

# Inkspot

Medina County Literary Review

Educational Service Center  
of Medina County  
Vol. 34, 2021-2022

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**Ekin Yang**  
Medina High School  
Grade 10

Greetings! We hope this letter finds you doing well and staying healthy! On behalf of the Educational Service Center of Medina County, thank you to the students and staff in all our county schools for everything you've done to ensure education in Medina County has remained at the highest level possible.

As always with Inkspot, our goal remains to feature the best of Medina County - and this year's Inkspot does not disappoint. In fact, I think it is appropriate to say that the number of submissions and the quality of these submissions clearly indicates students needed an outlet to share both their creativity and their perspective on how they've been impacted over the course of this pandemic. With amazing works from all ages and topics, the 34th volume of Inkspot showcases the talented students we are so fortunate to have in Medina County.

As a graduate of Cloverleaf High School myself, I value the education, support, and creative outlets that our schools offer. As contributors to and supporters of this edition, I encourage you to reflect upon the significance of the works in Inkspot. There's always a story behind the story - for some their work was influenced by COVID, for others, it is something that may have impacted their life in unimaginable ways. We may never see another time like this in our lives (here's hoping!) but the written word which you have given us will forever capture this time in our hearts and minds.

With sincerest appreciation for your talent and dedication,

Robert A. Hlasko, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
ESC of Medina County



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

My artwork was a Photoshop project from Digital Art & Photography 1 called "Double Exposure". In film photography, a double exposure is a combination of two exposures into one image. I thought about how cool wolves are while creating the artwork, in particular I considered the nature of wolves. So the wolf became the main subject for my double exposure. I then thought about where wolves live, and chose the second photo to combine with the wolf image and produce a unique result.

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

I don't feel like I'm a good artist, however if I work hard enough and put my mind to it, I am a decent artist, in particular when it comes to drawing. My photography class provides me with a variety of subject matter to choose from when taking pictures, so I enjoy that opportunity. My future plans include a career involving cars, video games and/or drawing.

**Please tell us more about yourself (i.e., hobbies, future plans, favorite place to travel, etc.)**

My main hobbies are anything with cars (in particular new cars), video games, a tiny bit of volleyball, and from time to time I draw. For the next two years of my high school career, I plan to join the volleyball team and see if I can beat my friends who play for other schools.

## Grades K-6

### Summer

Summer season can be whatever season you want it to be

It can be baseball season

It can be sleeping season

It can even be absolutely nothing season

But whatever it is

It must be super season

**Carson Glass**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

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**Ayana Bennett**

Isham Elementary

Grade 4

## **My Dream of Summer**

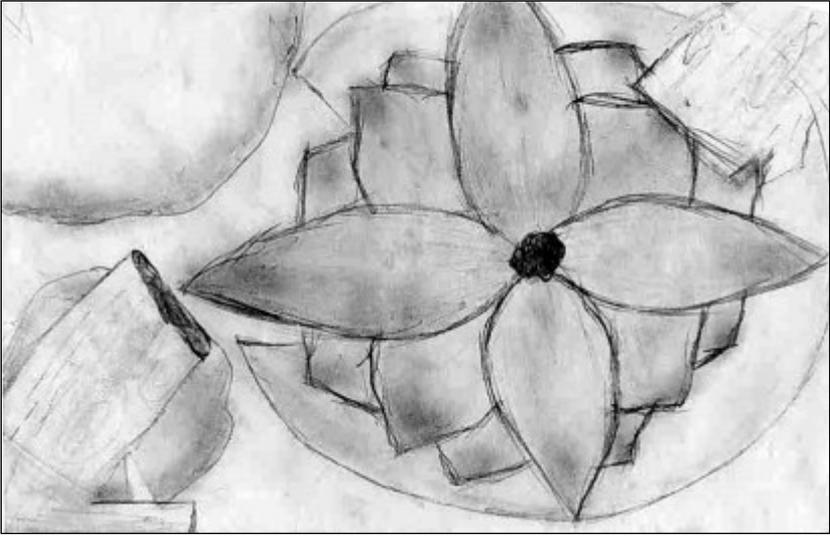
I love warm summer days and their light blue sky,  
Swimming all day in the clear pool,  
Listening to the sounds of birds singing high,  
Not having to go to school.

Summer is the time when friends play all day,  
As we smell the scented flowers,  
Reading a book under a tree where I lay,  
Losing track of the hours.

Summer is for campouts under the starry night,  
Only chased inside by angry, thunderous storms,  
Waking to the warm morning sunlight,  
It's the end of the summer which I mourn.

The rest of the year I dream of summer,  
Especially in February which is a bummer.

**Delaney Sinkovitz**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5



**Lilly Gaeckle**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

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### **The Beach**

The beach with sand everywhere  
The water flowing up the sand  
Destroying little sand castles  
With children and adults playing  
But little did they know  
The nightmares underneath the sand  
Where veterans lost friends  
Or lost people they called brothers  
If only they knew  
What nightmares some people have  
On this beach

**Alexander Frey**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Adelynn VanArnam**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## **Ocean's Depths**

Water ripples, fishes giggle

Down in the water below.

Down in the ocean's depths,

Where starfish lightly flow.

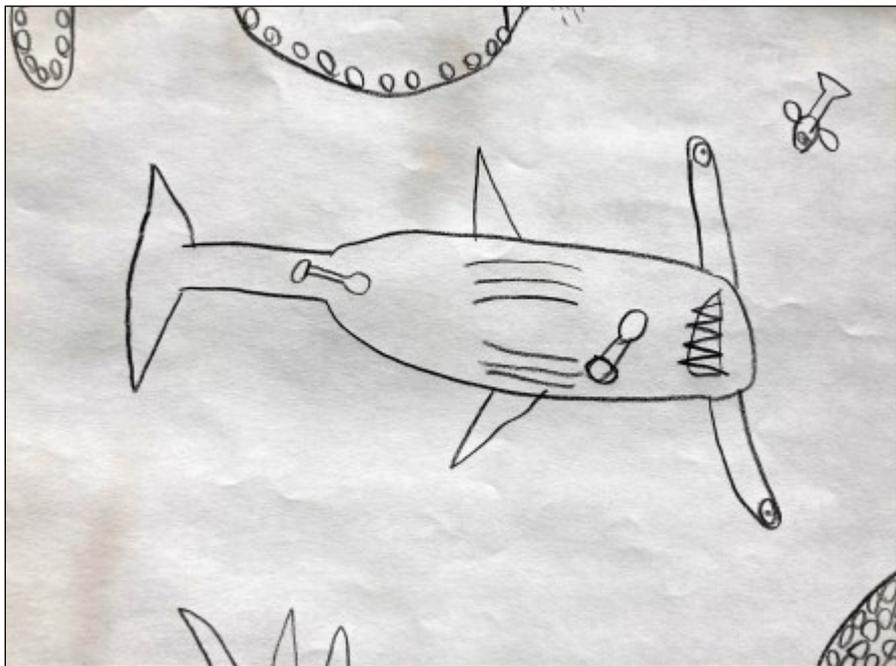
Bubbles fly delightfully,

Jumping where all the fish go.

Sharks chomp gloatingly,

Destroying the fishies below.

**Alyssa Cichon**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 4



**Colin McFarland**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

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### **Snow**

Snow. Such a beautiful sight

All is bright and all is white

Look at the snowflakes in the air.

The snowflakes are everywhere!

**Noah Kauffman**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 4

## A Snowy Day

The snow flutters to the ground  
Like a leaf falling off a tree  
All the kids stare with glee  
As the snow flutters free  
Joy to the world has come to thee

**Joseph Specht**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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**Ethan Milford**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## Dying Plants

Falling, falling, down

The snow kills the living plants

Falling onto death

**Charlie Pistone**

Huntington Elementary

Grade 4

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**Lilly Gaeckle**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## **Space**

Wow. Space

Majestic Space

A Fascinating place

Beautiful night sky. So pretty,

I'll Cry

**Noah Kauffman**

Huntington Elementary

Grade 4

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## **The Magic Mist**

Lots of leaves fell from all the trees

And Little Miss Jade could feel the breeze

She looked at her list

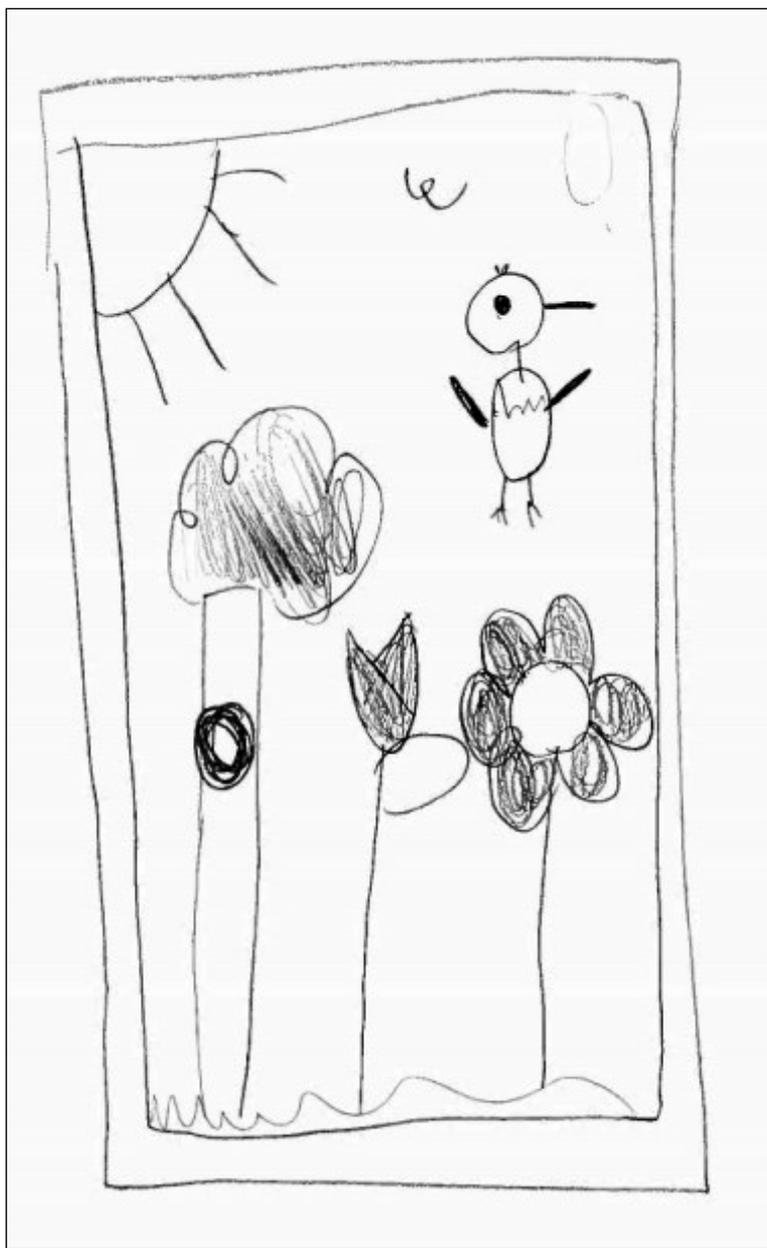
And saw some mist

For just a split second that Thursday Morning.

**Paige Vercuski**

Huntington Elementary

Grade 4



**Londyn Jontony**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

### Secret Sightings

The sun  
comes up  
with its  
rays of  
light,  
and we  
say good-bye  
to night.  
Who saw  
this? "Me"  
said the  
jaguar, her  
pelt glossy and  
bright.

The sun is  
high past  
the mountains  
at day, and  
the water  
below flows  
in every way.  
Who saw  
this? "I"  
said the  
wild horse,  
galloping  
through  
some hay.

The clouds  
swirl up in  
the bright  
blue sky  
and the  
sun shines  
up so high.  
Who saw  
this? "We"  
said the pack  
of wolves  
keeping a  
watchful  
eye.

**Kate Booth**  
Sharon Elementary  
Grade 3



**Jackson Wiles**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

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### **Trees Through Life and Seasons**

Bare in the winter, bloom in the spring,  
Trees, trees, trees, what beautiful things.

Pretty in the summer, leaves free in the fall,  
Oh, how they could be so tall.

Trees, trees, trees, what beautiful things.

**Landon Johnson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## Elements Calling

Fire blazes, clearing the path.

Skies thunder with lightning's rath.

Oceans glow with great despair.

Wind gloats in the frosty air.

Creatures gallop across the plains.

Forests leaving its animals untamed.

**Alyssa Cichon**

Huntington Elementary

Grade 4

## Trees

Trees have branches

The trees hold on to them with latches

If the tree let's go

They will fall down with a beautiful show

As the branch falls

They won't swing at all

When it hits the ground

It will make a crunching sound

Trees are like the brain

And the branches are your imagination

**Jena Koeberle**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Grayson Caplinger**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## **Aqua Kid**

Day and night  
Awake and Asleep  
Wherever I am  
Ocean  
Lake  
Pool  
River  
Creek  
I'll be in there for hours  
It's a mission to take me out  
An impossible one  
Oh! It's too much fun!  
I'll never get bored  
I can entertain myself  
By swimming around  
Or paddleboard on the edge of the lake  
I'll never frown!

**Katherine Bottoni**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## **Life**

Life is just like a book

Each page is like each day

There is something new to learn each page

And there are different chapters of life.

Your life could have 100 chapters, your life could have 70  
chapters.

One chapter could be a catastrophic event.

The next could be the best moment of your life.

People's lives are kinda the same.

You get up each morning and go to bed each night.

But it is how you live your life that makes it so special.

**Marshall Arends**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Anna Bickley**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5

## **You Can**

You can be brave

You can be shy

You can be strong

You can be weak

You can be a leader

You can be a helper

You can be smart

You can be kind

You can be **YOU**

**Anna Bickley**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5

## Introverted

Your life so empty, no people around,  
when problems come up, you have no one to help you bring  
them down.

You never talk, throughout your life,  
making it hard to find your husband or wife.

Sadness throughout, depression is here,

So go out in public, where friendly people are near.

You socialize with real people, and feel and sensation you have  
not felt,

since that time you ate a strawberry ice cream, that was about to  
melt.

That feeling, oh great feeling is,

**happiness.**

**Ray Koeberle**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## **Empty Feeling**

Sometimes we get a empty feeling

Deep Down inside

We feel we are alone

We feel we don't have friends

But we know that's not so

That empty feeling

Deep down inside

Still taunts us

Why you ask?

We will never know

**Alyssa Kinder**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Ella Wagar**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

## **Seasons Change**

As we move along in life, things change.

As seasons change, we change also.

Changing,

I feel the seasons changing.

We're all older.

Some friends changed.

I've changed,

We've changed,

Everyone changed.

But just because

Everyone has changed

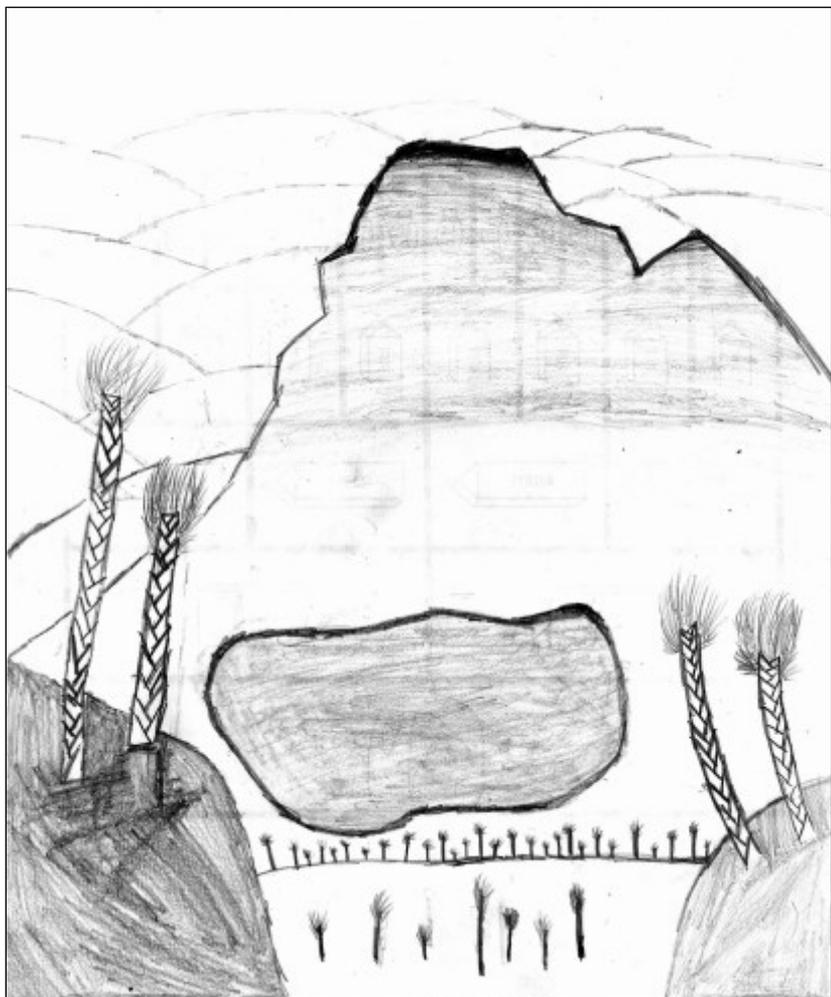
That doesn't mean we can't remain as one.

Changing together.

**Camille Maldonado**

Hickory Ridge Elementary

Grade 5



**Cody Bloesinger**  
Applewood Elementary  
Grade 3

## **Who Are They?**

Has anyone tried to be rude to you  
and talked about you behind your back?

Well who are they?

Who are they?

Who are the ones who ignore us?

Who are the ones who try to insult us?

Hurt us?

Talk to others about us?

Well, those people we don't have to worry about.

They don't hurt us.

We are an indestructible team.

