

# Inkspot

Medina County Literary Review

Educational Service Center  
of Medina County  
Vol. 33, 2020-2021

---



**Julia Camino**  
Highland High School  
Grade 12

The Educational Service Center of Medina County is proud to present the 2020-2021 edition of *Inkspot*, the Medina County Literary Review.

As you well know, this school year has consisted of a pandemic with its many challenges. However, with the cooperation of educators and students, we are able to publish *Inkspot* this year.

We are still rejoicing over three decades later with student artwork and writing being published in *Inkspot*.

Congratulations to the talented authors and artists who have their creative works published in this year's edition of *Inkspot*! We wish you much continued success in your future.

Thank you to the many Medina County educators who support their students by submitting student works to *Inkspot*. A special thank-you goes to Keturah Zacharias for her hard work and dedication to *Inkspot*.

Jacinda Yonker

*Inkspot* Project Chair



**\*What was the inspiration for your piece of artwork that is on this year's cover of Inkspot?**

*The inspiration for my piece has do with my mind and how I think about and process the world. My mind is always filled with different ideas, stories, characters, etc. This piece demonstrates how I process my ideas and create my art.*

**\*Please tell us about yourself as an artist.**

*I am mainly a digital artist who likes to do illustration work. However, I like to experiment with different mediums of art, from charcoal to sewing my own creations, which I design from start to finish. Trying new things lets me broaden my horizons, discover new interests, and explore different ideas. My art work allows me to express my feelings and create pieces that I enjoy. Art is my passion, and I plan to pursue a degree in illustration.*

**\*Please tell us more about yourself.**

*My name is Julia Camino, and I have enjoyed drawing ever since I was young. In middle school, I really connected with my art and decided to work harder at developing my skills as an artist. When I'm not at school or work, I like to spend time with my friends or working on my newest art project. I am graduating from Highland High School Magna Cum Laude and will attend Cleveland Institute of Art in the fall.*

—Jamie Camino

## Grades K-6

### Spring

Spring brings many things.  
Bright yellow sun that brings fun,  
Rainy skies that keep you inside.  
Colorful flowers that smell good or stink,  
Mushy mud that makes you sink.  
The sound of a bat hitting a ball,  
Playing at a field one vs. all.  
Spring break that bumps bedtimes back,  
There is nothing that Spring can lack.

**Carson Glass**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Stars

out in the blue, cloudy night,  
looking up, the stars so bright in the night,  
so quiet like a little mouse,  
a star comes flying as a bird,  
you make a wish hoping it will come true,  
then you go to your bed and drift away in sleep,  
the next morning your wish comes true

**Drea Chavez**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

---

## Light

There's always a light.  
Whether it's the moon, stars, or sun.  
It may be the street lights,  
the fireplace,  
or even just the glow in your heart.  
Wherever, whenever.  
No matter how big or how small,  
There's always a light.

**Reese Gruver**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5



**Pax Finley**  
 Central Intermediate  
 Grade 5

---

An unknown sparkling  
 Begins to burn like a fire.  
 Soon a raging flame  
 Burns a beautiful picture.  
 Flame of creativity.

**Adelaide Adams**  
 Huntington Elementary  
 Grade 4

Summer is here, what a good cheer,  
I'm filled with excitement and a bit of fear  
But where's the leaves?  
All I see is a blanket of white;  
Not to worry, nothing will happen,  
It'll clear overnight!  
I wake up the next morning rush out to my door,  
I filled with cheer, maybe wonder even more!  
I look out and see everything is gray,  
Where is the leave's colors,  
Of every minute of every hour!  
I realize I had been wrong,  
Summer is not here,  
It's a year away!  
I shall put my hopes down for summer,  
Since this is Autumn!!

**Rajanya Bishi**  
Fenn Elementary  
Grade 5

## **An Autumn Day**

The sun rises on the first day of Autumn. The birds are chirping, the sky is clear, and nature couldn't be any more beautiful. The red, orange and yellow leaves blissfully falling from the oak trees. The grass swaying in the calm breeze. Oh what could ruin this beautiful day?

It's now mid-day, and the smell in the air makes you feel relaxed. You are having so much fun playing football with your friends. The smile on your face cannot compare to the happiness within.

The sun is now setting, you and your friends are calmly watching the beautiful sunset. The fire you made crackles in the fading sunlight. The smores are delicious, and you are happier than you've ever been. But when there is a beginning, there must be an end.

The sun has set, and you are ready to go to sleep. You take a bubble bath to have just a little more fun before the end of this day. You get into your pajamas and crawl into bed. As the moonlight shines through your window, you fall asleep, and this beautiful day has come to an end.

**Cody Martz**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5

## A Single Leaf

I watch as all the other leaves around me swiftly fall from the branches as autumn turns to winter. The Oak is almost bare except for me. I hang from a tall branch, and hope today is my day. Every gust of wind that blows is another reminder that I still haven't fallen. As the days get shorter and the nights longer, I beg for a push to help me fall. I watch as dozens of surrounding leaves drift to the ground and I watch as the adults rake them into a big pile and the children jump with joy into them. How I wish I would just fall.

One stormy night, the wind and rain howl and I tighten myself, making an impenetrable shell around me. The rain pours down hard, then a huge gust of wind picks up and wraps around my Oak shaking my remaining friends, I watch as they spill to the ground. The wind swoops and I uncurl myself as much as I can hoping for the wind to catch me. But it doesn't.

I am the only leaf remaining and I no longer have the comfort of my tree as it is going dormant as time passes. One day, a small girl runs out of the school building across from me, laughing. She runs to a stroller underneath me and I feel guilty I alone cannot produce enough shade for the baby inside. Then she takes the child and holds him up facing my tree and points at me. I crispen myself and the baby laughs. "It's all alone," she says and smiles. "It's really pretty. Do you like it?!" I unfold myself and try to think why would she be smiling. I'm not on the ground for her enjoyment, but then I notice I am special and I am bringing joy to her, even though I am still clinging to my branch.

A couple more weeks pass by and I hold tall, as the girl grabs her brother every day and he points at me, smiling! I crispin myself into new shapes hoping him to notice. I'm not sure if he does. Then one particularly warm day I wait hoping to see the girl again as it was about time for her to arrive at my tree's trunk, when I feel myself twirling. Confused, I become dizzy. *What's happening is my tree being cut down?* But no, I am still but I am

*(Continued on page 10)*

*(Continued from page 9)*

not the kind of still that's hanging from a tall oak branch. No, I have fallen.

The girl comes out and looks around. She doesn't see me and she doesn't pull her baby brother out. She looks all around and I want to shout *Hello, I am here* but I cannot. A tear falls down her cheek. I can't crisper once I've fallen to let her know where I am. Then she spots me on the ground. She grabs her baby brother carries him to me and sets him on the ground. Then, I am being taken home and asked if I can stay with them forever. The mom reluctantly agrees and I am placed on a small shelf.

Sometimes I look out the window and see other leaves and one day I crumple into two pieces knowing my short life is almost over. The girl brings the boy into the room and he's gotten taller. They both kiss me and open the window. Then I fly, floating on the wind, twirling and twisting, until I am home once more.

**Megan Raklavits**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6

## The Lonely Leaf

There goes one, and another one, and another.

I watch as these very special chosen leaves fall from our tree.

I've been here for a while now, almost a year, and I'm not special.

I don't get chosen to go down to the great smelling fresh grass and get pulled from the wind to all different kinds of places.

It's been my dream ever since I was a little leafling.

I used to have some friends, but they too fell down.

I guess I'm just not the lucky one this year.

It's boring up here in the tree, just sitting and watching everything in the beautiful brown fall happen below me when I could be down there with my friends experiencing it all.

Sometimes I just feel like that one kid who never gets included in anything.

Just that one bystander who just watches the wind blow, and then the leaves swoop off of the tree gracefully.

All-day and every day.

I'm not sure why I'm still up here,

I deserve a spot on the ground

being stepped and crunched on with people's feet, tickling sometimes, I've heard.

One day; one day,

I too will fall to that ground and be like the other leaves.

**Madison Davis**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6

## Wolf

He is as fast as a flash  
gray and fierce  
but he is warm hearted and  
straightforward  
He is untamed and nervous  
also unpleasant and most extraordinary  
He is lonely and sad  
and his heart is as blue as the sky  
but the thing we know about him  
He is wisdom

**Brayden Placek**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

---

## Winter Wolf

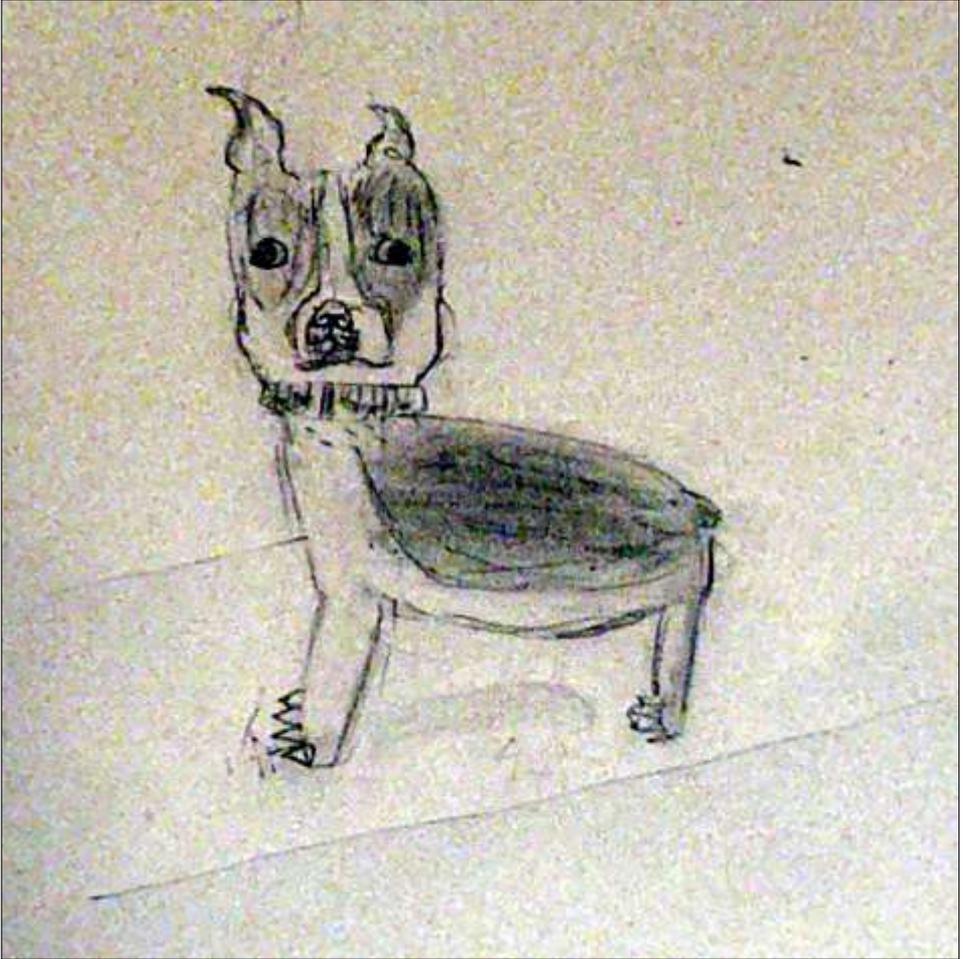
Howling, growling  
long claws, sharp teeth  
glowing eyes, thrashing tail  
gigantic paws, that flow like water  
on open land, crunching the white snow.  
hearing all, seeing all  
eyes flick left, then to right  
Then narrow, galloping on...

**Isabella Marzano**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

### **The Little Raccoon**

young, small and intelligent  
he can pick locks with his bare hands  
he will climb a tree when he is scared  
make a nest and  
keep himself warm  
with his grey, brown striped, coat  
he will wake at night and chirp to call his friends  
and raid campsites all night like bandits,  
then when dawn comes they run back to their nests  
and do it all again the next night

**Cooper Claypool**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6



**Cameron Kilpatrick**  
Sharon Elementary  
Grade 3

### **Warm Apple Pie**

Dash of cinnamon and a dash of spice  
Is all you need to make everything nice  
Pop it in the oven, and then shut it,  
But first you need an apple, then cut it  
Then some spice, maybe twice  
And the rest is up to you . . .  
CHOMP!

**Isabella Marzano**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

---

### **Time Is Time**

Oh my, oh my, how time flies by.  
Or at least that's what they say.  
That's not really how I picture my day.  
Time doesn't really just fly away.  
It takes its time and we can't control it.  
But some people say, "I can control it."  
But you know you can't so why even try.  
It's not that easy, it's not like eating pie.

**Emily Kerstetter**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

### **Poem of a Poem**

This is a poem of a poem,  
all the words might rhyme.  
You climb the words high and low,  
but you don't want to go.  
Make it a circle, make it a kite,  
make it fly above the night sky.  
Make it live, make it lie,  
whatever you want to do,  
do it tonight.  
For tonight is a nice night to be quiet,  
to snuggle up tight,  
write, write, write  
goodnight.

**Aubrey Shanklin**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## **I Am**

I am a cat lover

I am a dog lover

I am a violin player

I am a guitar player

I am a best friend

I am a goofball

I am a night owl

I am a sister

I am as silly as a cat with catnip

I am ME

**Maddy Schroll**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6

## **Life**

Life is beautiful.

Life is unfair.

Life can be short.

Life can be long.

Spend life not worrying but enjoying.

Life is a blessing.

Life should not be taken for granted.

Life can be sad.

Life can be hard.

Choose to make life adventurous and bright.

Don't hide behind shadows.

Choose to make your life shine like the sun.

Life is what you make it.

**Nora Love**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## **Blue**

Girl of kindness  
Her love is true  
She has a name  
And it is Blue  
She's not just kind  
She's halfway blind  
Blue likes to explore  
Each day she grows more  
More and more mature  
Blue adores nature  
She watches flowing water  
Turn into ice and mush  
She watches people saunter  
She watches people rush  
A lot of people argue  
Her brothers fight and fuss  
Blue's more than just a color  
She's part of all of us

**Elianna Grant**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **Breathe**

You think you aren't worth it

Breathe.

You think you should stop trying

Breathe.

You want to scream at the top of your lungs

Breathe.

You don't think you can make it to the end of the day

Breathe.

You want to bury yourself in a pile of you own sadness

Breathe.

You might take this for granted but just breath. Let your lungs fill with oxygen. Let your whole body be in your control once again.

You are strong, you are powerful, you are enough.

Breathe.

**Grace Piepho**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Laughter

Their faces are lit up.  
They're pointing their fingers.  
Their eyes are getting wet.  
They're throwing their heads back.  
They're gasping for air between cackles  
Their loud laughter in filling up the room.  
They're cackling like witches.  
They're laughing at you.

**Grace Piepho**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

## Happiness

When she walks into the room she is like the sun.  
She is always shining so bright.  
And when she smiles at you, you smile too.  
She is always happy and kind even when you  
push her buttons.  
When she sees you she says hello.  
And when she leaves she always says goodbye.  
She always compliments people.  
Even if they think the opposite.  
She is as bright as the sun and always will be.

**Hannah Tefteller**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Hope

Hope is inside all of us,

Including me, and **YOU!**

It helps us to not be afraid,

and to push through the hard times.

It helps us to light up the dark.

Hope is the key for a successful life.

It's the feeling of an expectation for something to

happen. A feeling of **TRUST.**

Hope shows you that through the battles,

through the sorrow. You can get through it, I know

**YOU** can!

Even though sometimes, it seems impossible to have hope,

it will always be there in your heart. Just close your eyes, and it

**WILL** bloom!

You can beat anything that you are put up to,

and all you need to have is a little bit of **HOPE.**

**Frida Martinez**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **Pride**

Pride,  
Something everyone should have,  
Something all should see,  
Pride is very important,  
At least to me.  
Pride can come,  
Pride can go,  
But pride will always,  
Be there with you,  
Through the hardest times.  
Through it all.  
Pride

**Emma Prew**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Words

Words can heal, they can break, they give joy and happiness.

Sometimes they feel like sticks and stones,  
words are words, they can do whatever they want to the world  
and they make up most of the world.

We say words every day, every hour, every minute, and every  
second.

The words we say are something special every day, they bring  
memories,  
they bring people together, they bring words together into one big  
community.

Sometimes, words can be annoying, sad, hurtful, joyful,  
all types of ways you can use words.

I'm using words now, creating a story full of words you read every  
day.

Words can be on anything you see,  
on walls, on bottles, on papers, on doors,  
on human skin sometimes, and on computers.

Your name is made of words.

Now who created all these fabulous words?

That I don't know yet. You may use Google which is full of words.

Words are sounds that come out of your mouth,  
words come out of your mind through your fingers  
onto your pencil or computer writing a story.

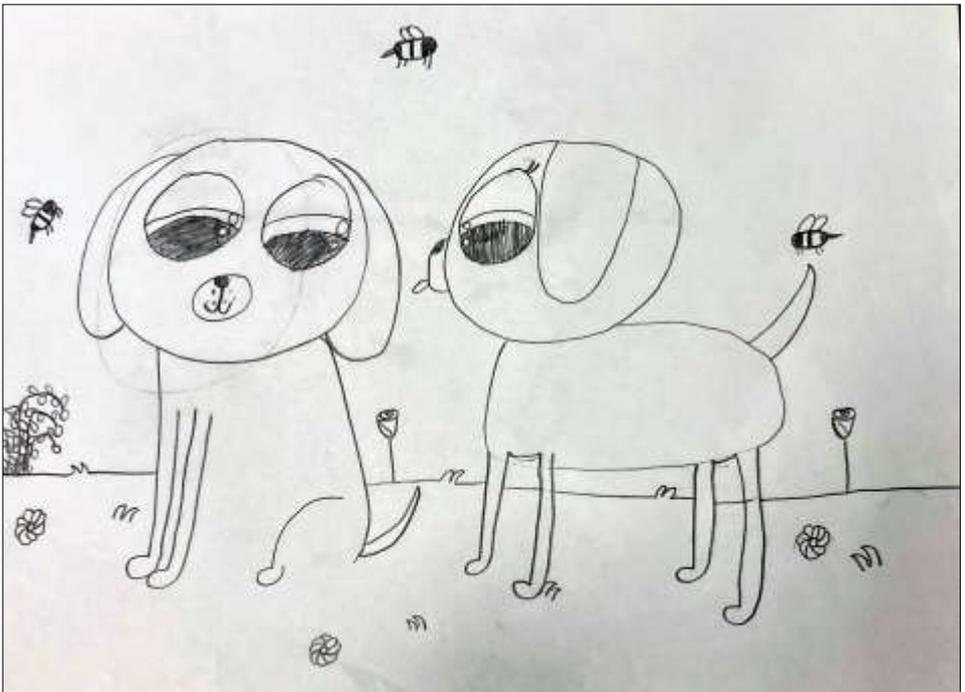
Words can be difficult to say,  
sometimes easier to say,  
the words teach us lessons and they give us education.

(Continued from page 24)

Words can do anything.  
Anything they would like to do to others,  
kind or rude, they are our rulers,  
words shall be loyal.  
Words can be anything, do anything.  
Now words can never end, but some do.  
This is the end of the story.

**Ashlynn Collins**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6

---



**Juniper Cunningham**  
Franklin Elementary  
Grade 3

**Before COVID-19**

Before COVID-19, I used to play with my friends,  
But after COVID started, that all came to an end.

I am eleven years old and I feel so tall.  
My name is Maddie and I play volleyball.

I also play soccer.  
I have my own school locker.

I love doing flips.  
I also like doing my kicks.

I loved doing crafts and art  
With my friends, but now we're apart.

I have a best friend who can be very wacky,  
But she also makes me very happy.

So you can see when COVID-19 hit,  
Me and my friends all had to split.

Losing so many things has made me so sad,  
It also has made me a little bit mad.

**Madison Stoner**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Lost in the Pages

When people look they might just see me,  
staring at the pages.

It may seem normal, but it is more than just  
some phrases.

There's a portal, a place  
where everything isn't so dreary.

To be honest, I would stay here  
year after year.

There is drama, and sadness,  
just plain madness.

There is murder, and death,  
A frightening stress.

Everything is here.

I don't think about me.

I think about them.

I think about the binding, the cover  
filled with hidden gems.

Don't know where we are going, or  
what's coming near.

Am I going to be angry?

Will the conflict draw a tear?

The characters are growing right before  
my eyes.

Some are already soaring through the

*(Continued on page 28)*

*(Continued from page 27)*

dark, cloudy skies.

A tap on the shoulder brings me back to reality,  
having to leave my book's hospitality.

**Eva Taylor**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

---

### **Quarantined**

You look outside as the world spins by,  
How long is this going to last,  
You must stay inside but do not to cry,  
Because this is going to be a blast,  
You won't have to wear a mask,  
Or sanitize a million times a day,  
You can sleep in as long as you want,  
As long as no one wakes you up,  
You don't have to wait to eat lunch,  
And you can go to the restroom whenever you want,  
Oh this is no fun,  
I rather play outside in the sun with my friends,  
When is this going to end.

**Grace Gale**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Things to Do

I'm bored mom, what do I do?

Well, there are so many things to choose!

You could sing in the school choir,

Not now, kinda tired.

You could go outside and play,

Nope there are much better ways to spend my day.

You could skate on the ice,

The kids out there are not very nice.

Well tell them to stop,

The only thing that would get them to stop is if I call a cop.

You can make fondue,

There are many other things to do.

That's it! I give up! You win!

Just go over and sit in that bin!

I'm through with you!

Next time you will find something to do!

**Nora Palumbo**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5

## Stuck

Stuck in my house,  
Little to do,  
Cold outside,  
I'm feeling blue,  
Online school,  
Happy to see my friends,  
Teachers stressed,  
Not getting dressed,  
Lazy feelings,  
At least I get rest,  
Time goes by,  
What should I do,  
Got a lot of dishes boohoo,  
Laundry too,  
Here comes the sun,  
And here comes the warm,  
New hope for fun,  
Let me get outside and run!

**Lily Haller**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

### **A Place for Us**

There's a place for us,  
beyond afar.

And all you must do,  
is follow the star.

There's a million reasons,  
to ignore my call.

But, I'll wait for you,  
past the waterfall.

The path is hard,  
the road is rough.

But, I'll meet you there,  
and that is enough.

There's a place for us,  
I know that much is true.

And till the end,  
I'll wait for you.

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Spicy

Can you handle it,  
Can you handle spice,  
How many scoville units,  
Be precise,  
Ghost pepper,  
Jalapeno,  
Carolina Reaper,  
Oh wait,  
Is that too much,  
Don't worry there is some milk here,  
You can drink it,  
But were you tough,  
I get that my rhymes, they might not be that good,  
But spice is pure,  
And spicy is good,  
If your tongue is not red,  
You should try again,  
Because spicy ain't cold,  
But it sure is bold,  
And it reigns high above ice cream,  
But you might get a bad dream,

**Olivia Evans**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Split in Two

That was the end.

I sat there crying and didn't know how much time I would spend.

Sitting there hearing them fight.

It had turned from a good to the worst night.

She said she was done.

He said that her love was like none.

Now I have had no fun

And it's not any better listening to my brother make puns.

The next day we sat in trial.

I am still in denial.

This period of time feels never ending.

Again I never knew how much time I would be spending.

Listening to my parents fight.

Would not be the worst night.

As I saw them sign the papers.

I thought of the week consisting of see you later

To my parents whose love could never have been faker.

**Emily Burkey**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Samantha Horvat**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Dad

I can dream I can play but not now, not today.

I can laugh, I can sing but right now my eyes sting.

I can flip I can swing but my mom just took off his wedding ring.

I can look, I can love but right now I think I need a hug.

I can dance, I can shake but I am so fragile right now I might break.

Here I sit, I feel alone, here I sit at his funeral home.

**Emily Burkey**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

## Flowers

I feel them brush the palm of my hand.

It tickles ever so slightly.

I smell their wonderful scent and wonder if I should take them back to the house.

I water the velvet roses.

I pick all sorts of them for an important occasion.

I went to the place I knew he would be.

And I place the flowers next to his sign, I place them right where people can see, outside the graveyard fence, I saw him wave to me

**Emily Burkey**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **The Story of My Life**

I complacently flick the ball,  
At the end of the day, I gave it my all.  
The crowd goes silent as the rubber floats,  
I get so nervous a lump forms in my throat.  
The ball approaches and I frown at the sight,  
Oh no, I cry, it doesn't have the height.  
With a bounce and a roll the ball puts on a show,  
Into the net it goes, but all too slow.  
The crowd goes wild in disbelief,  
The world is mine, I'm the chief.  
The chanting dwindles and comes to an end,  
Only to be interrupted by my affectionate friend.  
"Wake up", he says, "It's time for school",  
How could this happen, I'm so confused.

**Kyle Schmelzer**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

### **The Baseball Game**

I step up to the plate with the bat in my hands

I look up to the stars and back to the stands

I get my shoulder up and am ready to swing at anything I see

I see the pitcher winding up and I get ready to swing

Strike one the ump says

I look in the stands and try to find my family but I can't

I look back to the pitcher and the ball is already out of his hand

I take a swing . . . and I missed again

Strike two the ump yells

I take a deep breath with the bat in my hands

I step up to the plate and I think to myself I have to hit it into the stands

As the pitcher winds up I get into my stance

He pitches the ball I close my eyes then I hear a loud bang

Then I open my eyes and see the ball flying towards the stands

I then wake up with my blanket in my hands

**Collin Ely**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **Dads**

Dads are someone who catches you when you fall.

Dads are someone who cradles you when you cry.

So love your daddy in every way, love your daddy till he cries,

Love your daddy like he is yours to keep.

So don't pout,

don't boast.

Listen to this wise man God has given you.

Love him like his little princess or prince should.

Love him to the ends of the Earth and back.

**Amelia Whitman**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

### **Invisible boy**

Yesterday, upon the stair,

I met a man who wasn't there

He wasn't there again today

I wish, I wish he'd go away . . .

When I came home last night at three

The man was waiting there for me

But when I looked around the hall

I couldn't see him there at all!

Go away, go away, don't you come back anymore!

Go away, go away, and please don't slam the door . . . (slam!)

Last night I saw upon the stair

A little man who wasn't there

He wasn't there again today

Oh, how I wish he'd go away . . .

**Joey Cunningham**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **Rocket League**

The game is tied 3 to 3, and there is 5 seconds left. You collect a boost pad and start driving up the wall. You are certain to win this match. Your whole career depends on this game. Your teammate sees you driving up the wall, and they start air dribbling. You jump off the wall, ready to aerial the ball into the goal.

Your teammate passes the ball about 75 Unreal Units ahead of you. You use boost to reach the ball, and you start air dribbling. You pass the ball to the wall and you angle your car  $70^\circ$ , the ball bounces back a few Unreal Units below you. You use the very last amount of boost you have to send the ball flying straight towards your goal.

The suspense increases. The ball ends up hitting the crossbar and is heading towards the ground. You panic. Just then, your teammate comes out of nowhere and hits the ball into the goal. You won. Your career is saved. You cheer and start crying tears of joy. This, is Rocket League.

**Cody Martz**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5

## Where Legends Rise

Baseball is a great game to play,  
I could get out and do it every day.  
There is such great strategy to the game,  
No two teams play exactly the same.

Some teams hit with power and put on a show,  
Scoring at will all in a row.  
Other teams pitch great to succeed,  
Overpowering hitters with their outstanding speed.

Hitting a baseball is a wonderful thing,  
Not many people know the joy it can bring.  
It is amazing the way the bat cracks at the ball,  
Jack the ball out of the park and you can touch them all.

When you play defense, the ball may roll into your glove.  
If you flash some leather, your teammates will show you some love.  
Not every out in the field is a force play,  
You can tag somebody out and still save the day.

*(Continued on page 42)*

*(Continued from page 41)*

Baseball games are won and lost on the mound,  
Great pitchers generate power before their stride hits the ground.  
Locating your pitches is the definition of a staff ace,  
Keep pumping the strike zone and your team will end up in first  
place.

America's pastime has always been baseball.  
You play all summer long, but the real magic happens in the fall.  
Ruth, Koufax, Ripken, or Trout,  
It doesn't matter who you are, three strikes and you're out.

