresser and TV are in the right corner of my room. Also, my closet is across from my bed right next to the door. Now, onto the story of the most terrifying night of my life.

It was just like every other day, a bit boring, and slow. They had called the first snow day of the year for us that day. I remember the roads being covered with the white, fluffy snow. Anyway, let me start the story.

It was 7:30 at night when my mom called me downstairs, "Owen! Come down here for a minute," she shouted. I made my way out of my room, then down the stairs to see what she wanted.

"Yeah, mom?" I asked.

"Your father and I are going out and won't be back until late. Ok?" I could tell that this night was shaping up to be awesome! With no one home, I could play video games as long as I wanted, with the volume blasting!

"Sounds good, mom!" I replied, while eagerly waiting for them to leave.

"Bedtime is 10:30. Don't stay up too late, ok? Also, don't forget to lock the doors."

"I won't. Love you, mom."

"Love you."

And with that, my dad came downstairs and they left.

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I proceeded back up the stairs to my room to begin playing a little bit of Xbox. I cranked the volume up to full blast and got on with my night. Somewhere around 11:00 I began to doze off.

A few hours later, I awoke suddenly, to silence. I scanned my room well in the dim light from my TV.

I noticed that my closet door was cracked, slightly open, but didn't think much of it at the time. I got up, grabbed my phone, and walked over to my closet door and shut it. Then walked out of my room and down the stairs. I had completely forgotten to lock the doors, and had planned to lock them, then grab a quick bite to eat.

When I got to the entrance to the house, what I saw shocked me. The front door was wide open with traces of snow all around the floor. That was when I heard a thump come from upstairs, almost like something being knocked over. After that followed the sound of the floorboards creaking above me.

Panicking, I instantly realized what had happened. Someone came right through the front entrance of our home just because I didn't lock the doors.

My heart was pounding. I had no idea what to do, then I froze. My closet door was open even though I could've sworn it wasn't when I fell asleep. If this was really just a robbery, why was the person hiding in my closet? Then, from up the stairs I heard a raspy, deep voice, "Where are you kid? I just want to talk."

My heart sank down into my chest. I didn't know what I could even do! I tiptoed over into the kitchen and then behind the bar. I began to call 911. Once I heard the woman on the other end, I began to explain that someone had broken into my house, and I was home alone. The lady told me to hide and asked for me to stay on the line with her for five minutes until the police showed up.

I started to hear footsteps coming down the stairs, every step with a loud boom like the crazed man was taunting me. Minutes felt like hours as I waited for the police. When I heard the sirens and saw the red and blue flashing lights, I jumped out from behind the bar, but then I saw him. I saw the man who had broken into my house. He wore a long dirty trench coat. His hair

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was wild and long, and he was about 6'0" and very scrawny. I looked into his eyes as the police marched up into my house and began to drag him to the ground with their guns out ready to be fired! He was lifeless, as if he didn't know or care about what he had done. My parents had arrived home shortly, and my nightmare had ended. Although, I always sit and wonder, What would've happened if I didn't wake up in the middle of the night?

**Brenden Barlett**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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As I turn to seek what undiscovered stories the next aisle has to hold, the Atlanta summer sun shines through the old stained glass windows, beams of light cascading from the ceiling covering the library with an array of pleasure. The kaleidoscope of colors gives a great aesthetic joy to me, seeing every crevice of the east wall filled with books now twinkling with hues of Egyptian gold, Caribbean blue, and Jamaican pink. Mornings like these let me love the serenity of the library, but outside I could hear the bustling city opening its eyes and letting out a yawn as it stumbles down the hall looking for the lightswitch. I pull myself away from nature's awe and begin to eagerly walk towards my desk to sip my freshly brewed coffee.