When we are a team, anything is possible.

**Camille Maldonado**

Hickory Ridge Elementary

Grade 5

## Try

Try when things get hard,  
Try when no one cares,  
Cause I still care.  
Be you, don't let anyone change you.

Try when things get tough,  
Try when everyone has a doubt.  
No, don't care what they say.  
I still care, you are who you are.

Don't let them change your mind,  
You just have to try,  
You just have to try.

So don't you change a thing  
You're perfect in every way.

In every way.

TRY!

**Camille Maldonado**  
Hickory Ridge Elementary  
Grade 5



**Kayla Zimmerman**  
 Buckeye Primary  
 Grade 1

## **A Perfect World**

In a perfect world, everyone has a home, in a perfect world,  
no one feels alone.

In a perfect world, no one is scary, in a perfect world,  
everyone is happy and merry.

In a perfect world, everyone gets along, in a perfect world.  
everyone feels like they belong.

In a perfect world, everyone laughs, and no one wants  
other peoples' autographs.

We are all equal and we are all amazing in our own ways and  
nobody can tell you, me, or anyone any different.

We are exciting, and we are inviting people who are  
different from us.

We can change the world to make it perfect,  
one person at a time.

**Kinley Ferguson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## The Places I've Been

I've been through the desert, I've been through the dirt.

I've been deep in a cave, and come out unhurt.

I've dived through the ocean, I've swam through the seas.

I've walked through a forest, with thousands of trees.

I've climbed the highest mountain, I've been trapped in the deepest dark pit.

I've been through a huge battle, thank goodness I wasn't hit.

I've been in a castle, so scary and dark.

I've been to the North Pole, and to Jurassic Park.

I've been to France, Italy, and China.

I've even been to Wonderland, and to South Carolina.

Yet I was never at these places, at least not physically.

And if you happened to have been there, you wouldn't see me.

But I've been there through books, which can take you far and wide.

So if you happen to have some, just step inside.

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Peyton Lilly**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

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### I Am Writing This at Night

I am writing this poem at night,  
 I don't know why I have decided to write at night.  
 Maybe perhaps my life is too tight,  
 maybe perhaps I am tired and I want to watch the cars,  
 maybe because I feel free under the stars,  
 maybe because the dark makes me think,  
 maybe because my bed sheets are pink,  
 maybe because I am contemplating life,  
 maybe because I am dealing with my strife,  
 but I think the reason is I just took a fall banging into the wall.  
 I have been in class this whole time you see,  
 writing a poem about life's obscurity.

**Amos West**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **The Story of Us**

This is the story of our world.  
Everyone hides their face  
Behind these masks we wear.  
People stay at home, afraid,  
Telling no one to come near.  
We seem trapped, but no, oh no,  
We are strong, we can change this.  
We can do it, we will make it.  
Some of us are still afraid.  
But we can change,  
You can be the change.  
You don't have to be afraid.  
This is the story of our world.  
This is the story of us.

**Leila Hughes**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

### **I Find It Odd**

I find it odd that what's hot gets cold.

And I find it odd that what's new gets old.

I find it odd how the world spins around.

And I find it odd how things fall to the ground.

I find it odd how fast time goes by.

And I find it odd how birds learn to fly.

I find it odd that a seed makes a tree.

And I find it odd all the colors we see.

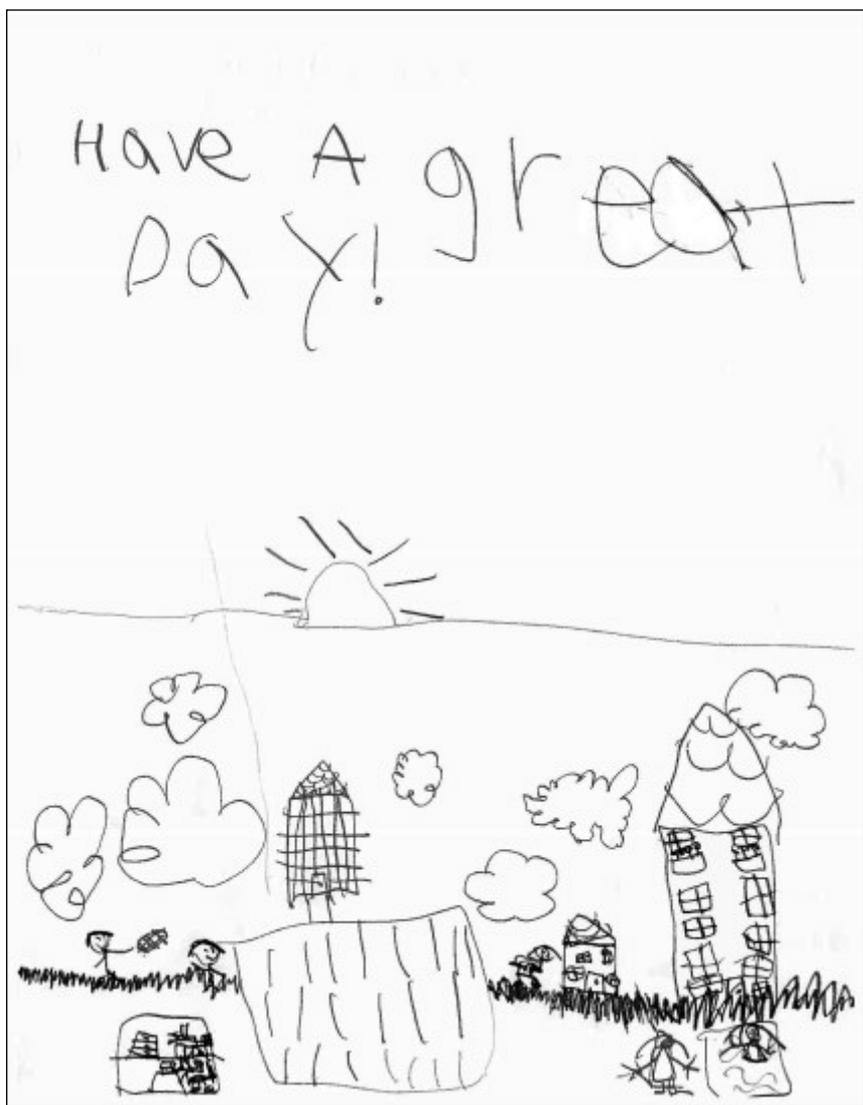
But these things are just living, or so they say.

And living happens just every day.

But I don't find life odd like the rest.

The world remains a mystery, and I think that is best.

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Reagan Kolarik**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

### **The Book Kid**

I have loads of books  
And different genres too!  
I have books that are funny  
Books that are sad  
I have books that are scary  
And books that are a mystery  
I have books that give information  
And romantic books  
Books that are old  
And books that have books inside of the books  
Whatever book genre you like  
I have that genre of whatever style you like!

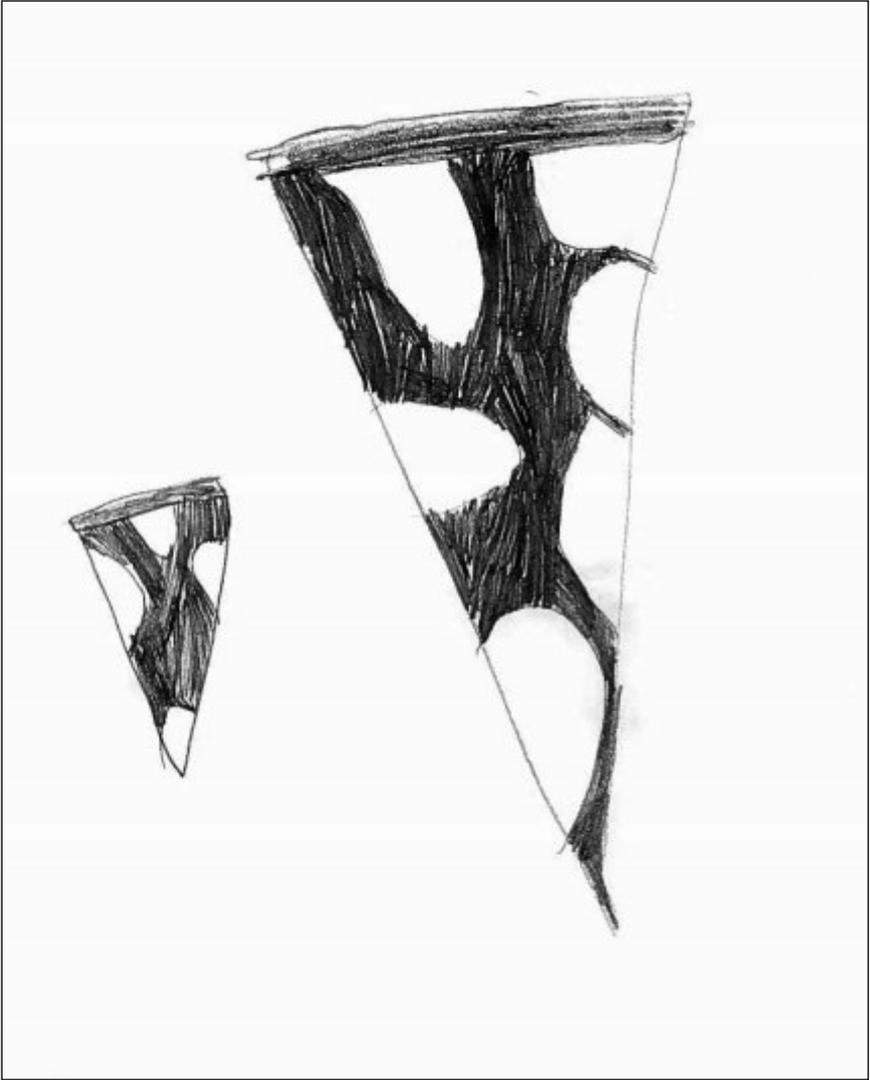
**Kailey Vrutneski**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

Drip, drip, drip,  
The rain flows throughout the town.  
The girl behind the window wears a dreary frown.  
Splash, splash, splash,  
A little boy at play,  
Kicking and stomping at puddles to happily clear his way.

Drip, drip, drip,  
The girl now wears a smirk.  
The rain continues to do its work.  
Splash, splash, splash  
The boy now sees the girl behind the frame.  
He sees that she is sad  
And urges her to join his game.

Drip, drip, drip  
No longer a dreary sound.  
This time there are two sets of rain boots pounding at the ground.  
Splash, splash, splash  
That frown turned into a smirk, and that smirk is now a smile  
And because of one simple act of kindness,  
The rain can turn to rainbows that go on and on for miles.

**Leah Wright**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5



**Maryn Kipp**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## **On Top of the World**

Dedicated to - Childhood

Have you ever felt on top of the world?

Where you can do what you want and make a million mistakes?

That's how I feel.

Yeah, that's how I feel.

I feel like I'm on top of the world and having the best time of my life.

Do you feel what I feel?

Like you're on top of the world?

That's how I feel,

Yeah, that's how I feel.

**Camille Maldonado**

Hickory Ridge Elementary

Grade 5



**Kaelyn Jenkins**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Yes It Is My Grandparents

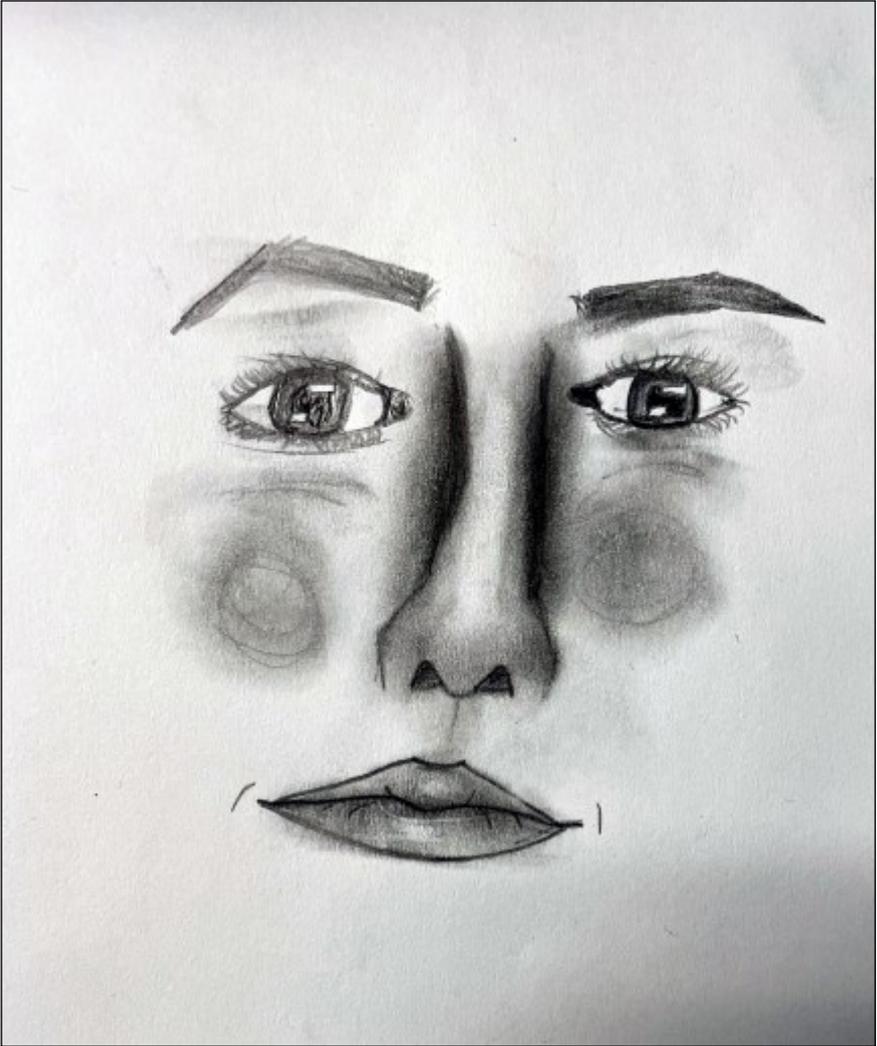
Yes it is my grandparents who held me when I was a baby,  
they were the ones who would watch me when my parents went  
to work  
who taught me very well

Yes it is my gammy who would be there by my side  
Who taught me how to clean properly,  
and if she got tired of me  
she would just watch tv,  
and would bring me to her job to have fun in the gym  
who loves me very much

Yes it is my pop pop who on Thanksgiving  
would bring supplies over to make apple pies  
He taught me many skills to help me out today and for the rest of  
my life  
He taught me on how to use tools and how to mow the lawn  
And who loves me very much

Yes it is my grandparents  
Who love me and teach me how to help other people  
And taught me to love myself  
And I'm grateful for them

**Emma Forsythe**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6



**Ainsley Calkins**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

### **My Favorite . . .**

He is always there

To annoy me

He is there to support me

To calm me

He is always there to make me laugh

To make me cry

He is always there to make me smile

He makes me smile with our dog

He makes me laugh with his corny Smegal voice

He is the one that will always be there for me

He is my best friend

He is secretive when it comes to it

But he will always be my Fratello

He will always be my Fratello and I will always be his Sorella.

**Katherine Bottoni**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6

### **My Broken Arm!!!**

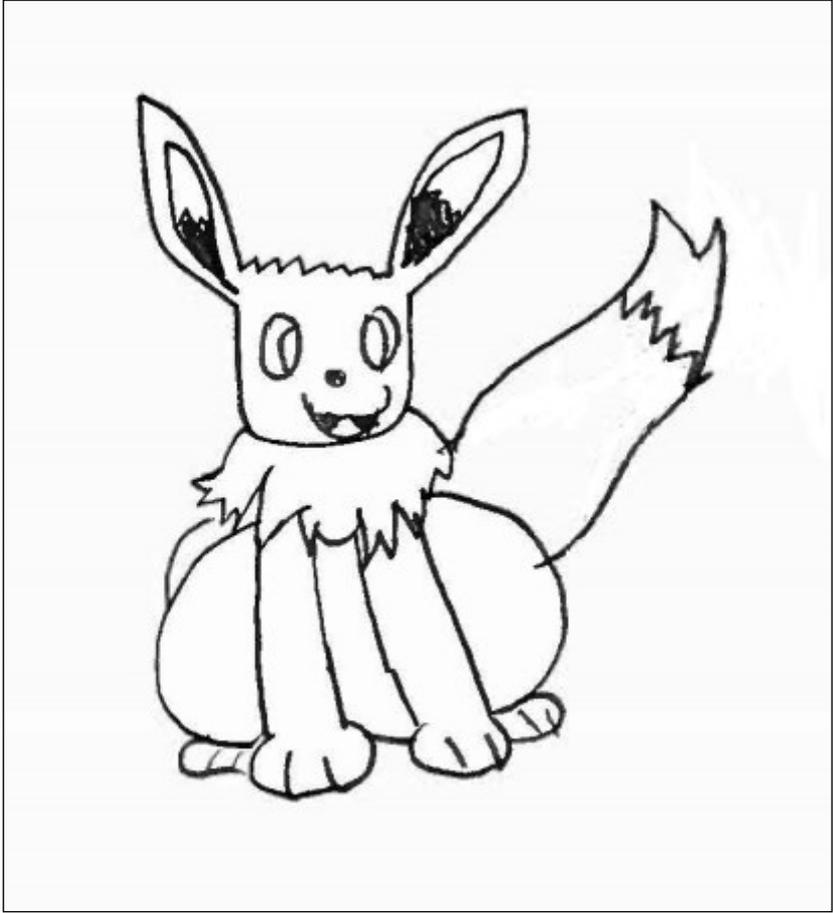
It was my turn  
I was on the tumble track,  
when I did a backhandspring backtuck  
and I landed on my arm I heard a crack,  
then I got back up and you wouldn't believe what I saw,  
and if you can believe,  
you'd be as shocked as me!  
there I was with a broken arm  
as I laid on my back, back, back,  
there I was with a broken bone looking like I was attacked,  
I guess you could say I was under the weather,  
When the paramedics lifted me  
I was as light as a feather,  
They fixed me up but it felt like 80 years,  
Either stay careful or just stay clear!