**Eli Shore**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

### **The Blitz**

As I lineup right in line with the wide receiver

I hear the play 24 red big

Then I know

This is my time

Under the bright lights

I am sweating

Hike

Off I go after the quarterback

As I get past

I hear blitz

They know

I must do this quick

As I buzz in between their legs

**BOOM**

The quarterback is on the ground

I did it, we **WON**

**James Laurence**

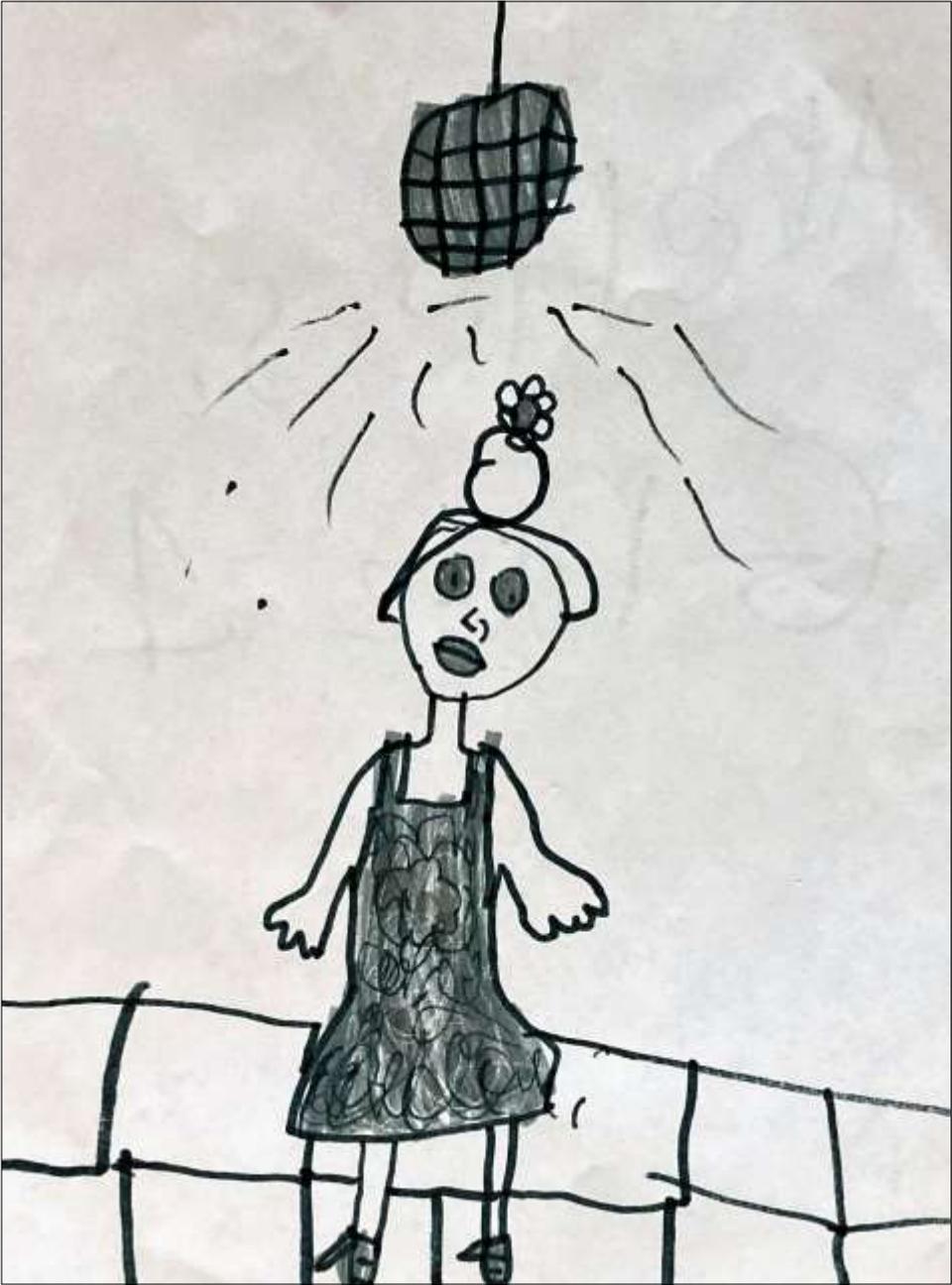
Claggett Middle

Grade 6

## Skateboards

Skateboards get rigid  
They get even get frigid  
It can have wobbly wheels  
You can have so much fun  
Once you are done you can rest in the sun  
But be careful you might break an arm  
Watch out for storms  
Because you might get wet  
And if you get wet you will regret you went outside  
Then you will have to go inside to get dried  
After you get dried you will have to hide from the rain and stay  
inside

**Wyatt Carlisle**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Averie Schmeltzer**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

## **Play Ball**

The field is ready  
The grass is mowed, dirt is raked  
Stripes line the diamond.

Ready for the game  
The umpire yells, "PLAY BALL"  
Players take their spot.

Pitcher on the mound  
Batter stepping in the box  
Ready for the pitch.

The pitch comes in fast  
"Crack" the ball flies off the bat  
It's over the fence.

The fans are cheering  
His teammates are excited  
Now next batter up.

**Brysen Hall**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## The Field

The baseball field was as brown as mud,  
as light as the surface of the sun,  
it made little dust bowls as the players' feet shuffled,  
the dugout was an old caveman's shack,  
the fence was as shiny as a crystal,  
but the field was a beautiful sight.

As night came around,  
the field lights blasted,  
shining a golden brown layer,  
the uniforms were big dirty bags,  
with soil and grass on the back,  
at the end of the field,  
the weeds tangled the fence,  
but the field was a beautiful sight.

Finally, the plates had been brushed,  
and the game had ended,  
the lights began to shut off,  
the players walked home under the pitch black sky,  
but the field was a beautiful sight.

**Trent Schirmer**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

### **The Hooper**

I bring myself toward the hoop, hearing the thump,  
and dribble of the ball,

I look ahead as the ball meets the court,  
faster and faster I go

My feet meet the edge of the paint,

I bring both hands up, and I aim for the glass,

Suddenly my ball is blocked,

The defender stands tall, keeping me from the shot,

I turn around quick, and shuffle right past him,

Then put the ball up in the hoop!

**Trent Schirmer**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## **The Shot**

The ball going down the field

Step by step

Moving past defenders

One by one

Until I reach the box

And put one on goal

Hits the post

And bounces back

My teammate heads

And scores with pride

We run to the middle

While the other team runs and hides

Until the games over

And we win with pride

**Zach Sohar**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## **The Browns**

We start off the season

Win by Win

A few loses

But off we go

Last game

We beat the steelers

Off we go to the wild card season

Pittsburg again just one more time

First snap touchdown

Man what a drive

First quarters over

28 to nothing

We held the lead the entire game

Play by play

Yards on yards

Cleveland is going to have some fame

The final seconds

On top 48-37

I can't believe the bad luck is ending

We'll see next week against the Chiefs

**Zach Sohar**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

**A-Z**

Basketball,  
Shoot, score!  
Soccer,  
Kick, Goal!  
Softball,  
Hit, Home Run!  
Things I've done  
Before

Singing,  
Do your best.  
Acting,  
Feel that character.  
Playing guitar,  
Strum the strings.  
The most fun things I've done  
By far

**Ashleigh Kannenberg**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## Keyboard

Felt the shine of the spotlight on my face,  
 And knew that everyone was counting on me.  
 I rested my fingers on my keyboard,  
 And placed my mouth closer to the mic.  
 Once I started, I couldn't stop,  
 Nothing else around me mattered.  
 My fingers danced,  
 My voice grew louder.  
 And right after I started, I was done,  
 The curtain fell over the stage like a veil.

**Ashleigh Kannenberg**  
 Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6

## No One Can Stop Me

Head sweaty, knees shaky. Score 8 to 8. 4 seconds left. Ball in hand, eyes on the target. Knees bent, elbows up, throw. Swish. 2 points. Game over. Trophy in hand, smiling eye to eye. Guess what? I didn't just beat the Red Badgers, I beat cancer.

"I feel so bad for you!" They say.

"You're so strong!" They say.

"You're a role model!" They say.

But I just nod and look down at the floor. It makes me so mad when people talk about my cancer. They don't get what it's like, and they never will. So why don't they shut their mouth. They can come to me when they get leukemia. Because I am not strong. I am not a role model. And you shouldn't feel bad for me. A lot of

*(Continued on page 53)*

*(Continued from page 52)*

people get cancer. And a lot of them live. So I will too. The kids are the worst. They feel awkward when they are around me and don't know what to say. So they don't. They don't talk to me, or even make eye contact. They just look down and shift their feet.

"Is that a wig? It looks so real!" So I just don't talk to them. They don't expect me to. I never participate in class, even though I have all A's. I just stare at the board, trying to pretend to not notice all the eyes on me. No, I take it back. Adults are the worst. They are always asking,

"Are you too cold?" Or, "Do you need a blanket?" And the worst one, "Don't let your head get cold!" Even if I am cold, I never say yes. I'm not a baby and they treat me like one. I'm 13 years old and I can get my own blanket. But the worst part about cancer, is that I can't ever do anything. I can't go anywhere alone, I have to come straight home from school, and no extra curricular activities. In other words, no basketball. Well, until now.

My palms are sweaty from clutching my basketball for too long. My back hurts from sitting on the cold metal bleachers for too long. I have been at the basketball court for over an hour. I have been sitting. Watching. Sure, I shoot hoops in my driveway, but this is not the same. What if I don't make it? What if I suck at it? I took a deep breath and stood up when I saw my coach walk in. My feet tremble when I start walking towards the big man. Every step I take is getting closer for my future. I want basketball to be my future. People say that no one can tell what their future is. But I know. I know I want to go to school with a basketball scholarship. It's my destiny. I know it.

My breath becomes heavy and I put my hand on my stomach, reminding myself to breathe slowly.

*(Continued on page 54)*

(Continued from page 53)

“Um . . .” I try to find the right words to say, but that's the only thing that comes out of my mouth. He doesn't hear me, he is coaching a team. I stand there for a while, probably for three minutes. Until finally a boy notices me. He points to me, and all the other boys stare. The coach turns around and looks down at me. Sage. The tiny bald girl, with a basketball that was about the size of me. I almost hear a small chuckle, at the fact of a small girl on an all-boys basketball team's court.

“Hi. My name is Sage. I wasn't able to do basketball last year, but I think I am ready to play again.” I say slowly and bravely so the coach takes it all in. He nods, and thinks about it.

“Well, we would be welcome to have you, but the season already started.” He sighs.

“Yeah. And she is a girl.” One boy snarls.

“She can. This is a mixed division. Boys and girls are welcome.” The coach, I learned is named Coach Steve, he told me to run sprints before I try out.

“Um, actually I already warmed up, is it ok for me to just shoot?” I look down, face red. He replied with an understanding look on his face, and a nod.

My first shot I missed. The second bounced off the backboard, into the hoop. I missed more than I made, which left tears in my eyes. *I wasn't gonna make it.* My dream wouldn't come true. Cancer, like everything else, will stop it. I can't do anything and I never will. By the time I was done, I was panting and breathing very heavily. Most of the boys laughed.

(Continued on page 55)

*(Continued from page 54)*

The next three words Steve said, made my heart stop.

“Congratulations. You made the cut.” He said other stuff about how I needed work, but he knows what I went through, and blah blah.

“You made the cut.”

“You made the team.” I felt like the wind got knocked out of me. My dream came true! I was going to be in my first basketball game since November 3rd, of last year, the day I got diagnosed with cancer. I was wrong. Cancer couldn't stop me from experiencing my dream. No one can. Once I am on the court, I am unstoppable.

**Farrah Holladay**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6

---

### **The Magic of a Door**

My days in school can get so stressful and hard that I get lost in the due date and the numbers and reading and so many things that make my head spin! But, that all stopped as soon as I found the perfect vacation place to go, and I know what all of you are probably thinking --- it's a place you drive or fly in an airplane to go, but to be honest, it is a door. Well here is the story of how I found out this place even existed.

So it was an ordinary day and like usual, I was doing my homework and I was exhausted that night. I finally got done with English, I hated it so much that my mom had to bribe me to do it. I get tutored, but what do I care.

*(Continued on page 56)*

*(Continued from page 55)*

Finally, I got done and I spun my chair around to see the kids playing outside, but then something unusual caught my eye. It was a door, a bright blue door that I was staring at. I got up and cautiously walked over to the door, examining it. As my shaky hand grabbed the silver door knob, I opened it and I was sucked into a colorful blue, pink, and white portal. As I approached the bottom, I found a haystack where I landed softly, then "thump". I looked around and I saw trees in a nice flowing blue river. Birds were chirping, but this wasn't like Earth. This place had other things like trees with patterns and birds that could talk and the river had a few animals playing in it. As I looked around puzzled, I found a billboard that said welcome to Bringlex "a world where there is no frustration, only fun".

I stood up and brushed off the hay and I looked around. Then I saw another billboard. This one said "Wayverty" town ahead. As I walked, I could see in the distance that there was a small town and small creatures. As I walked up to one, they looked at me and I looked at them.

"Hi!" I said.

They just stared at me. Then, there was a tap on my shoulder.

"Don't mind them, they are shy sometimes around new people."

I shook my head understandingly.

"Well, what brings you to the great town of Wayverty?," he asked me.

*(Continued on page 57)*

*(Continued from page 56)*

“Well, nothing much!”, I replied.

“Well, more importantly, how did you get here?” he asked me.

“ I am not sure how, I found a door and I opened it.”

He stopped me, “Oh no no no, this is not good---- that is the door of”

“The door of what?” I said eager to find out.

“Oh, I best not tell you, it is a terrible thing”.

“But I need out !” , I say in panic. “I have to get home!”

“Oh, now now, you will, but you came here for a reason”. You are stressed and you have no belief that you will do good on homework and that you only hate it, but I can help!” he said.

“How?,” I question.

“Well you see, you will need to BELIEVE that you are capable of doing it and you have to believe in yourself and have a good attitude about your work.”

“Yeah, well one problem,” I said with an attitude.

*(Continued on page 58)*

*(Continued from page 57)*

“Go on.” he said.

“Well, you're right. I don't like work and you can't help me like it. So sorry. Can you just let me go now?”

“Oh, I am afraid not, you are not leaving for a long time-----umm, what is your name?”

“Jesse,” I said with a sour look.

“And yours?”

“Professor Hovers, but you can call me Hover”.

“Look Jesse, you can't go until you are confident, that is my job here”.

“Well, you just came across your-”

He stops her. “Look, I have helped people worse than you, I will make you like school, if it is the last thing I do and I promise that you will because we all do it. It is not such a bad thing.”

He smiled at me.

I let out a sigh. “Ok I say”.

*(Continued on page 59)*

*(Continued from page 58)*

“Great golly Miss Molly! We will get started in the morning!”, he said hopping around me in joy.

As morning came around, I got up and as I opened up my door -- -- to my surprise, Hover was standing there! I jumped, in shock!

“Morning!”, he said, “Let's get started!”

“Ok”! First off, you need to change your attitude from bad to good, so let's start,” he told me.

“Sure,” I said, with no hope.

“Alright,” he said, “So let's start with scenarios. Let's say your teacher gives you a test. How are you going to act?”

“Ummmmmm. I would sit there and . . .”

“Well sorta,” Hover said with a smile of hope, or maybe it was fear. It was hard to tell.

“OH! I got it!” I said. “I would go in with a bad, NO! With a good attitude!” I corrected myself.

“You're getting it!”, he said.

“And I should go into it with a good attitude and try my best”.

*(Continued on page 60)*

*(Continued from page 59)*

“Spot on!” Hover said to me. “Should we do some more to practice?”

Jesse thinks. “No, I have a good attitude and I am ready to go try my best from now on, and I am going to stay positive in all classes! Thanks Professor!” as she laughs and so does Hover.

“Well!” he motioned over to the blue door that I came through.

“Well!” I said. “I guess this is goodbye, thank you for changing my attitude.”

“You’re welcome,” he said with a big smile.

I flew back to my room and I landed with a “thump” on my bed. I looked back over to where the blue door was, it had disappeared, but a note was on the wall.

It read:

“You can do it. I know you can, just think of all the fun we had.”  
-HOVER.

“I can!” I whispered to myself. I got back to my work, ready to be focused and do great and most importantly, have a good attitude and try my best!

**Jillian Kollar**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **The Pricker Bush See**

### **Part I: The Pricker Bush**

Once upon a time, there was a single pricker bush standing outside an inn. No one paid any attention to the Pricker Bush, for it was bland and not special. Instead, they marveled at the Lily that was planted right beside the Pricker Bush. The Pricker Bush knew he was not special, but next to the beautiful Lilly, he looked hideous and ugly. But one of his Seeds, did not want a life of just being a seed; another part of the Pricker Bush. All he ever wanted to be was his own Pricker Bush.

So one day, he fell from the Pricker Bush. He waited hours on end for something to come and pick him up, even a gust of wind would be suitable. But the wind was still that day. And the next day. And no one came down that dirt path, so no shoes came to pick him up.

One day, a beautiful blue jay perched on the Pricker Bush. It plucked another Seed off and flew away with it. Then, the Fallen Pricker Bush Seed became insanely jealous. He started screaming and yelling to get attention, but of course his childish actions had no reward.

A few weeks later, an orange tabby cat came near. The Fallen Pricker Bush Seed nearly jumped when he saw the stray cat coming his way. The cat laid down on top of the Pricker Bush Seed and rolled around. When the Cat got up, the Pricker Bush Seed was clung to the cat's fur, and on his way to become his own bush.

*(Continued on page 62)*

*(Continued from page 61)*

## Part II: Growth

The Pricker Bush Seed had been clung to that cat for months now. But he could not uncling himself, and he began to regret his selfish actions. But alas, he finally fell off and landed near a Rose Sprout.

We waited for the forces of nature to act upon him, but years pass and he somehow remain above the soil. He lay there, shriveled and dying. He had watched for years now, as the Rose Sprout turned into a gorgeous blood red Rose.

He watched as a Boy gently plucked the Rose from the ground and approached a Girl. He handed it to the Girl, and the two humans walked away, hand-in-hand. The Rose had served her purpose, but would the Pricker Bush Seed ever do so? He began to think of his brother and sister seeds, probably bushes by now with their own seeds, while he lay here, dying, with no purpose nor honor. If only he had waited and acted with better character.

Then a light shone brightly from above.

“Has thee learnt thy mistakes?” said a soft, melodic voice. A lady flew down from the clouds. She has soft green skin and long brown hair. Her amber eyes shone nearly as bright as the sun as her bare feet landed on the soft soil.

“Oh, Mother Nature!” The Pricker Bush Seed cried out. “Forgive me! I know what I have done and I beg for your forgiveness and mercy.”

“I will give you so,” Nature said, nodding. “But men are coming. We shall do it quickly.” And with a simple tap, the Pricker Bush Seed sunk into the soil. He grew into a Mighty Pricker Bush. When the men arrived they bowed before the ever growing bush, believing it to be a gift from above.

*(Continued on page 63)*

*(Continued from page 62)*

### Part III: Death & Legacy

The Mighty Pricker Bush became a holy sight. Everyone wanted to be there. Some believed that if you took a seed from him, and planted it, and took good care of it, you would be rewarded with eternal good luck. Many also rumored that if you pricked a drop of blood, and no more, from your left pinky finger using one of his thorns, you would become immortal and immune to pain, disease and injury.

One cold, winter day, a hundred years later, he lay there, bent over, and shriveled and browning. His children cried out to him, begging for him to not be consumed by death.

“What is so bad about death?” He asked his children.

“It’s the opposite of life!” They cried out.

“No,” He laughed. “It is simply a part of it, a stage of life. Not the opposite.”

“Either way, death is terrible!” They cried out once more. “Please, do not leave us! Earth has never been so at-peace before!”

He then swore on the rivers and the rocks, that he wouldn’t leave. He never would. He couldn’t if he wanted to. His children began to ask what he meant, but then a bright ball of light appeared above him. It spoke to them, saying, “Do not have fear. It is only I, your Father, the Mighty Pricker Bush, guardian and protector of Earth. Take care, now. I will always be with you, guarding my body, the Heart of Earth.”

His children then asked what would happen if his body was destroyed. He replied, saying, “Earth would crumple. Fall into darkness. For eternity. Help me protect my body. It will bring light and hope to humans, animals and plants alike.”

*(Continued on page 64)*

*(Continued from page 63)*

His children agreed to guard the heart with their lives. The ball of light then floated, up, up and up, until it was out of sight.

His children used the power deep within them granted by their father to make a thick forest, filled with carnivorous and poisonous plants, along with thorny vines, so no animal, human or plant could come and destroy the body.

His children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and all of his descendants still guard his body today, protecting it with their lives.

**Abigail Lipscomb**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Servant of The Painter's

As the little brush runs along,

setting refined lines on the canvas,

flaws and blunders plastered along as the brush skipped beside it.

It stumbled on its bristles, losing control.

The brush riddled colors, envying other brushes,

but the brush had no hold on itself as it watched itself advance.

The brush settled down, letting itself droop.

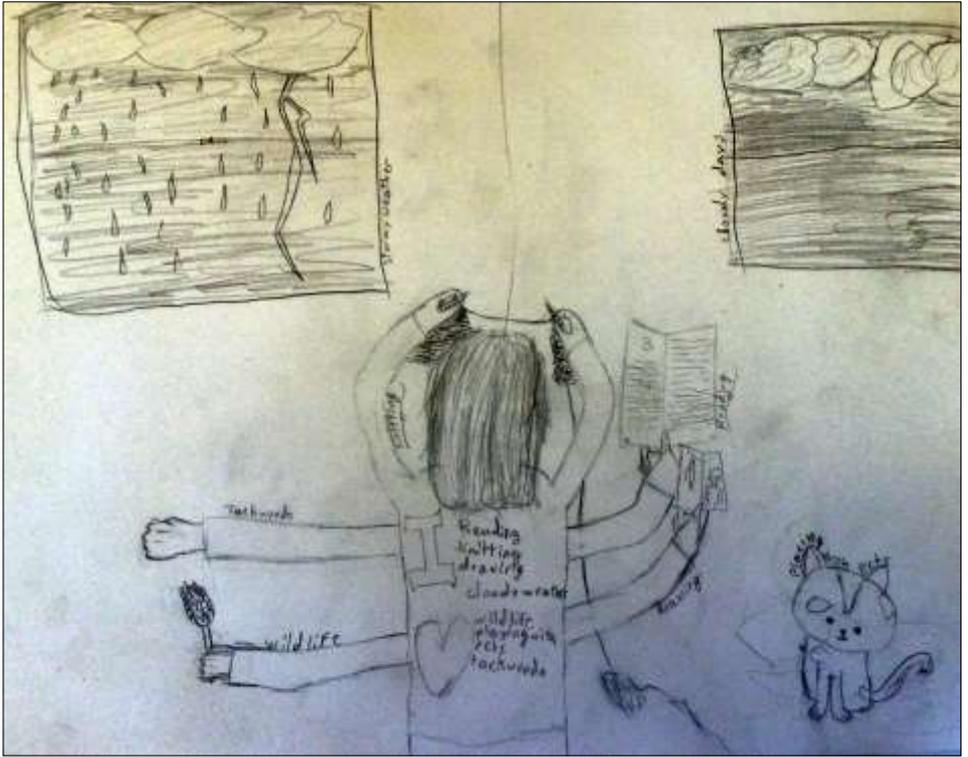
The brush lay down beside the colorful lines.

No longer did the brush riddle, no longer did it try;

for this brush did its work, and pride consumed it inside.

The brush's heart began to swell as cosmic brushes took its place,

as this brush was no longer worth its master's time.



**Adelle Harris**  
Hinckley Elementary  
Grade 5

**Scribble Scribble**

Scribble scribble, look it's a squirrel

Scribble scribble, it will end up a mural

Scribble scribble, it looks like a tree

Scribble scribble, you might disagree

Scribble scribble, it's hurting my wrist

Scribble scribble, but I can't resist

Scribble scribble, the page is filling up

Scribble scribble, but that won't interrupt

Scribble scribble, I'll stop I swear

Scribble scribble, things are flying everywhere

Scribble scribble, it's all just for fun

Scribble scribble, I'm almost done

*(Continued on page 68)*

*(Continued from page 67)*

Scribble scribble, what do you think

Scribble scribble, it's a rat in a sink

**Jay Kerstetter**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

### **The Magic of Books**

Books are magical, They can take you to so many  
places,

The dance floor, dancing with your hands in the air  
like you just don't care,

The track, beating the competition by 6 paces

The baseball field, after you smacked a home run  
and jogging the bases,

The quidditch field, soaring through the air,

The orthodontist, scared to get braces,

The football field, mad the other team isn't playing  
fair,

Magical, magical books, taking you to so many  
places

**Brandon Ball**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Keeper of Words

I started in nature  
Surrounded by friends  
We grew up together  
Seemingly 'till the end

One day some men  
Who seemed really bad  
Pulled me away  
They must have been mad!

I was carried off  
To a terrible place  
Where others like me  
Met awful fates

But would you believe it?  
I am right here!  
I keep these words  
And you read them clear

Now you know my story  
And this is the end  
I hope you pick me up  
And read me again!

## The Noise

I hate the noise!

I hate the noise!

My mother's mad, a screaming fit

My brother yells and squirts out spit

My father's always on the phone

My cat is breaking garden gnomes

My sister's friends, tweedle dee and dum, think making noise is  
oh such fun

Now I go to boarding school, but boy oh boy it's a doozy do

The bell's too loud, I think I'm deaf

My classmates talk throughout the test

My teacher like to snip and tease

Don't get me started on play groundee's

Now I work in an office, boy, wish I could say it brought me joy

The clicking and clacking the keyboard keys

I'll never stand my employees

The pranks, the jokes, the coffee hour

Every day needs a long hot shower

And the paperwork

*(Continued on page 71)*

*(Continued from page 70)*

It's this this this!

People are shouting my name name name!

The shredders, the fillers, the humming of it all

I don't even want to talk about all the phone calls

Now I have a wife, some kids, a family, all I wish is that they  
leave me be!

I wish that I could say I had it all under control

But really it's so loud we had to hire babysitter patrol

The kids are always crying

My wife is mad at me

And all of them complain over the big TV

My oldest cranks it up, and plays his music tunes

My youngest wants a pony, and a bomb that goes KA-BOOM!

Now I'm old, and in a retirement home, finally silence! . . . But  
now I feel I'm all alone.

I never thought I'd say this, but I hate this quiet so

Nobody ever talks to me, they know how it will go

I always look out window, though I can't hear the birds

Or people on the sidewalk, talking at the curbs

*(Continued on page 72)*

*(Continued from page 71)*

And I miss my family, my school and my work

And I wish I could remember, the way the world would sound

The best that I can do

Is be creative now.

I miss the noise . . .

I miss the noise . . .

**Reese McQuaid**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

### **My Last and Only Entry**

April 14th, 1941

This is my first and probably my last entry in this notebook forever.

I am dreading tomorrow. I don't want it to come. I wish it never will. I wish that the whole world will just end at 11:59 p.m. tonight. Then everything will be fine. I am being taken away tomorrow by the Nazi's to a concentration camp while my family is in hiding. They left me here while I was out buying food for supper when I came home to see a note on the cupboard saying that my mom, my dad, and my little brother William went into hiding without me. They weren't going to tell me where they were in case the letter was found. I tried to shrug it off that night, but the fact that they just decided to leave me to be taken away kept bothering me. And now that I got a notice saying I had one week until being taken away, was dreadful. My family just left me here, while they saved themselves. Have they been planning this for a while? Had they purposely sent me out for food just so they could

*(Continued on page 73)*

*(Continued from page 72)*

climb into their hiding spot? It's like they were waiting for me to be taken away. Like they just turned their backs on me and walked away. I have nothing else to do except wait. Wait for the time to come. For the soldiers to just burst through my door and take me to Auschwitz, the worst concentration camp in Germany. What will I do? In less than 12 hours my life will be over. I will have no purpose in the world anymore. I will just be a Jew, pacing the floors of my new home, with others just like me.

It's much later now, and I cannot fall asleep and it's obvious why. There is just anger, sadness, misery, built up inside me, like a wall that is not ever going to let any happiness break the wall and enter my body. My family, my life, everything I ever had will be gone once I am taken away. I just have one wish. One wish that maybe, possibly someone could grant in future times. I hope that someone finds this letter, someone who will take care of it, once this is over. A letter that will be shared after my time is up. It's finally coming, the dreadful day waiting for me just before my eyes. Goodbye world.

**Madison Davis**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6

## The Legend of the Screaming Children

There was a family going on a nice getaway in the woods at a cabin. There was a mom, a dad, and two kids. They were supposed to spend two weeks there, but something happened that made their stay shorter than they had planned.

They had driven for hours to get to the cabin. When they finally arrived, the kids ran around and played tag through the trees. The parents were unloading the bags and looking around the house. The first night they were there, Alyson (the youngest child) woke up because she heard someone pounding on her bedroom door. Her parents told her that they didn't hear anything and to go back to bed. Alyson just couldn't shake the feeling someone was there.

The next morning Jacob (the oldest child) woke up to find Alyson in his bed. He woke her up and she woke up their parents. They all woke up and had a delicious breakfast to start the morning. That day they went fishing. Alyson didn't know how to fish, so her dad had to show her the ropes. They fished for hours and caught a few fish to have for dinner. The day came to an end and they had to go to bed. Alyson still didn't want to go to sleep because of her previous night. She finally went to bed. Jacob woke up to the same pounding that Alyson heard. He told his parents and they told him what they told Alyson, go back to bed. So Jacob went back to bed.

The next morning the parents woke up the kids. When they went to wake Jacob they saw a note written on the wall that read "Leave Now And You Won't Get Hurt". They called the local police. When they arrived they searched the area and they couldn't find anything. The parents were shocked at this. So they went into town and got some food. Afterwards they went back to the cabin and they went to bed.

This time the parents heard the pounding. They went to get the kids up and call the police. When they went into their kids room they didn't find them. They called the police, the police searched the whole woods and they came back with bad news,

*(Continued from page 74)*

there was no sign of the children. The police told them to sleep on it. They did and they woke up to screaming that sounded like their kids. They grabbed flashlights and called the police again. The parents searched around all night and when the police got there, they couldn't find the parents or the kids.

As legend has it the kids still roam the woods screaming for their parents.

**Brooke Maynard**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

### **Walking on Water**

There is a girl named Lilly. She always hated the ocean. It was too scary to her and too cold she just had a feeling that she just hates the ocean. She loves staying inside for many reasons, there were no bugs, she could be warm or cold, and it was way more comfortable and safe in her house. Lilly always stayed inside and she just felt safe.

But one day her parents said right to her face very seriously, "You're going outside right now we don't need an excuse go now!" She was so scared she had never even wanted to go outside she told her parents, "But I hate it outside it's scary and cold." But her parents did not accept that excuse as they said "Well you're going if you like it or not, plus it's one of the hottest days so far this year." Lilly said "Fine" and got dressed out of her pajamas as she muttered to herself while changing that she "hates her life". When she was done she brushed her long, curly, dirty blonde hair. She went out of her room to eat lunch before they went outside, she asked her parents for some leftover chicken. When she got done eating she said to her parents "ok... I'm ready to go outside". As Lilly opened the door with fear she stepped outside, saying to herself that it's all gonna be ok. She

*(Continued on page 76)*

*(Continued from page 75)*

felt the sun hit her on her face, felt the small breeze that went on and on. She started to feel comfortable as she jumped around and was... happy? She did not expect it. She was confused but happy. They went on a walk, her hair flowing through the air in a small light breeze, they walked right along the ocean and she was scared. "AHHH!" she said as she heard splashes in the water.

They finally got home but she said to her parents, "But I want to stay out here." Lilly's parents knew that when they finally got her outside she would love it and not want to come in. It was almost night time, but the sun was just about to start setting when her parents said to her "If you want to go outside you can walk Poppy." Poppy was their dog, a little Corgi. Lilly said, "Eh can I just go on a walk by myself," they said "sure". She went outside and walked along the open ocean. She saw someone who had a dog who looked super angry, she got super scared the dog pulled and chewed as hard as he could to get off of his leash and he finally bit his way through it. He ran after her, but she thought for a second while running "wait some dogs hate water, so if I could find water that would be nice". She saw the ocean and turned toward it. She was very frightened. She tried running in it but something happened . . . ? She was not in the ocean but she was on the ocean? She was so scared she did not know at all what was happening. She tried putting her hand in the water but no. She thought in her mind and said to herself "Make it so I can put my hand in the water" and it worked. She saw that the dog had left and run home.