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While enjoying breakfast, I turn my head to see a pile of books on my left waiting to be returned to their homes. On top of the pile there is a note saying, “Elena, be extra careful with this one.” Abiding to the request, I pick up the book with an extraordinary amount of caution. En route to deliver the book to its niche, I admire its coarse, frayed, leather binding and its fragrance of candlelit libraries. Upon the shelf lay ten other books of similar age, classics ranging from Aristotle to Homer. Creating room for their returning friend, I slide the others over and delicately place the relic into its designated site. As I slide the book into its nook, a piece of paper slips out of the bottom and floats to the floor where it lands face down. I bend down to pick it up and realize it’s not a piece of paper, but a photograph.

The photograph was black and white, faded, edges ripped and worn, and had a coffee stain on the bottom right corner. Pictured, a couple hugging in front of a shop, smiling into the camera. I look for a date or name anywhere on the crumpled borders of the photograph, hoping I may be capable of returning this memory to its owner. On the top left corner it says in neat and slender cursive, “Jenny and Johnny Adams — 1954.” I

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pondered whether or not these people could still be alive after sixty years. This thought in mind, I scramble to my computer and search the caption. My screen remains blank and I think to myself, how do I even initiate my investigation to find the owner? As a starting point, I open the library's logs to see who returned the book last. Displayed on my previously blank screen emerges the statement, "This book was donated by an anonymous benefactor."

After a day of possessing this photo, I scour a myriad of phone books for either a Jenny or Johnny Adams for countless hours. I end my research with a sigh and say aloud to the empty library, "Oh, where else can I look for an answer to this mystery?" I thought to myself, I could really use some help from Nancy Drew at the moment.

Looking at the picture for what seemed like the thousandth time, I realize that I overlooked the name of the shop! How did I not see that before? On the front window it says, "Adams' Family Bakery — Home of the Best Pastries in Savannah." Now inserting their business into the search bar of my internet browser, I find that their little bakery is indeed still in business. In

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the spur of the moment I grab my purse, get out my keys, and tell the other librarian that I'm headed to Savannah for the weekend.

I park my car on a neighboring street, two spots down from an old, rusty lamppost. Walking to the shop, I admire the beauty and security of nature. I look up through the thick canopies of Spanish moss draping from the tree branches to see the sun peeking through the slits between vegetation. I stand on the sidewalk, look up, and feel the golden rays of sunlight shine down and warm every inch of my face. The wind blows gently, moving a strand of hair into my face as if it is telling me to continue walking.

Approaching the bakery, I pull out the photo from my purse and hold it up to compare history to the present. The only changes are that the broken bricks above the door have been replaced, and the window writing has been redone. Opening the door, I am indulged with the scents of fresh bread, chocolate chip cookies, blueberry muffins, and apple danishes. I look around, observing every detail of the small shop with scrutiny. Pictures of what seems to look like of the family hang on the walls along with various pictures of Savannah. The metal chairs and tables line

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the left wall while the display case and front counter are in the back of the room. Almost every seat is filled with a satisfied customer, and the line of hungry recipients almost goes out the door. I shuffle my way through the crowd up to the counter and ask a worker, "Do you know a Jenny or Johnny Adams?"

"Yes, ma'am. I believe I do."

"Can I talk to to them? It's very important."

I'm led behind the counter, through a door, and up a flight of stairs. The worker knocks on the door and says, "Mr. Adams, you have a visitor. It's a young lady who says it's something very important. Can she come in?" He responds by saying, "Send her in, Jordan. You know I love company." The door opens slowly. I make my way into the next room, and I'm greeted by an elderly man who must be in his eighties. He's about five and a half feet tall, and walks with a cane. His eyes are a vibrant, bright, sky blue. His hair white and thinned. His face wrinkled and aged from decades of work. He asks, "How may I be of service to you, miss?" I tell him that it's a long story, then I politely suggest that he should sit down so he does not become tired.