**Joseph Swihart**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## **Shark!**

The boat crashing in the waves,  
The ocean breeze against my hair  
The seagulls squawking  
All of a sudden  
Jump! Jump! Jump  
Splash! Splash! Splash!  
Teeth white as the white-out on your paper  
Chomp  
Crunch  
Fierce  
Black eye  
Pointy teeth  
Perfectly edged tail  
Splash  
Splash  
Splash  
What a beautiful sight  
A Great White

**Isabella Deighton**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6



**Ethan Dubber**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Cats

The cute playful creature  
That you just can't help but cuddle  
A animal that lots of people own  
Just at their home  
Just a fluffy little creature just so could be  
The cutest thing that you ever could see  
Now what could it be  
A CAT!

**Kaitlyn Bennett**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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### Tidus, the Fluffy Warrior

Tidus, my long gone  
But not forgotten cat  
He is like a mighty tiger  
Or a little fluffy warrior  
He wore his armor with pride  
And he was oh so lovable  
He held his sword and was ready to strike  
Who will come on top?  
Our cat warrior or death itself  
Through the dust it appeared that death had took down our hero  
Sadness filled the town but I will always know that he is watching  
out for me.

**Braxton Pruitt**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

**There She Is . . .**

There she is

Laying in her bed

There she is

Sleeping in her deepest dreams

There she is

Sitting patiently for a freezing cold ice cube

There she is

Looking at me with her deep dog eyes

There she is

Grinding her teeth against an elk bone

There she is

Sleeping next to me with love

Oh! That's my dog

**Katherine Bottoni**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6



**Mason Frank**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## **Polar Opposites**

You pull me forward, I pull you back,  
I love to sleep in, you're an early bird,  
You run through the snow banks, I walk on the side walks,  
I love to swim in the summer, you don't,  
In the fall I try to catch leaves, you see what's under them,  
In the spring you chase the bunnies, I look at the birds  
I hate cheese, you will lick it off the nacho bowl,  
I like the colors green and purple, you like yellow and blue,  
I'm a girl, you're a boy,  
I like to run, you like to jump,  
In the evenings you go to bed an hour after dinner, I stay up and  
watch TV  
At midday you go on a walk, I watch the clouds,  
You're always hot I'm always cold,  
I'm thoughtful and shy, you're so brave and bold  
Polar opposites attract, so you'd be my very best friend,  
If you weren't just a dog

**Evangeline Sondles**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Hidden Predator

In the rainforest, a feared foe  
Orange and black stripes hidden  
Crouched down low  
Behind some grass  
Then at last  
Some prey slithered past  
A scaly snake gliding along the ground  
Then with a leap and without a sound  
The tiger struck.

### Adelaide Adams

Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5



### Ashley Renner

Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

### **The Scarecrow**

Scarecrow oh scarecrow are you alive I do not know.  
In the field your smile oh so bright it does not fade away  
even in the night.

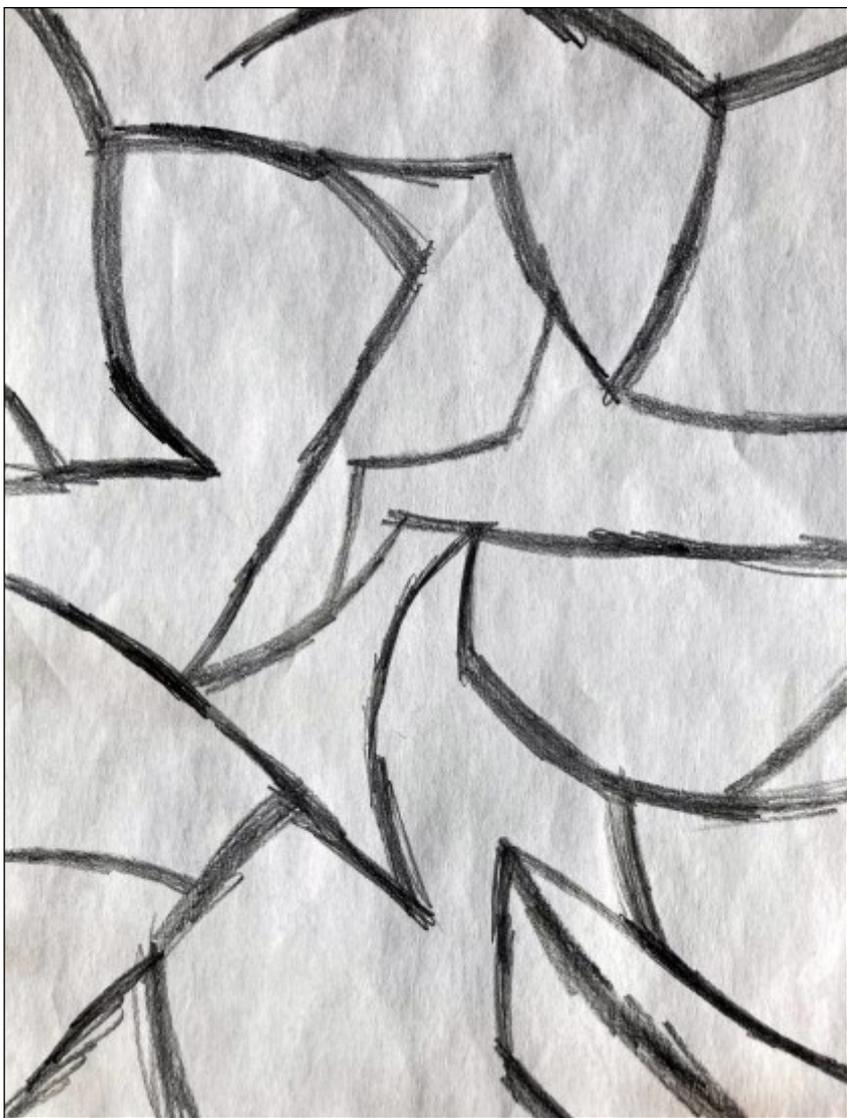
You make me feel so bright you are covered in hay  
yellow of white.

Some people and birds think you look scary but I don't.  
I think you merry.

When leaves fall red, yellow and brown you still don't  
have a frown.

Even in a cold winter night you always bring me such delight  
Scarecrow oh scarecrow are you alive  
I do not know as I see you out there in the snow.  
Even if you are not real  
It is not fake how you make me feel.

**Jude Cole**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Aiden Orr**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## Dreams

I am running to a beautiful land  
I keep on running with my soul  
My freedom catching up behind me  
With me while I land on  
A fluffy cloud.

**Cate Smicklas**

Sharon Elementary

Grade 3

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### The Amazing Winter Day

The amazing feeling when you wake up and check the time and see that it's past time to wake up and get ready, and look out the window and see the freshly fallen snow, and realize it's a snow day.

The glorious taste of the breakfast your parents had the time to make you because they didn't have to go to work.

The warm feeling as you put on your snow suit.

The thrill and excitement as you fly down the hill on your brown, wooden sled.

The cozy feeling as you sit by the warm, glowing fire and slowly sip on your hot chocolate.

The feeling of a good day as you're tucked into bed.

And finally, the sadness when you wake up and realize you have to go back to school.

**Reese Gruver**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## **Skiing**

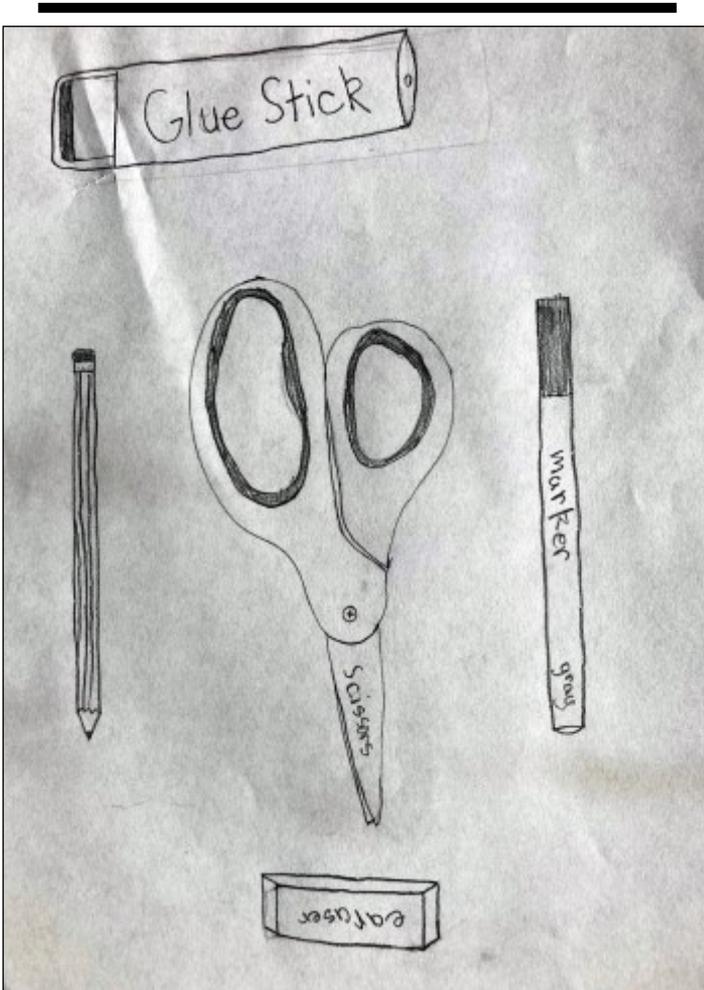
The big lights shine down on the hills  
A cool breeze sweeps the mountain  
All is silent down at Boston Mills  
But the irritating sound of the lifts  
My friends follow close behind  
On both sides cliffs  
The air whistles in our ears  
The snow dances in the air  
Whirling  
And  
Twirling  
As it falls  
No ice in sight  
The wind in your face is blinding  
But you must keep focus  
As you get to the end of the run  
You have to do it all over again

**Manny Heming**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## My Trusty Pencil

My Yellow Pencil  
Glimmer of Creativity  
A Small, Boundless Tool

**Lucas Kiedrowski**  
Huntington Elementary  
Grade 5



**Eliana Pakic**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## The Clock

The time is 12:38 you're not really paying attention, you're just thinking about what you want to do after school and what you did today.

The teacher is talking about Inkspot when your mind is going to all the possible things you could write about but you can't think of anything that quick.

It's 12:40 The teacher has pulled out kids for reading as people are writing their entries trying to make them as good as possible.

The room isn't silent but it's quiet. You can hear the desks and chairs moving from the floor above and kids whispering across the room about what they're going to write while typing on the people's boards and the clock.

At 12:45 thinking about what you're going to write next the whispers get louder as the ideas about the writing slowly fade away as you don't know what to write next.

Your mind goes back to the examples the teacher read out loud earlier thinking about how creative they were.

The room gets a little louder at 12:48 while people are somehow finishing their work already and going to their books.

No matter how loud the classroom is you can always hear the clock.

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The clock in the front of the classroom will always be louder than you.

Sometimes the clock makes you happy as you watch the hands slowly move closer to the time your class will be over and you can go to your next class as it's a step closer to the end of the day.

But sometimes the clock can make you stressed. You could be writing an Essay that is do at the end of class but you only have 5 minutes left and a half of a paragraph to write.

Like the moment right now the clock gives you stress as you see you wrote too much about the clock that the time is running out.

**Kinley Stallard**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Sophia Jarvis**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

It was just another school day as summer was nearing its end. I, Layla, had spent the last few days getting over some sickness. I frowned remembering those few last days. As I swiped the dust off my seat, I felt the bumpy screws near the edges. As my hands touched the smooth table, the stool that I sat in creaked. The room had a small chill in it for sure, it was colder than any other room in the school I had been in.

I was excited but I didn't show many signs of it, after all I had a mask on. Though I smiled from under my paper-like mask which crinkled. Finally after what seemed well, alright it wasn't too long we started.

Curiously I watched as the video started "Hello Waite artists," it began as it usually does.

After seeing the video, I thought "I might not catch up," and I knew that it had a big chance of being true.

"How can I start?" I asked the teacher.

"Here" she responded. She gave me a big, blank, white piece of paper. Also she gave me a finished example page. I knew that the white paper was how every paper looked before an artist started working their masterpiece. I felt happy to be able to have an art class on that day. Then, I don't waste another moment when we can start so I set to work.

My hand moves from up to down, left to right as if I was making a, well who knows? I work looking from the clock on the wall back to my paper which was coming along quite well.

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Then I heard the bell, that bell, that either is our clean up signal or the five minute quiet break. Nervously I froze in the middle of my work and waited to hear what it was. I was as nervous as an elephant. I bit my lip thinking "What would it be?" My fingers were attached to my paper as I listened for the answer. Would I still work, or would I be done?

Thankfully I don't know how I got lucky, and seriously I never thought I could ever get this lucky, but thankfully it was a quiet break.

I sighed in relief.

Suddenly my eyes widened. I had always considered the quiet break to be the half-time of art. I knew that there was not much time left. Desperately I picked up the pace. My palms were all sweaty but I didn't stop, I couldn't stop.

Minutes passed one by one, I felt as if I was conquering time itself. I was catching up. As each minute passed I was more becoming finished, and just as each minute also passed I knew . . . art would always come to an end. Because nothing lasts forever, everything has an end. Even a ring, you put your finger on one point and then you go around and end.

Just then the next bell rang, the clean up bell, I didn't mind. I had already accomplished my goal. The goal that may have come true or may have not come true. The artist of the day was announced and I didn't mind that it was not me. I knew my time for that would come. I just needed to work hard and have hope. Hope is all you need to accomplish your goals.

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I left the art room feeling relieved. Seriously, I was totally relieved. My art bag felt heavy from all the supplies in it. The bag felt smooth and just a hint slippery. I had finished it. I had finished the project. I, Layla realized that some of the hardest things in life can require hope. I had thought that I wouldn't make it. I was happy to have learned something about hard work, not giving up, and believing in yourself.

**Rania Papakonstantopoulos**

Waite Elementary

Grade 4

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**Play!**

I laugh

You and I laugh

We all laugh

Then we go to the swings

The air makes us warm

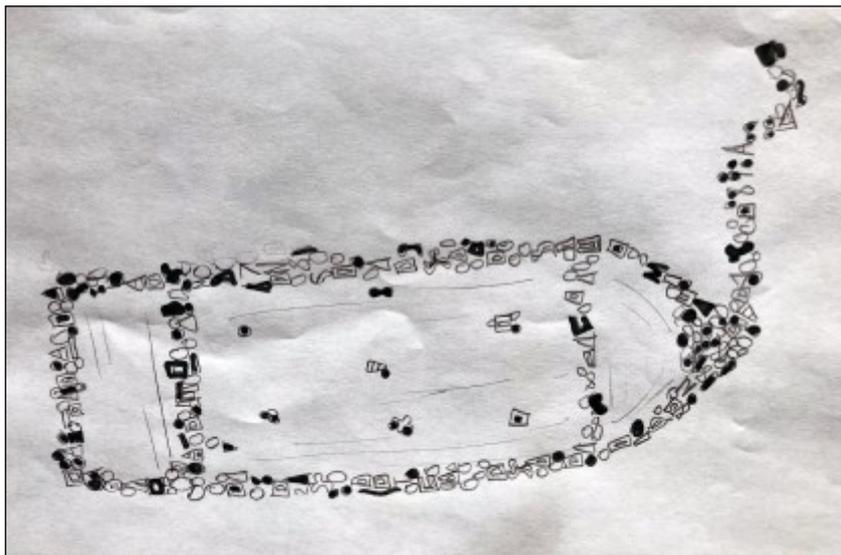
Then close our eyes

Enjoy the wind passing through our hair

**Yaniris Madera**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6



**Miranda Kidney**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

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## Biking

Biking is like being a part of nature itself,  
 I'm far away from town  
 Hearing the click of the gears as the wheels turn,  
 and turn and turn,  
 As I go down the dirt path, my bike goes up and down  
 Bounce, bounce, bounce  
 The beautiful breeze seems to be calling me into the woods,  
 I am in nature and nature is in me.

**Mark Schaffeld**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## The Thing About Sports

There are so many different kinds.

For people of all gender, ages, race, or type of minds.

In some it helps to be big and tall.

While in some the benefits come from being small.

There are sports you play on fields or sports you play on a court.

Sports that are played on rinks, sidelines, or other of that sort.

Some are played with pucks, some are played with a racket.

Others you throw up a ball, and then you try to whack it.

But one thing stays the same with almost every sport .

Is the team that you are on, the one you will support.

Most times you get lucky, with a team that is very good.

But in some others, your teammates don't always do as they should.

Yet whatever team you get put with, for good or for bad.

Put in your best effort and remember to be glad.

For though it may seem normal, for a person to play a sport like baseball or dance.

There are some places out there, that don't give you the chance.

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So for any sport you may play, or one you'd like to try.

Do your best to not complain, and I will tell you why.

For in the far future, you will regret things you didn't do.

And that's the thing about sports and life, that always will stay true.

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

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## Swimming

I can feel the water pulling my flowing hair back,  
as the water hits my face.

I hold my breath as I go under,  
I swim slowly and gracefully.

I can hear the "*splish splash*" of others jumping in,  
I come up and all my senses are brought back.

I feel the cool summer air on my face,  
kids yelling as they jump in.

I hear my mom call my name,  
It's time to go home.

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Goodbye swimming pool,  
goodbye kids,  
goodbye slide,  
I will be back to see you again soon.