Lilly told her parents that she did something, they got worried and asked "Oh my gosh what happened?" Lilly said, "I walked on water . . .". Her parents looked confused, but did not believe her, they thought she had lied to them. Her parents said, "Tomorrow we are going swimming at the beach." Lilly responded with a quick nod. Lilly had just woken up and she

*(Continued on page 77)*

*(Continued from page 76)*

was nervous to show her parents that she could walk on water. As they got to the beach Lilly got ready, she said to her mom and dad, "Ok mom and dad watch!" She walked to the water, but she did not walk on it but she walked through it. "We are so disappointed in you. Why would you ever lie to us?" said her parents. "but I . . ." said Lilly, but then Lilly said, "Wait, watch." She thought of reasons that she was not able to walk on water again and realized that she had to say in her mind "make it so I can put my hand in the water," and it worked! Her mom and dad were speechless; they did not know what was happening.

The next day Lilly woke up to her parents saying, "Get up darling we are taking you to a place to find out what happened yesterday at the beach." Lilly responded with a quick "Ok." When they got to the place a woman named Mrs. Low took her inside. When they got in Mrs. Low said, "So I heard that you walked on water, how did you do it?" Lilly responded, "I . . . I don't know." Mrs. Low then asked, "When did you find out that you could walk on water?" "Well I was taking a walk alone, and a furious dog got off of his leash, and I could only go to the ocean." Mrs. Low decided that she had to give up; she did not know what happened. Lilly and her parents went down to the beach again so they could see her walk on water again. Lilly lived on helping people from shark attacks, drowning, and any other harm from the ocean. She knew that outside could be very dangerous but she faced her fears and did it. Stories were told about her for years to come. Most of them about her saving people. She ended up living her life as a very adventurous person. Who would have ever guessed?

**Ava Reese**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## The Homeless Man Who Won the Lottery

Have you ever heard of the story, *The Homeless Man who Won the Lottery*? It all started on a normal day in Cleveland, Ohio. Or so you may think.

Years ago, there was a homeless man in the city of Cleveland, who lived under *Bob Hope Bridge*. He stayed in a box he had found on the streets a couple of years ago. Near the bridge, there was a store called *The West Side Market*. Every day, The Homeless Man would walk to the market, and get water from the fountains by the restrooms, and food from the dumpsters behind the store. Although this may sound disgusting, but if there was a half-eaten apple, The Homeless Man would remove the eaten part, so that he would have the rest of the apple to eat.

One day, as The Homeless Man was walking up to *The West Side Market*, as he noticed a sign on the door. It read:

**Closed**

**Under Construction**

**(Could take up to a week.)**

Knowing that the market was closed due to construction, The Homeless Man gathered as much food, and water as he could, and stored it in his box.

A week later, The Homeless Man walked back to the market, and saw that it was still under construction. He started to worry, knowing that he was out of food, and water. That afternoon, The Homeless Man went for a walk in the park. It was a beautiful park, with picnic tables scattered around, and food trucks along the sidewalk. As The Homeless Man was walking, he realized that he was beginning to get very hungry. So, he decided to take a moment and pray.

*(Continued on page 79)*

*(Continued from page 78)*

The Homeless Man prayed, and asked for God to help him get food. After he prayed, he noticed a green corner of something on a picnic table, covered with leaves. Suddenly, the leaves started to blow, and to his surprise, The Homeless Man saw that the green thing was a dollar bill. He went to one of the food trucks, and was going to get a hot dog, with all the toppings, BBQ chips, and some buttermilk. As The Homeless Man was about to order his food, he saw a sign, on the window of a small shop. That read:

**LOTTERY TICKETS**

**\$1 EACH**

The Homeless Man decided to buy a lottery ticket instead. Hours later, the numbers for the winning lottery ticket were put up. The Homeless Man was sitting on a bench across from the lottery ticket shop, watching the numbers, and praying to win. Once the last number went up, he was shocked. He sat there for a moment, to recheck his numbers. Then, The Homeless Man sprang from the bench.

“I won the lottery! I won the lottery,” he shouted.

As he rushed to the lottery ticket shop, many people started following him, asking,

“Hey! Do you remember me?”

“Homeless Man, do you remember me?”

*(Continued on page 80)*

*(Continued from page 79)*

“I said hi to you that one time, remember me?”

All of them were trying to see if he would share his money with them.

The Homeless Man ignored them, as he went up to the cashier showing him the winning ticket.

“Congratulations. I see you have won a thousand dollars,” The cashier said, “But I ain't got that kind of money. You'll have to wait till Sunday, to claim your reward. “

The Homeless Man stood there puzzled. The crowd became silent. The Homeless Man looks down at his ticket. Then looked at the cashier, and asks him, “You ain't got two dollars?”

The cashier had a blank look on his face, as he handed The Homeless Man the two dollars. The crowd was in disbelief. They started mumbling things such as,

“Oh my gosh”

“Why Homeless Man, why?”

“Ah jeez, Homeless Man”

The Homeless Man walked out of the shop happier than ever, knowing that he had just been able to double his money. After a short walk in the park, he went to get a hot dog with all the toppings, BBQ chips, and some buttermilk.

“Okay, that will be three dollars,” said the worker at the food truck.

“Well, I only have two dollars,” The Homeless Man replied.

“If you only have two dollars, then you are going to have to put an item back,” the worker said.

*(Continued on page 81)*

(Continued from page 80)

The Homeless Man put back the BBQ chips, ate his hot dog, and drank his buttermilk. On his way back to the bridge, The Homeless Man saw a black corner of something on a picnic table, covered in leaves. The wind started blowing, and there on the table was a brand new, family size bag of BBQ chips. He picked up the bag of chips, and continued to walk back to the bridge.

Once he got back, he opened the chips, ate some, and saved the rest for another time. The next day, *The West Side Market* had opened back up, and everything went back to normal for The Homeless Man.

**Isabelle Krakowski**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

## **The Beginning of the Journey**

Holland is the worst thing that ever happened to me. We lived in small, higgly-piggly, wooden houses with dirt floors. I've been there ever since I was born. It's like I was the supreme lord of sheer, terrible *luck*. Oh. Hold up. Sorry, I haven't introduced myself yet.

My name's Wesley Sharp. I'm ten. My mom moved to Holland the year before I was born. Most people that have met me probably would have described me as "a ten year-old skinny twig with hair like he just woke up and quite enough smarts to knock someone unconscious."

I am about to set off on a journey, drum-roll please . . . to the New World! But right now, I'm stuck in Holland with my mother. There have been SOOO many delays, like, delayed for months. Months on end. That's how long I have been waiting to go to the New World. And believe me, it *stinks*.

(Continued on page 82)

(Continued from page 81)

“Wes! You’ve got to pack!” yelled my Mother from the room next door. She can get shouty sometimes. My mother was a slim woman, on the shorter side, with smooth, thick hair that looked just naturally perfect

“I know, Mother,” I called back. “Hang on. I’ve got to pack my tunic.” It wasn’t that hard to pack, considering I only have to pack one pair of clothes and put it in a small, acadia wood crate, along with my mother’s clothes (also only one pair) and food. “Who’s paying for the supplies and . . . ” I paused, thinking. “the other things?”

“The fishing company is paying for all the ‘other things’ that we need.”

“Is it safe to assume that there’s a catch and we have to give the guy, like, a thousand fish or something ridiculous like that?”

“Yeah, when we get there, we have to send half of our animal skins.”

Trying to change the topic, I asked “What ship are we going on?” In the universe of sailing, there are ships so good that it seems like they came from heaven, and there are ships that are so cheap that even the poorest can afford them.

“Sometimes I wonder why you ask so many questions. But, to answer your question, we’re going on the *Speedwell*.” Phew! I thought we were going to the New World on a cheap wooden plank. The *Speedwell* was a pretty decent ship, apart from the fact that it was created in 1577.

Oh, darn. I forgot to tell you that it’s 1620. Just sayin’. That makes the *Speedwell* 43 years old. That’s a lot of time for wood to rot away from the inside without anyone knowing. But I doubt that we’re going to sink or be eaten by a huge monster octopus or something stupid like that.

(Continued on page 83)

*(Continued from page 82)*

“When are we leaving?” I asked.

“About nine o’clock sharp tomorrow morning.”

Holy mother of barnacle-encrusted boat hulls! I didn’t expect we were gonna leave this SOON! Come to think of it, we still needed to pack that extra salted cod!

-|-|-|-|-|-|-|-

I had one of the worst sleeps I had ever had (which is saying something, because we don’t have stockings and our living area has fleas), partially because it was the most excited I’ve ever been, and because of our friends, the fleas.

I woke up the day after feeling as if I’d eaten a nest of snakes for dinner last night. I groggily put on my clothes and walked slowly over to the eating area.

“Last night I got twenty-seven flea bites,” I said to my mom as I sat down and found a nice bowl of brown bean soup to eat.

“That’s nothing compared to my four-hundred and eighty-six,” said my mom.

“Holy barnacles of heaven! Four-hundred and eighty-six?” My mom opened her mouth to answer but before she could, someone out in the street yelled “SPEEDWELL BOARDING IN ONE MINUTE!”

It was time.

There was a stampede in the streets as everyone hustled forward to board the boat. Small fights broke out, everyone wanting to board the boat first. It was pandemonium out in the streets of Holland. Something about the utter *eagerness* of everyone struck me as unnerving.

*(Continued on page 84)*

(Continued from page 83)

One time when there was free duck meat in the market, everyone wanted it. I knew that. But there still wasn't a stampede to get to it.

"HAAAAALLT!" yelled the captain of the ship, who was standing at the front of the ramp onto the boat. There was sudden awkward silence as most people.

"One time when there was free duck meat in the market, everyone wanted it. I knew that. But there still wasn't a stampede to get to it.

"HAAAAALLT!" yelled the captain of the ship, who was standing at the front of the ramp onto the boat. There was sudden awkward silence as most people stopped what they were doing. That is, *most* people. There were still punches being thrown, along with barrels of bread and other foods (See what I did there?). "I SAID HALT, YOU NUMBSKULLS!"

Now *everyone* was still and quiet.

"NOW, THAT YOU ALL ARE LISTENING," said the captain. Ugh, I keep forgetting to describe things to you, reader. The captain was tall and muscular, looked like he was thirty-six, probably weighed about 16 stone, and thought that anything below top volume was too quiet. "GET INTO SINGLE FILE LINE. NOW, YOU LITTLE SEA SHRIMPS IN SKIRTS!" the captain added as he saw that people were slowly grumbling into a line.

When we boarded, I wasn't so sure that this was going to end well when I felt that this was the craziest thing of my life.

**Aaron Pyle**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5

## The Door to My Mind

My mind is trapped with thoughts. It's filled. Bad thoughts, good thoughts, and thoughts I didn't even know existed. But I can't get hold of them. They are trapped behind the door. But I never imagined what good the secrets behind the door can do.

I keep it locked for good reasons, I always tell my parents. But they just tell me I am too scared to open it. And to be honest, I am. And I know exactly why.

January 23rd. The day I lost my very best friend. It was a crazy idea that made him go away. I pushed him too much, too far. I thought he could handle it. But I was wrong. I hurt him. I made him go away forever. I made him lock his door and hide. He never spoke to me again. I never opened my mind again to new ideas.

But one day I had a sudden urge to open the door. It was the middle of the night, exactly 3:30 AM. *No!* I thought. I can't do it. I can't hurt the people I love any more. I can't take the chance. So I didn't. I hid the door away forever. I burned the door, so no one can ever use it again.

But the truth? The only person that door ever hurt, was me. I never opened the door. And that caused me pain. I was never happy again, never creative. Until one day, my friend came into my dream. I heard laughter and it was him. I can pick him from any crowd. My friend started to run. He was running away, again. This time, I wouldn't lose him. I started running. Faster and faster, until he stopped, looked me in the eyes, turned away, and ran through a door. My door. The door that would lead to all my thoughts and feelings, and ideas. The door that I hid away forever. The door locked behind him. I woke up, drowned in sweat.

*(Continued on page 86)*

*(Continued from page 85)*

And there I laid for hours, my eyes open, wondering, hoping, yet dreading, but I did in fact, find the key. I took a deep breath, and opened the door. I couldn't believe it. All my memories came back, good and bad. But deep in my brain, I found what I have been looking for, the thing He tried to show me in my dream. And, sitting there, in the way back of my brain, was an idea. An idea that all of a sudden made sense. I took that idea, I held on to it, hoping and begging, that with that idea, I will see my dear friend, once again.

**Farrah Holladay**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6

---

### **The Dream**

Sarah Beck came walking back from school and couldn't stop thinking about that C she got on her test, "How could she have missed 7 questions and what was she going to tell her parents", she said to herself. She had never gotten a C before. Once she got home she ran up to her room and closed the door.

A few minutes later her mom came in and asked "Is everything okay?" Sarah didn't answer, she knew her mom would just ask what was wrong and Sarah didn't want to answer that question. She decided just to try and go to bed. All of a sudden Sarah was lying down, and she was the most comfortable she had ever been.

Sarah sat up and realized she was on a marshmallow and there were big pieces of candy everywhere. Then a voice said "Hi!"

Sarah screamed. It was a cricket but its' legs were suckers. Sarah was very startled and asked, "Hi, um where am I?"

The cricket answered "Candy Land, I'm Jimmy and I have a question for you."

*(Continued on page 87)*

*(Continued from page 86)*

“Fine, but I get to ask mine first, I’m dreaming right?”

Again the cricket answered” Yes, but Candy Land is a real place. Only kids who have the most passionate hearts can come here when they dream.

“Oh and what's your name?” asked the cricket.

Sarah replied” Sarah.”

“Okay Sarah, Can you do us the biggest favor? A long time ago this evil red vine put all the power of Candy Land into the king’s staff, and we need it or Candy Land will be destroyed. But here’s the catch, only human hands can touch it, so will you retrieve it for us?”

“Why can’t another human get it?”

“Because you are the first kid to come here in 25 years.”

“Okay fine, but then I have to leave, I have to talk to my parents. Where is the staff?”

“Up there, on that mountain” Jimmy answered. She looked and it was a big red and white swirly lollipop.

Sarah asked, “How do I leave?” Sarah wondered.

“The king has to let you, but you have to get the staff. Oh, are you afraid of heights? It’s okay there are stairs up and a slide down.”

So Sarah started to run towards the mountain, she ran up the stairs until she got up to the top, she grabbed the staff and slid down the slide (never looking down). Sarah walked to the castle and handed the king his staff and turned around and Jimmy was right there. The king was very thankful.

Then the king said “Something good will happen to you because of your kindness.”

*(Continued on page 88)*

*(Continued from page 87)*

All at once Sarah woke up, got ready, and went to school. Then her teacher asked her if she would want to retake the science test, Sarah was thrilled. She remembered being in Candy Land and thought about what the king said. That afternoon her teacher called her up to her desk to tell her she got an A. Her teacher also gave her a lollipop that looked exactly like the king's staff, and she couldn't stop thinking that her own teacher could have been to Candy Land.

**Kate Shearer**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

---

### **Case of: Sherlock Combs**

Sherlock Combs owned a very nice barbershop in the middle of a brightly colored and bustling city. In his free time, he loved solving mysteries with his pet monkey, Brushette. He also enjoyed doing escape rooms and reading all sorts of mystery books. He was a great detective.

He lived with Brushette in a small two-story house filled to the brim with books. Every day he opened the barbershop with Brushette on his shoulders. In the evening they would go on a small adventure around the city before returning home to read. He often invented crimes and mysteries that he and Brushette would have to solve before it's too late.

One day, a bad guy named Balder Bob, who just happened to be bald, decided he should be the evilest villain there ever was. Balder Bob lived in an underground house filled with My Little Pony and Hello Kitty objects. He slept in a bed with a coolish looking tent around it that was filled with stuffed animals. Every day Balder Bob would despise people with hair. Because of his jealousy over people with hair, he thought of an evil

*(Continued on page 89)*

*(Continued from page 88)*

scheme that would make everyone bald. The worst part of his plan was that there wouldn't be any hair left for Sherlock to cut and we would have to close his business.

Sherlock Combs had heard of Balder Bob's plan to make everyone in the world go bald. Sherlock spent so much time with Brushette breaking out of escape rooms and solving mysteries he thought that he could maybe stop Balder Bob. It couldn't be that different, right? He knew he and his awesome sidekick had to do something before it was too late.

Sherlock and Brushette traveled around the city offering their autograph to anyone with amazing hair that would help them put a stop to this fiend. They found 25 people that were happy to help them, and then went back to the shop. Shortly after they returned, Balder Bob walked into the barbershop.

"Sherlock Combs and creepy monkey," he boomed! "I will take all of this lovely hair away from these people!

Ahahahahahahahahahahahahaha!" Balder Bob chased after a man with a huge afro. "Give me that hair now," he growled!

Sherlock Combs had to stop Balder Bob and had to stop him quickly. He pointed at Balder Bob, Brushette dashed at him and swiftly placed something on his head. Balder Bob caught a glimpse of his reflection in the mirrors lining the walls.

"Ooh! I love it!" He stopped to admire the Twilight Sparkles (one of the most popular My Little Pony characters) wig Brushette gave him. While Balder Bob was distracted, Sherlock tied Balder Bob up with a thick rope, high fived Brushette, and turned away to call the police. But, when he looked back the villain was gone.

Balder Bob was sitting on a wooden bench in the bus station. He was waiting for a ride when all of a sudden he had an idea. In a few days, his plan started coming together, and he was loving it!

*(Continued on page 90)*

(Continued from page 89)

“Ok so, I open an ice cream truck called Magic Like a Unicorn. I put the balding cream in the ice cream which makes my ice cream taste really good! Now, all I need are customers - and I know they’ll come eventually. Ahahahahahahahahaha!”

Of course, no one would know it was him thanks to Brushette giving him his wig.

After 5 days he only had 3 customers. Devilish Balder Bob needed to improvise.

*“Maybe, just maybe I could make an ice cream catapult to shoot my balding ice cream at people. I AM an evil genius! Ahahahahahahaha,”* he thought to himself.

He laughed so hard his wig shifted.

“Oh no! My wig almost fell off! Good thing it didn’t or else I would have looked ugly - and I can’t look ugly because I was made to be handsome,” Balder Bob said.

Balder Bob was so overly excited to use his catapult that he started to shoot random things with it. He shot a hippopotamus and a bird - which led to him learning that hippos and birds can’t go bald. He also learned his ice cream was poisonous to hippos and birds. Oops!

With all of the flying ice cream, people suddenly started to buy his ice cream! Magic Like a Unicorn was getting super popular! Balder Bob decided he needed a theme song and a new name to go with his new business. His new name was Bob the Balder and his theme song was ♪♪*Bob the Balder Ice cream man!* He became a big hit!

Sherlock Combs started to notice a bunch of people going bald lately and a drop in the customers at his barbershop. He started to go around and ask the newly bald people when they went bald and what they did around that time. The common theme seemed to be delicious ice cream from Magic Like a Unicorn. Brushette suggested that they should investigate the

(Continued on page 91)

(Continued from page 90)

truck. On their way, Sherlock was thinking about all of these strange events. *“What happened to Balder Bob? Wait! Could Bob the Balder be Balder Bob?”* he wondered.

Balder Bob was quite happy with the loss of hair around town. He was humming his theme song and scooping ice cream when he heard a customer say, “Bob the Balder - or should I say - Balder Bob. I know what you’re up to.”

“You’re just talking nonsense. Would you like one scoop or two?” Balder Bob asked. As he turned around he gasped. “Sherlock Combs and Brushette!” Balder Bob shrieked. Brushette held up a note that had “2” scribbled on it, but Sherlock swatted the mint chip ice cream from Balder Bob’s hands.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. I’m... ♪♪ *Bob the Balder Ice Cream Man!* See?!? Different person,” Balder Bob answered.

“I’m no fool! You put some kind of formula in your ice cream that makes people bald - and it poisons hippos and birds,” Sherlock explained.

Balder Bob gasped. *“How did Sherlock know?!?”* Balder Bob thought. “Fine, I’ll propose a deal to you. If you don’t try to stop me, I’ll tell you that I am Balder Bob and I did do it. If you *do* try to stop me I’ll tell you I didn’t do it and that I’m not Balder Bob. See, aren’t I smart?” beamed Balder Bob.

“No, you aren’t smart!” Sherlock sassed back.

“It wasn’t a question!” Balder Bob was starting to get angry now. He pulled his Twilight Sparkles wig back into a ponytail which Brushette started chewing on. He was getting ready to fight. “I summon the power of Twilight Sparkles to help me get away with this! After all, I’m . . . ♪♪ *Bob the Balder, ice cream man!* Also, Brushette stop eating my hair!” Balder Bob exclaimed.

Sherlock grew impatient and punched Balder Bob in the stomach. Balder Bob started crying.

(Continued on page 92)

(Continued from page 91)

“Owie! That really hurt!” He shrieked.

Sherlock Combs tied Balder Bob up again. Then Sherlock took the wig off of Balder Bob and let Brushette mess with it, which made Balder Bob start to cry harder. *“How could Sherlock tie me up and take away my favorite wig?! Especially if he gave it to that monster monkey!”* Balder Bob thought. Sherlock turned away and called the police. Brushette tried to get his attention, but when he turned around, Balder Bob had escaped again. Sherlock noticed a note on the ground and picked it up. It was sloppy and he could barely read it. He could just barely figure out that it said, “Until next time! P.S. I took the wig because it’s mine and you have no right whatsoever to take it away from me! P.P.S. Thanks for the wig!”

Sherlock Combs set the note down and said, “I really need to find a different way to capture bad guys.” Then he put Brushette on his shoulder and sped after the My Little Pony-obsessed villain.

A while later, the police came to the crime scene. The main officer, Officer Kid, went into the ice cream truck. There were My Little Pony posters all over the walls. Officer Kid tripped over a rope. “OOF!” He brushed himself off and examined the rope. He saw the note that Balder Bob left for Sherlock. *“I never gave anyone a wig,”* Officer Kid thought to himself. *“Maybe I did? Well anyways - it looks like this villain is going to get stronger, and it looks like it’s up to me to stop him.”*

Officer Kid went to the trunk of his car and pulled out a costume. He went back in the truck and put it on. “I’m... The Kid Officer,” he cheered! Officer Kid climbed into the driver’s seat and spoke into the radio. “Officer Kid is going after our new villain! Can someone call the best barber around, and schedule me a hair appointment? I’m going to team up with the best detective in town, Sherlock Combs!”

(Continued on page 93)

*(Continued from page 92)*

Officer Kid went to Sherlock's barbershop, Styles for Miles.

"Sherlock I'm not here just to get a haircut. I need some serious help. Would you please help me stop a devious villain?" Officer Kid sat down, took off his hat, and Sherlock started to cut his hair.

"Who's this villain you speak of?" Sherlock asked.

"Well that's the thing, I don't really know who it is." Officer Kid responded sheepishly. He left this note for me. Sherlock picked the note up. It was the note Balder Bob had left for Sherlock. Sherlock was starting to get suspicious.

"And where did you get such a note?" Sherlock inquired.

"I found it in the ice cream truck called Magic Like a Unicorn," Officer Kid said.

Sherlock told Officer Kid about when he found the note, and who the villain they are up against is.

"Now that I'm filled in, where can we find him?" asked Officer Kid. Bruschetta jumped up from her mini chair right behind Officer Kid. She jumped up and down a couple of times and then pointed at the movie theater. There was a screen above the entryway showing an advertisement for the new My Little Pony movie.

After Sherlock finished cutting Officer Kid's hair they were on their way out of the door when Officer Kid said, "I need to go to the bathroom." A few minutes later he came out in a superhero costume. Sherlock and Brushette smacked their foreheads in unison. "No one will know who I am because . . . I'm the Kid Officer!" Officer Kid announced.

On the street outside, Sherlock pointed to a ladder around the back. "We'll hop from roof to roof and sneak into the theater because I'm not paying to arrest someone at a My Little Pony movie," Sherlock said.

*(Continued on page 94)*

*(Continued from page 93)*

Meanwhile, at the front of the movie theater, Balder Bob was now in a full twilight Sparkles costume with kids on his back. One kid was trying to pull off his wig and Balder Bob sassed, “Stop it! Respect your fellow ponies! Neigh!”

“May I have your tickets, please?” the worker asked.

“Neigh! I’m a pony! Twilight Sparkles to be exact. I thought because I’m in the movie that I wouldn’t have to pay to see it. Neigh!” Balder Bob used his best Twilight Sparkles voice.

“Sir I’m going to have to call the police if you aren’t going to give me your ticket.” the worker said.

“Fiiinnnneee!” Balder Bob whined. He took one of the kid’s tickets - which made them cry - and held it up to the worker. “I don’t know what that kid was thinking. You know you should never ever steal.” Balder Bob said innocently.

“Your name is Timmy and you want to see my little pony movie?” the worker raised her eyebrow.

“Stop right there!” Sherlock said.

♪♪Dun dun! Dee Dee! I’m the Kid Officer! Can’t you see!?!♪♪ sang Officer Kid. Sherlock and Brushette smacked their foreheads in unison.

Balder Bob neighed a horrified neigh. Sherlock ran up to him, grabbed his wig, and threw it in the popcorn maker. Balder Bob started to cry. “NNNOOOOO! MY PRECIOUS WIG!!” He shrieked while sinking to the ground. Officer Kid handcuffed him and took Balder Bob to jail. Sherlock went home and fell asleep. The next day Sherlock started to write a story of his adventures and it was called The Case of Sherlock Combs.

**Lillith Carlson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Avengers 5 Annihilation

It has been 6 months since Cap left and Tony died. It is still like the hardest day in the world. But then whoosh dr strange full form a portal into avengers hq and was breathing so hard he could have blown down the statue of liberty. (What happened? Professor hulk said). He is coming, he is coming, who, Galactus ? Who is that? (Galactus is the biggest thing ever said by Dr Strange). He eats planets for breakfast.

I open a portal and He is coming the second we speak we need to get the avengers asap! You start making portals I will make calls ok I will go to westview and get Wanda and Vision strange said I will go and find the guardians of the galaxy I think thor is will them too ok split up. Strange moved his arms forward and moved them in circles and baam a porta and whoosh goes the spaceship with professor hulk in it.

Wanda Vision, we need to go, a big thing is coming to destroy the world and his name is Galactus. Guys galactus is coming, we need to go, beep boop bop slide lets go. Ok we are back together I will go to wakanda strange said and I will go to 1960 to get cap with the time machine we made in avengers endgame. Push circles and boom dr strange went to wakanda I am dr steven strange and I am looking for black panther ya hoo ya hoo wish and hear he is we to go ok. Hay cap long time no see we need to go, the biggest man in history is coming, said hulk what is his name Galactus.

Ok it is time you ready said hulk ready dr strange said dr strange did thing with his hand opened up the time stone that can reverse time like the time machine in back to the future the time stone shot out a beam ahaha dr strange screams! And then out of the blue dust started to come up from the ground and there he was Tony stark himself. But he immediately dropt to the ground; They rushed him to the medic and got him up to his feet. Then it was time they had to do what they had to, . . . (to save the world, Stark said). Everybody suits up. Tony was hering rock music for the first time since he snapt.

It will take him some time because the atmosphere is a fence around the earth. (Guys look out thor said) BOOM BAM it is Galactus turn on the sirens that is one of his weaknesses WE WO WE WO WE WO (STOP THAT NOW Galactus yield) (fire the missiles Stark screamed)! PO POW BOOM BAM BAM PAA

*(Continued on page 96)*

*(Continued from page 95)*

BOOOOOOM (we got him cap said). Wait what is happening BOOM! ROOR SHING POW no way it is all the villains we have faced before. They are going to fight them. Star lord who is not a big fan of iron man of course had say something and he said (smelly stark started a situation that we sertley can't get out of oh we are going now said star lord) AHHHHHH Spider man tite Venom up Black Panther clawed Killmonger Captain America tost his shield at Red Skull Iron Man blasted Altron in the face and Star Lord shot Ego in the chest.( I think we got them all mr Stark Spider man said.(You forgot about me, Thonos said) but then waam Captain marvel came out of no ware and swopt him up to space the avengers were proud as a lion. Even the clouds were happy for them.

the END

**Dominic Ramos**  
Towslee Elementary  
Grade 4

## **The Secret Friend**

If I had the chance to go to outer space I would try to explore all the planets and different galaxies. I would also search for an alien. I would bring it back home with me and keep it as a pet. He would help me with all kinds of things. He would play ball with me, do my homework, and help me with my chores. But mostly he would show me all his cool superpowers. Superpowers like making me invisible when needing to or teleporting me from one place to another. He would also show me his UFO and teach me how to fly it. My alien friend would also make me super strong and fast, so I could be the best football player ever. He will help me prank my friends and take me to all the galaxies in the solar system. It will be fun to prank my friends because no one would ever believe me that I have an alien friend. But I would have to keep it a secret, so the government doesn't find out that I have an alien and take it away from me or take me to jail for a long time. Keeping him a secret will be hard because he likes to escape and explore our planet. So, I will have to make him a disguise, so nobody finds out that there is an alien on Planet Earth. Maybe one day I won't have to keep this a secret anymore, but for now I am up for the challenge.

**Alex Plisko**  
Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6

## The Boy on Mars

Once upon a time, there was a 6 year old alien boy. He lived on Mars with his family. One day, his parents told him they had to go to Earth for some important work. They also told him to stay with his friends while they were away but he never listened to them. In fact, he was always getting into trouble.

So the next day, early in the morning, his parents went to their green spaceship and got in. The boy quietly snuck behind them and got in the ship too. A few hours later, when the ship arrived on Earth, the boy was curious about what he saw. First, there were human kids playing ball. He thought it would be okay to play with them. It looked like something he would enjoy.

The kids didn't let him play because he looked different, and they thought that the boy would hurt them. So, he tried to tell them that he would never do anything like that. He explained that he was visiting from a place called Mars. After a lot of convincing, the kids finally let him play.

The following day, they played again. They were becoming great friends! The little alien remembered it was about time to get back to Mars. The next day, they all agreed to help him find the spaceship. They searched and searched and suddenly they saw a little green piece of metal, they had found the spaceship!