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I explain to him my story about the discovery of the picture, my research to find the owners, and the quest to fulfill my curiosity. Lastly, I pull out the photo and hand it to him. His hands are visibly shaking as he reaches out to possess the faded, black-and-white photograph. A hand goes up to cover his mouth and says to a picture of his wife, “Jenny, look at that. Look at that. Oh, Jenny, look at that.” He then pulls a tissue out of a nearby container and wipes the tears from his eyes. “Jenny, look at what is found at last.”

The old man says to me, “Young lady, I owe you a debt of gratitude. I thank you so very much for returning this picture to me. Fifty years ago, when I put it in my book, I never thought the book would’ve been taken away from me. But when my son went through my library and borrowed the book, I assumed he would return it within a week or so. One week turned into several, then it turned into months, and months into years. The next time I saw my son, I asked him about the book, and he said that he had given it to a neighbor a couple years prior. I thought not only the book but also my beloved picture were lost forever. Sadly, my wife died thinking that our picture was gone. She

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would have loved to see this one more time. If only I could see her again to remind her of the start of our life together. I— ” His voice fades away and tears begin to well up in his eyes. He takes my hand in his, “You are a blessing. I can never thank you enough. May I tell you the story behind the picture? I’ll even take you out for coffee if you’d like, miss.” I put my hand on his and reply with a nod, “I’ll pay, Sir.”

**Isabella Allen**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

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### **Thirteen Seconds**

A person, when faced with a traumatic or stressful situation, is said to either fight or flight. Face the situation head on or let the events continue to unfold without the interference of your own actions. I would have always considered myself as a “fighter.” That was before the afternoon of May 4, 1970.

#### **April 30, 1970**

The sound of books closing and doors slamming open cut off my Anatomy professor during his lecture on the spinal cord.

“Remember, finals will be here before you know it!” he yells over the noise.

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My evening classes had just ended and my rumbling stomach adds to the chaotic noise surrounding me. Students in heated conversations pass by and throw frisbees while I walk with my head perched downward.

PB&J and coffee somehow fill the emptiness in my stomach. Notes occupy the table completely, since no one else is with me. The surrounding volume begins to pick up, conflicting my thoughts on chromosomes and genomes. A large group circles around the small TV set in the corner of the hall.

“That idiot has done it again!”

My head peeks between the necks of others as I see President Nixon sitting behind a desk carefully eyeing a stack of written documents. Idiot? Mom and Dad always praised his efforts during the war.

“He is invading Cambodia!”

“More troops are being sent in!”

A few students begin a chant that is followed by the herding of bodies through the doors. More and more students leave their seats to follow the leaders with trays still on tables. Out the window, I notice that the crowd is around two dozen or so, with

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some stragglers jogging towards the gathering. I can either stay here and study, or join in with my peers.

Before my mind can catch up with my feet, I end up on the outskirts of the crowd. Around me they shout for peace and ending the war, while I find it all hard to comprehend considering this is new to me. Rebellion has never been a character trait I possess. I try to join in, but the words can't seem to make their way out. The crowd has grown and eager followers push me to get a better spot. This is where things cross the line for me. I swing the other strap of my bag around my shoulder and head back to my dorm.

### **May 1, 1970**

I find it hard to focus on anything. In the library, passionate voices filter in through the walls and divert my attention toward the complaints of our government instead of my lab report on proteins. In my dorm, my roommate Karen and her greasy boyfriend John paint posters with bold red letters.

"Karen, is there any way you could please paint that somewhere else? I am trying to do work." I realize then that these words were the most I have said to her since move-in day,

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probably.

“No, Holly, I can’t. We are already running late for the protests. And I find it hard to believe that your paper on atoms or whatever is anywhere near as important as the state of our country and the ignorant pigs that are making reckless decisions. Now shut up.”

The boyfriend exhales a thick cloud of smoke from his cigarette towards my desk. I wipe the fog from my glasses before hurrying out of the room.