**Natalie Maybaum**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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### **My Meet**

The competition is tough  
Everyone is really good  
I have to get a 9.5 to win  
The bars squeak  
The chalk flies through the air  
As the floor music plays  
The beam shakes as I flip  
I have to stick this vault to win  
I can feel the wind as I run by  
The board springs as I fly through the air  
I flip and look for the ground  
I stick the landing  
My hands sweat as I wait for the score  
9.5!!!  
The crowd cheers  
My friends are so excited  
We win!!!

**Kendall Menick**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## **The Win**

Drip, Drip, Drip

Sweat comes off my head like a waterfall

The goal in sight

And no defense in my eyes

Run, Run, Run

I must run and take the shot

Shoot Shoot Shoot

I hear the team call out

Score Score Score

The team calls out

I take a breath like a swimmer

I take another

Next thing I know I hear the crowd go wild like a jungle

I had scored

And we had won another

**Kailey Vrutneski**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6

## The Big Game

The court is slick and clean  
As I dribble up and down  
I run up and down the court like I'm sprinting in a race  
I make a buzzer beater  
I hear the clock go buzz  
3!  
The crowd cheers

We're down by 6  
Pretty soon we've made a few  
It's a tie game

End of the 4th  
11 seconds left  
My teammate passes the ball in  
I'm flying up the court!  
I pass the ball way down deep

I shoot I miss  
My team gets the rebound  
We pass it back up to the top  
I call a play  
She sets a screen for me  
She rolls down to the bucket  
She gets the ball  
She goes in for a lay-up  
She shoots  
she . . .  
Scores!

**Soccer**

Walking on the field  
With my bag  
Seeing people running  
Shooting  
Scoring  
Dribbling with the ball  
Thinking,  
It's as fast as seeing a car  
Speeding through the highway

I get on the field  
Warm up  
The ref blows the whistle  
It's like smoke alarm beeping  
It time to go on the field

I'm playing and  
My teammate passes the ball  
I dribble with the ball  
I dribble for hours  
But I know the ball is ours

As I get to the goal,  
I shoot  
BOOM!  
The rocket goes past the goalie  
The white net flies back with the ball  
The cheering  
The joy  
It's like getting a new toy

## Soccer

The ball plows through the soft grass,  
Making a soft, swish, swish, swish noise as it travels  
He runs towards the ball, like a wolf catching its prey  
The game is tied, with only a couple of minutes left  
    He kicks the ball towards the net,  
    He's not sure if he will make it yet,  
The ball runs toward the open goal  
    The goalie dives, to try to stop it,  
    The ball hops over his body,  
        And,  
        And,  
        And,  
    IT'S GOOD!!!!

**Mark Schaffeld**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## **The Big Shot**

People watching,  
Waiting,  
Silent whispers,  
The ref lines the ball,  
The crowd in silent gasps,  
Slow breaths,  
Lining up the footing,  
And then,  
And then,  
Shot,  
The crowd starts screaming  
We hear GOAL! from the announcers  
Car horns beeping in the distance,  
Everybody jumping out of their seats,  
The Other Team in disbelief,  
We win!  
We made the kick!

**Chloe Eidenmiller**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## Final Out

I was on the pitcher's mound,  
The score was four to three.  
There were two outs,  
My team depending on me.

Ninth inning, bases loaded,  
The last batter of the game, possibly.  
I shivered and trembled  
As I threw the ball carefully.

The umpire called strike one,  
It was a relief to me.  
The next four pitches are a blur,  
Ball one, strike two, ball two, ball three.

The count was full,  
The game was on the line.  
The batter stared me down,  
Chills went down my spine.

As I prepared to throw the last pitch,  
I was hoping it would not be a hit.  
I threw the ball, the batter swung,  
The ball was in the catcher's mitt.

**Jackson McFarland**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

## **Football in Italy**

I love football so much.

I want to be doing it in Italy. Most people call it soccer in the United States of America, but football is the best sport in the world.

I will do everything in my power to get there, but I know it won't be easy.

I can see my destiny, but it's not here.

Italy is a place with a three colored flag, Italy is a place where my relatives have been, I am Italian, and I am very glad. I hope that that's my future, and that I do not dread.

L'Italia è dove sarò

**Landon Lanham**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## The First Match

As I see my opponent  
I knew they could see fear in my eye  
“Wrestle!”, the ref calls  
I took the first shot  
He sprawled on me  
He then got me into a referee position  
I did a switch and got on him  
By that time have match hit and we got back in the middle  
“Wrestle” the ref yelled again  
I shot again and he didn’t sprawl this time  
But he got me down into another referee position  
He then got me down  
The match was almost over  
Around 20 seconds left  
I was down 1 point  
He got me into a cradle  
His sweat dripped into my eye  
Felt like forever  
Trying to wiggle out while the ref called  
“1, 2, 3, 4 . . . ”  
But right before the ref called 5

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I kicked out of it  
Got him into a pin  
“1, 2, 3, 4, 5!”  
“Pin!” the ref then yelled  
I was so happy  
My coaches were cheering too  
And then I realized  
I’m a winner  
And it was my first match

**Owen Mamich**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **Sport Kid**

Lacrosse, sticks, cleats, goal  
basketball, shoes, ball, hoops, swish  
soccer, players, cleats, jerseys, goal  
number  
names  
crowd  
refs  
whistles  
sweat  
turf  
grass  
hard floor  
lines  
out of bounds  
play hard

**Emma Koehler**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

### **Lacrosse Goal**

Goal . . . my goal is to make a goal  
A shot that goes so fast you can't see it  
Goal, goal, goal  
My goal is to make a winning goal in this game  
I feel my heart pounding when I get the ball. It's time  
I get to midfield  
almost there  
Goal, goal, goal  
I get to the goal circle  
I take a shot  
Bam!  
In the goal it goes  
Goal, goal, goal

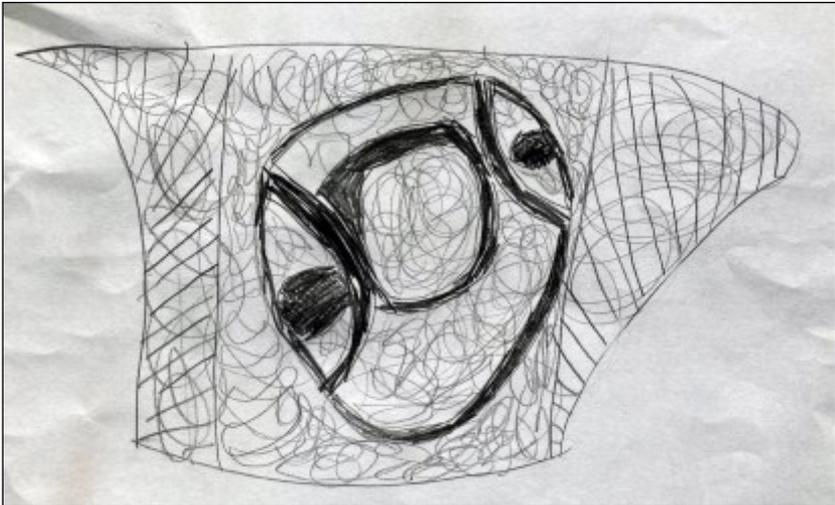
**Cora Claypool**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## Dance

It's hard remembering the steps in a Dance  
I rewatch the dance  
I twirl and feel the breeze through my hair  
Point my feet  
Raise my hands  
And I start realizing this is easier than I thought  
All I needed was confidence . . .

**Yaniris Madera**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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**Chloe Cobb**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

## **I Don't Like Basketball**

I don't like basketball

I tried it out

I didn't like it

NOT one bit

I'm telling you

I despise it

I played for a season

That was enough

The coaches were rude

The coaches were rough

I had a game on my birthday

We lost again

But that's okay

Our team wasn't good

We were really bad

I scored once but not again

But it was worth a try

I'm not going to lie

But that's why I'm still going to stay with soccer instead.

**Stella Wood**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## One Day

One day this will be over.

One day we'll be old.

One day times move fastly.

So try not to be cold.

One day robots will take over taking our lives and dreams.

One day you will wake up and see your being taken over by a screen.

One day will never be enough to accomplish your hopes and dreams.

That is why one day turned into a week but never enough.

So it turned into a month.

Next you see that it has been a year.

It went by really fast.

But if you really think about how fast your life has passed.

One day is just enough to start that whole thing.

It all just started with.

One day.

**Peyton Lilly**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

**Seasons Changing**

Summer springs

People unite

With diamond rings

A lifetime together

Not alone

Unbreakable bond

Promise of care

Promise of protection

Everlasting love

Seasons Changing

Lifespans shortening

Not much left

Hard to breathe

Hearts racing

Seasons Changing

Alone again

Growing old

The world begins to fold

Seasons Changing

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Back together

In the sky

Forever united

The sky's gift

**Calista Wendt**

Root Middle

Grade 6



**Virginia Scheimahn**

Isham Elementary

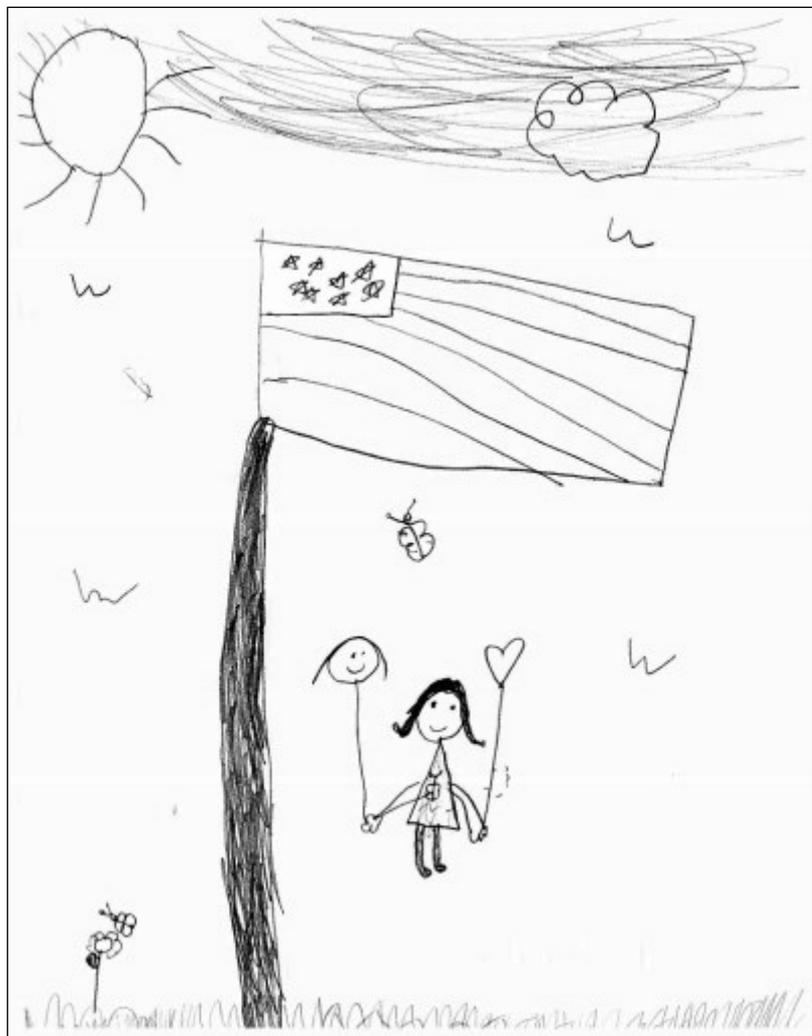
Grade 4

## Pressure

Eyes cover me.  
I breathe heavily,  
eyes icy blue,  
My skin burns with soft browns  
that seem more like sandpaper.  
I look up. I see you smiling.  
I can read your face like pages of a book,  
each one of your words,  
comes back to me with a fluttering pain.  
I want to say something,  
but my body feels like a rock.  
I try to get the words off my tongue,  
they taste like sour candy.  
I feel like the room is going to fold over me,  
my eyes fill with a river of tears running down my face.  
You are in my way.  
I talk as each word slips out with a thud,  
I can see your face.  
It is drained of color,  
it has the color of a cold snow,  
that's been frozen over.  
I feel each one of my words cuts you deep,  
my eyes burn less with tears,  
and more of a burning passion,  
with sadness that it's over.

Men and women in red, white, and blue,  
A thank you to you is long overdue.  
To those who have served for life at the better,  
We love and support you so says this letter.  
Thank you for all you have done in service.  
I know that it must have made you quite nervous,  
But still, you did what you did and that's kind.  
To all of your greatness, some people are blind,  
And for that, I beg your forgiveness, please.  
Yet some people think still that your job is a breeze,  
But I know in my heart that it truly is not  
And gratefulness for you is very easily sought.  
But let me give you some advice.  
When you look at America you see a paradise,  
You all have done really so much.  
You have been wounded and it hurts to the touch.  
So you must be rewarded with presents of such,  
But hopefully, this poem will suffice.  
So no matter the cost and no matter the price,  
We will repay you for your great sacrifice.

**Ava Hamm**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5



**Ella Kurilov**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## **I Have Risen**

I'm just a sad broken lightbulb, that's what you think.

You've seen me broken, broken down.

Will you look at me now?

I'm not broken, can't you see?

I have risen,

I have risen.

I have risen like dirt on a windy day.

No you can't take me down anymore!

No you can't,

No you can't,

No more,

I have risen.

**Camille Maldonado**  
Hickory Ridge Elementary  
Grade 5

## The Spot

The sound of trickling water and chirping birds led Kora to her spot.

She stepped down mossy, worn down stairs and over mushroom flooded logs, which crunched when she stepped on them.

Kora watched as the leaves above her shuddered at the breath of the wind, her picnic basket gently bumped at her waist any time she hopped over twigs.

Her long dusty green skirt flowed around her ankles, and she made sure to lift it whenever she crossed over water. She followed familiar trees and dips in the land to her spot.

She stepped over twigs and made her way through suspicious green plants. As she went down a specific trail she found her spot, run down but still beautiful in a way. Nature surrounded her and she examined the purple lavender, daisies, and stone gray walls that were around a tiny pond, and a ledge sticking out from one of them.

She sat down on the rock ledge, Kora tangled her fingers in one of her brown braids as she watched the blue birds fly across the sky. Her pale skin gleamed under the dawn light. Kora dipped her boots lightly into the water that flowed below her.

She grabbed a flat rock from next to her and skipped it against the water, splash, splash, splash!

Slowly, she opened her basket. Kora looked up and closed her eyes as she munched down on some strawberries, she loved her spot.

**Melina Vonduyke**  
Memorial Elementary  
Grade 5



**Sophia Manos**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

One time I stayed with my grandma at pop pop's house and it was my first time staying there. Once my grandma picked me up and drove me to his house I was excited to get to see him because I never got to see him. Once we got there he told us "Hey what are you doing here!" I chuckled and ran over to his cat Max, Max was a white cat with dark gray spots and brown eyes and he was always laying down on a comfy spinning chair. When it got dark we ate lunch in the living room while watching TV. I had a hamburger meat with some craft mac and cheese and pop pop had the same thing. When it was time to go to bed I slept on the couch while my grandma slept in the bedroom, pop pop woke up at 7:00 and went in the bathroom and when he came out he led Max to the front door and closed the door I came up and told "You can't do that!" and I let Max back in and pop pop laughed. We both sat down on the couch and he turned the TV up so loud that I had to tell him to turn it down so he did and when my grandma got up and said that she would take me home after a nurse left to check on him and that I should stay in the kitchen and I did and when she left my grandma take me home to see my mom.

**Josephine Scott**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 6

One early evening a little four year old boy went up to his grandfather, and lightly pulled on his sleeve. The boy asked him if he could read this book. When the grandfather looked down he saw that it was a cookbook, and was going to tell him to put it back. But then he looked down and saw his eyes sparkled with love. So then he started to read the story.

Once upon a time the wife, Powdered Sugar, the husband, Butterman, the dog, Brown Sugar, and their twin eggs were in the park. They started to walk toward the playground for their twins to play when the weather got really hot. They went under the shade but that didn't help. Butter and his Brown Sugar dog went on a walk because the dog had to go to the bathroom. They walked so far that the twins and the wife could not see them, and "ZOOM!" their dog came barking, sprinting over the hill. Powdered Sugar came running with her kids and saw her husband all droopy about to fall. She set down her kids in the grass and made the dog watch them. Then her husband started saying honey then he blacked out. "BOOM!" he fell to the ground. Powdered sugar quickly called 911 to get fast help. The doctors came in a "ZOOM!". They came so fast that she could not even see them till they had him in the ambulance. Powdered sugar

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followed the ambulance in her Square oven looking car. When they got there they took him in fast and he had surgery.

He was in for over an hour. Then powdered sugar overheard some nurses say that they needed to turn on the cool room, she wondered what that was. Then she saw her husband rush into a room with ice. She thought in her head that “ who that is what that was like a freezer and that it is good that he is still living and when can I talk to him.” She sat down in the seat the doctor told her to sit in. The doc told her that we will do everything we can to help you be with him.

A doctor came and said your husband is in recovery from the melting state and will be fine. He just can't go outside for three week so he will stay with us. We have to do some more tests to make sure he will be fine but you can come and see him when I come to get you. The doctor came three minute later and powdered sugar jumped up. The doc told her while I was doing work a doctor came and told me your husband is allowed to leave the hospital and go home. So powdered sugar went to his room and helped him get dressed and his stuff together. He has to be in a wheelchair because his legs were not there anymore

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because of the amputation. They started walking out to the car and got in. They went with their dog, and kids. They had a happy/bad ending after all.

The grandfather suddenly had the urge of a cookie. He went to ask his grandson if they could sneak into the cookie jar. But he found him dead asleep in his bed. So he put the book back on the shelf and said good night. Then left in his car that looked like the one from the story.