Now all the alien friend had to do was get on his parent's ship. The little alien sadly said goodbye to his human friends. The parents came back and once again, they didn't notice their son. They started the engine and they were off. Happy to see his other family again the little alien smiled and went to sleep that night on Mars.

The end

### **The Pluviophile**

When the translucent drops of tranquil dripped into their heart,

the pluviophile's alert mind sank into a hush.

Their heart radiated flowingly watching the rain lavish the ground.

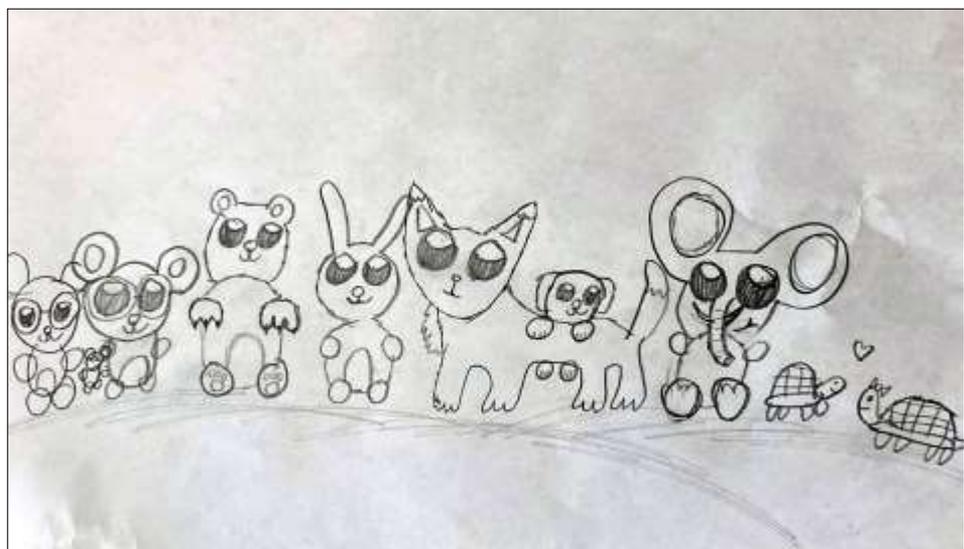
They relax in comfort as the rain thunders,

and let the rain delight their love.

When the rain softens and the grass dries,

the rainy day fades away back into a dry day.

**Avneet Singh**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Aurora Sulzener**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## Grades 7-12

### Starshine

Stars fall on the shimmering lake  
Casting it aglow, small white flames  
They flicker in and out  
Tiny galaxies bobbing up and down

Pristine waters reflect the moon  
Water lilies floating delicately across  
The midnight sounds ring in the woods  
Calming, a sound only heard by the dark

**Lena Buxton**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Light

Light is a reason we fight for what is right.  
Light guides our way and is a symbol of a new  
day.

Light is a symbol of love,  
Light is like a pure white dove,  
Peaceful in every way.

Light is the lamp that guides our way.

**Caleb Snyder**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

---

## Light

Light, it calls me everyday  
Begging me to go its way  
I'm never sure what to do  
Scared of what I might lose  
This light could change my world  
Or it could destroy it  
Listen to your gut, take a chance  
Have faith in the process  
It's your calling  
Take it or leave it

**Avery Neville**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Emerson Metheny**  
Brunswick Middle  
Grade 8

## Summer

Late summer nights  
Stars shining so bright  
Bees buzzing in the breeze  
I see lots of bright green trees

Families going on vacations  
Planning out the situation  
Flowers blooming  
Kids zooming

It's time for fun  
In the sun  
Let's go outside  
And sit beside

The pool  
With the breeze feeling cool  
Late summer nights  
Feel just right

**Bella Kneale**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Fall

Yellow, orange, red and green,  
Fall creates a gorgeous scene.

Chipmunks scurry to and fro,  
Under leaves to homes below.

Acorns scattered across the ground,  
Squirrels scamper to bury what's found.

Bears indulge to put on weight,  
It won't be long, they'll hibernate.

Daylight fades, the air is cool,  
Children all return to school.

Candy, costumes, lots of fun,  
House to house the children run.

Dashing through mazes, end to end,  
Hayrides and scarecrows are quite the trend.

Campfires, pumpkins, s'mores galore,  
Raking leaves becomes a chore.

Apple cider spreads the cheer,  
Nothing beats this time of year.

## Autumn Days

In the old Weeping Willow tree,  
the leaves grow sadder as the Autumn days keep coming.

They no longer have their humor,  
and now their once brightly shining colors seem dim.

The wind rustles them, making them blow,  
but as they once would have shouted for joy,  
they only murmur their dim delight.

I watch them from my small oak tree.  
Just watching the tree would make anyone sad,  
but for me, it is a special kind of sad.

These are my kind.

To watch them fade away  
only foreshadows what will happen to me soon.  
I want to help them, but what am I supposed to do?

I am a leaf. I cannot just break off from my tree,  
go walk over to them, and tell them to cheer up.

But still, part of me wishes I could.

I could always send them a message through the wind,  
but now that Halloween is almost here,  
the leaves of the Weeping Willow tree are drooping and failing.

They will fall soon.

I shake away my helpless and hopeless thoughts.

It will do no good to dwell on what I cannot fix.

I turn and look at my tree.

*(Continued on page 107)*

*(Continued from page 106)*

I smile as I hear the laughter and conversation  
rippling to and fro among us.

It is like giving music to the wind and trees  
and earth and ground.

I am still holding on.

I will not give up just yet, not when I know the end is near.

I will keep having hope until my last.

**Rosalia White**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

---

### **A Leaf**

There was this huge tree in an open meadow  
that led to a field of corn.

Kids could get lost in it.

It was the first day of fall.

The air had a nice winter smell to it.

The breeze tickled your skin when it blew

It was a sunny day, when birds were chirping.

They were flying in the air.

The breeze gets a bit harder, It tickles more.

*(Continued on page 108)*

*(Continued from page 107)*

It was a wonderful walk to the meadow tree.

The leaves changed color,  
and were Red and Orange and Brown.

The grass was nice and Humid.

The sunlight was blocked by some shadows  
that formed a spot of light on the tree.

A red leaf slowly comes down like a feather.

Falls very slowly, then reaches the ground.

It was the first that fell on the first day of fall that year.

**Madison Tollis**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7



**Emily Kniesly**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## Winter's Whispers

Winter has come again  
bringing cool whispers of death,  
leaves on trees fall away  
and plants shrivel down to nothing

The frozen world grows quiet  
all the small creatures  
have scurried to their hideouts  
and the birds have retreated  
down South

Tiny shimmering crystals  
begin to rain down  
from grey skies above  
covering the world  
In a blanket of sparkling white

Soft whispers of joy  
escape from the mouths  
of small children,  
admiring the new world  
in innocent wonder

*(Continued on page 111)*

*(Continued from page 110)*

Pure bliss lights up their faces  
as they run outside to play  
cherishing every moment  
and hoping that Winter's whisper  
never goes away

**Calix Lemp**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

---

### **Wintertime**

Wintertime oh wintertime  
You'll always be on my mind  
Sledding and snowball fights at their prime  
"don't get too competitive," the parents have to  
remind

Snowman building,  
Christmas cheer.  
Even though the breeze is chilling  
I wish we could play all year.

Winter sports  
oh, what fun.  
Indoor courts,  
you don't get to bask in the sun.

*(Continued on page 112)*

*(Continued from page 111)*

Drinking hot cocoa  
With marshmallows on top  
It makes you want to stay not go,  
and eat your Christmas cookie, there is no time to  
stop.

But finally, you get home to read a good book.  
Settle in on the couch you don't want to budge  
But, your mom is in the kitchen the "best cook"  
Maybe you can even have some fudge.

Its been a great day  
You can't wait for another  
"Good night," you say  
To your mom and your brother

Up to bed,  
to get a good nights sleep  
As you look at the shed  
You count all of the sheep

**Cami Ross**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

Listen. Do you hear it? It's the soft, almost non-existent sound of delicate, white snowflakes falling softly to the ground. It is the first snow of winter in your little town. You are not worried about the harsh temperatures that are soon to come for you are bundled up, safe, and cozy in your home. Look. Do you see it? Those few snowflakes are beginning to fall more rapidly and have doubled in size. They fall gently to the ground as you watch. You look up to the sky and see the big, fluffy clouds that are producing this winter wonderland. It is the clouds that make the view from your window look as if you are in a snowglobe. Look again. Those big snowflakes are sticking to every twig and blade of grass. It looks magical. Through your window, you can see the whole world, for you live on a mountain, far away from the world's problems. Every stick, branch, twig, and bush is now coated in a thick sheet of snow. The ground, which was moments ago bare and dead, is now covered in a heavy blanket of freshly fallen mountain snow. It's as if you can smell the renewal of the earth and feel the comfort of a hefty, evening snow. You look out your window one final time and watch as the sun slowly sets and hides behind the mountain tops. The moon greets the earth and the newly fallen snow as it rises to its duty of brightening the night sky. You look out at the world, at the snow. You know that you are safe and that you will wake up to another gloriously snowy day. Your head hits your pillow and your eyelids grow heavy. You finally give in to the irresistible temptation of slumber on a cold winter's night.

**Kinsey Nussbaum**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Cloud

Happy or Sad-  
Clouds are Always there.  
A puff of Fluffy mist,  
Floating through the sky.  
A blanket or Barrier-  
Hiding or releasing the sun.  
A Billow of warm steam-  
Like a nice warm bath.

Oh to be a Cumulous-  
How free would it be!  
To float like a Nebulous-  
And fly free like a bee.  
Sometimes- clouds will swarm the sun-  
Leaving a dark and dreary day.  
After the sun is gone-  
The thunderheads take over - showers fall.

**Wren Marquis**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 8

## **Endless Roots**

The trees reached toward the sky as if they were reaching for a way out of the forest. They stretched as if they were alive and trying to find a way out of the forest of themselves. They twisted and turned with all their might, but were only greeted by their brothers and sisters blocking their ways. While they blocked others and others blocked them, they also blocked the image of freedom from their clouded and dampened minds. They could no longer believe that they would see anything but thousands of reflections of themselves, but as other living beings with their own mindsets of freedom. No moving, no seeing, no feeling, they were trapped by their own roots that continued to burrow their way down, deeper and deeper into darkness. The trees were mighty and strong, but had no hope left to keep them from slouching. But as each tree died, a new sapling was born, each one having to suffer the fate of reaching for the sky in what feels like eternity.

**Reese Hassinger**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Aubrey Kinder**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Natural Beauty

The day we approached  
The regal green tree  
With natural beauty  
That I couldn't see.

For I was so focused  
On the practical use  
Of the regal green tree  
That would soon be abused.

My brothers and neighbors  
Followed my lead  
Under the branches  
Of the regal green tree.

A relentless storm,  
We cut down its limbs  
We forgot all our worries  
And stored away all our sins.

We used a small knife  
To saw at the tree  
And soon sap splattered  
On our crouching knees.

*(Continued on page 118)*

*(Continued from page 117)*

The sap oozed like blood,  
And the pines soon turned brown  
And the wood fell quickly,  
*Crashing* to the ground.

Our dad noticed this change,  
And bellowed at me,  
“What are you doing?  
You’re killing that tree!”

We still hid in that tree,  
But never again  
Did we carve out its insides,  
Or cut off its limbs.

The regal green tree  
Stood tall in the fog,  
And this time I noticed  
The beauty in it all.

This moment was greater  
Than the whole tree itself  
Because natural beauty  
Is greater than all else.

**Josh Butcher**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7



**Lena Buxton**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## **Cardinal**

A whisper of wind

A flutter of red

A memory afloat

A watchful eye

A nest of hope

The heartache of the emptiness below

A mesmerizing sight

A feather found

An angel watching

A loved one gone

A beautiful cardinal

Flying around

**Henry Hartman**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Owls

Canary eyes peering into the black silence

Swooping wingspan gliding with talons outstretched

Hoot

360 degree perspective of the midnight hour

Alone, brave, king of darkness

Hoot, feathers flutter

Owls

**Henry Hartman**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Beachside Birds

Four piping plovers  
Went flying by  
Over the ocean  
And under the sky

As they land on the sand  
A person walks near  
They scream as loud as a rocket  
As they were all in fear

There is a nest nearby  
Which appears invisible  
The person walks away  
From birds so little

But beware  
Their bite feels like being stabbed with a knife  
This bird can bite an elephant  
And it will limp for the rest of its life

**Sean Chambers**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7



**Emily Kniesly**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

### **The Black Rhino**

Stomp, Stomp, Stomp,  
As I come running in like a truck  
I hope to find some luck  
I have a pointed lip  
It helps me get a good grip on leaves  
I scream in pain while you poach me  
And you take something very important from me  
Although you find me  
Just so you know I will not react kindly  
Some think they're helping me  
I like to be free  
Not stuck in captivity  
I have very many homes  
I can't seem to roam  
Without being disowned  
Because of you, you have made me endangered

**Kylee Kash**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## The Bear That Rules the Mountains

The bear that has ruled for

over 19 million years

The Panda bear to China is like the Eiffel tower to France

Strong and mighty they fear no enemy

Sniff Sniff Grrrr

as the Panda walks through

the jungle

It rules among the other species,

big white and black furry with huge ears

It will always rule the mountains

for many years

As humans roam the earth

For wants and needs and many more

The bear looks down from the mountains above, and roars  
among the future

**Jacob Bally-Freiberg**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7



**Mackenzie Moore**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## **The Chimpanzee**

The social butterfly  
Some are tall  
And some are small  
They love to eat  
But they also have the size of human feet  
Chimpanzees are always happy and shed no tears  
And can live for more than 50 years  
They are as smart as humans  
Their hair is the night sky  
Their eyes, bigger than the sun  
Poaching is a harmful one  
Spreading the word would help a ton  
Baby chimps are being sold  
And nobody was really told  
People need to stop chillaxin  
And take action

**Aubrey Keenan**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## Orangutans

They're like giant beasts that roams the trees.  
They have the arms of a giant so they can swing with ease.

They're dark and orange, unique yes they are.

So unique in fact, it's very bizarre.

Their name is the orangutan, they swing and hang,  
sometimes in gangs,  
with their arms of the longest length.

They can eat with their feet.

Eat what? Not meat.

Instead they eat fruits,

vegetables you may include

Leaves, insects, eggs and small vertebrae.

But sadly one by one, they're going away.

Deforestation, in the places they live.

Sumatras rainforests might be a graveyard shift.

People illegally hunting,

that's crazy so crazy that you'd think that I'm bluffing

The population is 104,700,

because of humanity their population is stunted.

*(Continued on page 129)*

*(Continued from page 128)*

Deforestation  
all over their nation,  
mining is everywhere  
at this point no-one cares,  
Infrastructure  
all for class structure,  
illegal logging,  
wow this is mind boggling,  
and then there's the fires,  
then people realized everything backfired.

Now we try stopping  
all for their population  
people are working hard, at this point people can't even go on  
vacation.

Orangutans are important,  
vital for seed dispersal thank them for seed transporting.

They help humans, elephants, they're a big help,  
nature needed a hand and to the orangutan it yelped.

Helping them could be a piece of cake,  
either that or it can be a real headache.

Orangutans are close to us, they're not any strangers,  
but yet what we do, makes them endangered.

**Adam Hefflin**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7



**Thomas Ziol**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## The Speckled Shadow

On a summer evening,  
a big shadow strokes under my boat,  
I looked down  
to see the rays of light  
dancing through the water,  
I put my hand in the water  
for a greeting.  
Its speckled back  
bypasses my hand,  
it's so big  
that it practically owned the ocean.  
It opened its mouth,  
and filtered out its food,  
I watched  
as it dove down  
back into the darkness.

**Evelyn Cooper**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## **Hector Don't Forget Her**

Just off the crashing shores  
Near the island of New Zealand  
Swims a small Hector Dolphin  
Without a care about his feeling.

With a rounded dorsal fin,  
Grey skin with a white belly  
He looks like a Killer Whale  
Just not nearly as big or as deadly.

They are known to be playful  
As playful as a four year old child  
If you had the chance to swim with one  
I think that it would be wild

This close to populated areas  
Can pose quite the threat.  
With fishing nets and seabed mining  
Their extinction would be a regret.

Coastal development and boating  
Infringe on their habitat  
There need to be some policies  
To bring their population back.

**Eryn O'Brien**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## Big Blue

Take a dive in the ocean

As the biggest animal in the sea

Drown out the sounds of society

Feel the water smother you like a blanket on a cold day

Look down below you as you see the coral sway

While you the biggest animal eats a whole buffet

Then swim with your pod back to seize the day

Look up and see the sun smiling down on the surface of the ocean

Then dive up and make an explosion

Feel the breeze down your 100 feet spine

Then Plunge back into the colorful sea

Just hear the sound of mother nature

And smell the aroma of fresh water

It's truly the place you want to be

It's truly the place you see

You are as free as you can possibly be

**Savannah Blade**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## **Marine Iguana Central**

The nesting zones  
Makes the islands central

Many different colors  
All over the body

Like bright as the sky  
Threats everywhere like a lion's eye

Puerto Villmil  
On Isabela Island

SWOOSH SWOOSH!  
Goes the Iguana in the water

The Iguana is the king of the Island  
Like Villmil Island

The most oceangoing lizard  
For all to see

Rocky shores  
To live and seek

**Kaylee Esposito**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## Where the Ocean Meets the Land

Soft pinks and oranges streaked across the sky,  
like the sherbert I had eaten earlier that day.

The rosy clouds hung like wisps of sugar.

    he waves washed in and out,  
uncovering secrets and then washing them back out to sea with  
    every sweep.

Seagulls squawked somewhere in the distance.

The faint taste of salt formed on my lips.

The sand found its way between my toes, warm and soft.

It was so peaceful here, where the ocean meets the land.

The waves seem to whisper for you to get closer.

I walked toward the foamy waves, where the sand became wet  
and squishy.

The water gently swished around my feet, pulling the tiny grains  
of sand out from under me. Little pieces of shells gleamed on top  
of the sand.

I smiled, remembering the first time I came here.

My small fingers picked up every shell and rock I could find,  
proudly showing each one to my mother.

I squealed in excitement when the cold waves first hit my fragile  
ankles.

I wandered further down the coast.

What had once been a sandcastle now laid in a heap.

I imagined who had built it, the determined smiles on their faces.

The careful craft of each perfect mound,  
making sure to hit the pail just right as not to damage the shape  
inside.

*(Continued on page 136)*

*(Continued from page 135)*

The picture taken of it that would remain on someone's phone for ages.

The sun peaked just above the horizon, a deep orange silver.

I watched as it slowly dipped below the waves.

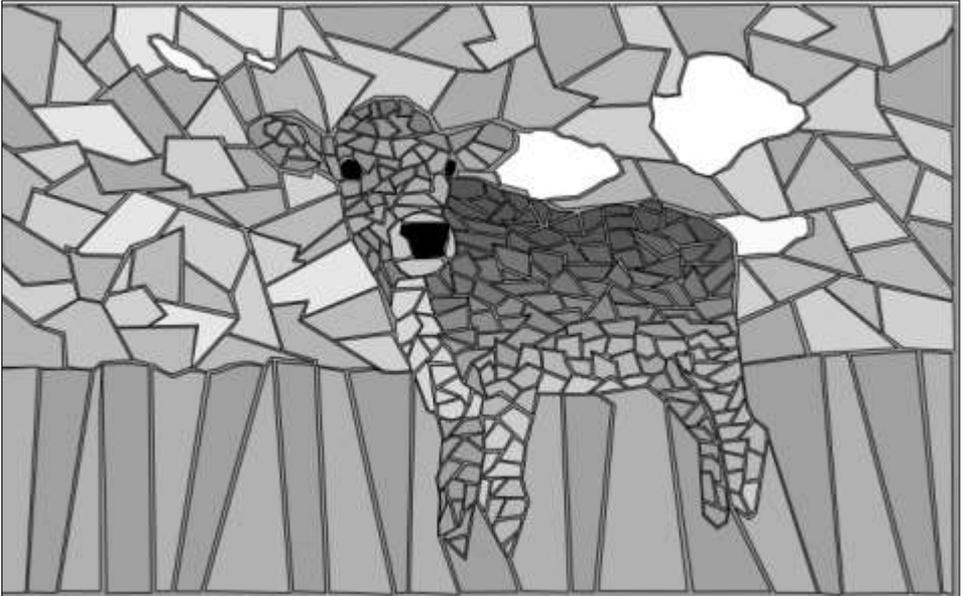
The brightest of the stars shined high above.

I methodically found Saturn and Jupiter, just like my father taught me  
long ago.

The waves crept higher up the shore,  
cooling off the sand from a day in the blazing sun.

I never want to leave this place, where the ocean meets the land.

**Madeline Beck**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8



**Claire Ferguson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **The Talkative Przewalski**

They're tiny but mighty  
Only 700 pounds  
In the Gobi desert,  
Cold and hot  
With a mane like a zebra  
Charming as a flower

They're the horse with 5 names,  
Oh such a talkative breed,  
The ones who graze for eternity  
They stay with their herd not anyone else  
With their big sharp hooves that dig in the dirt

They're tiny but mighty, but still endangered  
Zoos are helping but that's still not enough  
We need to save them or there will be none  
They're the last wild horses  
Something has to be done!

**Julia Andrukat**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

### **A Dog Named Scarlet**

Lazy napper near a sunny window  
Squirrel chaser on a summer day  
Sock taker when you're not looking  
Always, always ready to play

My dog is . . .

Silly

Sleepy

Cuddly

Crazy

Friendly

Feisty

Loving

Lazy

But just don't ask her to obey.

**Madeline Flaker**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Family Too

They feel too.

They listen sometimes too.

They make a mess too.

They dig up the yard too.

And fetch a stick with pride too.

They greet you,

protect you,

and are always with you.

They keep lint rollers in business.

They flap their ears in the wind,

and whimper to go with you.

They love car rides.

And sleeping too.

They love each other.

And television too.

No amount of attention

will ever be enough.

No amount of treats

will ever be enough.

*(Continued from page 139)*

They growl and play.

They jump and stay.

They lay and roll.

They are “man’s best friend.”

I 100% agree.

They snuggle with you.

They are happy with you.

My furry four legged friends

are family members.

And love me unconditionally.

They hold my heart

in their paws.

**Henry Hartman**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Greatest Treasure

The greatest treasure,  
Is not one that you uncover from the ground,  
previously marked by a giant X.  
It does not consist of diamonds,  
or gold.  
It is not even the compensation  
you receive after a long day at work.  
But instead, it is the true gift of friendship!  
Someone to talk to when you're sad,  
or laugh with when you're glad!  
Someone to be beyond happy for you  
when you have your biggest wins,  
and mourn with you  
at your greatest losses.  
The greatest treasure,  
more than any, is the gift of friendship.  
Knowing that it is a treasure that will last,  
and can never be taken away.

**Lacie Rice**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## **No Longer Always an Forever**

Everyday things are getting harder to remember  
Like waking up from a dream and having it slip away  
At first I forgot the last seven digits of your number  
But now I can't even recall the details of your face

The voice you used to use to calm me down  
When I got scared in the middle of the night  
Is starting to fade away into the background  
No longer reassuring me that everything will be alright

Sometimes your name gets said  
When I'm having a conversation  
And every memory of you pops into my head  
But always somehow twisted each time I relive them by my imagination

I'm done wishing that things could be different  
That maybe someday you'll change  
It really hurts to admit  
That you are never going to be the same

**Kaylynda Young**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

Look into my eyes  
And too much of your surprise  
There you'll find a broken girl  
Whose life is so twisted in lies  
That she can't find her way back out

Read my thoughts and you will see  
The flashes of memories from times long gone  
The late nights and random crying sprees  
My desperation to remain strong  
While war rages in my mind

Hold my scarred and broken hands  
And you will feel my pain  
The flashes of anger and floods of sadness  
The guilt I feel for something I couldn't control  
The feeling of paper cards in my hands for hours on end

Taste my tears and you will know  
All the time I spent alone  
Consumed by my thoughts  
My downcast eyes as the shouts  
Fill my mind  
Drowning everything out

*(Continued from page 143)*

Listen to my voice and hear the pain  
The story that remains untold  
Until this day

Kiss my lips and you will taste  
The words unspoken  
The things I shouldn't have said  
And the screams I can't get out of my head

Feel the poker chips  
And learn the rules of the game  
So I can I find you  
In the risks I take

Hold the pendant  
And talk all-day  
Acting as if you're still there  
Like playing a game

Lock your memories  
Up in my mind  
So I can't lose you  
Like I did the first time

**Arielle Bowman**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## I \_\_\_\_ you?

Love; the word is love. That's always the word. How overused, and how *original*, am I right? But I ponder this. Does anyone really mean the word? Or is it used as a statement to express a momentary infatuation? When I gaze at you, I catch sight of something that yanks me toward your figure. The burning furious storm that is ignited in your soft gentle touch. All of the corny jokes, and the laughs we shared may seem like nothing more than fun. Right? But . . . to me, they mean everything. The bright adoration I feel towards you is nothing compared to that overused word. The feeling I have geared towards you is much bigger. Much more... scarce. Whenever you're around, I can't even breathe or think. My bones become brittle and weak, my voice becomes hushed and shaky, and my heart bounds into my throat, I choke. Every feeling you have, every emotion you express is limited in words. Indescribably I can't express how much I feel this warm fluffy feeling. I see you, and I can't breathe. As I write this, it is hard to express the fondness I feel toward you. You walk past and I feel as if I am on fire. A flame started, my limbs feel weak and I am helpless in your touch, and in your presents. I can discern every trait about you, the fondness I feel and the affection I perceive as you look at me. The beautiful pools that we call eyes, are so wondrous I could stare and never look away. The wonderful tenderness of your laugh, and the innocents as you grasp my hand, I can't think. I feel as if I am sinking deeper and deeper into your soul, the connection like a body of water. An ocean. A sea. Everything is different but connected. As you sink, faster and faster, deeper and deeper, as I let out a cry, but no one could hear. The calm cool liquid flowing into my lungs, the peaceful feeling that came with it. The rays you shine, your beautiful smile, shining down, illuminating the calm ocean floor, I felt so alone, so scared, so lost. As the pressure builds, I let out a cry in misery, a howl of terror; I sink. As the warm air from inside my lungs would escape and slowly bubble to the surface, I was pulled out. I saw your eyes, those

(Continued on page 146)

*(Continued from page 145)*

beautiful comforting orbes, I smiled. My heart burns with a pain that is as I said: indescribable. I feel as a suffocating figure, as the compassion and longing I feel for you will continue to go unnoticed, I wish with every fiber of my being I could be yours. But I am not. I am not the person; the one who is right for you. So from a distance I will watch, with wonder in my eyes at how beautiful someone could be. How wonderful and how breathtaking you are.

**Maggie Katafiasz**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

---

### Thank You

I was told to write a poem about my life so far.  
It's tough to think about writing though,  
When I don't know where you are.  
I've known you for many years now.  
And it still remains a mystery how  
I couldn't find someone to replace you.  
Then I realized that was wrong to do.

Sometimes I believe I can tell the future  
So I think about how to react.  
Sometimes I think I've moved on  
But I end up coming right back.  
I've always been told what not to do.  
Didn't they realize I already knew?

*(Continued on page 147)*

*(Continued from page 146)*

Where were you to tell me  
How I should actually be?

It's more difficult than you think  
To live in a world where every blink  
Equals another thing you did wrong.  
It makes me think I don't belong.  
Most of my decisions also feel incorrect,  
More of them than you would suspect.  
I've learned a thing or two since I was born,  
But sometimes my choice making gets a little worn.

Sometimes I believe I've found my place  
But most of the time that isn't the case.  
Sometimes I think I've walked away  
But I'm just playing a game of ongoing chase.  
Then I met you, though you didn't meet me,  
It's kind of strange how that can be.  
It's been a long time since I first saw you smile.  
Hope to see that again, though I'll be waiting a while.

The only song I've ever cried to  
Was a song written about you.  
And now that you're away,

*(Continued on page 148)*

*(Continued from page 147)*

I have so much more to say.  
It's more difficult than you think  
To hold everything inside.  
It's like trapping a wild animal  
Who's tired of trying to hide.

All the time I think about you  
It's a pretty big challenge not to.  
I have to constantly remind myself  
To keep my feelings up on a shelf.  
People always called me crazy,  
But after I met you it didn't matter.  
You were there as a distraction,  
Now I think of you and my heart shatters.

I'd just like you to always know  
That no matter where we go  
I'll forever remember what you did for me.  
I was a locked door and you were my key.  
At this point in time, my key is lost  
But I'm learning to break through the door.  
Other people have tried to help me  
But I'll never thank them for what I thank you for.

*(Continued on page 149)*

*(Continued from page 148)*

I know you'll never think the same  
And probably never care.  
But if for some reason you still do  
Just know that I'll forever thank you.

**Mya Kosar**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

---

### **Never Goodbye**

Goodbyes are of love,  
Fear, and cries  
Goodbyes are of saddening sighs  
But for me, I haven't said to you  
My last goodbye because this ones not true  
Until that goodbye, I shall always love you  
I miss you then - I miss you now  
I miss you more than you know how  
But goodbyes aren't forever  
I will come back and see the sun  
The golden sands  
And in your arms I'll run

*(Continued on page 150)*

*(Continued from page 149)*

Goodbyes are good,  
Goodbyes are bad  
But please don't be sad  
for I haven't said to you  
My last goodbye  
this ones not true  
Until that goodbye I shall always love you  
Goodbyes are what I speak  
As I see  
The burning concrete  
That may burn our feet  
But the spiky cacti  
Is what I seek  
The one that we grew  
A whole week  
So I will remember  
Goodbyes aren't forever  
I will come back and see the sun

*(Continued on page 151)*

*(Continued from page 150)*

The golden sands

And in your arms I'll run

Goodbyes are of love,

Fear, and cries

But don't be said tonight

For I haven't said my last goodbye

There may come a time when I lose the fight

To return to you with all my might

But I will never forget

The love it's true

For grandma, I will always love you

But goodbyes aren't forever

I will come back and see the sun

The golden sands

And in your arms I'll run

Goodbyes are scary

Goodbyes are hard

*(Continued on page 152)*

*(Continued from page 151)*

But my efforts shall not be chard

But I'll remember the blazing sun of Arizona

For not even Corona

Can keep me from what I seek

And when I do this I'll speak

I miss you then, I miss you now

I miss you more than you know how.