Walking across campus to a common area makes me realize what is really going on. The quads and paths are filled completely with students. My body is the only active object moving amongst the crowd of those standing grounded with their signs held high above the heads and their mouths wide open. My heart rate picks up as the sounds pound into my ears and spread across my entire body. Just feet outside a common room my legs freeze. All these people, standing up for what they believe in. Passionate, vocal, determined. Adding to the chaos this war has brought to the country. Doing it in a way that seems small, but slowly gaining more attention and leaving a greater

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impact. And here I am working on a lab report.

### **May 2, 1970**

Attendance in most classes was a lot lower than the typical day. But I guess it really wouldn't make any sense to classify today as typical. The students that stood firmly with their heads held high now run sporadically on and off the campus. Cops quickly arrive in packs of four and five at a time, their wandering, maybe nervous eyes so perfectly hidden behind the aviator sunglasses resting on their noses.

After lunch, the surrounding mood seems to have shifted into something more chaotic, even violent. Crowds build like colonies as boys living in my residence hall grab handfuls of rocks and throw them towards the police. Dust and dirt rise into their sight and fill their lungs, but their voices attempt to raise higher and higher. Visions of peaceful gatherings and hand painted signs have been replaced with running and broken glass bottles. My feet move fast along the path back to my dorm in hopes that a rogue rock will not be thrown at me by accident.

The rapidly lowering sun is a backdrop for a number of roofless Jeeps to speed onto campus. My vision catches small

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green squares that evolve into distinct shapes with men in hard helmets. Their army green outfits are a contrast to the police officers' black uniforms. What is most noticeable, though, are the long guns perched high on their shoulders, intimidating and threatening even at a simple glance.

My eyes are fixated on the foreign intruders until the door slams open. Karen, sweating and out of breath, frantically paces around the dorm.

“The mayor of Kent declared a state of emergency!” her words tumble out in choppy patterns with breaths being taken in between.

“That’s why the National Guard is here and there is a fire at the officer training building and I can’t find John anywhere. He may be at the fire because students set it off, but I’m not sure.” She sits on her bed and throws her body back.

All I can do is continue to look out the window at the marching men. My brain is not letting me comprehend this all. It feels like someone is making me learn a new language while solving a math equation with no answer. There really is no answer to this either. I stare at them until the sky becomes too

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dark and their figures have dissolved into faceless beings. Their guns, however, do not fail to lose their outlines against the dark sky.

“Should we go and find him?” I ask without thoroughly thinking it through.

“You, you wanna help? Of all people?” Her confused facials make me second guess my offer. I nod my head.

“Well, alright, let’s go then.”

Karen leads the way towards the Reserve Officer Training Corps building where the fire had been set. A handful of students run through the smoke, mouths covered by their shirts. Police and firemen monitor the area and yell at us to leave. The dark sky and rising smoke make it hard to see just a few feet in front of us. The sight feels very eerie as people run past the natural backdrop. I look around for John’s long brown hair, but it is no use.

“Karen, I haven’t seen him anywhere. I got as close to the building as I could, but I got nervous.”

“He’s probably back on campus.” We both head back to our dorm as the smoke reaches higher and higher above our heads.

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I never would've expected things to get this way.

"Why did you come with me anyway?" Karen breaks the silence, causing my head to look away from the fire.

"It's usually my natural instinct to help, I guess."

### **May 3, 1970**

My eyes can no longer focus on the guardsmen because they are now scattered across the campus in huge packs. The radio playing in the bathroom reported that nearly 1,000 guards had been sent to Kent, all here to maintain order. They are standing in front of the students in long lines, like a wall separating the chaos and the calm. Although their efforts may seem to be halted, the protestors continue to hold true to their intentions as though the large number of guards mean nothing to their protest.

Staying in my dorm will be the best option. I do not want to risk getting hurt by another protester or a guard, and I don't think I would have what it takes to be out there in the crowd. I am not like my peers. The sounds of screams seep into the walls, making it hard to hear not only the shrill of the phone, but also the voice on the other line.