**Jenna Dieter**

Black River Middle School

Grade 6



**Thomas Myers**

Isham Elementary

Grade 1

## A Frozen Nightmare

I slowly layed down and closed my eyes, hoping I would wake where I really wanted to be. My body turned to static, and my mind got lost in a sea of deep, cold thoughts. My eyes fluttered open, like a soft fragile butterfly. The fierce, freezing winds sliced through my heart, making me stagger. I tried to open my eyes, but the wind picked and poked them. Pain invaded my soul. Tears fought my feelings, trying to escape my eyes. The snow burned my frozen over cheeks, rosey with the fire of pain. I tried to walk, only to be greeted by the pain of deaths hands.

My heart pumped quick and fast, like a newborn baby rabbit. Snow crunched, like the breaking of bones. My heart stopped as I heard it. The wind stopped as the slice of an old polar arctic tribe horn ripped through the harsh air. I slowly flickered open my frosty eyes. The pure, cold white of the fresh snow kissed earth. The sky was a pale blue, the blue of my frost nawed hands. My body shook with fear. This felt like a nightmare all over again.

I visualized a man, with his tall pale brown coat. It blanketed his tall, skinny body. His face mask and sunglasses covering his face. A big tophat, the color of his coat, nested on his head. I slowly turned my head around, looking for any sign of anyone. I took a step, the snow consuming my legs. I slowly sank further and further.

“Hello?” A soft voice echoed in my head, but this time, it was a real person.

“Hello,” I sounded almost as confused as the voice in the snow.

“Who is that?,” a small, soothing voice asked. A woman's voice. I quickly looked around, trying to find this person.

“I’m . . .” I trailed off, hesitating to tell this strange voice.

“It doesn’t matter now, does it?,” the voice interrupted.

I stopped, shock running through my body.

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“Who . . . are you?” I stuttered. My head went spinning.

“Well my dear, I am you,” the voice responded. The world started spinning.

“But, why?” I asked.

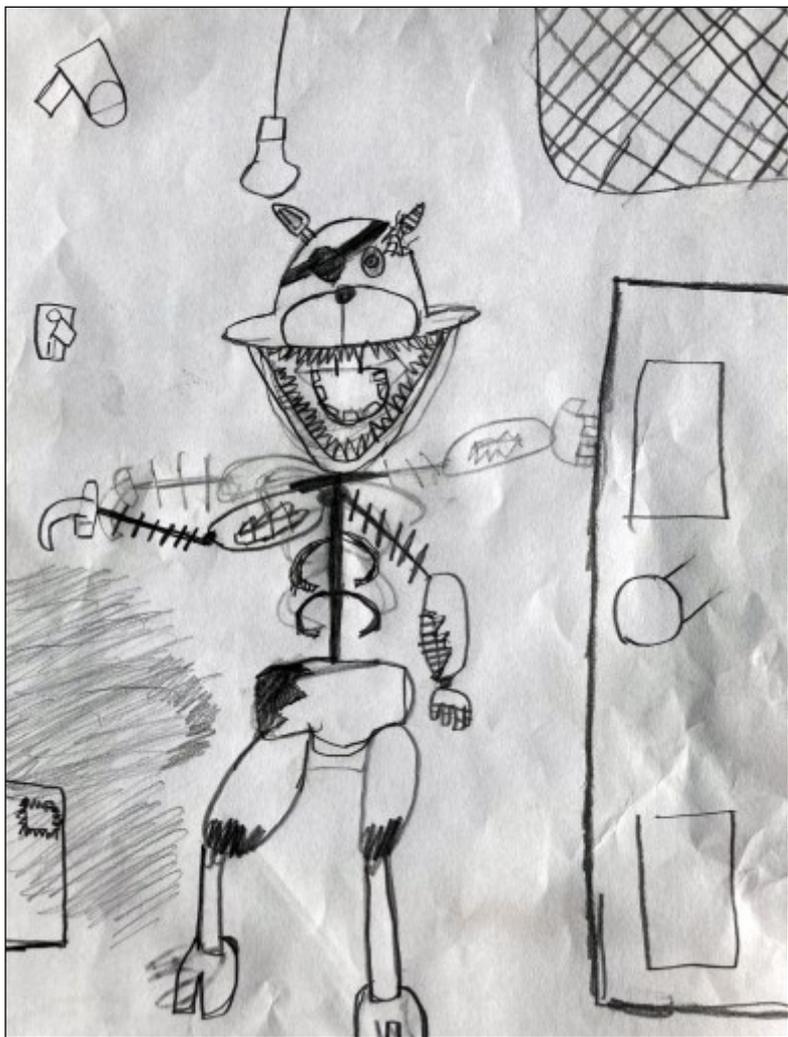
“Because, you’re in danger,” the voice shook, *my* voice shook. The world snapped back and stopped turning.

The snow was paper white. I slowly walked, to where, I don’t know. The snow crunched under my bare feet. The snow was like needles, poking at my cold, frozen feet. I kept my pace, walking slow and steady. I took a deep breath, and took a small step forward. The snow collapsed under my feet. I let out an empty scream into the cold, it freezing over before anyone could ever hear it. The snow piled up over my head, and the world turned into a cold, dark gray mush. My heart grew cold, and froze over. I kept falling, unable to see, blind from the freeze. My mind grew cold as ice. I fell, icy tears were frozen, making my eyes unable to open. I smiled, my lips cracking open and blood pouring out onto my hard face.

My ears, covered with ice, heard the screams of the souls trying to drag me down with them. I hit the dark ground, hard as cement. I shattered, breaking into a million pieces. My heart, my soul, my mind. It scattered over the dark floor. Everything slowly melted, and my brain puddled, my lungs splattered, my heart oozed, my soul evaporated into the darkness. The world clouded over with tears, covering everything with spiky, sparkling ice.

I jolted awake, the real world coming into vision. My head was dripping with sweat, and my clothes were soaked. My small room was dark, but I could hear the cars passing outside. I looked around and let out a cry. I had been taken from my dream, a dream that will soon return.

**Miranda Shramm**  
Root Middle  
Grade 6



**Bryson Alexander**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## Beasts of the Night

The flame danced in the young night  
bringing light to a world of darkness.

The fire went out and I was left on an ink-black earth.  
That's when I knew **they were here**, the beasts of the night.

Dread washed over me like the ocean breeze.

Fear overcame my whole body.

So I ran, *why did this day come so soon.*

After a few minutes,

I came across a forest.

The trees loomed over me.

The Evergreens quiver in the wind,  
welcoming me into their deep cool shadow.

Then I remember **what** I was running from.

I race into the depths of the shadows  
attempting to put as much space between me and them.

I hear cries from above, **they found me.**

Panic shoots through my body.

I feel as if I've been struck with lightning.

The thin light that came from the treetops is gone.

I glance over to my right to see an opening in a tree  
just big enough for me.

*(Continued on page 97)*

*(Continued from page 96)*

I dash over to the oak ignoring all pain in my legs.

I just barely dive in when they swoop down.

I disregard any fear telling me to run  
and get far far away from here.

One beast looks over at me but turns away.

***It didn't see me.***

They start flying farther away but break off in groups.

I let out a sigh.

*They're gone now.*

Just then I hear flapping coming my way.

Pecking noises filled out around me  
and I knew **it** had seen me.

The tree cracked open

leaving me to fend off a flock of monsters.

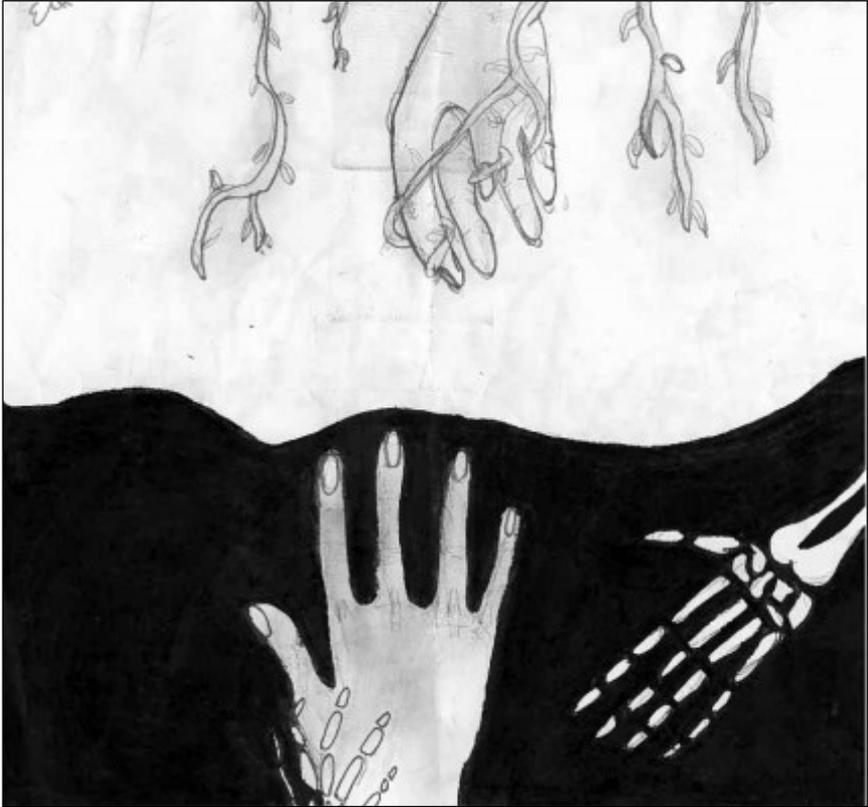
A beady black eye and a beak came down on me

leaving me to join everyone else in an endless sleep...

**Devon Heiskell**

Root Middle

Grade 6



**Eva Taylor**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Johnny Neferos**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

## Orange Flames

The orange flames twirled in the night sky, battling the oily black night to take over. They produce the shine they are most known for, creating a comforting smoky smell. The big, round, flat stones that enclose the flames lay patiently, waiting for something to excite them. Unaware of the silent night that will bore them.

The orange flames tear into the night sky, creating a small sun-like-light. The flames just want life free, to tear up everything in their path. The rocks surrounding them act like a life long prison. The flames try to burn the rocks but just leave their ash in the process. The flames roar with frustration, growing larger and larger. The small runaway embers fly up to the sky, just to end up losing their shine. The seconds that the embers fly are the best seconds. Even though the embers die off, they still enjoy their time of life left in them.

The embers get the freedom that the flame craves. The flame sends up a burst of embers to show it's rage. The sky shines with the embers and they twinkle like stars. The embers start to fall back to the ground like a fiery rain. The embers, who are now ashes, fall asleep on the floor of an oak forest.

One little ember wants to make a change, to create the freedom the flame wanted. The ember tries so very hard to keep itself alight and fights against the cool fall breeze. The ember has to win it's race against itself and the wind to hit a fallen leaf. The leaf is soft but losing it's life, just like the ember. The ember can smell the leaves, and the warm apple smell as it gets closer. It is so very close now. The ember slowly sets itself down on the leaves that lay on the forest floor that create a blanket for creatures to hide under in case they get scared by one who is larger and more fierce than them.

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*(Continued from page 100)*

The ember laughs in relief and in its win. It grows larger and larger as it quickly eats up the leaf it had landed on. The leaf crumbles and the ember, that is now a flame, moves on to the leaves that will continually drop to the pine covered floor. It quickly grows large and moves to the small pit surrounded by the stones that trap the other bright orange flames.

The ember surrenders its own life so the flame could be free from its prison. Soon the flame will tear up the forest, leaving nothing but ash, charred branches, and broken bodies of the critters underneath the forest blanket. The flame grows, destroying what is in its path. It overflows the rocks and leaves them to be charred and frail. The rocks weep, but the flame cannot hear them over its loud mix of emotions.

The flame runs away from this forest, tearing up anything in its path. It leaves embers behind, only for those embers to grow up and turn into a flame. The flame is clouded by its many emotions. The flame huffs and puffs with all its might to blow the sun away, but it just creates more smoke. The flame screams with anger building up. It grows larger and larger, standing above the forest. It looks down at the forest, now to realize it has destroyed it. It stops everything. It feels nothing, only to be swallowed by its own guilt.

The flame slowly dies down, only to be angered once again. It screams in rage as it hits a body of water. It still attempts to grow and grow, larger than anything anyone has ever seen.

It stops for a moment, just to look down at all the pain it has caused. Broken homes, tearing apart life, leaving nothing but ash, and everyone's grief is being scattered. The flame panics now. It looks around and around over and over again. It slowly becomes smaller, its emotions pushing it down to the ground to die off. It starts to get closer and closer to the once beautiful forest floor--now covered in ash. It shrinks under the dead charred branches of the trees.

*(Continued on page 102)*

*(Continued from page 101)*

It feels smaller and smaller. It tried to move, but everything was frozen in time. It lets out one last scream of everything it has ever felt combining together. It looks around one last time to the once beautiful forest. It watches one last time, until the darkness takes over, and it is nothing but an emotionless ember consumed by the water.

**Miranda Shramm**

Root Middle

Grade 6



**Andrew Gill**

Isham Elementary

Grade 3



**Ethan Dubber**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Obi-Wan Kenobi

Obi-Wan was an apprentice to Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn  
This is where this great Jedi's story would begin  
They traveled to a desert planet and met a young child who was  
clever  
Little did Obi-Wan know that this boy would change the galaxy  
forever

Obi-Wan was now the teacher, Anakin Skywalker was to learn  
The boy was growing rapidly, it was almost his turn  
Clones were now created to give the Jedi a hand  
Kenobi was now a general, as they battled across the land

Obi-Wan and Anakin fought together as a great pair  
They challenged the droid army without a care  
Unfortunately, Anakin turned on his master in a great lightsaber  
duel  
Obi-Wan defeated him, Anakin was a fool

Obi-Wan had been gone while the Empire rose to fame  
But two droids brought a message asking General Kenobi to get  
back in the game  
In Obi-Wan's final fight, he fought Darth Vader, his old friend  
Luke Skywalker was now the last Jedi, but this would not be  
Obi-Wan's end

**Eli Shore**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Ethan Lewis**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Grades 7-12

### Spring

Dew on the grass glistening in the morning light.  
The sunshine is burning, strong and bright.  
Frogs croak,  
Rains soak.  
From a deep slumber the bears awake.  
Roaring with an earthshaking quake.  
The forest comes alive.  
Animals will arrive.  
Let the bells ring,  
Because it's time for spring!

**Lyla Marzano**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## A Means to an End: Known as Fall

Fall

Beginning September 1st.

Ending November 30th.

What does fall truly mean?

For it is not just the falling leaves,  
The comforting, nostalgic warmth,  
Nor the holiday spirit.

Fall is just a signal of another end.

An end that doesn't have to be dreadful, but still it can be.

An end that doesn't have to be beautiful, but still it can be.

An end that has a multitude of meanings, yet it can be deduced  
to meaning nothing.

The falling leaves change with colors.

The outstanding beauty in it

Just signaling another year passing

Another year the same.

With the season I can hear a symphony

Each note ringing in my ears with the same ferocity as the previous.

Just another year burdened by unrelinquished sorrow from the one before.

*(Continued on page 108)*

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Another concert adorned with joy hiding the desolate promise of winter.

Each feeling, each emotion, each moment brought out by fall contributing to the masterful requiem of the former year.

Even the flavors of fall overwhelm me.

The sweet taste warms my body, my soul

A sweetness I have experienced before, yet it is still different

Like words at the tip of my tongue

Or a feeling inches from my grasp.

Hiding in the sweetness in the underlying tones of bitterness

Off-setting the suavity of fall into the reality of it all

The flavor gives me insight on the melancholy tones.

Because fall is just another end

To start another beginning.

And all we can really do is admire the beauty in it all.

All we can really do is watch as spectators.

With only the leaves that fell years before

As proof of the end previous to the last.

So please take a seat

And experience my favorite means to an end

Fall.

**Rebekah Murphy**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Lydia Lanier**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

## Jump!

A rake rests in the tall grass,  
And piles of leaves rise up to my eyes.  
Big clouds, as white as snow, fill the autumn air,  
Yet the sun still finds its way to shine through.

My brother's laughter sounds in my ears, as I watch him disappear into  
the leaves.

"Jump!" he says.

I hesitate, thinking I will get lost,  
Thinking that I might lose sight of the sun.

He urges me to jump, promising to pull me out.

So I jump.

The rough leaves scrape against my soft skin,  
Getting tangled in my hair.

Before I knew it, my brother's hands reach mine, as he had promised.  
The air is still, and I begin to smile.

The sun shines brighter than before.

And so I jump again.

**Sydney Smith**  
Highland High  
Grade 10



**Ava Hollingsworth**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

## Warmth In the Winter

Warmth

(n.) feeling of enthusiasm, affection and kindness

Why winter?

Why can't it be warm all year

I'm sick and tired of the cold,

This season is really getting old.

What makes you say that,

There's lots of warmth

In the winter

When you take the time to find it

Where is this warmth??

All I see on the weather app is

A high of 7° and lots of snow.

Not that kind of warmth,

I'm talking about the

Kind of warmth you feel inside you,

That isn't affected by the weather.

Well, I don't feel that kind of warmth either,

All I feel is sadness,

Sadness because I'm trapped inside.

And when I go outside,

My skin burns from the freezing sensation.

*(Continued on page 113)*



*(Continued from page 113)*

You're right!  
My sadness has gone away,  
Please, please  
Can we go outside and play?

Yes!

Of course we can have fun.  
In the snow and in the sun.  
But before you get ready,  
I want to tell you that  
Winter is so great  
Because it includes things like,

**Wonderful** wool blankets,  
**Intriguing** icicles,  
**Never-ending** nestling nights,  
**Terrific** toboggans,  
**Extravagant** Evergreens,  
(and last but certainly not least)  
**Rekindling** radiant fires  
So that we can feel  
The physical warmth of winter,  
In addition to the emotional warmth.

**Reagan Bach**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

Here we come

Tumbling down

Till we touch

On the ground.

Our friend wind

Will blow around

All of us

On the ground.

We hear the child's

Gleeful sound

A million mounds

On the ground.