But goodbyes aren't forever

I hope you know

That I will return one day

As long as I get a say.

**Laycee Higbee**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## The Way the Moon Works

The moon has a difficult job. It has to sit in the endless blanket of darkness to give night time a little bit of light. But every few weeks, even the moon gets too tired and it doesn't show up in the sky. The darkness wins on those nights. The moon doesn't give up, though. It keeps coming back and trying to shine a little light.

I was never one to believe in myths or miracles or wishes. At least not in the beginning.

It had been about eight months without your footsteps on this planet. Without your words in the air. Without your laughter floating around me. I stopped counting the days as they passed. Since you passed. I stopped hearing your voice in my head. I accepted what happened and I tried my best to move on with my life even though yours was taken too soon.

You'd always been the one to sing the lyrics to the melody that played in my head when I forgot them. And the second you were taken from me, the lyrics disappeared along with the melodies and the harmonies and all the instruments. I was surrounded by a silence I didn't know how to fill. Part of me was taken when you were taken, leaving the half of me that didn't know how to operate on its own.

I bottled everything that I felt up and hid the bottle deep inside of myself. All the memories and all the sadness. But the contents of the bottle made its way into my life in some way or another. On this particular night, they slipped into my dreams.

In this dream I was standing at a table in a dark room. I ran my hands over a book that sat on the table and it glowed, giving the room a small amount of light. A voice began to talk to me from the other side of the table and I followed its directions. The voice told me to open the book to a random spot and set my palms flat on the spread of pages. I didn't have time to read what was written in this book since this voice told me to close my eyes

*(Continued on page 154)*

*(Continued from page 153)*

and make a wish. I wished that I wasn't so far away from you. There was a long gap of silence before the mysterious voice returned an answer. The voice said slowly and clearly "They're not as far away as you think. You're just not willing to see them yet."

I felt my eyes open and I woke up out of the dream. It took a moment for me to remember what was reality and what wasn't. I got out of bed and walked to the window where a bright, round, full moon glowed in the dark sky.

I'd never believed in myths or miracles or wishes. But when I looked out the window that night, I swear I saw a face on the moon. A face that looked a little too much like yours to be a coincidence.

**Mya Kosar**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8



**Sophia Cooper**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## In Between Thunder

It was dark outside as more clouds rolled in to cover the sun. I watched out my window as the drops of water falling from the sky got bigger and bigger. The sound of raindrops hitting the glass got louder the longer I waited there watching and my view out of the window got blurry. My cat ran to hide under my bed as the first bolt of lightning split the sky into pieces. I was home alone and the lightning became steady, like I could predict when it would strike next. The pitter patter of the raindrops on my roof became very rhythmic, and I began to tap my foot to the beat.

I was lost in my thoughts when I was startled by the first crack of thunder. I could hear my cat rustling under my bed. I could hear the noise of the raindrops get louder, and I could hear the faint noise of more thunder somewhere farther off in the distance.

I sat with my legs crossed on the edge of the bed staring blankly out the window. I watched as water trickled down the glass and off the windowsill. I thought about many things while I watched the water and listened to the raindrops on the roof. And every time I was distracted by my thoughts, a jolt of thunder brought me back to reality.

I have a habit of getting so invested in stories that when they're over, there's a second where I feel like I'm in between the world the story took me to and the real world. It feels like I'm traveling through universes from one world to the next. But it all happens so fast, quicker than the thunder sound lasts. And when I don't have a story in front of me, there's often one being written in my head. There's always a voice in my thoughts waiting to take me back to that place, a world I can't quite describe.

I had been sitting there on my bedside listening to the rain and watching the lightning for so long that I had been unintentionally making up a story. A very detailed one about some fictional scenario. Just as I was about to travel to that world where my story took place, a loud roar of thunder snapped me back to the world of reality. The world I don't always prefer to be in.

The difficult part about this habit is that it's easy to be disappointed. After going from a world where literally anything that you can think of is possible, where the unimaginable is suddenly imaginable, coming back to the real world can be very

*(Continued on page 157)*

*(Continued from page 156)*

discouraging. Suddenly, you have control over almost nothing and there are imperfections with this world we call reality that imagination can't fix. You can always try to go back to a world you dreamed up, but nothing will ever be as electrifying as the feeling when you first imagine a story that takes place in a different world.

As the rain trickled away, and the lighting got farther and farther from me, I longed to go back to that place where I was in between worlds. In between the cracks of thunder that separated reality from the magical "anything can happen" place. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my cat crawl out of her rainstorm hiding place.

I reached my hand out the window to feel the air where rain once was. The air felt . . . weird. No characters from my imagination. No thoughts taking up space in a world where ideas were endless. The air felt how reality feels if you could give reality a feeling. It felt empty. It felt lonely. But I'm not alone. In the back of my head, where the most impossible thoughts live, I knew I could always go back to a world where the stories come from. The world that feels in between.

**Mya Kosar**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

## Wildwood Campground: A Sense of Place

I remember the hickory fire  
Under the stars, laughing  
Telling stories, singing songs  
About Baby Shark and the Angels on a string

I remember going to lake  
To swim and get ice cream  
One hated and one loved  
The warm sun and family fun

I remember bear hunting  
Riding around in a golf cart  
With a flashlight and them two  
Finding wooden bears, for decoration  
And, Bear, another resident camper

I remember the smells and the sounds  
Intense and unforgettable  
I remember the tastes and sights  
Savory or sweet and brilliant

**Bridgette Donohue**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 10

## What Is That Thing?

What is that thing?

Is it a ring? Or is it spring?

Go check it out

And be very careful.

We don't really know what we can handle.

What is it? What is it?

Can you see it from here?

If you can, please tell me.

I'll run like a deer.

And make a dash out the door, so run back behind me.

So we'll both get out, and run towards Mississippi.

What's that your telling me?

It' s a wing?

It's a king?

Sorry, can't hear you.

Did you say it's a spring?

Come closer, I can't tell what you are saying.

Tell me one more time.

Oh I see, it's a thing.

**Cameron Gorog**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Nature

Nature is a beautiful thing,  
Sometimes it makes me want to sing.  
I can see the water flow,  
And the birds sing low.

I can hear the leaves falling  
And a deer calling.  
Bright colors, beautiful and neat,  
Just like a newly paved street.

Sometimes I will sit and wonder  
How nature has so much calmness  
And how it can sit still for so long.

If I was in nature, I would be  
A flowing river, so gentle, but also  
Sometimes very harsh and mean.  
I would make friends with all of  
The animals and plants,

And I would bring joy, to everyone,  
When they pass.  
The kids, adults and grandmas too,  
Would all come to see me, and say hello.

*(Continued on page 161)*

*(Continued from page 160)*

All the beauty, the glory, that nature brings,  
I love that, and so, If I could pick  
one place to be,  
It would be nature,  
A place that is just right for me.

**Eli Watson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

---

### **Nature's Warning**

For when the wolves no longer howl  
and the birds no longer chirp  
and when the animals that used to roam freely  
along the earth  
are gone with the wind,  
that is when our numbers  
will begin to dwindle  
and slowly but surely  
our race will die out  
so we shall be careful now  
and if not  
the end may be nearer  
than we perceive

**Calix Lemp**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Yummy Treats and Yummy Trees

Hunger consumes him  
he eats whatever he sees  
whatever he can get his  
hand on he munches.

Apples or peas, chicken  
then beans, pork, now rice.  
he'll eat it all,  
until there is nothing left.  
yet he is still hungry

Nothing will stop it,  
the pain keeps on gnawing  
his tummy growling,  
the fridge it empty.

He marches outside,  
looking for food.  
but he see none,  
yet that doesn't stop him.

He still munches.  
rocks and grass, sticks or stones,  
and  
Trees, Trees, and more Trees.

**Emily Winnicki**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 12

## A Spark

When most people think of a spark, they picture

A lit match

A frayed wire

A static shock

But to an artist, a spark is so much more

A painter gets a spark when they envision

A canvas swirled with colors,

Depicting beautiful scenes

A musician gets a spark when they hear

Lovely notes joining in harmony,

Words creating the perfect lyrics

A sculptor gets a spark when they feel

Clay molding in their hands,

Figurines coming to life

But I, as a writer, get a different kind of spark

A spark that happens when an idea arises in my mind

Worlds and characters, plots and scenes

Essays and novels, all created by words

Because that's where this poem came from

A spark

**Lauren Ball**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **Any Ideas?**

Poems are hard to write.  
Ideas may seem endless,  
But they are limited.

Inspiration is not kind to thee,  
Who attempts to write these.

Nothing comes to mind,  
Empty as a shell waiting to  
Get rehomed by a crab.

Indeed it's very frustrating,  
And very time-consuming.

I guess I just won't write today.

**Bailey Fetterolf**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **Small Stone**

Lightning strikes the land  
storms rage in the mighty sky  
on the silky sand  
stands a lone guy.

The moon full throughout the land  
the water shining bright  
although raging on the sand.

He swims through the water while it glistens  
In his hand a blossom.

Out far is a land  
although it is small a stone listens.  
the man drenched as the storms rages on  
places the blossom on the stone  
named Tom

**Breden Reed**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Joy of a Book

I love myself a good book.

One with a strong hook,  
and a crazy world.

A world that no matter how strange it is  
something draws you in.

When we read we tell are selves we would do the same,

We would fight the tyrant,

We would solve the mystery,

We would find that one true love.

We believe in ourselves,

sometimes more than we do in real life.

But who's to tell us this isn't real,

The way the world melts around us and we get sucked in.

There is no better joy in life than a good book,

a wandering mind,

And an open block of time.

**Allison Bartiromo**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Emily Kniesly**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## The Wishing Well

Oh wonderful wishing well, you work like a spell,  
And with you, I cannot fail.  
You can tell me a story,  
And make my life magical like a ringing bell..

I go to you around twelve every day,  
And on this day, I found out  
That a big surprise,  
Is just a moment away. I asked you for safety,  
And then you shot back up a sign,  
That told me, about my surprise,  
And this is waiting for me, around the corner.

I rush back in, like a stream in the summer,  
And my mind is whirling, in so many different colors.  
What is my fate?  
The path is laid out before me,  
And I can't do anything but wonder.

I drift away in my dreams,  
And I can hear a voice whispering my name,  
But then it is gone, all of the same.  
It spoke the word flame,  
Which makes me wonder, will this be extreme?

*(Continued on page 169)*

*(Continued from page 168)*

I awake, and feel like all of this,  
Is just a mistake.  
Can it really be? A prophecy that is for me?  
I go outside where I think best,  
And all of my mind goes blank,  
Except that I hear a hiss.

I take on last look,  
At the beautiful sunrise over the woods,  
Which I truly cherish,  
And then I turn and head inside,  
And I still wonder about the mystery,  
Which I just can't hook.

I can feel the heat, and I can see the bright colors,  
And then I see bones, and  
Leaves, as a jump awake in horror.  
I hear the hissing again, and I can't  
Bear this any longer, what is it, that I am supposed to do?

The rest of my day bumps and thumps  
Along like a rattly ricked roller coaster.  
Walking back to the well,  
I ponder, that whatever surprise it has summoned,

*(Continued on page 170)*

*(Continued from page 169)*

Is making my stomach tie up in knots,  
Like the rope on a ship.

Tik, tok, tik, tok,  
I can only hear my clock counting by time,  
And I know it is counting down the  
Seconds until the surprise,  
Is going to get underway.

I hear a weird noise, and then a thump,  
And I can feel myself getting hot,  
A strange feeling, like I am the  
Only one in the middle of an empty clearing.

My ears suddenly start screaming,  
And I feel as though I am burning to a crisp,  
All of the sudden I sit up, and realize that it was  
A dream, but I am sweating,  
And it felt so real and ideal.

Then I start getting hot, and I rush  
Outside, in a desperate hope,  
That I will find water,  
And dive in so that I do not get a single degree hotter.

*(Continued on page 171)*

*(Continued from page 170)*

My heart stops for nearly five seconds,  
When I see the animals hissing and screaming,  
They are dashing from the biggest fire  
That I have ever seen.

This is my fate, to stop this mess,  
And save the things that I love,  
Before they are destroyed, once and for all.

I dive into the fire, like a runner dives into the race.  
My heart burns for this forest that I love,  
And all of the earth's creation,  
I want to save this nature nation.  
I sprint around rescuing bunnies, foxes, and even snakes.  
Everyone deserves a chance to live.

I run deeper into the woods and I see a pond,  
Around the corner.  
It was like it just appeared, by the spell of a magic wand.  
I splash into the water,  
And throw it all around me,  
The fire sizzles, like bacon in the early morning,  
And the animals run into the water,  
Scared like a toddler.

*(Continued on page 172)*

*(Continued from page 171)*

I won't give up. I can't.

I use my last bit of energy to get the fire out,  
And just as I do, I see the animals run to safety,  
And then I pass out.

I wake up in sweat, and I feel hot.

I look around, and everything looks safe and sound.

I am really confused on what just happened,

And then I realize, that

That must have been the worst nightmare

That anyone

Has ever seen.

**Eli Watson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

### **Quarantine Blues**

I'm stuck in the house with nothing to do

Online school is making me blue

I see no friends

I miss playing ball

Talking to my pals by giving them a call

Back to school next week

It's been so long

Being home this long feels so wrong

My dog likes me here

But even he's sick of me near

**Gavin Madigan**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Isolation

Isolation quickly overwhelms me  
Begging for forgiveness, a fallen hand  
Desolation I now begin to see  
Hanging by a thin thread, a single strand

Watch them . . . Their fears, their misunderstanding  
Mistreat, abuse . . . Completely unaware  
I am the land, their glorious teacher  
Someday they will learn to treat me with care

I wish they would learn to trust each other  
To join as one, to stand strong together  
A bond, a band and a mighty brother  
Forever as one, a powerful tether

You may not know, that fear is their captor  
So you may not see each special factor

**Tristan Pitts**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Abby Ludlow**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

**When Will This Be Over?**

When will this be over?

It's almost been a year.

I'm trapped,

Behind this mask,

But I do not fear.

As days roll by,

I start to think,

Why?

Why is this still going on,

Can't it just be done.

These times have been rough,

But we have to remember,

We are in this together!

We have accomplished great things,

Even though these are hard times.

With vaccines becoming available,

As I write,

I can see the end is in sight.

**Eddie Gale**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

### **The Light of Hope**

The glow of the faint silver light,  
So weak and subtle, yet it shines so bright.  
The slight hope it shows with a country falling apart,  
As if a young turtle dove came to announce a fresh start.  
A year we wish we could discard,  
Many people have died, if not scarred.  
The fear the people hold is raw and real,  
Yet one way or another, this country will heal.  
Soon our country will revive,  
And take its first steps, strive after strive.

**Noah Fry**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Here We Come

2020 what a year,  
Didn't bring much cheer.  
With COVID threatening,  
It wasn't very welcoming.

When COVID attacked  
Our lives cracked.  
Spilling out all of our fun,  
All we want is for it to be done.

2021 is very promising,  
Our hopes are blossoming.  
The bar is set pretty low,  
COVID's gotta go.

Now we have a vaccine  
No more school on a screen.  
Our future looks bright,  
Happiness is in our sight.

We're done with being glum,  
2021 here we come!

**Vincent Gambaccini**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

Dear Journal,

June 19, 2026

Today, the sirens went off, 7 years after the apocalypse started. It wasn't expected to be this bad. I'm on my way to a bunker of some sort. Just thinking about being hidden underground makes me get the feeling that I'm some sort of dog that has to be stuck in a cage for who knows how long. As of right now, it's me, Dad, Dr. Jackson, and her son, Ben. I've only met Dr. Jackson once and, well, I've never met Ben. But, I'm sure I'll get to know them pretty well if we're going to be in the bunker for a while. Even though Ben and I have only exchanged a few words, I decided that he's pretty cool. I'm feeling a little tired so I think I might nap on the rest of the way to the bunker.

Sincerely,

Jane

Little did Jane know, this was just the beginning of something scary, new, exciting and yet somehow fun. Jane was definitely a handful. She stood at around 5 feet tall and had brown hair that sparkled red in the sun. She also acquired blue-ish green eyes and an attitude in which she got from her mother. Jane's face was almost cartoon like as she had wide eyes and an animated looking smile. Her teeth shone so bright that they were almost blinding. Ben and Jane were quite similar. He had wavy brown hair and brown eyes with a tint of green to them. Also, he stood at around 5 foot 1. He was very quiet at first but Jane eventually warmed up to him.

Dr. Jackson and Jane's father, William, were coworkers and very good friends. They treated each other as though they were siblings. Dr. Jackson had curly blonde hair and bright blue eyes. If her eyes were compared to the sky, there would be no difference. She was a very outgoing person who kept her modesty. Dr. Jackson was also quite tall, standing at around 5 foot 7. William looked a lot like his daughter, Jane. He had brown hair that had a lighter colored shimmer in the sun. He had brown eyes and tan olive skin which complimented each other. William was quite short, standing at around 5 foot 9. Dr. Jackson and

*(Continued on page 180)*

*(Continued from page 179)*

William shared lots of similarities among their personalities, especially their sense of humor.

Shortly after Jane decided to take a nap, they arrived at the bunker. "So this is it?", Jane asked, "It's not much but at least we should be safe", her Dad responded. The bunker was very secluded and hidden. The door to get in was aged and heavy, almost too heavy for Jane to lift. She found out how to open it and attempted lifting it. She let out a groan of struggle and Ben noticed. He ran over to Jane to help, "Need some help?", Ben asked, already knowing the answer, "Nope, I got this", Jane replied with a laugh. Jane and Ben went on to open the bunker and peek inside. They simultaneously looked at each other with a grimace expression.

Dear Journal,

June 19, 2026

We've finally arrived at the bunker and it's a bit less than I expected. I take that back, it's a lot less than I expected. It smells kind of weird and it gives me an eerie feeling. I can't believe I have to live here for who knows how long. We unpacked all of our stuff out of Dad's pickup and carried it down to our bunker. Ben, Dr. Jackson, Dad, and I all have our own rooms which is pretty cool since I'm not too fond of sharing. Ben and I are about to play a board game and get to know each other for a little while. I hope he's actually nice. Otherwise, this whole staying underground in a bunker thing is not going to go over well with me.

Yours truly,

Jane

*(Continued on page 181)*

*(Continued from page 180)*

Ben and Jane went on to play board game after board game. They also asked about each other non stop. "If you could be an animal, which one would you be?" Ben asked Jane followed with a giggle. "Definitely a bird so I could fly around and see all of the world from the sky. How about you?", "You make being a bird sound cool, probably a bird." Jane smiled at Ben and they continued their game. "How's it going?" Dr. Jackson asked, "Good", they answered. Dr. Jackson and William were in the other room talking as the kids eavesdropped. "At this rate, we could be here for a couple years" "Oh no, they've got to be working on a vaccine." The two went on and on about the virus for a while and Ben and Jane heard every part of it. Panic started to linger among the kids but they tried to stay calm.

Jane lost interest in writing in her journal as she had someone else to talk to, Ben. The two developed an unbreakable bond, sharing jokes and good laughs what seemed like every minute of the day. Many months had passed since they first entered the bunker and they had no idea when they would be able to leave. Jane finally decided to pick up her journal again and she got to writing.

*(Continued on page 182)*

*(Continued from page 181)*

Dear Journal,

December 12, 2026

It's been a while since I've last written. Ben and I are getting along and I think we compliment each other quite well. Dr. Jackson keeps telling Dad that the virus is clearing up but the casualties continue to pile up everyday. "William, I think we can leave here pretty soon and finally get back to our normal lives. Won't it just be great to see the sun for once?" "Yes of course but there's still a risk." I think that's what was said if I can remember correctly. Hearing them say that gives me hope. It will be so exciting to finally see the sun again and feel the wind blow my hair across my face. I think Ben will be excited to hear this so I'm going to tell him now. Oh, and I promise I won't wait this long to write again.

Sincerely,

Jane

"Knock knock" Jane exclaimed as she walked into Ben's room with a little skip in her step, "Guess what, we might be able to leave this place soon!" Ben looked at her as his eyes widened and a smirk began to show. "Are you serious?" Ben asked with the most enthusiasm he's had the entire time in the bunker, "It's about time." "I overheard our parents talking and they said it might be safe now," Jane had to pause, trying not to give Ben too much hope, "I think". "I really can't wait!" Ben exclaimed as he got up and danced around his room. He suddenly stopped and stared at Jane with a stern look. "We should go outside tonight" Ben said as though he was really set on the plan. "Ben I-" "We should go as soon as we can be sure everyone else is asleep". Jane wanted that so badly but deep down she knew it wasn't a good idea.

*(Continued on page 183)*

*(Continued from page 182)*

Dear Journal,

December 12, 2026

I think I gave Ben the wrong idea about the virus and the safety of the outside world. He was all “Let’s go outside tonight” this and “I can’t wait” that. I’m not sure how to break it to him, but I don’t want to go outside yet. Not until we know it’s safe for sure. He just knocked at my door and probably wants to talk about the ‘plan’. Wish me luck.

Yours truly,

Jane

Ben was let into Jane's room and he started rambling about his ‘plan’. “I think we should go out at exactly twelve o’clock” he says, “Are you ready? We have exactly four hours” Ben adds as he checks his watch. “Whatever you say. This is pretty risky but I guess I’m up for it.” Jane replies. Ben goes back to his room and Jane couldn’t help but ponder about what could happen. Although, she was excited. Almost four hours had passed and there was a quiet knock on Jane’s door. Ben walked in. “It’s go time” he whispers with enthusiasm. Jane and Ben snuck up the ladder and Ben twisted the handle of the door. It let out a squeak. “Ben!” Jane whispered. “My bad,” he replied. The door was open and Ben pushed it up.

They finally emerged from the underground bunker. The icy wind stabbed at their faces as they stood outside for the first time in months. Jane pulled a flash light out of her pocket and shone it on Ben’s face. “Wow” he said in amazement, “nothing really changed”. Ben and Jane smiled as they realized that they might be able to go back home and live how they did before the sirens went off, before the virus got out of control, before the apocalypse.

**Giuliana Hulesch**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

### **Piece of Cake . . . Not**

The art of baking cakes is so advanced.

First, make the cake to put in the oven.

Wait for the cake to bake while I dance.

Whip up the buttercream with some lovin'.

Let the cakes cool, get your stacking tools.

Level the cakes, with cream between layers,

and don't lick the buttercream, this is a rule.

Don't let the cake tilt, or say your prayers.

Buttercream the cake, with all the sides smooth,  
and add some little dollips on the top.

Then, eat the cake to satisfy that sweet tooth  
but make sure none of the little crumbs drop.

Baking is so much fun, especially cake.

Don't eat too much, or you'll get a bellyache

**Hannah Boyes**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Kylie Anderson**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## The Old House

The old, abandoned house had a very nefarious feel to it. There was an uneasy feeling about the house. I got a sudden chill from the bleak wind, as I stepped in the abandoned house, I could see the broken floorboards and the shattered glass as I tried to walk around without hurting myself. The imperceptible light from the windows made it very difficult to walk around. It had a very faint, revolting scent. The kitchen was old and rusted and it was a non-propos living environment. There were cracked stairs going up to the attic. I hesitated about whether to go up or not. One false move and the stairs could collapse. I decided to leave. Several years later, it was torn down. This house still remains a mystery.

**Jake Roebuck**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

---

### Illuminated

Every day when I flick the switch  
 In the basement  
 Light floods the area  
 The crickets and other bugs  
 Scurry away to the shadows  
 Make a glorified path to the fridge  
 All so I can grab a soda  
 The reflective can shines  
 As I casually head out  
 And hit the switch  
 The dark takes back over  
 It switches from noon to night  
 The creepy crawlies head back out  
 Scavenging for food

**Mason Knechtel**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

I took a heavy, labored breath  
in an attempt to do one more rep  
my arms shook  
my hands cried  
yet I dug deep

Pushing through the hardest time  
is a battle unseen,  
the work you put in  
when no one is watching  
will one day put you on screens

The discipline it takes  
to be the very best  
is like that of a soldier  
walking into battle  
no matter the risk

The pain you'll endure,  
the tests you'll be forced to take  
will be unlike any others  
and only time will tell  
how much you can withstand

*(Continued on page 188)*

*(Continued from page 187)*

So push on strong soul  
for a great future awaits  
brighter than you can imagine  
and it is all built  
from your darkest of days

**Calix Lemp**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Jake Freas**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

## Player's Thoughts

It was late Sunday night, and I'm waiting with my team to take the field. This moment is what all players dream of. Tonight I was playing in the Super Bowl. You would think your heart would be beating out of your chest, but surprisingly I was the calmest I've ever been. As soon as you step on the field all the sounds come rushing towards you. The heavy roar of the crowd, the ball thudding a receivers hands, a kicker booting a ball through the up-rights, and at that moment I knew I was living a dream. The game went by super fast. Everyone was showing strong emotions. I hadn't even thought about how much people could see me on TV. I suddenly saw a teammate make a mistake and then my coach scream at him. At that moment I suddenly got anxious. What if I made a mistake? Would the coach bench me? Would I be cut afterwards? The thoughts were overwhelming me until I finally realized that I was putting myself in a better position to fail. I needed to calm down if I wanted to play my game. I suddenly started playing like a hawk. Intercepting or deflecting every ball thrown to me till the last second of the game. I didn't even think that this was going to be the first time that I was a champion.

**Jacob Earnest**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

Once there was a kid named Bob. He was 13 years old and loved the game of basketball. Bob has had a rough past couple of years. He and his family have been homeless or living in dirty and cheap apartments as long as he could remember. Bob has spent countless hours on the public basketball court practicing. His dream one day was to get drafted into the NBA, so he could make enough money to get his parents a nice house. As the months went on, he kept practicing and working hard. One day, he went to his small apartment that they were living in one day and walked in to see his parents looked thrilled. He found out that they both got a job where they would each make decent money. They would now have enough money to move to a nice apartment on the other side of town. Bob was not happy at that moment, because one thing that stuck out in his mind was that he would be changing basketball teams. He already played for the East side blazers, for which he was the starting point guard for. They were also the back to back state champions. He would now be playing for the west side eagles who finished 7 - 28 the previous year. He was not happy, but he would have to deal with it.

A week later they moved to the new apartment and Bob finally had his own room. Bob instantly fit in with his new team, who also received two other new players, Jones who was a tall center and Dan the small forward. They practiced together for about a month before their first game. After many tough and physical practices, it was finally time for their first game. Bob was starting at point guard and he had his team winning 33-28 at halftime. Bob had 8 points but was being selfish by not looking to pass but to score, he had zero assists. The coach talked to Bob before the third quarter, but Bob did not listen. He started the 3rd quarter with two missed shots and also failed to pass to his open teammates. His coach sat him for the rest of the quarter. Bob then got the opportunity to start the fourth quarter. On the first possession, he had an open look at three but fired a pass underneath to Jones who got the layup. Bob finished the game with 10 points and 7 assists to lead the Eagles to their first win of the season. The eagles finished the season 27 - 8. They were the number 2 seed. They did not play the Blazers yet that year who finished with the number one seat. Bob finished averaging 12 points and 7 assists per game.

*(Continued on page 192)*

*(Continued from page 191)*

They cruised through the tournament, getting to the championship against the Blazers. The first half was rough; they were down 40 - 27. Bob had 4 points and only two assists. They started a run at the end of the third quarter making them down 66 - 58. It got close then Bob hit a deep three to tie the score at 78 with a minute left. Both teams scored twice in the next forty seconds, and with twenty seconds left, the Blazers center got fouled and hit both of his free throws. Now, with only fifteen seconds left. Bob brought the ball down and passed the ball into Jones, but he did not have an open look and passed the ball out to Bob with 4 seconds left. Bob had an open look from deep, he fired away and hit the three to put them up by one with a little less than two seconds left. The Blazers got the ball, fired up a quick shot, missed and the Eagles won the championship. Bob finished with 18 points and 10 assists. Bob had a feeling that great things were to come in the future.

**Payton Salzwimmer**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

The clock hit two minutes. All odds were against the Red Birds. Down 14, the comeback seemed impossible. The team's star quarterback, Justin, stepped up and threw a strike for a touch-down. There was one problem- the RED Birds only had one timeout. Their opponent could just run the clock out.

Justin jogged over to the sideline muttering under his breath. The coach pulled him over and said, "Hey, this game is not over yet". Coach yelled. Justin continued to complain underneath his breath. "That's it", Coach barked. "Fine!" Justin shouted back, "this team sucks anyway!" And he threw his helmet down in disgust.

Then something incredible happened. The opposing team fumbled the kickoff and the Red Birds recovered at the opposite 45 yard line. The only problem was the coach was not going to let Justin back in the game. Justin stood up and started to pull on his helmet, then the coach said, "What are you doing?" Justin replied, "I'm going to win this team a championship".

"No you're not", the coach said. "You can watch them win it though". He walked away and yelled for the backup quarterback. Lucas was a good quarterback, but he was no Justin. The team was up on the sidelines nervously watching. They had to go 45 yards with one time out and a backup quarterback. There was under a minute left. They handed the ball off and the running back broke for a big gain of 20 yards! They used their timeout. They had one play left. Lucas took the snap, stepped up, looked, looked again. He scrambled out of the pocket. Nothing was open. With nothing open, he made a move to run. He dodged 2 tackles and was at the 5 yard line. He had one man to beat. He had to pull something incredible off. He dove! He got it! The announcer yelled "The Red Birds are state champs!"

Justin sat there in complete shock. The whole crowd was going crazy. Justin walked off the field in disgust. Coach sat there and just smiled.

## My First Show

It was a bright sunny day Chagrin Valley Farms  
I was getting ready to ride when I heard the alarms.  
They were calling for my class to go to the ring.  
My spur hit the stirrup with a loud *CLING*  
I was so nervous, my stomach was turning.  
I could smell the popcorn and butter they were churning.

I drowned out the noise of the crowd.  
I promised to Jinx, no matter what, I would be proud.  
Sofia rode a clear round with Shannon.  
I went in the ring and rode a circle.  
Jinx started cantering toward the jump,  
His hooves hit the ground with a big giant *THUMP*

I looked up at my family as they looked back at me.  
"Make it over the jump" was my plea.  
We cleared the first line and the second,  
It was so hot that my face had reddened  
I gave Jinx a pat on his neck  
I was a sweaty and tired wreck.