"Holly!" I instantly recognize the piercing tone.

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“Holly, oh my goodness, are you there? Are you safe? Oh love, please tell me those hippie hooligans did not hurt or corrupt you!”

“Mom, I am okay. I plan on staying in my dorm to do work the rest of the day. I think classes will still go on tomorrow, but yes, I am fine. Please do not worry.”

“I just do not want anything to happen to you. These kids are taking the war protests too far. This is really getting out of hand for no real reason, don’t you think?”

If I disagree with her, she will be angry and say I have no respect for her or dad’s beliefs. But if I agree with her, will I be respecting my own beliefs?

“Well, I’m not really sure . . .” The compromise is the only response I can think of, making me seem indecisive. It is never good to look or sound weak around Mom.

“Just stay safe. I love you, Holly.”

“Love you, mom.” My hand slams down the phone, the crash ricocheting off the walls back into my ears.

Mom’s comments about the whole situation makes me think, Is the war even really worth it? All these people -- U.S. soldiers,

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Vietnamese soldiers, innocent civilians -- being killed. I guess it would be easier if everyone had their own respected ideals and maintained peace and order. Death and violence are too often the answer to disagreements.

*Passionate* does not fall in the list of my characteristics. It is hard for me to form connections or believe in something so much that it forces me to exert nothing but love and support. I have gone through life uninvolved and unengaged in any of my surroundings. Just going through the motions and letting everything pass by without grabbing onto the things that change people for better or for worse. Nothing is exciting or riveting. I have never craved this much for change.

### **May 4, 1970**

The sky reflects that of the ocean; it is so clear and blue that it appears you can almost see right through it. The breeze is warm against my skin and blows my stringy, long blonde hair in all different directions. My hand fumbles to push it away in order to clear my vision, while the other wraps tightly around the textbooks clinging to my chest.

The crowd appears more massive the closer I get to the

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Commons, the area in which the protesters had gathered in word that a rally would be held here. Before my mind has any time to recollect thoughts, my pace speeds up in the direction of the crowd. By the time I arrive near the hill, tear gas rises up in tall and wispy clouds above the protesters, followed by the yelling of victims. The gas burns as small puddles of liquid begin to steadily flow out my eyes.

The crowd covers ground and travels in a pack of what has to be over a thousand, but it is hard to tell. Some smaller packs of a few dozen young people break off and trail by the guardsmen, only a few feet between. It is easy to follow the smaller packs and my voice reflects that of my surroundings, my brain quickly obtaining the chants. The steady rhythm of my heartbeat is heard in my ears as rocks are once again used as the crowd's designated weapon. The sound of the greyish ovals colliding with the solid helmets of the guardsmen sticks with me and is discreet enough to be heard over the chaos.

Just seconds later, the noise spreads across the entire area. The noise so impactful and threatening that it sends chills up my entire body. About twenty feet ahead, I see a man lying face first

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on the ground, a scarlet pool flooding the bright green grass beneath him. The books stumble from my grasp as I sprint over to the man. The noise repeats again and again, until I realize that my knees can no longer support the weight of my body. My left knee hits the ground firmly, followed by my right. The body is just inches away from me. Crawling will help me get to him. I try to move, but a dampness in my floral blouse keeps me from going any further. The bottom of my chin moves downward as my gaze follows. The same scarlet staining the grass now stains my pale palm. The sound repeats and repeats, and the last thing I see is a girl running towards me.

### **May 5, 1970**

Bright fluorescent lights blind my vision. Everything is blurry, and it seems that my eyelashes are blocking anything in sight.

“Holly?”

The combination of the lights and the simple noise is enough to make my head pound in steady beats, but my eyes can fully open.

“Oh, Holly!” Mom and Dad raise from their seats and grab onto me.

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I let out a sigh of pain, for the soreness in my stomach is almost too much to bear. Trying to hug them back is quite the challenge because raising my arms feels like lifting hundreds of pounds above my head.