SNOWDAY

**Kira Walker**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## Snowflake

A snowflake falls on my nose,  
a labyrinth of cold.  
No branch the same,  
exactly like people.  
It tells stories of forever ago.  
It knows the truth of ancient tales  
and legends.

The snowflake.  
No one knows its knowledge.  
“A wise piece of snow?”  
Is what we all think,  
but underneath it  
sees more than we see,  
knows more than we know,  
travels more than we travel,  
and flies more than we fly.

The snowflake,  
in its never ending cycle of life,  
has seen, and  
will see  
everything that has existed, and  
everything that ever will.

**Charlotte Pugh**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Gwen Nagel**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

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There's a thousand pounds of snow outside

Then suddenly I am wide-eyed

All I can see is snow, snow, snow

It makes me want to go, go, go

But then the clouds clear

I kick it in to low gear

And watch the snow melt away

the sun smiles at me on the bright sunny day

**Nolan Rieth**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## Why Do Trees Lose Their Leaves

A lover's quarrel - but one side rejection  
To the maiden goddess she prayed  
In desperate need to avoid affection  
Turned into a tree, is how she was saved

A fathers tears, broken heart maybe  
Why, the sun god tested  
For what a shame, he replied, she carried snow's baby  
Enraged for a snow god he was bested

To lose her children year after year  
Dead and brown leaves to the ground  
So snow never meets his child dear  
Is the sun god's curse to bear year round

To never see his child  
For the princess to bear no triumph

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Grace Steiner**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## **That Beautiful Night**

I miss it,  
The rain coming down on the windows  
The pitter patter of the droplets against the house  
The puddles on the ground rippling with waves  
It was such a beautiful night

That long night in September  
Remembering it so vividly  
Walking outside with my friends  
There had been nothing more peaceful  
Than that long night in September

If only we could go back in time  
To the old friend group  
To who we were when we were younger  
To go back without worry,  
On that beautiful night.

**Alex Van Nostran**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## The City Lights

The city lights  
Stay aflame  
Shining oh so bright

The sky above, at such a height  
The stars we see - never tame

The city never sleeps at night  
It's beauty is to blame  
Shining oh so bright

Try with all my might  
To call them by their name  
The city lights

Sitting here, my room seems tight  
I love them all the same  
Shining oh so bright

Their lulling qualities invite  
To sleep - what a shame  
The city lights  
Shining oh so bright

**Reese McQuaid & Emily Burkey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Abigail Waugh**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

A tiny baby chick.

A sunflower that grew so quick.

The sun on a summer day.

The bus kids come home from play.

One banana from the store.

One glass of lemonade poured.

Each pineapple from somewhere warm.

Each pencil used after a brainstorm.

This color is very mellow,

this color is **yellow**.

**Mila Polczak**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

Bonobos climbing the trees  
 as they ascend, you can see  
 They are surrounded by no family  
 Humans are the cause of these  
 Small little creatures endangering  
 There are known as friendly apes,  
 In return they are getting scrapes  
 There are only about 50,000 left  
 With risk of population cleft.

**Cole Burtzlaff**  
 Buckeye Junior High  
 Grade 7

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### Hansa Bird

there once was a hansa bird  
 it flew so high and proud  
 brooding over the seas  
 of washed out faces  
 and crowds of one and the same

a blessing some say  
 to see that hansa bird  
 a curse some say  
 to see that hansa bird

*(Continued on page 127)*

*(Continued from page 126)*

someone saw it one day  
and the next they fell in love  
someone saw it another day  
and the next they were six feet under

the rest simply sit in wonder  
could the hansa bird could be the cause  
of all good and all the bad  
that becomes in the world?

as for me i think  
the hansa bird is true  
true as the rising sun  
true as the setting moon

when comes the day  
of the hansa bird's final reproach  
we'll see all there is to be seen  
we'll know before it ends  
what that hansa bird did  
and all that was beyond its control

**Calix Lemp**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Ellison Gillispie**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 9

## I Don't Know

I don't know if I will fly,  
I don't know if I will cry,  
I don't know if I will be shy,  
But I do know I will survive.

I don't know if I'm colorful,  
I don't know if I'm beautiful,  
I don't know if I'm powerful,  
But I do know that I'm one of a kind.

I don't know if I will be disliked by others,  
I don't know if I will be different than others,  
I don't know if I will be excluded from others,  
But I know I will be fine just the way that I am.

I don't know if animals will even like me,  
I don't know if animals will even admire me,  
I don't know if animals will even listen to me,  
But I do know that someone out there will appreciate me.

One thing I do know for sure is that I am a peacock and a peacock is the best thing to be.

**Eddie Gale**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Space

Space, space the wondrous place  
With sparkling stars, and galaxies ajar.  
What could be up there, in the dark of the night?  
Could there be aliens or monsters? There might.  
How far does it go?  
We may never know.  
Could we live up there in the future?  
Possibly on Jupiter?  
Just how many miles of stars are up there,  
Probably over a septillion light years  
When we look up in the night,  
You may see a UFO in flight,  
Or a planet filled with granite.  
April 12th, 1961, is when the deed was done.  
A human in space, as the soviet was the race.  
Space, space the wondrous place,  
It definitely is not a disgrace.

**Eli Watson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

If the sun were a pool  
I'd dive right in

I'd run miles and miles  
Just to feel it on my skin

I trust the sun  
Like a farmer trusts the rain

Because when it comes out from behind the clouds  
It's impossible to complain

Each morning I watch as it rises from the east  
And the beauty that it is capable, becomes unleashed

When you see its golden rays  
You know it's gonna be a good day

Because everything is fine  
When there is sunshine

**Reagan Bach**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Nicholas Monastra**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

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### **What the Rain Can Do**

Picture it. A bright, clear spring day. It's not too hot and not too cold, and there's a nice breeze that flutters your hair and cools your skin. The birds are chirping, the sun is shining when you notice what that nice, kind breeze is bringing in. Well, no. You smell it first, thick and cold like a blanket of snow. It smells like tar and wet. You see that beautiful, clear sky turn into a deep, dark gray color and you know what's coming. It's me rolling in. I am the rain.

I wasn't always this way, you know? I didn't always come and ruin your outdoor plans. I don't even try to. I just do. I used to be a crystal clear beach, all the way from Italy. There was a hot day and I remember being sucked up into the sky, feeling lighter than I thought was possible. Now I've been up in the clouds and out and back up again so many times, I hardly even notice it.

*(Continued on page 133)*

*(Continued from page 132)*

I wish I wasn't the way I am. Not so wet and disgustingly sluggish. I wish I didn't ruin people's days or outside walks. I wish people didn't hate me and I wish there wasn't an entire song telling me to go away. But as we all know, a wish is just a wish. There's no changing who I am or how people think of me. I'm stuck with myself and my ruiness ways forever.

So as the monster I am, I roll into your town and absorb the fun and brightness of the day you were moments ago experiencing. I begin to downpour and I watch you run inside, desperate to escape me. I see the fuzzy, little critters of your yard run up their trees, into their tiny little homes.

I look down on this world that I remain a burden in and see it. The answer I've been looking for. It is a flower shining up at me despite the dark gloom that I've created. This is the moment I realize how important I am. Without me, that flower would never get enough water to survive. It and so many others just like it would shrivel up into a little, brown-tipped ball, so fragile even the slightest pressure could crush it completely.

Across the street from the flower is a little girl with tiny, curled pigtails. She's dressed head to toe in clothes to protect her from my wetness. A pink raincoat with slightly paler pink stripes. A soft green hat that my splashy drops are rolling off of and matching rain boots. She is jumping and splashing about in a puddle I've created. I hear her shrieks and giggles of joy as she jumps about.

I see a ceramic bird bath being refilled by my precipitation. Two little songbirds happily chirp and bathe themselves as I continue to pour down. They seem happy. The girl seems happy. The flower seems happy. The earth seems happy. It's new and refreshed because of me. I have now learned that I will always have people who pout in their homes when I arrive, feeling sour and salty in my presence. But I also now know that there will always be people like that little girl who I so easily made happy. Or the flower, to whom I give life. I now see what I, The Rain, can do.

**Kinsey Nussbaum**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Jagged Rocks

the sky is a bright, brilliant blue  
the clouds so white  
they're almost blinding  
we see the horizon  
separating two worlds  
forevermore

in the middle  
the jagged rocks stand  
creating a barrier  
cracked by time  
they are gnarled and rough  
but beautiful to me

the water plagued  
by ripples from the breeze  
softened by a deep blue  
kisses the pebbled shoreline  
quiet and peaceful  
the smooth small stones  
look weak in the shadow  
of the jagged rocks

*(Continued on page 135)*

*(Continued from page 134)*

yet all come together  
as one unified scene  
to create  
a pretty picture indeed

**Calix Lemp**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## Yellow

Yellow

A color of happiness

Not many are yellow

Some are

Yellow

The sun

The dandelions

Seeing people you enjoy

The most

Dancing in the rain

Smelling the flowers

We all experience our happiness

It happens quite a lot,

In our own lifetime

Maybe other colors

But we all try to stay focused

On being us

Happy

Joyful

Yellow is a color for all

Enjoy the happiness today

**Ashton Collins**

Root Middle

Grade 7

## **Shades of Purple**

The color purple.

What do you think of when you think of purple?

My family and I think of epilepsy

Born in November, the month of epilepsy,

I Have Seizures, EEGs

Since I was young

We walk for epilepsy,

Support for those with epilepsy,

Find a cure for epilepsy,

In November, I think of purple,

What do you think of when you hear the word purple?

**Madison Tollis**

Root Middle

Grade 8



**Nicholas Monastra**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

### **My Happy Place**

The lush green color,  
Of the perfect lawn,  
The cute dog, with a blue collar,  
The beautiful sunrise at dawn.

The sounds of laughter in the air,  
The leaves rustling in the breeze,  
The buzzing of bees everywhere,  
The sound of someone's sneeze,

The lovely taste,  
Of chocolate chip pancakes,  
The way they squish and flake,

My favorite place to be,  
Where I can be free,  
And enjoy my day with glee.

**Isaac Robinson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Cameron Gorog**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **A Cherished Place of Mine**

The beach is a cherished place of mine

I feel like everything is fine

I love hearing the waves crashing

And the people laughing

I love to feel the warm sun

And feeling like a beach bum

The beach is a cherished place of mine

I feel like everything is fine

I love feeling the warm sand between my toes

And the salty sea breeze through my nose

When I'm in the sand, running with intensity

It feels me with serotonin and positivity

The beach is a cherished place of mine

I feel like everything is fine

This is where I feel free

The beach is where I want to be

**Madeline Flaker**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8



**Trenton Strebel**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## Boating

Water, Sun, Skis, Wakeboards,

It's all fun.

Having friends and family out for a trip,

We'll give them a ride on our big roaring ship.

Summer days, when the suns ablaze,

Fall nights, staying out until the last of the moonlight.

Best Friends, Before Sunrise, Boating,

You'll have a blast no matter where you're going.

Outdoors, On the lake, Outboard Engine,

On every trip, these you must take.

Afternoons, Acres of water, All trying something new,

Everyone is having fun.

Tubes, Tunes, Towing,

Essentials if you want to go seagoing.

Sunglasses, Sunscreen, Sunchips,

Skis, Surfboard

All things you need to have a good scene.

Boating is essential to life,

And with these machines, you have lots of potential.

**Eli Watson**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## The Waves

Crashing onto the shell-lined shore,  
Teasing the tourists on their summer getaways.  
Sending tangy salt into the humid air.

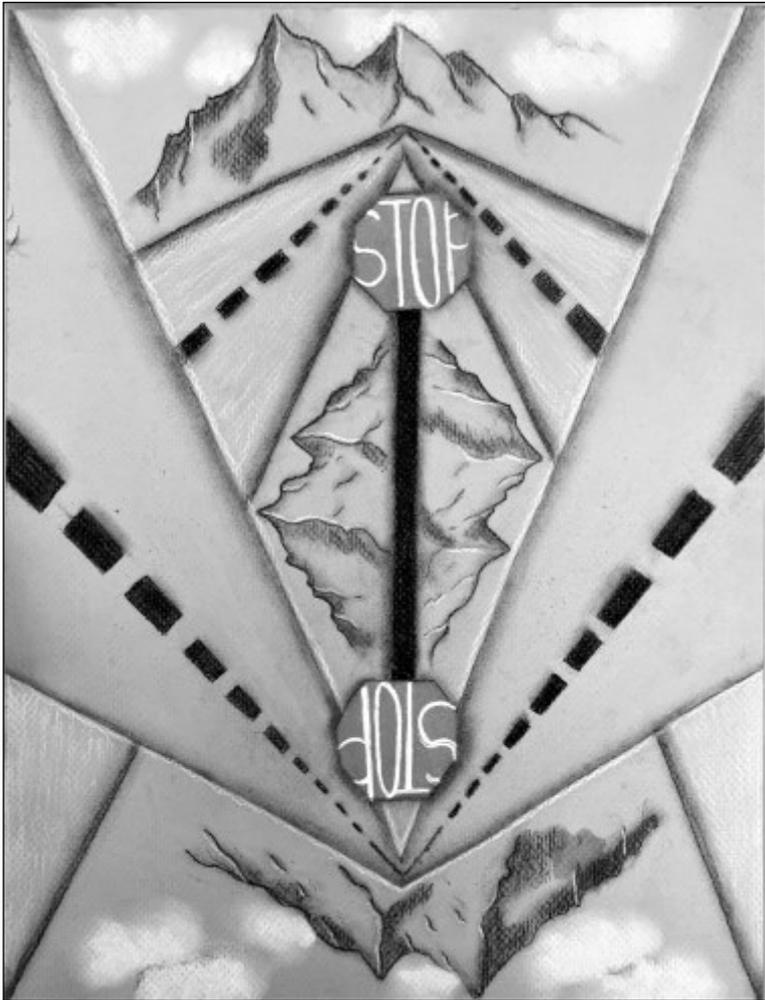
The crests of waves hitting the gritty sand,  
And foaming at the harsh contact of the coast.  
Sloshing as they recede back into the vast ocean.

Constructing dunes of sand with each push,  
Thrusting the surfers and paddleboards around.  
Bringing up material from all over the world.

Bringing up. . .

. . . The Body.

**Grace Piepho**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Lexi Sesock**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

**Those Glistening Waves**

Out there in the ocean  
No one comes to see them  
only the beach as a whole  
They don't recognize the beauty  
Those glistening waves

Out there in the ocean  
The roaring splash,  
of when the waves hitting the shore  
It is calming and beautiful  
Those glistening waves

Out there in the ocean  
The ocean is so vast.  
Nobody knows how deep it really is.  
The waves can push us down to a scary place  
Those frightening waves

**Eden Dierksheide**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Light Blue Sea

Can colors represent emotions?

Well, yes. Can the sea represent emotions? I think it can.

The sea always seems to know how to express the emotions  
that I am feeling through color.

I used to think that was weird, but now, to me, it makes sense.

It has to be cool colors.

A sea cannot be red or orange.

That only happens when the sun rises or sets,  
and even then, that's the sun reflecting on it.

Warm colors are not the sea's true colors.

You may think there is only blue, green, and gray,  
but what you don't consider is the mixing of each color.

When the sea is gray, it usually feels sad.

When it's green, it feels hyper and energetic.

But when it turns blue,  
you have to consider everything.

Have you ever counted all the shades of blue?

There are so many colors to match  
with so many emotions

So many names. Navy. Indigo. Peacock

Azure. Spruce. Denim. Slate. Sapphire.

Arctic. Cerulean. Teal. Stone. Berry.

Admiral. Lapis. Sky.

*(Continued on page 148)*

*(Continued from page 147)*

Blues can be happy, lonely, disturbed, unsure, mad, joyful,  
fearful,

When the sea gets deep blue,  
usually it is vengeful or mad,  
but not in a restless motion kind of way.

It keeps it buried inside itself,  
waiting until the right moment to release.

Sometimes, it gets to be such a deep dark blue  
that it's almost purple.

Rarely does the sea get a light blue.

It's not quite turquoise,  
and not quite sky blue.

It's a one of a kind light blue.

It shows peace, happiness, gentleness, and hope.

The sea is content when it is light blue.

No color is ever the same for two days in a row.

You never know when the sea will be a true, perfect, pure light  
blue.

I always have to be on the lookout for it, just in case

Just in case the sea is ready to express its purity once more.

**Rosalia White**

Root Middle

Grade 8



**Madison Kovacic**  
Black River High  
Grade 11

## Ruins

Fallen stone litters the ground  
The sun lights the scene aglow  
Forgotten and cast away,  
For time allows nature to grow.

No matter how solid,  
Ancient stone always breaks down.  
What once was certain  
Is now nothing but a fallen crown.

Moss and ivy coat the rubble  
Of what once may have been great.  
Flowers bloom on unknown lands,  
Broken away at the hands of fate.

Nature makes its way through,  
Breaking into what had been new.  
Hidden away from the unknowing eye,  
Ignorant of what once was under the sky.

**Lena Buxton**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Boyd Workman**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Flying

Flying wasn't what I thought it would feel like. It wasn't weightless. Instead the air pushed against my back, my head facing the clouds, not so far above me.

There was a sense of gracefulness to it though. I imagined I looked like a brown leaf, breezing back and forth on an invisible swing, when it falls from the tree. The one thing that ruined it was the sound. The constant roaring and whipping of the air in my ears. I plugged them with my unsteady fingers, but it didn't become dull. It was silent. That's when I noticed my eyes weren't closed, it was just black.

The one thing that separates me from the leaf is that one fell.

The other jumped.

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## How the Camp Still Is

It was only ever one place, but I regarded each memory as separate.