I rode 3 more rounds and cleared them all.  
We went back inside and I untacked Jinx in his stall.  
I watched my friends ride in the next class,

(Continued on page 195)

*(Continued from page 194)*

I drank ice cold water from a glass.  
I was so tired, I fell asleep in the chair,  
I woke up from my sister braiding my hair.

We got our ribbons and put the horses in the trailer  
I fell asleep as I got in the car, I couldn't wait any later  
We drove back to the barn and unloaded the horses  
The driveway we laid on was a blanket even though it was  
coarse.

I know I'll never forget this show  
My walls have so many ribbons, they're gonna overflow  
I was so proud of my old boy  
Everytime I remember that day, I'm filled with joy

**Kinsey Troyer**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

## **An Inventory of Being and a Statement of Self**

Hi, my name is Ashby

I bet you've never heard that name before

I'm the only one of me I know

I'm five foot five inches tall, yet my sister calls me small

I hate when she does that

My hair is long and red

It's a faded red, not really red at all

But I like red

I think my eyes are blue

But not a pretty blue

Just a muddled average of all the blues

I don't like my face sometimes

But I look in the mirror every day without fail

I am smart

I am clever, yet I tell myself I am not

Dumb is a word I use for myself every day

But my report cards would disagree

Why can't I just let them win the argument for once?

*(Continued on page 197)*

*(Continued from page 196)*

I like video games, but I'm afraid of dying

That's weird right, the character isn't real, so why am I scared?

I hate spiders, they give me the heebie-jeebies

So do heights

Also trying, and failing, and even existing sometimes

This world is terrifying

Sometimes I wish I was fictional

Make-believe is a tempting fate

Is any of this world even real?

I love eggs

Probably a little too much

I used to be allergic to them, and now I eat them almost every day

I like burnt cheese and crispy potatoes

Rare meat is gross and slimy

I'm not a picky eater

But I don't like fish, brussel sprouts, or anything with vinegar

I like it when it's cold because I get to pile on blankets

*(Continued on page 198)*

*(Continued from page 197)*

Summer dresses make me happy

I love talking and I overshare

But I carry dark secrets within my charcoal mind

I hate myself and I hate you too

I would never tell it to your face

Hate is a feeling I'm familiar with

Fury and passion often follow

I hate what has happened to the world: to me

I am angry all the time

Yet I smile every day with friends and family

I feel myself sinking beneath the waves of expectation

Yet I refuse to teach myself to swim

I want someone else to do that for me

But I will swim, I'm afraid of drowning

I am forlorn and despondent

My last year of high school is depressing, to say the least

*(Continued on page 199)*

*(Continued from page 198)*

Nothing can bring back the time and memories I've lost  
I fear I have become a bitter old woman at age eighteen

Hope is now just a childish whimsy flitting above the vast craters  
that spatter my soul

My name is Ashby and the year is 2021

**Ashby Marsh**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

---

### **Passion's Sunset**

If passion had a color, it would look like the sunset.

The way the night sky looks as if it's enveloping the moon. That's the way he felt when she wrapped her arms around his. The way the stars twinkle and glow against the blanket of darkness that indicates night. That's the way her eyes sparkled when she had an idea. And the way that blanket of darkness looks endless and empty sometimes - that's how he felt when he wasn't with her.

She was the type of person that could silence a room and fill it with laughter with the same sentence. She mastered both standing at the center of attention and blending into a crowd flawlessly. Like the way the sun moves out of the way for the moon, but the only people who get to see it are those who stay awake once the darkness rolls in. The way little kids are captivated by that glowing orb floating in the sky was the way he was captivated by her.

The way the tide brushed in and out rhythmically against the shore was the way every steady breath felt as her chest rose and fell when she sat beside him. How all the noise and chaos of the day faded away as night time approached allowed quiet as they sat together, not feeling any pressure to fill the silence.

*(Continued on page 200)*

*(Continued from page 199)*

The gentle rush of waves matched his rush of excitement as they drifted down the pier, hand in hand. It seemed so cliché to say that it felt like time stopped when they were together, but people say things are cliché because they're true. And the feeling he felt when he was with her was very very true, so true that sometimes he didn't believe it was real.

The satisfying comfort of the warm sand coating their bare feet and backs. The calm breeze was gentle against their skin. Everything felt like something out of a dream you'd beg to go once you woke up.

And if passion had a color, it would look like the sunrise.

**Mya Kosar**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

---

### Pure Love

No one really knows what it feels like to fall in love . . .  
until it happens.

Until you see that person.

That person that makes you so happy.

You feel like you can tell them anything.

Every touch from them feels like a lightning shock.

When you're with them, you never want to leave.

But that's the thing about love. It's so pure and true that when it's false, you can never see it coming.

Sure it may look real

It may feel real.

But you never really know.

That's why love hurts

*(Continued on page 201)*

*(Continued from page 200)*

It cries you to sleep at night.

It makes you feel empty, used, fake.

Love is a battlefield.

Every feeling is something you fight and battle against.

Or maybe you gave up and are just lying there, bleeding from your wounds.

Love is indescribable really. I can only tell you what I know.

Your experience will be different.

When you meet your person.

Some people use love as an alias.

They say it and do it, but they don't mean it.

Alias Love is dangerous. You are either guilty but pleased or you're broken.

Some say the representation for love is a heart. That's not true.

There's more broken love than real love in the world.

The symbol should be a scale. You have to keep it balanced.

Too fake and it tips.

Too much control and it tips.

But if you meet the one person who holds the scale.

The one person who makes everything balance.

That's love.

Some couples celebrate their anniversary.

That's wrong too

Why celebrate the date you entered in matrimony?

You should celebrate the first time you locked eyes.

*(Continued on page 202)*

*(Continued from page 201)*

The first time you felt your heart skip a beat when you looked at them. The first time you knew you were soulmates.

That's an interesting word, isn't it?

Soulmates.

You aren't each half of a soul.

You aren't siblings.

You are connected. You are each other's grip on life.

You are everything to one person and they are everything to you.

I think love can best be described by the word 'whole'

Because when you find that person, that person who completes you, who makes you feel alive, who doesn't make you feel alone, you are whole.

You finally know what it feels like to be you.

You finally accept yourself.

You finally know how to answer the question, "who are you"

Because you know who you are.

You are in love

And if you've found the truest love there is, you are set for life.

Ready to spend eternity with the one that completes you.

The one who you share with, the purest of true love.

**Sylvie Parada**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7



**Kaitlyn Pesarchick**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## Who Are You?

Who are you? A question asked probably thousands of times a day.

You meet someone and you ask them who they are.

When I am asked that, my response is simple:  
a name, or some other title that someone gave me.

But who am I truly? A name isn't who I am, is it?

It's a tricky question, you see.

People for some reason feel as though  
they should know who they are right away.

Some people expect others to have their lives planned  
out from age 10.

But when I think about who I am, I can't answer right  
away

How do we know who we are?

There's no sign up sheet,  
there's no name tags that tell you your purpose in life.

Who are you?

My simple answer; I don't know yet.

Sure I can say that I'm a piano player or a violinist.  
I could say I'm a student, but I won't be a student forever.  
I could say I'm a daughter, a sister, a cousin, a friend, but  
is that all I am?

People say life is too short, and they are right.  
Life is too short to put yourself in a box like that,  
to automatically define who you are.

But life is also quite long.

*(Continued on page 205)*

*(Continued from page 204)*

You have so much time to discover who you actually are.

You don't have to answer right away.

So for now, when people ask who you are,  
just say your name.

**Madeline Beck**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

---

## **The Big Bright Ball**

Walking outside to my car, I spot my sister sitting all by herself on the swings. I jog over to her. My feet crunch when the wood chips touch my flip-flops. My sister looks like she's crying but it is too early to tell. I pass the monkey bars and slide, eventually arriving at the swings where my sister is sitting. "Hey Jenny, what's going on?" I ask her.

"Well," she says in between sobs, "Uh, Jessica took my ball and, deep breath, ran home."

"Hey, who is this Jessica person and why did she take your ball?" I ask nonchalantly. "I walked to the playground this morning, and then a girl my age came up to me and said,

'Do you want to play?' I, of course, said yes because I was bored. I thought I could, hiccup, make a new friend, but instead she took my ball." Jenny explained.

"What game were you playing?" I asked like she had not been crying.

Jenny replied, "We were, hiccup, playing 'throw the ball as high as you could then catch it.' That's what Jessica said it was called anyway."

I looked right into her eyes and said, "Did someone REALLY

*(Continued on page 206)*

*(Continued from page 205)*

take your ball, or did you just lose it and don't want to get in trouble?"

Jenny then began to sob even harder. "Okay fine! I accidentally kicked the ball into the street and then a car ran over it."

My mind instantly flashed to what could have happened if Jenny had ran into the street and gotten hit by that car.

"Well as long as you're okay, I'll try to get you a new ball."

"Do you promise not to tell, hiccup, mom?" Jenny asked fearfully.

"I promise." I tell her.

Jenny stops crying as hard and we walk home.

The next day I decided I should get Jenny a new ball to play with. Hm, I think as I walk into Walmart, what kind of a ball would a seven year old like to play with? A football? No, maybe a soccer ball? I don't think so. Oh I know. I'll get her a big rubber ball! I cruise down the aisles until I find what I am looking for. At the end of one of the toy aisles, I see a big, bright, rubber ball. Perfect! I grab it and walk back to the checkout area. I can't help but smell the sweet scent of the bakery, and have to get a cupcake. In the car, I bite my face into the vanilla cupcake with bright blue icing. The frosting dyes my mouth blue, and I get a little blob on my driver's license. I wipe off the blue drop and look at how the section giving my age, seventeen, is a light shade of blue. The car ride home is long, but worth it. My sister's face absolutely lights up when she sees the big red ball.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you!" Jenny repeats over and over again. "No problem." I reply. Just then, my mom walks in and says, "Jenny? Didn't I just get you a new ball yesterday?" My sister's face goes white.

"Uh." A pause. "Jason ran over it with his car." Jenny says in

*(Continued on page 207)*

*(Continued from page 206)*

one quick breath. Now, my face turned white.

Mom says, "Seriously Jason? You didn't tell me you popped it? Not only did you lie to me, but you just lost your permits too. No driving the car for a week."

My jaw drops to the ground as I look at my sister. I don't bother fighting back, because I don't want to make even more of a fool of myself. Jenny smirks at me then walks away with the ball I got her. Then I realize, it was all staged. She pretended to be sad, just so she could get a new ball. She was a crafty one. I am so mad! I absolutely just got played by my sister who is ten years younger than me, and I'm not allowed to drive for a week. I walk upstairs to my room, put my face in the pillow, and scream.

**Caleb Sundermeier**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

---

## **Flowers!**

I am walking along the old crumbly side-walk, smiling, as this is another beautiful sunny Spring day. The birds are singing, the light wind is blowing my hair and I imagine playing to my heart's content after school. Until I hear the sound: BRRRRING!! I stop in my tracks. My smile freezes. The sun goes behind the clouds. "The Tardy Bell!" I think and start sprinting towards the school. My light brown sandals slap against the pavement, my hair is now flying out behind me, and my cheeks are redder than before. I sprint into the parking lot and race across the school park. Then, the main entrance comes into sight. My eyes widen. I hear myself cry out, "Wait! WAAAAIT! Don't close the door!!" Somehow, I slip inside at the last second, and stop just inside the school, panting. Then I gulp. I suddenly hear the "click clop" of her heels, and the phony "Good Morning!", as she passes by. I look up, and there, heels and all, is Mrs. Pan, the school principal. She lowers her glasses and looks at me. "Sarah?!" She says.

*(Continued on page 208)*

*(Continued from page 207)*

"Yes?" I say, softly.

"Do you know why I am talking to you?" she asks. I do, but shake my head anyway. "I am talking to you because you are late. For the fifth time this week!" She ends, frowning madly. "What happened this time?!" She asks me, bending over so her face was level with mine.

"Uh . . . pardon?" I say, trying to bide my time.

"I said," She says, getting really close to me. "Why. Are. You. Late." "Uh . . . well . . ." I start.

"Yes?"

My mind races. What could I say, what could I say? The fact that I had been daydreaming was just too . . . normal. She was sure to put me in detention! I had to think of something else. But what? So I said the first thing that popped into my head. "Flowers!"

"What?!" She asked.

"Uh . . . flowers! My-my dog was chasing flowers all morning and I couldn't catch him! When I FINALLY did, I had to change because I smelled like pollen, and there are kids here who are allergic to pollen!" I finished.

"You don't have a dog."

"What?" I ask, horrified.

"You don't have a dog. I talked to your mother just yesterday and there wasn't any mention of a dog."

"Well . . . we could have gotten it last night! Or this morning!" I say.

"The pet store closes at 3:00pm and opens at 10:00am." She said. "I talked to your mother well past 3:00 yesterday, and it's only 9:00 right now."

"Well . . ." I start. "Okay. It wasn't a dog. It was . . . a rabbit!"

*(Continued on page 209)*

*(Continued from page 208)*

"A what?" She asks, her brow furrowing.

"A bunny rabbit!"

"And why would you be chasing a bunny rabbit?" She asks.

"Um...because it was chasing me?" I say, speaking without really even thinking. "Have you ever even heard of that happening?" She asks me. "Rabbits are very shy and timid. I don't think one of them would become mad and start chasing you, unless it's your pet, which it isn't because you don't have one, and the pet store is not open right now."

"Right . . ." I say. "Um . . . then the flower was chasing me!" I say.

"Excuse me?" She asks.

"Nevermind!" I say, "Too close!" I think in my head.

"So." Mrs. Pan says. "Why were you late?"

"I . . .I already told you. A . . .a bee was chasing me! And I got stung! So I had to go home to put some . . .things on it! That's why I was late!" I shout.

"And where is your sting?" She asks me.

"What?"

"Where is your sting? You have to show me it. I'm sure it hurts." There is fire in her eyes. I shiver. "That's right." she says, smiling triumphantly. "You can't! Because there IS NO sting!"

"Yeah, yeah, okay. Sure." I say. "But-"

"Oh enough already!" She yells. "I have already shut down many of your excuses, Sarah.

The time has come to give up!" I bite my lip. I am about to speak, to say something, anything, but then she says,

"Either way, you're busted.", and then hands me a detention slip.

## **Mrs. Winkabit, Aliens, and the Evil Alarm Clock**

Oh no. Oh no. I'm late AGAIN for school, and this time I'll have to figure out a better excuse than last time. My teacher, Mrs. Winkabit, wasn't pleased, as I had said an alien came down from Mars and told me that I couldn't go to school that day, and that I had killed it with my ruler. This time, I thought, I'll say that a tree fell down over my road last night in the storm. Yeah, she'll believe that.

I get to school and rocket up the steps, stopping in the office for a late pass, ignoring the major eye-rolling I get from the staff that works there. I run as fast as a race car to my seventh grade language arts class, and bolt into the classroom. Mrs. Winkabit doesn't even look at me from the whiteboard, but instead says, "What's the excuse today, Alex?" I launch into my story about the tree, making up the details as I go. When I'm finished, she says, "Well that's nice. I'm so very glad you're not hurt. Shall we go on to read our book?" I soar through the rest of the school day, and I'm so excited to go home and play video games.

The next day, if you'll believe it, I'm late again! The real reason for being late, as it always is, is that I slept in too long and missed the bus. I haven't ridden that bus since the first day of school. Instead, I run to school, and I'm flushed after the ten minutes it takes me. I ran up the stairs to Mrs. Winkabit's room, not even bothering to get a late pass. "Glad you could join us, Alex. What terrible fate awaited you this morning for you to be so late?" She asked me. I then launched into a story about some trolls I supposedly met along the way, and she nods as I go. "How wonderful. Now, let's get back to learning about figurative language, shall we?"

Again, I soar through my other classes, and run back home after school. My mom is waiting for me when I get there, and she is standing in my room holding an alarm clock. "You are using this," she says, "You're not making up any more excuses for being late to school." I oblige, and then lose myself in video games.

The next morning, the alarm clock wakes me up on time, blaring like a siren, and I actually have time for a hot breakfast. Mom hands me my normal breakfast of an egg sandwich, and it's nice to sit at the kitchen table to eat it. The food is piping hot, and I

*(Continued on page 211)*

*(Continued from page 210)*

drink some refreshing orange juice before heading out to wait for the bus. The morning air is brisk, and I can see our neighbor next door heading out to feed his horses. When the bus pulls up, the driver looks surprised to see me, and looks at me like I myself am an alien from Mars, as well as the rest of the kids. I find my way to the back of the bus and sit in the seat, which smells like a pile of dung. The bus finally pulls into the school, and I walk inside.

I meander my way towards Mrs. Winkabit's room, and I'm in there on time. She finally takes attendance, and what do you know, she skips right over my name! I say, "Mrs. Winkabit, I'm here." I guess it wasn't the greatest idea to stand right behind her when I said that, because she screamed, knocked me over, and she fell like a log being cut down. She didn't get up, and our principal had to call an ambulance. I felt so bad, and the day seemed to drag on forever.

I sulked home, deciding not to ride the school bus to avoid the sneers and jeers of my classmates, blaming me for Mrs. Winkabit's hospitalization. I walk into my house, and not even video games can make me feel better. I turn off the alarm clock, vowing never to use the blasted, evil thing ever again.

The next day, I'm late. It's comforting to sink into my normal schedule, no matter how good it felt to eat a warm breakfast and be on time. As usual, I run into Mrs. Winkabit's classroom, and to my surprise, she's there! She looks at me with a twinkle in her eye and a hint of a smile on her face. "Well, back into your normal routine, I see. You gave me quite a scare yesterday, Alexander. Me and my family had quite a laugh about all of it, afterwards. Have a new story for today?" She asks me quizzically. Again, for what seems like the millionth time, I launch into a story, this time it being about an evil alarm clock who wanted to ruin my day. Everyone laughs as I finish up my story, and so I settle into my comforting routine, and I was never on time for school again.

**Abby Demczyk**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 7



**Lauren Webb**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## A Pleasure to Have in Class

“What are you?”

People often avoid this question because they believe it’s hard to answer in just one word, or one sentence even. I avoid this question because, honestly I don’t know how to answer it. I could say I’m an athlete, I mean, I played soccer for twelve years. Or I could say I’m a daughter, sister, girl in general. But that’s not enough for me. Well, I’m a student, a pretty good one according to what I hear from teachers and parents. I was always the kid who had “A pleasure to have in class” on my report card—every single semester.

What does that even mean? Am I a pleasure because I always did well on tests? Or do I always respect the teacher? Or am I involved with extra curriculars? No, that’s not even the half of it.

I’m a Junior, so I’ve been doing this school thing for a while now, and have realized something about myself: I have no clue who I am. I mean— don’t get me wrong, I normally enjoy the school setting, but that’s *all* I am. I wake up every morning, go to school, after school I go to band practice, then I go home, do

*(Continued on page 214)*

*(Continued from page 213)*

homework and study, and find some sort of window where I can eat, shower, and take care of my basic human needs. And I've never really thought about doing life any other way. I was raised like this. My mom always pushed me to do my best and be involved in other things. I can still recall one evening I had soccer practice, but I had homework too. So, while on the way to practice, I'd be doing my homework in the backseat. Seems harmless right? It actually seems like I'm saving time. But I now realize that I didn't even have enough time to do one thing and focus fully on it. I have always packed my schedule with different things because "Sure, I'll have plenty of time!" This mindset has really turned me into what some call a "workaholic."

I try to take brakes, but I feel like I'm wasting time.

This is all I know how to do: work, move, do anything except relax. Because this is what I've been doing for ages, and I don't know how to stop. I can't stop. My day-to-day schedule is horrible, and most often it's just going from one thing to another within the same hour and not getting home until 9pm or later. I've tried to lighten my load but everything I do I see as essential or something that will look good on college applications. I want to

*(Continued on page 215)*

*(Continued from page 214)*

stop—I really do—but if I stop for even a moment, I’ll be so behind and then I’ll have so much more work to do. I’m tired. I just wish I could stop thinking for 10 minutes. I wish I wasn’t afraid for someone to genuinely ask me how I’m doing, because I don’t think I could look them in the eye and say “I’m fine” without crying. I wish I could just put the world on pause so I could catch up.

Teachers don’t see what happens behind the scenes, they don’t see what’s behind the mask we put on every day. They see a good student who studied hard and did good on a test. But they don’t see the kid who got no sleep because they studied literally all night and are disappointed because they got a B+. They see someone who doesn’t interrupt conversations and is always quiet—never a problem. They don’t see the person who was taught that their opinion didn’t matter and sharing their ideas was rude. They see the kid who always understands and never needs help. They don’t see the person who’s confused but was taught that asking for help is an inconvenience. Teachers see the Honors, AP, CCP student who always has work done on time. They don’t see the kid who doesn’t have enough time to do all

*(Continued on page 216)*

(Continued from page 215)

the work and take care of themselves, so they trade off eating, sleeping, bathing for work because they don't want to feel like a failure. This has been my whole life. I have been stressed to the point where I won't notice how hungry I am, I will fall asleep in class because I pulled another all nighter, I have gotten so frustrated with my work that I send myself into a downward spiral and end up crying alone on the bathroom floor because I don't want to disturb anyone else.

This is all I know, this is what I've done for eleven years. And now that I'm almost done with school and have to look at colleges, I realize I have spent so much time on school that I have no clue what I want to do with the rest of my life. I don't know what college I want to go to, I don't know what I want to major in, for God's sake *I don't even know what my favorite animal is!* I'm this robot that doesn't question why things are the way they are, that does everything without question, and anytime something new happens this big error message pops up, and you just exit out of it without actually fixing the problem. I've had no time to actually develop my interests because I would be wasting time, when I could be working.

(Continued on page 217)

(Continued from page 216)

So, to answer the question, “What are you?” I have no clue, but if you find out please let me know, so I can work that into my schedule.

But, hey, in the meantime, at least I’m “a pleasure to have in class.”

**Kayleigh Ethington**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11

---

### **The Disaster Driver’s Exam**

*7:30am. Wednesday. Time for Biology. Or rather time to daydream.*

That’s what I was thinking as I sat down in my chair at the back of the room in Room 102. My Biology teacher is Mrs. Pickett or as all us kids called her, Mrs. Pick-it, as in her nose. Mrs. Pick-it loves biology so, she is one of those teachers that yammers on about something and by the end of the class everyone in the room is asleep, drooling on their desks. Over the course of the year, I developed a habit of letting my mind wander anywhere else, usually to a fantasy I’d created in my head. Today, I traveled to a new one where I’d just got my license. It went like this:

*It was 4 o’clock in the afternoon and I had just passed my in-car test to get my license and now I was getting in the car to call my mom. I put my seatbelt on and dialed her.*

*“Hello? Honey, how’d it go?” she asked as she picked up.*

*“I did it, Mom! I did it!” I screamed into the phone thrumming with excitement.*

(Continued on page 218)

*(Continued from page 217)*

*“Oh, Honey, I knew you could do it! I’m proud of you!” she said.*

*I said goodbye and hung up. Then I put the key in the ignition and the engine roared to life, sounding like a lion. I stepped on the gas pedal and that’s where everything went wrong. I shot forward right into another car. A second later the car alarm went off and my airbag imploded. Then, a man from the DMV came running out the doors. In a panic, I backed up and tried to swerve out of the parking lot. I didn’t get very far because I had swerved into a tree. The guy from the DMV was getting closer so I backed up again and I smoothly drove out of the parking lot, right? Wrong!! I did make it out of the parking lot, however, I bulldozed the DMV entrance sign in the process. It was now mangled and said MDNA CTY DV instead of Medina City DMV. The DMV guy had his hand on my car pulling himself towards my window, so I stepped on the gas pedal again.*

*Once on the streets, I drove pretty smoothly except for a few trash cans and an unfortunate cat. To try and calm myself down, I flicked on the radio and that’s when I realized I left my jacket at the DMV. Too afraid to turn back, I continued to drive home.*

*Now, I know what you’re thinking, “Why is she daydreaming about this terrible event?” Don’t worry I haven’t gotten to the fun part yet.*

*After ten minutes, I began to hear police sirens and it seemed like they were following me. Then, I saw the red and blue lights flashing in my rearview mirror. So, being a stupid sixteen year old that just got her license, I stepped on the gas pedal for a third time that day. The cop car sped up and swerved around other cars. I tried to swerve around one car myself but smashed into the rail. Seconds later, the police car pulled up next to me and the cop got out of the car. He tapped on the window and I unrolled it.*

*(Continued on page 219)*

*(Continued from page 218)*

*“Miss, I was just at the DMV and they said you forgot your jacket but you drove off too quickly,” he said.*

*“I---” I stammered my heart pounding thinking he knew and I was going to jail.*

*“I followed you to make sure you were okay since it seems you had a rough start,” he replied to my non-answer.*

I was about to answer when someone began screaming my name.

“Sarah.”

“Sarah!”

“Sarah!!!”

I jumped and found myself staring at Mrs. Pick-it. Then, I realized I had my drivers test today. And I was fine, until I realized I would have to drive home after.

*Help me!*

**Bridgette Donohue**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 10

## The Test

My breath was sharp, and shallow. My palms, they were sweaty. "Five minutes left!" A voice yelled, but I was paying too much attention to what I was doing. I was writing furiously, trying to scratch down ideas and thoughts. We had practiced many times before, but this was even harder than what we prepared for, or so it felt like that. "Two minutes! Finish your thoughts, Ideas, and go edit! Quickly!" The voice yelled sharply. I looked around nervously. Many of my classmates had finished, but I felt like I was a moon's distance away. Oh how I hoped to get a good grade. "Time! Pencils down, pupils," The professor conducted. I put my pencil down, tears forming in my eyes. I hadn't finished. I had one more sentence to do, and I didn't finish it. I felt like a deflated balloon. The professor came around and saw me on the verge of crying, he saw my overgrowth-colored eyes, and knelt down next to me. "Annabel, you'll be okay. You're such a great writer, I bet you're gonna have the best grade in your class." My professor whispered to me. I was worried, because I hadn't finished. "But sir," I whimpered like an innocent puppy. "I- I didn't finish." He looked me in the eyes, his deep blue eyes concerned. "Annabel, looking at your paper now . . . I'm gonna read it to the whole class!" he remarked as I watched him scan it, his eyes wide. "Please sir . . . please don't read it . . ." I whispered back, looking at the ground. My anxiety was an Earthquake, making me tremble. The professor saw this too. "Then I'm at least gonna grade yours first. I'll email you your score tonight, how does that sound?" I looked at him, my eyes wide with compassion. "Thank you, Professor," I said kindly. The bell rang suddenly, making everyone jump. They must've all been as anxious as me, I guess I wasn't the only one. I thanked my professor one last time and grabbed my bag, heading back to my temporary home.

I was making dinner for me and my dorm mates, all of us laughing after playing some intense Monopoly. The smell of stir-fry wafted through the house, all of our mouths watering. There was enough for the three of us. I scooped it into a bowl, and just

*(Continued on page 221)*

*(Continued from page 220)*

as I put a delicious bite of the spicy stir-fry in my mouth, my phone chirped like a bird. I, being the curious person I am, pulled out my phone with confusion. Who would email me so late? It was seven thirty. I opened the email . . . and it was my professor! The one from the exam! I read nervously and quickly, until I came upon something so surprising I almost choked on my food. The email read:

Hey, Annabel, this is your Professor.

I was emailing you to share with you your score on the exam. I bet your gonna be surprised by this! I was grading it, and your paper reminded me of a story I had read before. I loved what you wrote, and I found no errors! I did see that you didn't have a concluding statement, and I'm assuming it was a time thing. Now onto your score.

Annabel, your score was . . . A 98%!!!! This is the best score I have ever gotten, in my twenty years of teaching. The average of your class, not counting you was only about a 65%.

I'm going to ask you one more time, may I read this in front of all of my classes? And if you want, may I share with them who wrote this wonderful essay? I will let you edit in a concluding sentence to be able to read it, but I will not take that part as any extra points. So what do you say?

Thanks for a great paper Annabel,

Your Professor.

*(Continued on page 222)*

*(Continued from page 221)*

I read it over three times in awe. Me, the most ordinary student, had wrote the best paper the professor had ever gotten? I felt lightheaded with confidence, and my heart was doing a victory dance. Never in one million years did I expect to have written a paper that well. I quickly told my close friends, and they said I should take up the chance to have my paper read in front of his classes! I smiled, turning a bit red. I would have never expected that me, the most ordinary of people, would get a grade so well. I smiled, writing back an email. I faltered a minute before clicking send. Did I really want this? I deleted the email I was writing and began a whole new one.

Hi Professor!

I got your email, and I just wanted to say I'm overjoyed with the grade I had. But to your dismay, I do not want you to read my paper in front of any class but my own. I do not want to be known for writing well on one test. I will also not be editing it. I feel how I wrote there is the best I could've done.

Thank you for your cooperation, professor,  
Annabel.

I smiled, and pressed send on the email. My heart did one more victory dance. I had done great, Even though I didn't think I would. I smiled and kept eating, telling jokes to my friends. I wished that night would never end.

**Savannah Brantelli**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Thunder Thoughts

Kirsten knew the storm was coming. As soon as the wind began to speed up faster than she could control, she knew there was nothing she could do. There was nothing she could do to stop the raindrops from getting bigger, or the thunder from getting louder, or the skies from getting darker.

The air around Kirsten grew thicker as she ran to take cover. She couldn't see clearly through the mist that had formed since the storm began. Large drops of water splashed loudly into the puddles around Kirsten.

The first strike of lightning startled Kirsten. It broke through the sky and left a faint crack amongst the black and blue clouds. The noise that followed the bolt of brightness shook Kirsten and as the air grew colder it became harder to breathe.

Eventually the raindrops became smaller, the wind became a gentle breeze, and the clouds lost their dark shade and became thinner. The cracks in the sky made by the lightning had been mended and the sun was peeking through the clouds.

But when Kirsten looked out the window, there were no puddles left from the rain. No leaves or branches had fallen to the ground from the wind. That's because there was no actual storm.

The wind had been Kirsten's thoughts, rushing through her head too fast for her to comprehend. Her mind was filled with things to think about and it still felt empty. There was nothing she could do once she felt overwhelmed and uneasy. There was nothing she could do to stop her mind from worrying, to stop the thoughts from multiplying, or to stop the room around her from getting darker.