“We are so happy you are alright, honey. When we got the news, we drove here as soon as possible. We were both hysterical.” Dad’s hand gestures towards Mom. She wipes a tear before resting her head on his shoulder. It’s a perfect fit.

“But Holly, what were you doing? I am going to sue that negligent school if you were just innocently walking by and one of those reckless hippies caused you to get shot--”

“Mom, stop! You have no idea what you are talking about. I put myself in that situation. I was taking part in the protests, and for once in my life I was making a difference and putting myself in a situation that was not the safe or easy way out. I was supporting something that I believe in, and you know what? Maybe it left me lying in a hospital bed for God knows how long, but at least our voices will be heard. These so-called reckless people are putting their lives on the line just like those soldiers over there that shouldn’t even have to be there in the first place.

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No one knew that they would be a part of something this serious when they woke up this morning. And the government, the one that you praise and praise, and love for fighting overseas, caused this to happen to me. So before you say another word about any of this, I need you to--” My breathing can no longer support the words rapidly spilling out of my mouth. Coughs come out in deep hacks and increase the pain in my stomach. Mom yells for a nurse.

“Get out!” I scream while trying to settle the coughs.

Both of them look at me terrified before crossing paths with a woman in scrubs.

### **August 31, 1970**

Thirteen seconds. Thirteen seconds on the campus of Kent State was all it took to change how I think and behave for the rest of my precious time on this earth. That specific interval is how long the shots lasted. Four passionate students lost their lives due to this, as nine others, including myself, were confined to the walls of a hospital for days and days on end. The events I experienced firsthand sparked a minor revolution across the country, with anti-war protests on college campuses and beyond

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becoming more common. Unfortunately, these efforts are not strong enough to overcome the forces that are causing thousands of more people to lose their lives in Vietnam.

On the first day back to classes of my sophomore year, the sky and breeze reflect the same one nature graciously handed us on May 4. It is hard to pass the grassy area and not see thousands of students and guardsmen conflicting. The image of those few short minutes will forever be etched in the confines of my brain. The current mood on campus is one that is indescribable, but as I sit here in the lecture hall, I know that I will continue to use my voice until my throat can longer handle it.

**Gillian Dralle**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 12

## A Final Note

Editorials abound about the inevitable death and disappearance of the physical book as a format and an object. Books are read on electronic devices, newspapers are published online, and the art of writing a letter has been reduced to “tweets” and “text messages.” Messages 140 characters in length send news, but they lack the art and imagination that come from the pleasure of reading and writing for the stimulation and relaxation that they inspire.

The Father of our Country, George Washington, wrote, “To encourage literature and the arts is a duty which every good citizen owes to his country.” This 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Inkspot* proves that the art of writing is alive and well in the schools of Medina County.

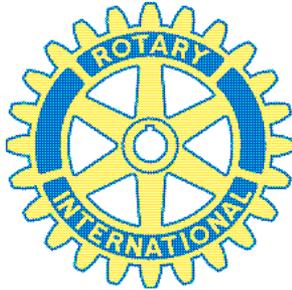
This literary review highlights the imaginations and creative thoughts of today’s youth. The stories, poems, and works of visual art that are contained in this review allow the reader the opportunity to share in the creativity of the authors and illustrators and to reflect on the teaching that took place in the schools to encourage and support the students.

The Medina Sunrise Rotary Club supports the expansion and encouragement of literacy through the distribution of the *Inkspot*.

Rotary dedicates the *Inkspot* to the 30,000 students in Medina County and to Rotary International’s goal of achieving global literacy. Whether Rotarians work to eliminate poverty, polio, or hunger, it all starts with education and literacy. As B. B. King, the King of the Blues, wrote, “The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”

William J. Koran, Superintendent  
ESC of Medina County  
*“Rotary Promotes Literacy”*





Sponsored by the Medina Sunrise  
Rotary Club