The alpine tower I climbed in the pouring rain, different from the same alpine tower I climbed in the breeze

The crafts cabin that I built a staff in, was much different from the one I traversed through a labyrinth in

However, the mess hall where I ate, and laughed, and danced to was the same each year

As well as the cabin I played games in, wrote letters in, and had siesta

Every year is different, and each quest varies, but the same people come and go

Making memories that float around me like an aura each summer

Each time I make a new memory, it builds, not a memory but a place

So never should I forget, king of the hill on the lake, claiming ceremony at Kastner, or the toga party at fire circle

But also the people, the inside jokes

The competitions to be first to meals

Not the songs and playlists of the battles,

Or the stories told by each traveler

And each year, I remember the aura that only grows, from the same places, same people, but different memories

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Addison Dressel**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## A Hero Almost Becomes a Villain

My mom was my favorite person in the entire world. She had done nothing but love me and embraced every imperfection I had to offer. She was the kindest and most caring mom in the world, so to thank her I decided to bake her a cake for her birthday. This was going to be the best birthday she would ever have, little did we both know, it could have been her last.

I had waited until she left to run a few errands at the store to start the baking. I knew the recipe by heart because she had made this same, deliciously moist, chocolate cake for my birthday a thousand times. I poured all ingredients into the shiny, metal bowl and stirred it up until it was a batter-like consistency and yummy-looking. *Perfect!* I thought. I pulled out the biggest cake pan I could find from the cabinet and poured the brown mixture in.

As I waited for the cake to bake in the oven, I started making the pink frosting that would cover the cake. This cake was going to be the most beautiful cake my mom would ever get the honor to dig into. I mixed together the powdered sugar, butter, and vanilla extract until it resembled the image I had stored in my mind from previous birthdays.

*Ding. That was the oven. It was time to frost this cake!* I thought to myself, picturing mom's smile. I was no cake decorator so this was not the neatest looking cake, but like mom always said, it's the thought that counts.

I heard the front door open all of a sudden and rushed to find a candle and a match. I crouched behind the kitchen counter, making sure mom couldn't see me and lit the candle and stuck it on the cake. "Happy birthday to you," I sang as I revealed myself from behind the counter. "Oh! Aw, you didn't have to do that for me," she said dropping the bags she was holding and clutching her heart. "You're so sweet."

(Continued on page 157)

*(Continued from page 156)*

We settled down at the dinner table and we were about to enjoy the cake when we both realized that there were no forks to eat it with. “Hold on a second, let me get some silverware,” mom said getting up. As she got up she jerked the table, making the candle fall over, still lit. I tried to catch it but it was too late, the tablecloth was already engulfed in flames. “Mom!” I shouted. “Get out of the house! Now!” she yelled getting the fire-extinguisher out. Smoke filled the house.

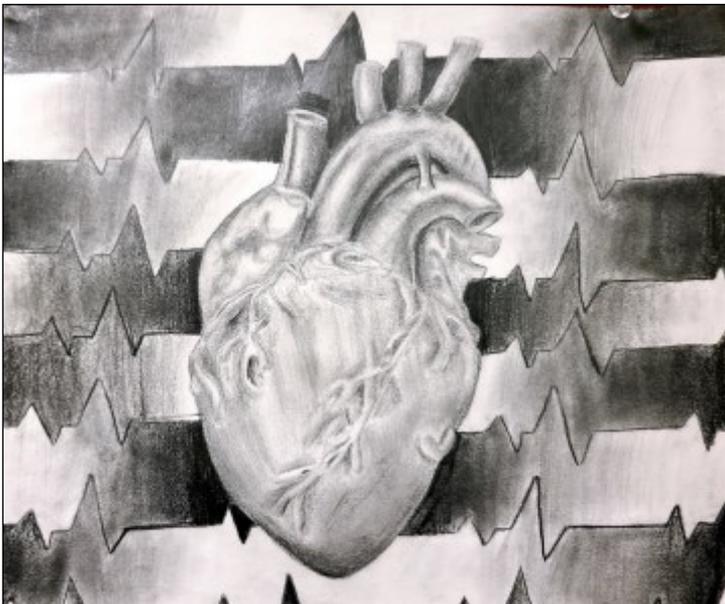
I thought it was over for my mom, but no, there she was stumbling through the smoke, she was safe!!!!

But there was this . . . feeling inside of me. My mom thought I was a hero for baking her favorite cake, but I almost became the villain.

### **Lincoln Marks**

Root Middle

Grade 7



### **Callista Kuzmik**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## Flames of Life

Life, is like the flame of a match;  
not easily lit, but easily extinguished.

It grows through the act of contact  
**a connection**  
to the things surrounding.

The fire is nurtured by paper;  
spreading and enhancing,  
as it learns how to make  
**a connection**  
on its own.

It burns brighter and brighter as it discovers  
something new in the world: wood.

The wood ignites slowly, but once it is going,  
it shall not lose its light for a  
very long time, allowing  
**a connection**  
to be made with things far and wide.

*(Continued on page 159)*

*(Continued from page 158)*

Continually burning along the path it has chosen,  
though some charred wood had been rid of,  
the flame finally reached  
the forest.

In the forest, there is a plentiful amount  
of things to have  
**a connection**  
with successfully.

Leaves, bushes, trunks, flowers.  
All of it is lit ablaze by the fire that started out  
from a lone match.

At some point though, there is nothing left  
to make  
**a connection.**

All that is left from the now dimming light,  
is the smallest bit of burning wood,  
and the ashes of what was once  
a beautiful forest,  
turned into a blackened, barren  
wasteland.

*(Continued on page 160)*

*(Continued from page 159)*

Then, when the last edge of a log burns into  
nothingness,  
the flame that once licked across bark and leaves,  
finally burned out.

For it has nothing left to  
**connect it**  
to the earth.

No matter how desperately the coals are pushed  
together,  
in hope of igniting  
something,  
anything;  
a fire that has been extinguished  
cannot be rekindled from such efforts.

As it had its time to disintegrate into the  
air,  
just like all humans  
will someday have theirs.

*(Continued on page 161)*

*(Continued from page 160)*

And while it may be scary, we must  
appreciate  
the beauty of life that burns brightly around us  
at all times.

Now, I ask that you reread these words I have put  
onto a page,

but replace the fire with your life, the paper with  
family members, the wood with friends, the leaves  
and bushes and trunks and flowers alike,  
with people you may meet along your journey  
through this wonderful thing we have been  
blessed with, called

**life,**

and think of the connection that is repeated  
multiple times,

as the memories and experiences gained,  
that will never be forgotten,  
no matter what lifetime you may be in.

*(Continued on page 162)*

*(Continued from page 161)*

Because the fire did not burn to just go out,  
leaving nothing behind.

It burned and left  
scorch marks,  
coals,  
ash.

The fire left its  
legacy  
on the world,

And you will too.

**Bryce Goodin**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Abigail Waugh**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## Hope

Charcoal clouds flood the sky  
and all I can say is "I'm fine."

Signs read, "*abandon all hope who enter here.*"

The lime green grass loses its vibrant color--  
the whole world seems so much duller.

I don't even recognize myself in the mirror--  
but every day gets a little clearer.

The heavy fog finally starts to lift  
and color starts to return to the grass.

Ah, my life finally has some contrast.

Hope starts to fill every ounce of being--  
letting go is so freeing...

So go seek out joy from high and low,  
let your happiness grow and grow.

**Ellison Gillispie**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 9



**Max Papajcik**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

I was walking through the woods  
Not a chirp or a tweet.  
Sometimes I just stood and looked  
All you could hear was the rustle of the leaves.  
It was like the trees were stripped to the wood  
It was under a few degrees.  
Sometimes I wish I could  
Stay there forever like a rock and never leave.

**Jimmy Meyer**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

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Boring and  
Sad  
Annoyed  
Nowhere  
To run  
Nowhere to  
Go  
I was  
Stuck  
There  
For what  
Feel like  
Forever.

**Elijah Lempner**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

The day as fast as planes  
Crickets as loud as trains  
The sky as black as coal  
Like a dark, empty hole  
The wind whistling in the night  
Despite the simple fright  
You just have to find the light

**Gaige Knowles**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

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### **Ode to Chocolate**

So very sweet,  
Creamy and cold  
The only thing I want to hold.

A huge delight  
And the only thing I'm eating on a Friday night  
Wow what a sight.

This is no joke.  
Without all the cocoa  
I go loco.

*(Continued on page 168)*

*(Continued from page 167)*

Oh, Chocolate!  
 You're my only friend  
 And the only one who I'll bend  
 the rules for.

Sorry to tell you I'm sick  
 and sure the only cure  
 Is more and more chocolate.

**Lucas McDermitt**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7

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**Ode to Parmesan (at the Olive Garden)**

There is something I must confess  
 For it has caused me great stress  
 Olive garden your cheese is the best

VHR VHR VHR VHR  
 The spinning of your grader is music  
 To my ears and my mouth.  
 Which grumbles with anticipation

Your slightly salty finish completes my day  
 Your dry stringy tendrils mix with my salad  
 Like a perfect symphony and you are the melody

*(Continued on page 169)*

*(Continued from page 168)*

When the waiter asks me when  
I say do not stop  
I must have my melty delicious cheese  
You melt like butter on my tongue  
If I could not have you I would be hung  
By a nouse of cheese

I want to inhale you into my lung  
and taste your comforting hug  
The happiness you bring to me is different  
It can not be described

There is nothing like your flavor  
But the waiter is asking to stop  
I am nervous  
Tell me when  
Tell me when  
Mom says that's good

But it is not

It will never  
Be  
Enough

**Corbin Demiter**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

**A Sleepless Night**  
**Terza rima by Desmond Morgan**

Another night deprived of slumber,  
I'm lying here, awake in my bed,  
And the hours pass without a number.

I dread these sleepless hours ahead,  
Without a rumble of a car, or the chirping of a bird,  
And the sound of silence fills my head.

There is not a sound to be heard,  
Each hour after sleepless hour,  
My brain whirring like a nerd's.

The darkness looms like a tower  
With nothing to elate  
Myself, now filled with sleepless power  
I've nothing left to do but wait  
For sleep to come to me, in these hours late.

The terza rima was created by the Italian poet Dante Aligheri in the late 13th century. The stanzas have three lines, the first and third lines rhyming, and the middle line rhyming with the first and third lines of the next stanza. The final stanza has five lines, the last two lines rhyming with the second line. This results in an *ababc bcdcd edede* rhyme scheme in this case. The poem could, however, be shorter or longer.

**Desmond Morgan**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Falling Asleep

As night falls upon us  
Sounds become silenced  
The atmosphere becomes calm  
Worries start to fade

My eyes flutter  
The feeling of having no control  
The bobbing of my head  
Comes to a stop

Troubles out of sight  
Forgetting my fears  
The satisfaction of feeling free  
Starts filling my heart

The best feeling ever  
Cozy in my bed  
Relaxed and calm  
Until my alarm unpleasantly rings

**Brenna Renner**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## The Bumpy Monster

Killian is woken by a sudden sound downstairs, he gets up suddenly in his bed looking around to see what the sound did come from. He really thought he was going crazy as he hops out of bed landing two feet on the floor. He looks around up and down trying to find what exactly it was that made it. Then out of nowhere he hears it again. 'CLANK-CLANK'. Killian just jumps in the air higher than a frog. He yelps as he falls back down, hitting back. "Ow!" That sure woke him up so he got to his feet again and opened his bedroom door and he saw nothing out-of-place upstairs.

He walks out and peeks his head around the corner only to see an empty hall with a window at the end. In his case he was super confused as he didn't know what the sound was but he went to investigate the sound. He starts to walk down his creaky steps only to stop midway. Killian was scared he only saw a dark, scary shadow on his couch. Killian grabs a shoe that is sitting in front of the gate on the bottom of the steps. Killian continued with the shoe in his left hand and fear in his eyes down the steps.. The dark, scary shadow turned to look at him as it growled.

He didn't know what to do as it got closer and closer, but finally he reached the bottom of the steps. Killian quickly turned on the light and screamed. The scream died down slowly before turning into a laughter. He looks around the living room as it has

*(Continued on page 173)*

*(Continued from page 172)*

torn up and tables are knocked over. The scary monster wasn't there anymore. There sat a small Chihuahua named Frank. Killian busted out laughing. He spoke still laughing, "Well then you really are a scary bumpy monster aren't you! You knocked down everything!" Now Killian knows it ain't a monster that woke him up that very night. It was only a small little dog whose name was Frank.

**Robert Glasser**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

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### **The Battle Between My Brain and My Skin**

When I wake I hope I don't have a brain  
To cease the pain I've woke to all my life  
When I have my brain, I have a migraine  
And I've found I could ease it with a knife  
Hiding my blades, my knives, my cuts, my scars  
That I've put on skin for too many years  
With a glance, they must think I've fought the stars  
The pain dissipates as my lined blood clears  
Though the marks on my skin aren't easy seen  
I hold on myself much more than a grudge  
And when I see it all, I don't feel clean  
Wish I could get rid of it like a smudge  
For my brain and my skin don't get along  
One wants to hurt the other, all day long

**Mave Dell**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 9



**Grace Karas**  
Medina High  
Grade 10



**Ashlynn Collins**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

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**(Untitled)**

What I would give  
To halt it all for just one  
Moment, savor it all

One time more we could  
Run and jump and not care more  
One moment, that's all

**Gwen Strehle**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11

The world could be a wonderful place  
If everyone noticed what's happening  
And if other people didn't hate the other race  
And wars and battles stopped starting

If they stopped littering  
And stopped bickering  
About how people should live  
Or instead they should help give  
A better attitude towards the world

We could be living in a paradise  
But instead greed and selfishness rise  
It is sad that some don't care  
Or even be a bit beware

There is a chance for this better world  
If we all just listened to people  
And helped others and were better people  
To live in a better world.

**Jimmy Meyer**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

## One More Moment

I often wonder what life would be like,  
If we could take a moment, a second frozen in time,  
Maybe things would look different.

If we all just took One More Moment  
Maybe our society wouldn't be so void of all emotion,  
Of love . . . Compassion.

If we all just looked around for One More Moment  
Maybe our first response wouldn't be to hate,  
And love wouldn't be so scarce.

If we all just loved for One More Moment  
Maybe our streets wouldn't be lined with grieving mothers,  
With children without fathers and "burdens" without homes.

If we all just cared for One More Moment  
Maybe then we wouldn't have fallen so far down the beaten path,  
That it seems nearly impossible to find our way back.

Oh, to have just One More Moment

**Allison Whitacre**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11



**Nicholas Monastra**  
 Buckeye High  
 Grade 12

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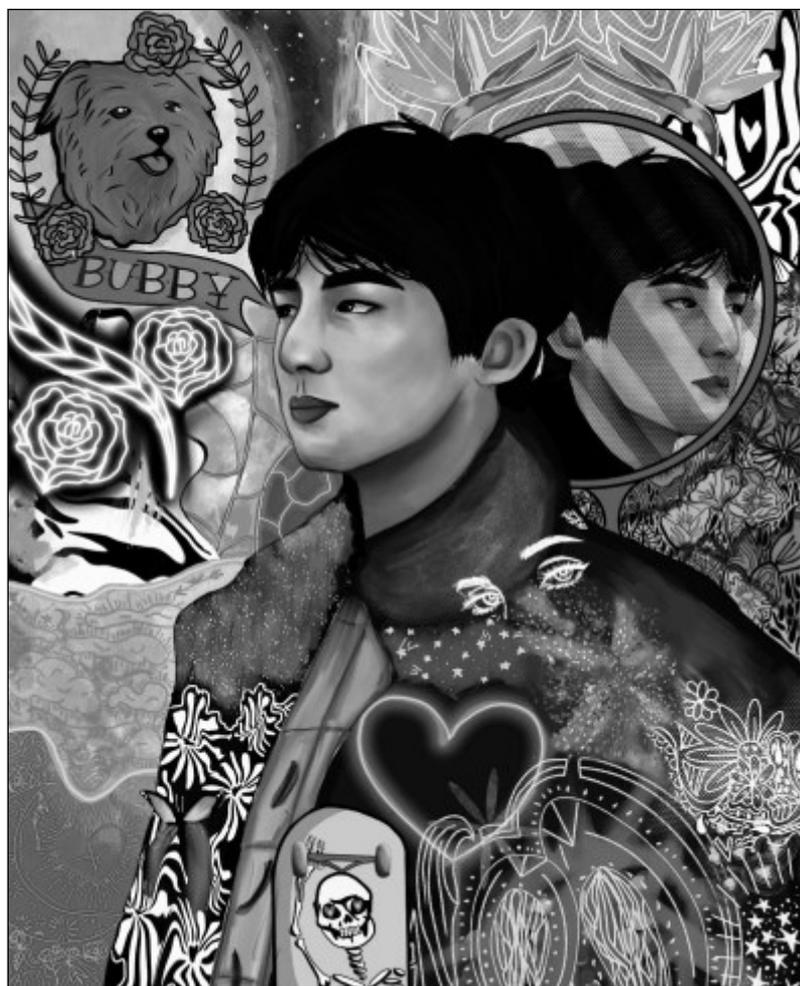
### Failure

Failure comes and goes.  
 It diminishes your hopes,  
 And will suck away what little faith you have left in you.  
 It dares you to never dream again.  
 It will leave your mind scattered,  
 Trying to piece together where it all went wrong.  
 It will put you down in despair till you have nothing left.  
 No lessons learned, no escaping the hollow feeling.  
 You just have to keep going.

**Sydney Smith**  
 Highland High  
 Grade 10



**Nicholas Monastra**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## **We Don't Know When It Will End**

Crashes, Fires, Earthquakes,

Tornados, Outbreaks, Sickness . . .

They all-cause death

Some people are lucky enough to survive

9-11 Attack on the U.S.A

Twin towers falling, Crashing . . . Deaths . . .

World War 1 and 2

Thousands of Deaths . . . Broken Families.

Outbreaks . . .

The Great Depression, Black Plague, and Covid-19.

All leave families and friends with sickness . . .

Doctors Failing

We don't know when it will be fixed . . .

This world?

World peace?