Kirsten felt as if the walls around her were closing in. She couldn't see clearly through the pools that had formed in her eyes. Large teardrops fell quietly to the ground next to Kirsten's shoes.

Unlike the storms that come from the sky, the storm that enveloped Kirsten came from inside. It was a result of all the times she chose to push her emotions down where they could stay hidden for a while. Unfortunately, time was up and her anxiety needed to escape.

*(Continued on page 224)*

*(Continued from page 223)*

Eventually, tears stopped rolling down from Kirsten's eyes, the room around her returned to normal, and her breathing slowed to a normal pace. The skies were clear for now.

**Mya Kosar**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

---

### **The Grand Winner Dinner Challenge**

I stroll into the dimmed restaurant and sit down in the farthest booth in the corner. The ripped fake leather scratches at my back as I rest my body. The table looks like it has not been cleaned in a week. My hand seems to stick to it, no matter how I move. I do have to say though, the middle of the table was squeaky clean. Gazing across the area, I lay my eyes on a young man with a rough chin sitting in a booth on the other side of the restaurant. I watch as he orders his food to the waitress. The man asks for a cheeseburger and fries. As much as a cheeseburger meal sounded great to me, I know I am here for only one reason, the Grand Dinner Winner.

The Grand Dinner Winner is a meal for only the heaviest of hearts. This feast is a combination of a five pound burger patty, with three pounds of fries, and to wash it all down, three liters of Diet Coke. So I guess in a way, I actually am getting that cheeseburger and fries meal. Only it is ten times larger.

The waitress walks over to my table and I can tell that she looks directly at my stomach. The veins are popping out from expansion, and she is probably wondering how I got through the door. "My eyes are up here." I say. "I'm so sorry sir. My name is Barbara and I will be your waitress today." Barbara announces. "Can I start you off with any drinks?" "No," I reply, "I would actually like to take on the Grand Dinner Winner challenge. I heard no one has completed it yet, and I want to be the first." "Okay, if you really want to."

*(Continued on page 225)*

*(Continued from page 224)*

I watch as she walks off through the kitchen door, and eyes begin following me. "Is he going to actually do it?" I hear a table whisper. "I mean he looks like he can." I hear the same table say. The next hour is filled with waiting and stomach growls. My heart seems to skip a beat when I see Barbara come out of the kitchen door, holding a huge plate with an absolutely massive cheeseburger, fries, and sodas.

Barbara sets down the plate right in the middle of the table where it is clean, and says, "Good luck. I'll start your half hour timer now." "Timer?!" I scream. "Well yeah silly, you don't just get all day to chow down." My poor heart starts beating faster and faster. It will be worth it, I tell myself. I won't have to pay for it, I'll get T-shirt saying I beat the challenge, and I will get my picture on the wall forever.

As these thoughts are going through my head. I hear Barbara yell, "GO!" Without thinking, I start by grabbing the fries. They make a small crinkling sound when I pick them up. I put a handful of them in my mouth and then take a swig of Diet Coke. Just remember what mom always said, "A quick sip makes it all go down faster." My hands continue to fill with fries until my mouth starts rejecting them. It's time for the burger. I grab the cheeseburger by the side and rip off a piece. The patty is so greasy and wet that I do not even need some soda. My mouth tears through the burger at rapid speed. "Only ten minutes left!" Barbara yells. A group of teens start to gather around my booth. I would like to say that I'm halfway done, but actually I am not, because I am going at absolutely blazing speeds. I'm actually about three quarters of the way done, and now is the hardest part, the wall. I am going to have to break this wall of nausea if I can finish. I continue to shove my face with fries until there is none left.

*(Continued on page 226)*

*(Continued from page 225)*

Okay, now two more elements to finish. The cheese on the patty is so gooey and yellow that I want to eat it alone. I rip off the cheese from the patty and throw it in my mouth. So good! The last bites of patty went extremely slowing, but it was finished. All that was left were the sodas. "Two minutes!" Barbara screamed.

I only have one bottle left, because I have been drinking soda the whole time. I unscrew the cap and put the container up to my mouth, and then I drink. The fizz tickles as it goes down my throat, which oddly feels good. Then just like that, the competition was over. I had won. The people around were cheering, and Barbara was dumbfounded. I wiggled out of my seat, and then stood up and did my 'I just won a food challenge' dance.

**Caleb Sundermeier**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8



**Savannah Brantelli**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## There's a Backstory to Every Joke

We've all heard the joke. 'Why was the tomato blushing? He saw the salad dressing.' But what actually happened in that encounter, and why? Tom the tomato was your average red fruit. He was round, bright red, and sensitive. Everyone in his dorm at his college campus called him fat, and made him feel like an outcast. At this college, Veggie Campus, Tom excelled in school. He not only got straight A's, but he also was his professor's favorite. They all knew him by name, and gave him extra daily attendance points just for being pleasant. There was one thing on his mind though, Julie.

Julie too, was a smart young lettuce. Tom had heard her friends picking on her for always being so green, but there was nothing she could do about it. Julie is the special race of iceberg lettuce. The crunchiest kind of lettuce. She was usually first pick to go to parties in the big bowl. The special part though was that Tom was usually invited too. Even though he was a smart student, he was also popular at salad parties. He also enjoyed salsa parties, but that always took a lot out of him.

Coming up this Friday, there was an important party to attend. This Friday was the big Veggie Boogie. Tom had met Julie at the salad parties and already knew he wanted to go with her. Tom was smart, Julie was smart. Tom was round, Julie was round. Tom liked Julie, Julie liked Tom. Or that's what Tom wanted anyway. Tom knew that Julie will most likely come to the next scheduled salad party, which was Wednesday. That would be Tom's chance.

Tom arrived at the party with just enough time to get into the bowl. Julie, luckily, was sitting across from him. Tom made his way over to her and said, "Hey, I'm Tom." Julie responded with, "Yeah, I know. You're pretty popular at these parties. Good to see you."

*(Continued on page 229)*

*(Continued from page 228)*

Tom's heart started beating faster and said, "I heard they are showing 'Raiders of the Lost Cantaloupe' at the local theater. Would you ever want to come with me?" Julie replied, "Pick me up tomorrow at five, sharp. You better be well dressed." "You got it!" Tom said a bit too loudly. Just like that, Tom had gotten his way, and is going to go out with Julie.

At four fifty-nine, Tom showed up at Julie's house. He honked, and then waited in his Cornvette. The time reached five o' three, and he honked again. Julie still had not come out. Five minutes later, Tom decided to take it upon himself to check on Julie. Tom entered the fraternity and walked up the stairs to Julie's room. Tom knew exactly where it was, because his best friend lived next door. Julie's room was cracked open which worried Tom. Tom slowly opened the door. Creeeeeeeeek. Hesitantly, Tom walked step by step into Julie's room. What Tom found was a kitchen table bombarded with old jewelry and what looked like half eaten donut, and a sink dripping with water. Drip, drop. Drip, drop. Tom knew he shouldn't, but he continued through the house. Tom turned the corner and his face turned even brighter red. There was Julie, with only pants and a tank top. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?!" Julie demanded. "You weren't coming out so I thought . . ." Tom was cut off by a shrill, "GET OUT! GET OUT!" that came from Julie's mouth. Tom quickly waddled out to his car and banged his head on the steering wheel a few times. "What was I thinking?" Tom said with panic. "What was I thinking?"

Tom, filled with sorrow and embarrassment, drove away from Julie's house. I guess Tom will just have to find another vegetable to take to the Veggie Boogie.

**Caleb Sundermeier**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

## Reaching

I am reaching, reaching for it almost there

But no it's leaving running away from me

It seems to get closer but in reality it's getting farther, farther  
away

But why, why won't it let me reach

I keep reaching, reaching but its running, running

Running away from me

But why, why does it run

Or maybe it's flying flying away

But that's even worse

Wait it stopped

It stopped and stood

It's just standing there

*(Continued on page 231)*

*(Continued from page 230)*

Waiting?

Possibly waiting for me to catch up and it will run again

Why why does it torment me

I can hear it laughing, giggling under its breath

I yell stop but it goes faster even faster it's getting farther, farther

But the sound of its laugh gets closer, closer tormenting me for  
life

**Abbigale Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Jesse Eschelbacher**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

Have you ever thought about injustice? Well, I have to deal with it on a regular basis. I thought it would be therapeutic for me to tell you all about how unjust life is for me. First, I need my morning coffee, so I go to the local Starbucks and ask for 'the regular.' Of course there's a new employee working there, there always is, so I have to explain to her my order all over again. It's only an iced, medium-mixed, gluten-free, grande, almond chocolate mocha swirl with whipped cream and soy milk, and she has the audacity to ask me to repeat myself, wasting my time and everyone else I cut in line. Doesn't she know my kids are late to their soccer game? Doesn't she realize the injustice she's committing by wasting my time?

After I finally get my iced, medium-mixed, gluten-free, grande, almond chocolate mocha swirl with whipped cream and soy milk, I head back to my gray minivan where I could hear my miniature poodle barking at everyone who walked by, and my four kids screaming their lungs out to Kidz Bop. I guess I left the windows down. Silly me! Anyways, taking my kids to their soccer practice proved much more difficult than it normally was. I had to run more red lights than I did the last three days combined. Also, if one more person honks their horn at me, I'm going to have to contact the police. Harassment is never okay, especially when you have kids in the car!

When we got out of the car at the game, I accidentally let go of Princess' leash, and, like the silly little poodle she is, she started trying to eat people's fingers and steal their food. Oops! Normally, she's more friendly, I promise. Of course, we were twenty minutes late to the game, but it wasn't like it was my problem. It wasn't my fault the new girl couldn't handle my order, and it wasn't my fault that one guy had to be run off the road for honking his horn at me, and it wasn't my fault that Princess jumped out the window on the way here, and we had to take a small detour to rescue her. It was all the injustice in this community! I mean, seriously, the world doesn't revolve around you people!

*(Continued on page 234)*

*(Continued from page 233)*

The game was a disaster. First, the coach benched little Tommy for “losing his temper.” All he did was kick the little brat playing goalie where it hurts and score a goal, and they bench him and disqualify his well-earned point? The injustice in our society is unreal. Second, Snowbird (she’s an angel; you’ll like her) wanted the coach to put her on offence, and he refused, saying, “you’ve been goalie the last two times, why don’t you let others go instead?” Snowbird obviously wasn’t happy and, like any little feisty child, starting ripping up the grass and throwing it was the coach fist fulls at a time. She even screamed at the top of her lungs. A new record high might I add! At this point most of the parents were staring at me. Just because my kids have more gumption than any of their little dweeds ever will, doesn’t mean they have to get so jealous, my goodness!

Anyways, after speaking to the coach at the end of the game (I had to let him know that my kids needed more playing time and less time sitting on the bench if he wanted them to improve,) I posted a picture of Snowbird standing next to her demonstration on her field, and we left. I hope you can learn from this day to treat people with respect and recognize the injustice that happens all around you. Open your eyes, and you will see people who are just trying to live their lives amongst a bunch of crazies. Thank you, this was very therapeutic.

**Lorene Bennett**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Maggie Katafiasz**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## My Story of Change

Change. Something that makes our lives twist and turn. Something that can flip lives like nothing. As someone who has seen how the simplest things can make your life so much different I know how powerful change is. The simplest action just like a huge action can cause a big wave that could possibly affect your present entirely. Families and relationships torn by a little secret or brought together by one. Change whether big or small can affect everything. Sometimes change takes time other times it feels like it happens at the speed of light. Change is always something unexpected. Something we never see coming.

On these pages I pour out my heart and soul for writing changed me. Writing has made me the person I am today. I have been writing for years now. Scribbling stories and thoughts on a piece of paper or even on my arm. Trying to remember every detail I had in my head before. Writing made me open up after everything I had been through. So many changes made me who I am today.

From the beginning my life changed. Before the age of three my life was a wreck. I had parents that weren't really parents. Who knew that six months later I would be taken away from them and everything would be different. I would be in custody of my grandparents and my first little sister would come with me. A year later my first little brother would reunite with me and my sister. He would live with my Aunt and Uncle and in the future be adopted by them. Just in the first four to five years of my life I had gone from something awful to something beautiful. That's when my grandparents knew their prayers for change had been answered.

Fast forward in life, I was adopted in fourth grade with my little sister (she was in second) making our grandparents Mom and Dad. Also I found out I had another little sister who was four. She would be the youngest sister. I was told it was nearly impossible for me to ever meet her. I remember still praying with everything I had that one day I would be able to hold her in my arms. My prayers ended up coming true and that's when I believed in miracles. For a week or two before Christmas I got to hold her in my arms for the first time and I cried. My littlest sister is now nine years old and lives with our brother, who is going to be twelve in April, and my aunt and uncle.

*(Continued on page 237)*

*(Continued from page 236)*

Change for me was filled with ups, downs, twists and turns. All was pretty good for a while. I passed through middle school sometimes being slow yet sometimes fast. Then three years ago again everything changed. I found out I was now the oldest of five. I found out about my youngest brother. To this day I have never met him but I still believe someday something will turn and I'll get to see him for the first time.

For that year everything was again good. It wasn't till about two years ago my life changed for the worse. I developed severe depression and anxiety. Life became harder. I went down some deep dark roads. I was still battling and fighting though. I had hope. I was getting better. Then six months later my whole life fell apart and something that to this day has changed me happened. Me and my best friend at the time got in a bad fight. She told my parents everything. She told them about my depression, the dark roads I went down and my sexuality for I am not straight. My parents took none of it well. I knew they wouldn't which is why I had asked her not to tell any of it and I had already been getting professional help for my mental illnesses. Yet she still did. She then left my life. After that day they found out everything my life has not been the same. There is not as much laughing as there used to be. There is much arguing.

Since the incident I have been writing more and have even considered becoming a writer which actually has been my dream for awhile now. Slowly I have learned to control my depression and dark roads more. I am accepted by some people with my place in the LGBTQ+ community and it makes me happy to know that though my family doesn't support me other people I love do. I am in a happy relationship and have amazing friends. Things are changing for the better again. Slowly but surely.

In conclusion the reason I have told you my story is to show how powerful change is. I went from something that was so awful and terrible at the age of three to now being okay and going to turn sixteen in March. Change happened through my life with tons of ups and downs. Tons of hard times and tons of easier times. Yet change is so powerful. You may think that nothing will get better but I have proof it will for I was in some very dark places yet things changed. It got better. I know it's hard but have hope and never give up. For every change whether big or small makes up who you are and who you are going to be.

**Jennifer Shimko**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 10

## The Cat Excuse

I suddenly wake up from a deep sleep wondering what time it actually is. I look over at my clock and see that I am thirty minutes late for my first day at my new job. "Crap!" I yelled springing up from my bed to head for the closet. "I can't believe I am late for my first day! I have no idea what I am going to wear to work. I'm usually in my PJs."

Speeding out the door in a semi-fashionable suit, I head to the coffee shop for a quick coffee and a donut. "Good evening sir, would you like your usual?" the employee said to me. "Yeah, but please make it quick, I'm late to work." As I said that, the coffee shop employee grabbed both my coffee from the brewer and my favorite cream filled donut from the amazingly smelling rack.

After I pay, I start to rush to my office. I get to the entrance just to be greeted by my boss "Hey Stuart, you seem to be a little late," he says. All that I could make up at the moment was, "Uh sorry my . . . cat peed on my clock?" I don't know if he gave me the look of disbelief or the look that I'm going to be fired in 10 seconds if I don't take my butt upstairs and do my work. All that I did was move right past him to get to my work station, I really didn't need to be fired the first day I worked here.

I'm about 63 stories up in one of the biggest towers in New York City. This is where I work. The view was amazing but the people were not. All that I heard for most of the day was people spreading around my very very bad excuse that my cat peed on my clock. The funny thing is that I don't even own a cat!

Around lunch time, I get up from my workstation to head to the cafe. On the way there I just heard whispers when I walked past people. I still can't believe that I made such a stupid excuse. I sat down and opened my bag to be greeted by my donut and a half-eaten sandwich. Someone from behind me yelled, "Did your cat eat your sandwich too!" After that everyone just busted into laughter. I couldn't help myself as I got up, turned around, and threw my coffee at the person behind me. I always keep my coffee hot so it was probably burning him. All that I could say was, "Oops my cat did that."

After that I don't think anyone talked to me at that workplace again.

**Robbie Glasser**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 7



**Dylan Caldwell**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

This story starts at the WFA (world fishing awards). I just had my 90th birthday a couple weeks ago. When I received a letter from the WFA. The letter was inviting me to the award show in Huron Ohio. I was awarded The lifetime fishing award. This is the highest honor fisherman can receive. My jaw dropped. I was so excited. I dropped my walker and ran to my wife Megan and called my sons to tell them that I won the award.

My son Richie said to me, "Grandpa Rich would be so proud of you dad!" My other son Scott says to me, "Dad, we are so proud of you." I told them, "Boys I can see your grandfather smiling down on us. My dad was one of the greatest fishermen I have ever seen. He taught me everything and took me on fishing trips all over the country." My dad said to me, "One day son you will be twice the fisherman I am." I said, "Dad I hope to be half the fisherman you are. Since then I have fished all around the world and caught fish on almost every continent. This brings us to today Megan and my two sons are sitting in the front row. I have never been more proud of myself. I only wish my dad, who was the greatest fisherman I have ever known, could be out there cheering for me. They call me out to receive my award. I slowly push my walker out to the center stage. I see my family cheering for me. I swore I saw my dad's face in the crowd. As I gave my speech I held back tears. As I remember all the times I spent with my dad and sons fishing. I could pass on tomorrow and go be a happy man.

**Trenton Weir**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Scarecrow

I felt the sun's rays caress my face as I awoke. I opened my eyes and looked around my field. The barnhouse was many acres away and looked small to my eyes. The rows and rows of corn were many. Behind me, more rows lay and on and on. I have never known anything else.

The owners of the barnhouse had appeared to have forgotten me. Normally I was taken in for winter. I would be set in a warm barn and watch the horses nuzzle their young. I hadn't seen that barn for many moons now. It was only a memory . . . of happier times.

I do not know my name. Once long ago, men in overalls and boots had called me "Scarecrow" but that was then. This is now.

I am dressed in a maroon shirt well aged from rain and snow. My pants are a dark olive. I cannot move either. I appear to be made of straw, but there is always more that does not meet the eye.

I can see quite well, although my eyes never open nor shut. My mouth is stitched on to my cloth face and there is more straw to look like hair on my worn head.

I watched as the early morning crows set upon nibbling on the small bugs among the hay. They ignored me as always. Long ago, the crows would run from me, their caws filling the air. I was not scary anymore. I just looked lonely and quite sad.

I wished for a female of me. When the man came around, they would pick daisies and give them to the women. The women were dressed in tight shirts and skirts that touched their ankles. Their hair was always up in tails or tight wraps. The men would do many things for these women and they referred to them as their "wife." I wished for a "wife." Maybe then, I'd be less lonely.

Once the crows left, I knew it to be the period called "noon". It was where the men would bring delicacies like shot turkey and deer to feed their families. I have never eaten anything. My body does not rely on food to make it work. I merely live.

*(Continued on page 242)*

*(Continued from page 241)*

The rest of the day after that went quicker. The time I love. The warm after “noon” sun and the sunset seemed to zip by. Time was, as always, a pain.

Soon it was the time the men called “supper,” where they served fresh foods, bought from markets. The women would harvest vegetables and serve them as well.

I miss the men. They were my source of company. And now they are gone. I will be alone in my field forever.

The sky then grew dark and many bugs came out to add noises to the silence.

I closed my unmoving eyes and shut out the world. I was alone. I was me. I am “scarecrow.”

**Sylvie Parada**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

---

### **Poncho, Cheeto and a Barn in Distress!**

One day there was a cat named Poncho. He was a large gray tabby cat with great hunting skills. Poncho loved living in his apartment above the good old Chucky’s Cheese Barn. The cheese barn was from the 1930s and was barely standing up financially. The cheese barn itself was great, they had all kinds of cheeses in all kinds of sizes. The barn had one major problem, it was infested with mice. The mice either ate the cheese or scared away the customers.

John, the son of Chucky (the owner of the cheese barn), had an idea that could save the business. John said “Why don’t we just hire a cat? A cat could get rid of all the mice within an instant!” Chucky thought about it for a moment and decided he would finally hire a cat. He would pay the cat’s owner \$10 every hour.

*(Continued on page 243)*

*(Continued from page 242)*

He then printed black and white papers all over the town describing what kind of cat they are looking for.

A lot of people saw the posters, but no one responded or showed any interest. After 4 days, John started to get desperate and went around trying to get people to take the job. One night, when he was posting more fliers, he ran into the woman that lived above the barn. They talked about the offer and made a deal. If Clara's cat, Poncho, was to work in the barn, then she wanted to earn 3 extra dollars every hour he worked. John took the deal and went back to the barn to tell Chucky the news. Clara went home happy thinking she was going to save the barn from closure and her amazing Poncho would be the hero.

The next day, Poncho started his new job and captured three out of five mice in total. Clara and John were astonished at his skills and started promoting the barn again in hopes the mice would be gone soon.

The following day was a little unsuccessful. Poncho tried to catch the last two mice but only one of them came out from hiding. This mouse was too fast for poor Poncho to catch. He chased that stupid mouse to the point where he nearly destroyed the barn. He jumped up and onto the counter and started chasing the mouse through all the cheese displays. The mouse was weaving through the cheese, taking some as he went, as if he were an American Ninja Warrior barreling through an obstacle course. Poncho, knowing the consequences if he didn't catch this mouse, destroyed the cheese cases chasing after him. The mouse dashed back towards its hole, waving some cheese pieces in the air in triumph. One of the few customers they had in the barn started screaming and ran for the door. Poncho was exhausted and had to stop and take a breath. John was very surprised to see his father's store in such a horrible condition after he had gotten back. Although John was mad at Poncho, he was even more furious about the pieces of cheese that were missing from

*(Continued on page 244)*

*(Continued from page 243)*

the display, or at least what was left of it.

After a week on the job, Poncho started to get bored and John was frustrated. It was the same thing every day. That same mouse caused havoc, stole some cheese and retreated back to his hole because Poncho was too slow to catch him. Poncho tried with all his might, but was unsuccessful every time. Out of frustration, John tried mouse traps again, but that didn't work either. Every morning John checked the trap, the lever would be sprung and the cheese would be gone.

Eventually, they realized getting rid of the mouse was not the solution. The mouse was smart and any efforts to get rid of him were futile. John thought, "If you can't beat them, join them." He decided such a special mouse should have a name. What to name him though, Speedy or Sneaky? Wait, no, none of those sound right. "We can name him Cheeto." suggested Chucky as he was setting out the cheese on the counter. "No, we're not naming the mouse Cheeto." said John sternly. "Well I'm pretty sure you don't have a say as he's in my barn. Plus, I think we could make something good out of this mouse. If we can't catch him with a trap then we'll just give him a home here. He can be the cheese barn mascot. It fits the theme of the place anyway, and then he won't steal any cheese." The room fell silent as John walked out of the barn. Clara then went back upstairs and waited until Poncho's shift was over and he could come home.

Chucky was just excited to be back in business. Cheeto could be the official mascot and they will be known for having a pet mouse instead of rogue mouse. The next evening Chucky executed his plan and they were starting to get some customers. Poncho was still working there so he could catch any of the other mice that still lived there. Chucky was going to feed Cheeto in the special mouse house he had built for him when Poncho came into that section of the barn. Poncho desperately wanted to catch Cheeto, but realized the mission of saving the barn was accomplished.

*(Continued on page 245)*

*(Continued from page 244)*

He kinda got used to the mouse and would lay in a cat bed next to him. Poncho became as well-known and loved as Cheeto by the people in the town. Chucky even started to give Poncho little gifts like jungle gyms to climb on and tunnels to run through. Chucky's Cheese Barn was forever loved and known for its mascots, Poncho and Cheeto. The End.

**Robert Beatty**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

---

### **Made of Glass**

As a kid, I was fascinated with the beach. The sun that dried you off. The waves that tickled your toes when you walked behind mom. The shells that shone like the sun and sparkled like a thousand stars. The tiny crabs and sand dwellers that you collected in a bucket and released back towards the ocean. And the ocean itself. The gorgeous blue that stretched as far as eyes could see. That cooled you off when you were hot. That brought waves that you surfed on until dusk. And it was always there the next day. Waiting for you. Always loyal.

I never had many friends. I was that kid that was just there. That always knew the answer. That was the one in the back of the photo. The one who you knew and talked too but never got a name. That's why I liked the ocean. It was always there for me. Never backstabbing or betraying me. Always by my side ready for my surf to breach its waves. It always knew my thoughts and never let me be sucked under. A true friend. One that would never go away.

But that's the thing about true friendship. The strongest things are often the easiest to crack. We were made of glass and never knew it. That's why I can't go back. That's why I never want to feel the salt water upon my flesh. The ocean made a choice. A choice that impeded my doom.

*(Continued on page 246)*

*(Continued from page 245)*

It was a windy day. Clouds up above. The perfect day for surfing. I loved the cold days. The windy days. The days where the ocean went wild. That's when a surf could impact your future. Make your adrenaline go off charts. When you let yourself let go of your problems. Let go of your life. And surf to your dreams content.

Not seconds passed before I was out there. Among the waves. Ignoring the cold. My heart pumping faster than the beat of a drum. I waited for my baby. The wave that would take you to shore. The wave so smooth, so clear you could see fish swimming through its center. I called her my baby. She was a wild horse. One that could never be tamed. Then I saw her. About a mile off. Riding in the wind. I readied my board. I was ready.

She hit me like a brick wall, crushing all the bones in my body. But I was ready for her. I prepared to jump on her. I kneed up my board and got ready. In about 10 seconds, she'd be mine. All mine. Suddenly a sharp pain strade up my left leg and my vision blurred. The water turned red. Everything turned black as I fell off my board and sunk between the waves. The cool waves. The salty waves. The waves that betrayed me.

That's all I remember about it. It. I say as though it was something cool. Something important. No. It was deadly. It was monstrous. It was not to be trifled with.

I would not be alive if not for the boat. Fishermen. Coming back from a clam dive. Also very prosperous on days like those. The clams loosened when the water pummeled them again and again and again. Easy to collect. The meat ripe and fresh for meals.

The thing I remember most vividly is waking up. Among scratchy blankets and surrounded by family members I had long forgotten. I remember looking around and seeing my dad's face.

*(Continued on page 247)*

*(Continued from page 246)*

Full of worry and when his eyes met mine I saw the rush of relief. Me and him shared the teal eyes. Full of mystery. Full of color. Full of emotion. Then I was pummeled by mom. By aunts. By cousins. The women seemed to have to squeeze me in order to calm down. The men just winked at me or made jokes and I'd laugh. They knew I was okay before I did. I remember looking down and only seeing one long lump underneath the blanket. I remember the shock. The loss. The numbness. The family members ensuring I could do so many things with only one leg. The doctors whispering in the corner. That was the scariest part. Whatever had happened, they clearly didn't want to tell me.

I asked politely to see a doctor. My mother obliged and brought one of the nervous ones from the corner. "What happened to me?", I asked. He did not answer. Clearly getting more nervous every second. I asked again, a bit more firm this time. All that came out of his mouth was, "sh-sh-shark attack". The room went quiet. The doctor and I fainted at the same time, him crumbling to the floor, me falling back into the scratchy blankets that held me so firmly. That day I learned what the ocean had done to me. I swore I would never go back. I would never taste the salty waves. I would never feel the sand between my toes. I would never go back again. The Ocean had betrayed me in the worst way. Our friendship, which held strong for so long, had finally cracked. We never knew it, but we were made of glass.

**Sylvie Parada**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

## Shipwrecked

*“Please help.”* I write as I fold the yellowing old piece of paper and put it in the wine bottle. I shake my head and wipe away a few tears that have suddenly fallen down my face. I still can’t believe it. I’ve been shipwrecked.

I remember it as clearly as glass. The stormy night. The pounding waves. The roaring. I still don’t know quite what the roaring was. Maybe it was my own heart, lashing out in terror. All I know is one moment I’m on the ship and the next I am in the waves. I am slightly heavy, but the waves threw me back and forth like I was a ping-pong ball. I remember I was too scared to scream, or even yell for help. I let the waves carry me away, away from home, away from peace, away from life.

The next thing you know, I am on this beach. This white sand, bright green palm tree, clear blue water, shark infested beach.

I come back to myself as I look around the beach I have been here for four weeks. My light blue dress is faded and torn. My dark brown hair is a tangled mess. My breath stinks. My feet are sore and bloody from trying to climb trees and hunt for food and shelter. I lost my shoes in the storm. My face is tear streaked. My blue eyes are always wet now. I *look* like a castaway. And I feel like one.

All my life I have been told fairy tales and stories of pirates and islands. But now . . . they are no longer fairy tales. At least, not the islands and shipwreckings. I have made my own hut, hunted my own food, and have had to live like an animal, and yet life goes on.

But I say LET life go on. It can have its cycle without me. I am stuck here. There is no escape. Just then, the sun goes behind the clouds and I again come back to the present.

The truth? I know my fate is coming. This island is becoming more vivid. As I walk on the sand, feeling the smooth but rough

*(Continued on page 249)*

(Continued from page 248)

texture on my feet, I think about all that has happened. This island is uninhabited, as far as I know, besides the birds and wild dogs that sometimes cross my path. I shake my head, and lost in thought, trip over a sea log and fall flat on my face. I know that I am too scared to face the thought of going back. I don't fully know why, but . . . it's just like I would be like a bright yellow banana in a black and white picture. Foreign.

Many times I have stared into the sea, willing, wishing, wanting a ship to come by. But none have come. I, too, am starting to hide inside myself. I am more quiet, thinking, wondering why my life has become a nightmare of a fairytale. I am alone.

The fragile wine glass shakes because my hands are shaking. I vaguely hear the note inside it pounding on the wine glass. My breathing gets fast. I am alone. I am alone. I am alone.

In a gust of salty dry sea wind, the wine glass shatters in my hands, and the paper with the words "*Please help.*" written on it tears.

**Rosalia White**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

## The Alien Kidnap

Once there was a boy named Thomas and he loved to play outside with his friends. His favorite game to play with his friends was wiffleball. One day when they were playing with his friends he asked if they wanted to play hide n' seek. They said sure and then did rock paper scissors to see who was it. Thomas's friend Braden had to count. Thomas decided to go back in the woods behind his house and thought no one would find him there. He was hiding there for hours and then fell asleep. As he was sleeping he got lifted off the ground.

When he woke up he was in a room. He had no idea where he was until a creature walked up to him and started talking in a different language. He couldn't understand what the creature was saying. Thomas figured he was in a UFO and that creature was an alien. The alien finally started talking English and said, "Greetings Earthling, my name is Nasu. You might be wondering where you are. If you are, you are in my UFO. This is your lucky day. I have a laser pointed at your planet, and I have chosen to spare your life." Thomas decided to not say anything because he was afraid. Nasu walked away and told Thomas he was off to prepare the laser to blast Earth.

Thomas decided he wanted to do something to stop Nasu from destroying Earth and killing everyone he knew. He noticed that there were guards in the room that Nasu walked into so, he looked if there were any vents he could go into. He found one behind a wall so he entered. He started going up the vent and looking for the room Nasu went into. While he was looking for it he found a weird looking knife. He grabbed it and kept going. He eventually found the room and dropped down. He told Nasu to point the laser away from Earth or he'd throw the knife at him. Nasu ignored him and called in his guards. His guards walked in and Nasu continued to prepare the laser but Thomas took the guards down. Surprised, Nasu turned around and told Thomas he surrendered. Thomas took Nasu to the airlock and opened it. Then Nasu was gone. Thomas took the UFO down to Earth and got out. Then he exploded it and it was gone.

The End

**Jack Pavkov**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Pack Rat

(Seven of Hal's "friends"): Ring ring, "Hello?"

(Hal): "This is Hal. Do you want to go to Davie's Fun House with me tonight?"

(Seven of Hal's "friends"): "No." Hangs up.

This is Hal, who has absolutely NO friends. This was his seventh call of the night to see if anyone from his school would go to Davie's Fun House with him. Seven rejections later he leaves on his own for the third Halloween in a row. Davie's Fun House always made 14 year old Hal Oscar Weenlington's (Hal O. Ween) lonely Halloween better. This has been his favorite place for 6 years, but that would not be the case tomorrow when tonight's horror begins haunting him forever.

After his mom dropped him off, he saw some people that he had called and told him that they were occupied. The air smelled like kettle corn and fear. He could see all of the bouncy houses and pumpkins and "scary" clowns running around. He felt like something good was going to happen tonight. And sure enough, the leader of the friend group that normally ignores him called him over.

"Get over here!" Jim, (the leader of the group) shouts at Hal.

"Huh? Me?" Hal says confused.

"Hey, we want to see how long you can stay in the security room without getting caught," Jim proposes. The "we" was Jim's gang which consisted of boys with blue hair and girls with hair that was purple, they all wore matching biker jackets, and heavy boots.

"Ok." Hal says back forgetting all his morals, and hoping for friends. Upon entering the cold and dark security room, he glanced around nervously to reassure himself that he would not get caught. He turned on the lights and could see a "broken" animatronic rat. He examined it, seeing a torn fur coat, rusty metal poles, worn down buttons, and some dried blood running

*(Continued on page 252)*

*(Continued from page 251)*

down the back. He pressed the buttons thinking that nothing would happen, but to his surprise it turned on and said, "Thank you for freeing the Pack Rat," in the deepest and most horrifying voice he had ever heard. Panicked, he ran out of the room to find Jim and his gang, but no one was there except for some pathetic clowns and an empty entrance way.

Hal didn't know what to do, but what he did know was that he had a great idea. I'll put this thing on and go scare Jim, he thought to himself. And that's exactly what he tried to do. The outfit was wet, dirty, and downright disgusting, but he didn't care. After all these years of getting ignored, he was finally going to let Jim and his little friends know what it felt like to get bullied and experience careless treatment. The suit fit perfectly and it was time to execute his master plan. As Hal stepped in and zipped up the suit it was clear to him that he was no longer in control, but that it was controlling him.

What a terrible situation Hal got himself into. Stuck inside of a soggy and bloody animatronic rat costume with no control whatsoever. Trying to kick and scream, most of his words were manipulated by the Pack Rat, leaving him with just mere murmurs scrambling out. He could feel the costume getting a little bit tighter every minute, as if shaping the form of his body. The cold death-like smelling animatronic was even wetter than it was in the beginning of this mishap. Hal wanted to go home, but knew he couldn't. Instead, he ran to the management station as fast as he could. To his surprise, Hal found nobody except the janitor. The janitor had his headphones in and no matter what Hal did, he could not get the janitor's attention who was cleaning up some yuckies after a kid had 16 funnel cakes. Oof. Hal had a crazy idea . . . so dumb that it might actually work. He would kindly ask the Pack Rat if he would simply let him go.

"M-m-m-Mr. Pack Rat, can y-y-you . . . let me g-g-go . . . home?" Hal squeaked, shivering in the little room he had left in the tightly fitted suit.

*(Continued on page 253)*

*(Continued from page 252)*

“NO!” the Pack Rat retorted immediately. Hal told himself that it was a good thought even though he knew it really wasn’t.

“Am I bleeding?” Hal wondered, smelling blood, but not locating a source of the stench. Hal could smell the blood throughout the night, but it didn’t bother him. When he pried the suit open from his neck, he saw that half of his legs were gone, and he let out a muffled shriek. The sight was nauseating and it was at this point where Hal couldn’t tell what was his body and what was now strangely connected to him through a disgusting fur coat. The Pack Rat kept making weird noises and saying Hal’s name and acting like they knew each other. He felt unaccomplished and just down right upset. Hal still owned his ability to move his legs, so he ran home as fast as an awkward half-animatronic half-boy could.

When Hal and the Pack Rat arrived at Hal’s house, the Pack Rat gained control of Hal’s walking abilities and brought him down to the basement. Which was pretty well lit because Hal had his bedroom down there, and he never turned off his lights when he left. It smelled like sweaty socks and pepperoni pizza. The pizza was getting moldy because it was leftover from a Friday night pizza party three weeks ago. Since Hal could no longer move for himself, he was unable to get his phone from his room. “WAIT!” Hal thinks to himself. It was at this time that Hal realized that he had his phone in his pocket this whole time! As soon as he could, he called the police. Since the Pack Rat manipulated Hal’s language, when the police asked for the location, all they heard was a deep voice saying “I am the Pack Rat!”, in a very loud, but low growl. Everytime Hal heard the Pack Rat speak, it sent chills down his spine. The police tracked the phone call, found Hal’s house, and went in to investigate.

“Do you see anything?”, asked the first official to enter.

“No, do you think we fell for another prank call? If this happens

*(Continued on page 254)*

*(Continued from page 253)*

again we are going to lose our jobs. If we get fired, this town will have no protection for two weeks until they hire two new officers.”, the other said in a panic.

The police officers left. Hal felt useless and thought of giving up. He heard the officers conversation, but they could not hear him. He glanced down at his legs and they were about three fourths of the way gone. About 45 minutes later, Hal heard a trick-or-treater at his door. “Trick or Treat!” he had heard from the basement. The Pack Rat was an old urban legend in Hal’s town, and all the kids were told the story of the Pack Rat one week before Halloween. The kids all liked the story of the Pack Rat, but all (except Jeremy Jones also known as JJ) knew it was fake. As fate would have it, the unsuspecting trick-or-treater was none other than Jeremy Jones.

“Ding dong,” the doorbell went, followed by “Trick or Treat!”. Jeremy was dressed as Albert Einstein. He had a large and poofy white wig, a white lab coat, and dark black jeans completing the look. From the front step JJ could hear a deep voice call out “I am The Pack Rat!”. Jeremy jumped backwards, but after a few seconds he convinced himself that it was just someone trying to scare him. It worked. JJ was scared, but not enough to give up free candy. Jeremy went to get some of his friends. He brought them back to Hal’s house all while Hal was going mentally insane by the crazy situation he had fitted himself into. Hal had heard JJ scream, talk to himself and even his friend’s reaction to the house.

After 37 minutes, JJ and his friends leave after finding nothing suspicious about the house. The Pack Rat was left completely alone with Hal. Hal was looking around for an escape, when he stumbled upon something he could have never imagined. In a dark red velvet-looking box Hal noticed a couple journals full of 50 - 200 years of family history.

*(Continued on page 255)*

(Continued from page 254)

~Friday October 31, 1867: Dear diary . . . he read . . . today is Halloween and I fought off a monster . . .

~Thursday October 31, 1904: Dear diary, today is Halloween and I killed a crazy rat monster . . .

~Sunday October 31, 1979: Dear diary, today is Halloween and I had a fight with a rat machine that grandma said she took care of over 50 years ago. Today I put it to death once and for all and donated it to a local Fun House. They will enjoy it there . . .

As it turns out, neither grandma nor great-great-grandma finished the rat off. It was up to Hal. The Pack Rat had been hurt, rattled and nearly dismantled. The Pack Rat was NOT dismantled to any extent. He had come back stronger and more fierce than ever before. Once again, he had called the police, hoping for a better result this time. He was getting increasingly more cold with every breath he took. As he dialed the number for the police department he wondered if he would get out of this doomful situation alive. Contemplating if the officials would know to come down stairs this time, Hal thought up an idea to signal them in some way or to make them aware of his position in the basement. He remembered back to when he had tried to speak before, when he had last dialed the police. When he made the attempt, *his* words could not be heard, but when he wanted to say something the Pack Rat would cover it up with something else. He continued to think of how he would execute his plot. Hal got it! He was aware that the police would take time to arrive due to the lack of instructions and the second suspicious *Pack Rat* call of the night. Again, Hal peeked into his suit, to find only a neck and head left to get engulfed. As time passed from when he was possessed to right now, he hadn't thought about how much blood he was losing and how he was so very tired. Moving was much harder and just to test it out, he tried jumping and he couldn't. As mentioned before, Hal was genuinely colder than he was at the start of this crazy fiasco. Hal started talking to himself

(Continued on page 256)

*(Continued from page 255)*

(as he usually did in moments of fright), but could only hear a deep voice overriding his sorrow. His heart jumped in excitement when he heard the door swing open. Quickly, he started talking about Halloween knowing that he could ramble about it for hours upon hours. He also knew that his words would be masked by the Pack Rat's voice, so it (loudly) would ramble as well. Hal was nervous and felt his heart in his throat (partly because his chest was gone and where else would it go and also) because of the nervousness heavily setting in. Nervousness wasn't Hal's only emotion though, he was thoroughly excited as well. His plan was working, there were footsteps on the stairs coming to his rescue. The police had arrived bringing Hal the first glimmer of joy throughout this night of horrors and terrible misfortune. The official had arrived but had absolutely no idea what to do next. Hal's heart dropped and wanted to stop trying. That was until the police said these words with an idea giving Hal hope . . .

"Call in the expert!" the first officer said.

"OK." the other responded.

Someone who might know what to do, finally. Hal's expectations were nowhere near high, but they were definitely there. The officers called the expert on speed dial. The name of the animatronic expert was Dr. Pullum. At this time, a couple different local news stations stopped in for the scoop. The first (and most well known), quickly started their cameras and reported all the information they could without getting too close. Three other news channels arrived and they all pretty much displayed the same story including almost zero details about the current event, but sharing everything about the previous victims and their struggle. Hal didn't really care about the stories since he had already learned about them earlier in the night. They talked about Hal's great-great-great-great grandfather, his great-great-grandmother, and his grandmother. Each of them had a very minorly different story. As it turns out, Hal comes from a

*(Continued on page 257)*

*(Continued from page 256)*

long boring line of accountants. When Hal would listen, he was impressed at how wealthy his family used to be. That's why the Pack Rat wanted them . . . for the money. By this time, Hal's family had seen their son on the news channel and rushed home to see the whole situation. A few minutes after Hal's family had arrived, so did Dr. Pullum. Excited to see both family and Dr. Pullum, Hal had another glimmer of hope. This was the closest he had come to salvation since he had gotten possessed. Within just short minutes of Dr. Pullum getting there, he had already devised a plan to free Hal of his Rat induced problems. The issue was that he needed parts. During the time that the Dr. had left and then came back, nothing had really happened. There were a couple of failed attempts at freeing Hal, but it was all going to be OK since Dr. Pullum was back.

"OK, here's the plan . . ."

Dr. Pullum's plan had worked! It was so simple that nobody had thought about it. To put it in simple terms, Dr. Pullum literally just took the batteries out and cut some cables. In contrast, to put it in more complicated terms, he took the batteries out and cut some cables. It was at this time that the police officers and the animatronic expert had properly dismantled the Pack Rat. Over the course of two or three weeks, Hal's body fully recovered and the Pack Rat would never strike again. Finally, Hal Oscar Weenlington was a household name and went from being lonely, to the most popular person in all of his town.

**Silas Sundermeier**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7



**Grace Soles**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## The Somme

The Hun sedated and waited,  
Waves of crumps echoes at dawn.  
Allied destruction was inflated  
We are just mere pawns.  
Bodies straight from Blighty,  
Tommies green and ready.  
But the boche already knew

Old gentlemen glistened with insignia.  
But when the whistle blew,  
Then the men had to follow through.  
Up to the land where no men have been  
A labyrinth of muddled clot  
And where dead men rot.

Toms tangled within the Devil's wire  
Mortars poised midair,  
And spilled shrapnel everywhere.  
Hawks swivel up, up high  
Safe and alive  
We are just mere pawns.

Waves of men cut from steel,  
Extinguishable lives.  
They will never again see their wives  
Angels weep with tears of blood.  
As they observe the Devil's crud,  
Just to gain a mere few yards,  
Enough to fill a million graveyards.



**Maggie Katafiasz**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

The wind blows on a quiet, cloudy day. So forceful it could knock you off your feet. It's a nice day . . . if you live here. Being here on a bad day, you can only imagine how ravaging it gets. Rain falling so hard, so fast, that the drops turn into bullets, tearing into people's roofs as if it was an all you can eat buffet. The sun scarcely showing its rays as if it's scared. Scared of what might happen if it does. From what I've shared, you may be wondering why I live here. This is the town of misfits, people who don't fit in with society, people who are unique, people who are "crazy". I woke up here randomly one day never knowing why. I still don't. I've tried to leave but you can only get so far walking before the bullet rain starts up again. You might be thinking that I'm here because I'm like the others. Well, let me tell you, I'm *not* like them at all.

All day, Ryan sits by the large, front window of his house across the street, reading his unusually large book one might call a dictionary. He's fascinated with words, especially ones that don't exist. As he comes up with new words, he adds them to his dictionary. You can't see what he writes, but the peculiar contents it may contain is enough to allure your attention.

Kelce lives next to Ryan. You can see the shiny, lifeless eyes of her dolls watching your every move through the front window. She's obsessed with them, covering her walls and furniture with them. Calling them her "little babies" and whatnot. As you stare at her house, you start to feel their eyes luring you, beckoning you through the window, calling you to come play with them.

Harmony lives next to me, always playing piano, hitting the notes perfectly and flawlessly as she hits them one by one or, most often, multiple at a time. You can hear them being hit with such gracefulness and perfection through the paper-thin walls. Her wonderful talent, slowly coaxing you to join her. I've never given into the temptation though, never. For the risk, if I do, will be far worse than the bullet rain hitting me.

*(Continued from page 261)*

I will *never* give in to the temptation. Ever. Not Ryan's fascinating words or Kelce's beautifully creepy dolls, not even Harmony's effortless playing. Not even the . . . wait a minute. There's another one, another noise banging in my head, temptation slowly rising, trying to persuade me to leave the safety of my home. I look over to the right side where another huge window is, and through the window, through the neighbor's window, there's a dancer. A ballerina, in a beautiful tutu and pointe shoes. Dancing. Dancing. Dancing. I can't look away and a force pulls me out of my chair where I've been studying for tests I can't take and taking notes for things I don't understand. Before I know it, I'm unlocking the front door. I force open the door, stuck from years of being unused, and run outside. I turn to go back but I can't. A black wall, created from the remains of the other houses, is rushing towards me as my feet carry me into the house of the dancer. Unbothered, she keeps dancing. Keeps dancing to a tune unfamiliar to me, that went from a beautiful violin and orchestra to horrid screeching as the glass shattered and the black wall broke through, diminishing everything in its path, engulfing me in darkness.

"I've lived in this town for years and it's gone, gone, it's gone." I eerily say as I slowly bring my hand to my head. It's in pain. The pain, the pain presses against my temple, searing through my brain as my eyes shoot open.

"Hey," a soft voice says somewhere. I look around to see who the voice belongs to, and I see a lady wearing weird, matching dark blue clothes. I think the voice was supposed to be calming, but it wasn't calming at all. I look down to see I'm in this uncomfortable, itchy dress and there's something on my finger as I pull my hands away from my head. Where am I?

I look around, eyes wide, and start to shake as I bob my head up and down and up and down, frantically mumbling, "Where is it? Where's my town? My home? The ballerina? The oh so

*(Continued on page 263)*

*(Continued from page 262)*

gorgeous ballerina! Kelce and her dolls, Ryan and his dictionary, sitting in the window all day?" I raise my voice. "Where is it?"

A weeping cry rips out of me as I grip my head with my hands, pulling at the greasy hair on my scalp. From my skull comes a throbbing, aching pain. I start to scream, shaking even more as I burst into sobs. The stranger runs away and out the door yelling, "Doctor, doctor!" But I'm too worried to care about whatever that means.

Shaking and sobbing, I viciously take the thing off of my finger, go to get up but am knocked down by blackness and colorful, dancing dots. Someone appears, touching my arm, trying to lift me up off of the floor. But I don't want to move. The floor is cold, the coldness brings me back to my town, everything's destroyed, demolished as if it never existed. Everything I worked so hard on, gone. Gone, gone, gone. No. No, no, no, no, no. This can't be happening! Make it stop, make it stop! Just like that, the blackness appears again, sucking me into it.

There are words. Faint words coming from somewhere. I try to listen. "She's been in a coma for years, we don't know who she is, clearly she's unstable and needs help . . ." More words are exchanged but I lose any interest of listening in. Over all of the talking, I hesitantly open my eyes to see a group of three people gathered around me. The stranger who ran out earlier, the person who was trying to help me up, and another unfamiliar face. I look around wide-eyed as the unfamiliar face takes a seat next to me and begins to talk. "Jane Doe? I'm Sandra, a therapist. I'm going to help you get better in here," she says slowly as she points to her head.

**Emma Bush**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

Icy fingers gripped my arm in the darkness it felt like a thousand needles were poking my arm. When I turned around nothing was there I thought it was just me over thinking or feeling something that was not real until when I got home and I walked in the door I felt it again, but this time it felt like my arm was on fire. As I started to relax I heard a noise almost as if there was someone in my house. I walked up the narrow wooden stairs and as I was walking down the hallway it felt that it was closing in and it was getting harder to breath, but when I opened my bedroom door there was nothing, I went to take a shower.

After my shower everything was going normal so I went to bed before anything else would happen. The next morning I got up and I was walking down the stairs and I thought I had saw my grand grandmother who had passed away and as I got down stairs she was still there and she started talking to me, she said "I have come to get you" and I was very confused and she went away shortly after that I was walking and I kept seeing her and I didn't know what it was about. That night I went to bed and I had a dream, the reason I kept seeing my grandmother is because she wanted to come back alive and the reason she needed me was to replace her so she could live again.

When I had woken up I didn't know where I was, when I looked around it looked just like my house, but when I went to leave I couldn't, I seen myself standing in the doorway and I saw the fingers gripping my arm it was a ice person of some type, I didn't understand what was going on until I remembered my dream I had, my dream wasn't such a dream it was real, my grandmother had traded places with me, and I was not alive anymore. My chest felt like someone was gripping it and ripping my heart out, something I thought was impossible but it happened. My life was now over and my grandmother was living it but not for long because I was going to figure out how to hunt her for the rest of her life. I will now become the Ice man and bring the dead back alive forever.

**Lavana King**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## The Path to Self-Discovery

“Yo-Yo!”

The Lieutenant screamed out my name, well not my real name. My real name is Maxim. Yo-Yo is what they called me here. I never quite figured out why. I looked over towards him, his voice was drowned out by the sound of bullets whizzing by. An explosion of bloody fire a mere fifteen yards down the trench.

“Get your butt over here! We’ve got wounded!”. I crouched down, moving as quickly as I could in the muddy water of the trench. Bullets whizzing by my ears and battle cries echoing in the stormy night.

Nazis never sleep, I swear. Not till you put a bullet in them.

Not that I’d know, I’ve never killed a person in my life. I was a medic, and I never would kill a person.

I felt a heavy pat on my shoulder.

“Snap out of it, get this man some attention.” I nodded my head slightly as I looked at the Lieutenant, not entirely responding. I could barely hear myself think. It felt as if the muddy water from the trench was filling my ears. Bullets and explosions distant in my focus as I tended to the man. It was my friend, I had joined the war with this man. He looks terrible. Blood flowing down the side of his head. There was a bad dent in his helmet, and as I removed the metal cap from his head I cursed silently under my hypothermic breath.

I opened my kit, taking out a needle and some thread. I wouldn’t let him die, not today. I’d joined the war with him. He was the only reason I was here. I couldn’t possibly let him die, otherwise I’d have no reason to stay. I stabbed him in the knee with a syringe. Some painkillers. Major painkillers. He’d probably be stuck in this trench for a while. I could see my squad moving up in the trenches. One more explosion and we’d be in the German fortification. A brick building with two mounted lms. I took a breath as I continued stitching up my friend.

*(Continued on page 266)*

*(Continued from page 265)*

“You’re not dying here, Matt. I won’t allow it.”

It wasn’t until I talked that I realized how tired I was. My voice was raspy in my throat. From all the cigars I’d smoked and the little water I’d drank. Rations had been tough. We’d been on the beach for days. I couldn’t believe it as I saw my squad finally break through the wire. We were in. But I didn’t focus on that now, Matt was fading out. If he died I’d-

“Max . . . You’ve gotta go.” I shook my head, not replying as I continued to stitch up his head.

“Stop . . .” He groaned out as his hand wrapped around my wrist. I tried to pull it away, but he gave me a look that told me there was nothing I could do. Such hopeless bravery in his eyes. “They need you . . . Go.” He rasped, trying to catch his breath. Blood was flowing from between his lips. I looked down at his chest, my eyes widening in fear. There were dozens of small cuts in his chest. Each one leaking blood. He’d been hit with shrapnel.

“You’ll be fine, I’ll get us out and-”. Matt shook his head pushing me away, and I knew there was nothing I could do. I nodded slightly, hot tears flowing down my face. My lifetime friend was dying. And I was completely useless.

“Yo-Yo!”. It was the Lieutenant again. I grabbed Matt’s gun. It felt unfamiliar in my hand, I hadn’t used a gun since training. A chill ran down my spine as my finger brushed over the trigger. A cold and raging chill that shook my very core. I gave him one last longing look, his eyes now shut. The steady rising and falling of his chest now gone before following the Lieutenant’s voice.

As he patted me on the shoulder, I could tell he understood. He gave me a look, a questioning look in his eyes as I shook my head. He nodded, words didn’t need to be said. Matt was the best in the squad. He held us together. But the moment quickly faded as a bullet buried itself in the sand besides us.

*(Continued on page 267)*

*(Continued from page 266)*

“Sniper!”. I tried to scream out, but my voice gave out. My squad understood anyhow, they all quickly dove into the German building. Gunfire drowned out my thoughts. Every other noise. I stayed back slightly, I’d never killed a man. I didn’t know if I could. I heard artillery fire. The only artillery gun was up here. The man who killed Matt was here. As we rampaged through the building, my thoughts were drowned out with rage. Yet, I still didn’t fire a bullet. The trigger was too heavy. I simply couldn’t pull it.

As hard as I tried I couldn’t. I was too weak. I desperately tried to fight against my own morals. The morals that had time and time again failed me. The morals that got me landed as the field medic who refused to fight. The warring pacifist. I dropped the gun down. I couldn’t pull that damned trigger. No matter what.

Even with all my rage and grief. I couldn’t make myself pull that trigger. It felt as if I was trying to hold up the sky. I took a breath, at least we were at the top of the building. We’d taken back the artillery gun. Air support could finally come in safely.

But, I’d realized something about myself.

No matter how hard I tried to discover a bloodthirsty anger inside me. It wasn’t possible for me to kill a person. I was simply too weak. Or was I? I looked down towards the trench. Looking at the lifeless body of the friend who made me strong. And realizing I would never be that without him.

**Zachary Friess**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11



**Rowan King**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Index

Name	Page
Adams, Adelaide .....	6
Anderson, Kylie .....	185
Andrukat, Julia .....	137
Ball, Brandon .....	68
Ball, Lauren .....	163
Bally-Freiberg, Jacob .....	125
Bartirromo, Allison .....	166
Beatty, Robert .....	105, 242-245
Beck, Madeline .....	135-136, 204-205
Bennett, Lorene .....	233-234
Bishi, Rajanya .....	7
Blade, Savannah .....	133
Bowman, Arielle .....	143-144
Boyes, Hannah .....	184
Brantelli, Savannah .....	220-222, 227
Burkey, Emily .....	33, 35
Bush, Emma .....	261-263
Butcher, Josh .....	117-118
Buxton, Lena .....	101, 119
Caldwell, Dylan .....	239
Carlisle, Wyatt .....	44
Carlson, Lillith .....	88-94
Chambers, Sean .....	122
Chavez, Drea .....	5
Claypool, Cooper .....	13
Collins, Ashlynn .....	24-25
Cooper, Evelyn .....	131
Cooper, Sophia .....	155
Cunningham, Joey .....	39
Cunningham, Juniper .....	25

*(Continued on page 270)*

**Index**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Currens, Abbigale .....	230-231
Davis, Madison .....	11, 72-73
Demczyk, Abby .....	210-211
Donohue, Bridgette .....	158, 217-219
Earnest, Jacob .....	190
Ely, Collin .....	37
Eschelbacher, Jesse .....	232
Esposito, Kaylee .....	134
Ethington, Kayleigh .....	213-217
Evans, Olivia .....	32
Ferguson, Claire .....	136
Fetterolf, Bailey .....	164
Finley, Pax .....	6
Flaker, Madeline .....	138
Folk, Vivienne .....	69
Freas, Jake .....	189
Friess, Zachary .....	265-267
Fry, Noah .....	177
Gale, Eddie .....	176
Gale, Grace .....	28
Gambaccini, Vincent .....	178
Glass, Carson .....	4
Glasser, Robbie .....	238
Gorog, Cameron .....	159
Grant, Elianna .....	19
Gruver, Reese .....	5
Hall, Brysen .....	46
Haller, Lily .....	30
Harris, Adelle .....	66
Hartman, Henry .....	120, 121, 139-140

*(Continued from page 270)***Index**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Hassinger, Reese .....	115
Hefflin, Adam .....	128-129
Higbee, Laycee .....	150-152
Holladay, Farrah .....	52-55, 85-86
Horvat, Samantha .....	34
Hulesch, Giuliana .....	179-183
Kannenberg, Ashleigh .....	51, 52
Kash, Kylee .....	124
Katafiasz, Maggie .....	145-146, 235, 260
Keenan, Aubrey .....	127
Kerstetter, Emily .....	15
Kerstetter, Jay .....	67-68
Kilpatrick, Cameron .....	14
Kinder, Aubrey .....	116
King, Lavana .....	264
King, Rowan .....	268
Kneale, Bella .....	104
Knechtel, Mason .....	186
Kniesly, Emily .....	109, 123, 167
Kollar, Jillian .....	55-60
Kosar, Mya .....	146-149, 153-154, 156-157, 199-200, 223-224
Krakovski, Isabelle .....	78-81
Laurence, James .....	43
Lemp, Calix .....	110-111, 161, 187-188
Lever, Joseph .....	259
Lipscomb, Abigial .....	61-64
Love, Nora .....	18
Ludlow, Abby .....	175
Madigan, Gavin .....	173
Manglani, Sahana .....	98

*(Continued on page 272)*

**Index**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Marquis, Wren .....	114
Marsh, Ashby .....	196-199
Martz, Cody .....	8, 40
Martinez, Frida .....	22
Marzano, Isabella .....	12, 15
Maynard, Brooke .....	74-75
McQuaid, Reese .....	70-72
Metheny, Emerson .....	103
Moore, Mackenzie .....	126
Neville, Avery .....	102
Nussbaum, Kinsey .....	113
O'Brien, Eryn .....	132
Palumbo, Nora .....	29
Parada, Sylvie .....	200-202, 241-242, 245-247
Pavkov, Jack .....	250
Pesarchick, Kaitlyn .....	203
Piepho, Grace .....	20, 21
Pitts, Tristan .....	174
Placek, Brayden .....	12
Plisko, Alex .....	97
Prew, Emma .....	23
Pyle, Aaron .....	81-84
Raklavits, Megan .....	9-10
Ramos, Dominic .....	95-96
Reed, Breden .....	165
Reese, Ava .....	75-77
Rice, Lacie .....	141
Roebuck, Jake .....	186
Ross, Cami .....	111-112
Salzwimmer, Payton .....	191-192

(Continued from page 272)

**Index**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Schirmer, Trent .....	47, 48
Schmeltzer, Averie .....	45
Schmeltzer, Kyle .....	36
Schroll, Maddy .....	17
Severence, Austin .....	193
Shanklin, Aubrey .....	16
Shearer, Kate .....	86-88
Shimko, Jennifer .....	236-237
Shore, Eli .....	41-42
Singh, Avneet .....	65, 99
Snyder, Caleb .....	102
Sohar, Zach .....	49, 50
Soles, Grace .....	258
Stoner, Madison .....	26
Sulzener, Aurora .....	100
Sundermeier, Caleb .....	205-207, 224-226, 228-229, 251-257
Taylor, Eva .....	27-28
Tefteller, Hannah .....	21
Tollis, Madison .....	107-108
Troyer, Kinsey .....	194-195
Watson, Eli .....	160-161, 168-172
Webb, Lauren .....	212
Weinberger, Oliva .....	31
Weir, Trenton .....	240
White, Rosalia .....	106-107, 207-209, 248-249
Whitman, Amelia .....	38
Winnicki, Emily .....	162
Young, Kaylynda .....	142
Ziol, Thomas .....	130



## 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 33<sup>rd</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 27,000 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 (Retired)  
ESC of Medina County  
*“Rotary Promotes Literacy”*



Sponsored by the Medina Sunrise  
Rotary Club