No.

**Ashlynn Collins**

Root Middle

Grade 7

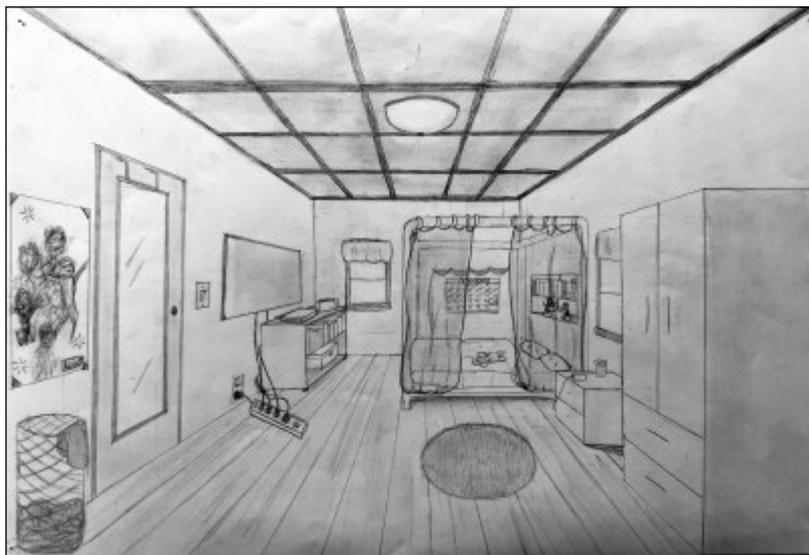
## I Wish

We stopped leaving milk and cookies out for Santa, the Easter Bunny doesn't come anymore because "we're too old for that stuff" the Tooth Fairy has no reason to come anymore because we lost all of our teeth and the leprechauns that turned our toilets green don't prank us anymore, why didn't we listen to our parents when they told us to stop growing up?

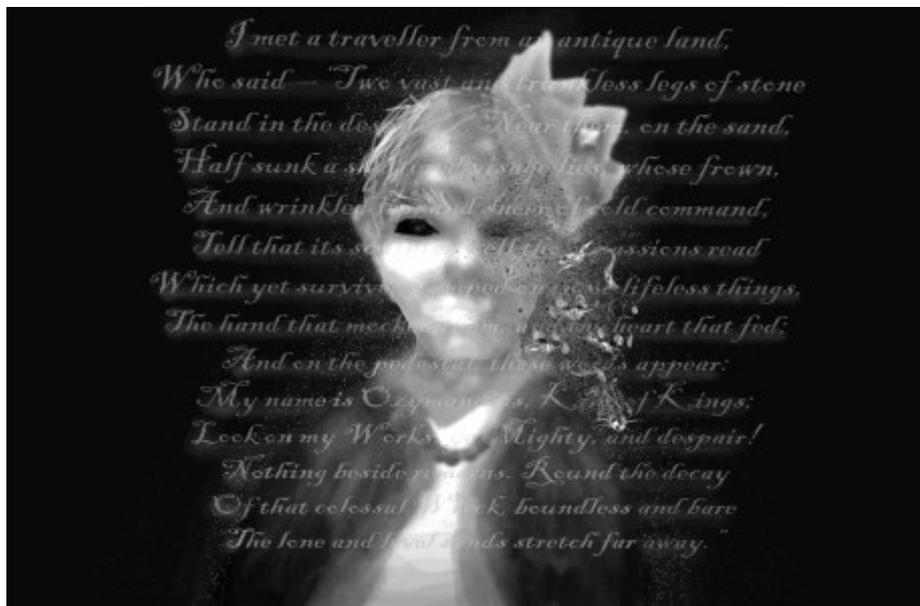
I wish we could still play with our food without being told where are our manners or climb a tree and then scream for help down because we got stuck, I wish that our parents still had the energy to run around in the backyard with us when they got home from work, I wish begging to go to the park was still a daily thing.

I wish that it was still cute when we can't pronounce a word right or don't have to feel like we won't fit in for being our self, I wish we aren't focused on our weight or height, I wish so many things but most of all I wish we listened to our parents when they told us to stop growing up. I wish.

**Sofia Soto**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Ethan Edmonds**  
Black River High  
Grade 11



**William Karkoff**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## The Film of Life

Life rushes by scene after scene - a never ending cycle  
Nothing has been left to choice  
It's merely a collection of a pre-written script, a pre-picked  
soundtrack, and a pre-designed wardrobe  
The narrative is not told by me  
I'm just an actor clinging to the silver screen  
Broadway and Hollywood fight for a spot, constantly struggling  
for control  
The horror of growing older, the adventure of something better,  
the drama  
That follows separation, and the laughable, ironic comedy of  
thinking you're someone  
special  
The invisible cameras catch every moment, always on  
continuous replay  
And yet the theater sits empty because who would bother  
To watch a movie about a lonesome girl  
Questioning anything and fearful of everything

**Meredith Good**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## Endings

Everything ends  
The flowers wilt  
Growing to only lose its grace  
The songs we never want to end come to a close  
A note fading away into the unforgiving quiet  
These perfect day will end  
If those flawless hours lasted longer  
It wouldn't be quite perfect anymore

The devotion filled kisses we share  
Ends all too soon  
The people we love  
Will either pass on or move on  
You will end  
Leaving behind broken hearts and parts  
We will end  
Big or small we see the same fate

Why make endings so dishonorable  
Days end at some point  
Yet sometimes that's needed  
The strain we feel will end  
Flying away to wait for a different day  
Life is full of beginnings and ends  
Don't be afraid  
As it will all inevitably end

**Abby Vavrek**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 9

## Masks

Everyone's wearing masks. It's the new norm.

It obscures your view from their face. Their emotions.

You no longer know if the person you told the joke to

Is smiling.

You no longer know if the person you gave a complement to,

Took it to heart.

You no longer know if you made someone feel good when you

Greeted

Them in the hallway.

If you made someone smile by complimenting their shoes.

When you helped someone who just dropped their pencil pouch.

After you let someone go in front of you.

You no longer can see their true emotions.

Everyone's wearing masks.

It's the new norm.

Or is it?

How do we truly know if anyone ever actually found your joke funny?

If they actually believed you when you talked about their shoes.

If someone likes it when you greet them.

How do we truly know if someone actually wants you to be friends with them?

Everyone's wearing masks.

But it's been the norm.

But I can't wait until the day we can toss the masks into the air, and let the wind blow them away.

**Jakoby Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Sarah Riley**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

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## 2022

It's a new year, a new chance, a new story,  
Maybe this year you can capture all the glory.

Change, Adventure, and Learning.

All words that come to mind when I think of the year turning.

Always an experience you can never relive,

Make it memorable,

So you can cherish it forever.

Goals.

Goals.

Goals.

Many people set them, not many achieve them.

*(Continued on page 188)*

*(Continued from page 187)*

Be the reacher, the dreamer, the achiever,  
And then everyone else can be the believer.

The

There's loads of different goals you can reach,  
So try one out,  
An maybe you'll find your own calm beach.

Diet is a big one,  
And most times it's not much fun.  
Cutting down on calories and carbs,  
It can be very hard.  
Vegetables, fruits and other garden greens,  
All of those will make you lean.

A new year doesn't just have to mean goals,  
You can also try out new adventures,  
And find new roads.

Do something on your bucket list, something you've never done,  
And you'll most likely end up having tons of fun.  
Try a new sport, or find a new hobby,  
Just don't go around acting all snobby.

New Year, New YOU,  
This year do something that helps you succeed  
And fill everyone's day with good deeds.

## Christmas Morning

It was Christmas morning  
And I jumped out of my bed without warning  
As I ran to the window  
I did not know  
That there would not be snow

But the disappointment didn't last long  
Because Angelina came along  
Squealing about our new gifts  
And then we took shifts  
Asking mom when we could open them

When the time finally came  
We could not contain  
Our excitement and joy  
To get our new toys  
And sadly  
Clothes

After we opened them all  
We had a ball  
Using our cool new things  
And of course building legos

*(Continued on page 190)*

*(Continued from page 189)*

Then we joined a zoom  
In our living room  
And we got to play  
A great gift exchange  
Where I won a Cleveland Browns sign

When the zoom had finished  
My energy was diminished  
COVID kept us at home in 2021  
Let's hope in 2022, the pandemic is done!

**Vincent Gambaccini**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **Susie's Art**

Old English in a modern tongue  
Expressing many feelings often gone unsung  
Happiness mixed with other emotions  
Everyday life with seemingly random notions  
Family, friends, and all in between  
Whoever you are, they're never a friend  
Sly as a fox, loud as an elephant  
There's something about them that make you feel confident  
An unlikely support system  
But it's useless to fight them  
If it is still unclear what I am talking about  
Don't worry, you may soon find out  
However, if you do not know me  
It shall remain a mystery

**Alysha Syed**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

### **Before the Mat**

You've been preparing for months  
All leading up to these next few minutes  
Endless nights,  
Sometimes leading to unexpected fights

Ready as you can be,  
Waiting for the moment  
Sitting and stretching to pass the time,  
You have already heard a chime

All uniform,  
Prefect,  
And ready as can be

To the side of the mat,  
Now it is time to go  
Rushing like a flock of birds,  
finding their way home

Standing in position,  
Waiting for the music to start  
Smiles on, and you begin

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It is your time for 2 minutes,  
You must make it count  
Expression,  
Tight,  
Clean

It all comes down to these minor details  
Done, out of breath,  
You all run off spiriting  
Trying to stay positive and happy

That was your one chance,  
That one chance payed off  
Your team won,  
Not only because of you,  
But everyone else too

**Bailey Harris**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## Winning So Much More

It was my first volleyball game of the championship tournament.

Inside the Columbus convention center,  
my salty, smelly, and sticky sweat dripped  
as I smashed the ball  
and it started to swerve.

I won the point and served again.  
Then I hit it into the net that was like a wall.

The other team then won  
and the tension had begun.

My team was a shattered plate,  
once whole but now separated.  
Our opinions were like paper being ripped.

As the next game approached at noon,  
most of my team were not united  
and the coach definitely wasn't delighted.  
The game then started. We had the first set

until the threat.

They won the point,  
and it became worse from there.  
At that moment I was rotated to back row,  
and that was when he began to blow.  
He subbed me out without a warning.

When I got to the sidelines  
I began to approach the coach,

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and there was a frog in my throat.

I came to the coach and asked why I was taken out,  
holding back tears as all my fear came rushing out.

You're too tall for the back row.

He was so wrong. I felt a spark inside me

Boom!

Out of nowhere a booming voice of confidence came out,

I almost had to shout!

I respectfully told him he was wrong,

and wow that was long.

I later walked up to the line to substitute in,

and when I got to back row,

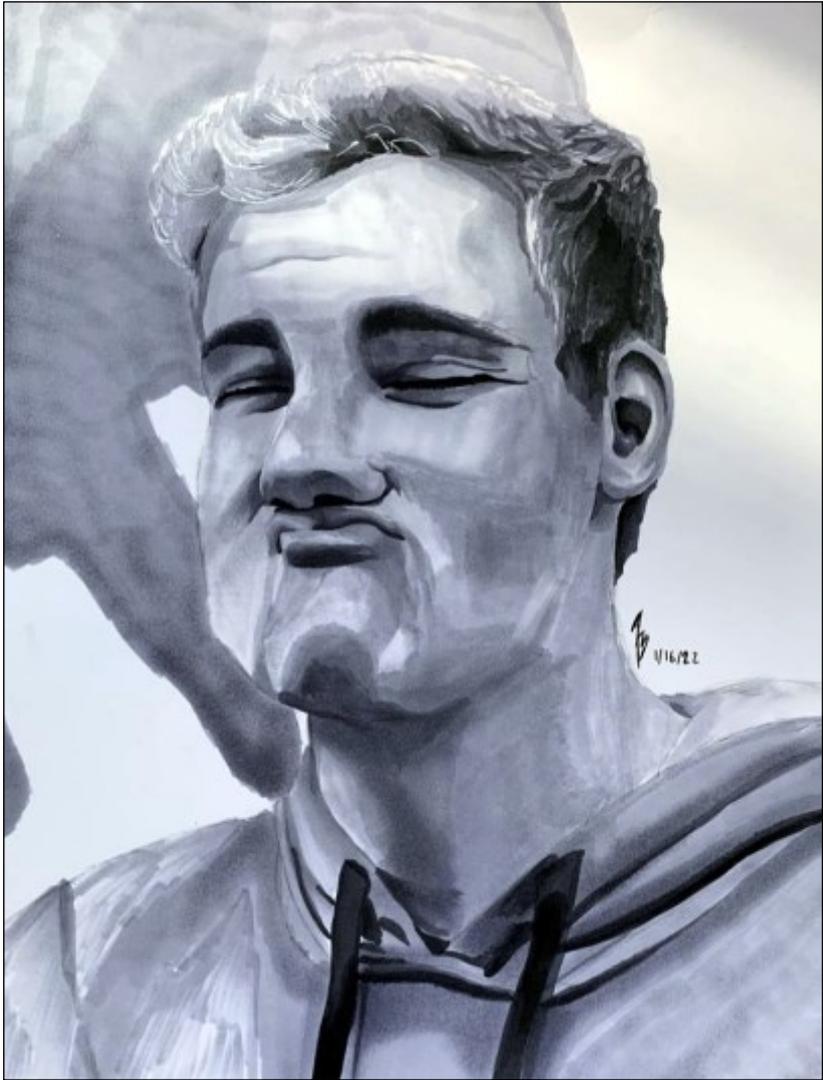
he said give it a go.

After we won the game I felt like crying. Not because we won,

but because I won so much more.

Confidence.

**Riley Critchett**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7



**Andrew Bryan**  
Highland High  
Grade 9

## Gymnastics

Exercises developing or displaying physical agility and coordination

The smell of chalk fills the air  
Some product is sprayed in a girl's hair  
Hustle and bustle fills the room  
The audience knows it starts soon

You can now smell the hairspray  
As the girl lets the music sweep her away  
Then you hear the thud of feet on the ground  
And you think "what a nerve wracking sound"

Within the small moments of break  
You feel the ground lightly quake  
There, twice a girl soars  
The crowd anxiously awaits her scores

When seemingly endless squeaking ends  
There is a ceremony you must attend  
From a simple ribbon to a gold medal  
Each award is always special  
Because no matter how you do  
Your team will always be there with you

**Alysha Syed**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## Tennis

Sunny weather is what we need,  
Hard, green courts will give us speed.  
Forehands give the ball great spin,  
Serve it right and Ace to win.

Clay courts let you slide around,  
Some players even bite the ground.  
“It’s too hard” the opponents say,  
But they are not the “King of Clay”.

Grass courts are where Roger shines,  
For he can keep it in the lines.  
Agile like a Border Collie,  
Sprinting up to hit a volley.

If your getting in the flow,  
In your performance it will show.  
Tennis is for any age,  
That’s what makes it all the rage.

**Robert Beatty**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Ellison Gillispie**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 9

## **The Weeks Before**

We had been waiting for that day, counting down every second of every minute. The days were long, to the point where we thought they were never going to end, but somehow did. The day finally came, we got our first two pieces, songs we had never heard of. The start, slow, unstable, shaky, but we worked ourselves up to the finished product, song after song. Eventually, we got another, we practiced like the whole world depended on us. The songs were good, but not good enough. We continued on each, spending hours every week. So tense you could not feel your face, and forgot that you even had fingers. But it all eventually started to pay off. Perfect posture, tempo, dynamics, and length, leading up to these pieces you would never have thought could come out of a 7th grade band. One concert and then we start the process all over again.

**Bailey Harris**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Before the Curtains Close

The curtains open. And just like that, the show started.

You're nervous for how the show will go.

But all of that leaves you as you get on with the show. The  
show

you've been practicing for months. The

memories backstage

that will forever be engraved in your mind.

The show must go on. No matter what. If you mess up, you  
pick yourself up.

The show must go on. Even if the nerves get to you.

The show must go on.

You make a mistake. You don't stop. You know that this soon will  
be over.

And that you need to

take everything you can from every moment.

Because you know that this is what you've been waiting for. Be-  
cause you know that this is what you've been practicing for.

Because this is your chance to enjoy being in the show

Before the curtains close.

**Jakoby Currens**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

### **The Fright of a First Time**

I was young and starting,  
When my violin teacher came to me.  
He asked me to join him in a small orchestra,  
And I thought it couldn't be.

Such a big task,  
One I was willing to take on.  
I told my parents and they were proud,  
I was so, so happy, till I saw one song.

So many notes that swam on the page like a swan,  
With so little time to get ready.  
Every day I worried if I could get prepared fast enough,  
But I kept working, and my progression was steady.

I was still so afraid,  
In fact, my stress and nerves grew.  
But I was getting better,  
So no reason to be blue.

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Finally the concert arose,  
And there were a million butterflies in my stomach, each growing  
in size.

We were at a retirement home with many fancy decorations,  
To give the folks a prize.

I put my bow on the string and,

*Strum . . .*

My violin sang, I was playing so proud with few mistakes,  
Feeling so glad I had come.

We were done,

The applause felt earned.

Others and I were so grateful for this opportunity,

Another concert was yearned.

**Katherine Schuler**

Highland Middle

Grade 7



**Marcus Getz**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

**Feels**

I feel nauseous as I walk to the red line in the center of the mat,  
My heart pounds and my stomach turns,  
We shake hands and the whistle blows,  
Another match begins.  
Muscles burning, fingers reaching for nonexistent hands,  
Perspiration on my face,  
My opponent fights for the pin,  
But I refuse,  
We both fight for three whole periods,  
Twisting, Grabbing, Overpowering,  
The whistle blows the final time,  
The score shocks me,  
4-5,  
The ref raises my opponents hand,  
I let out a sigh defeated,  
But in the wrestling room,  
I train, I train and train some more,  
I get stronger faster and quicker,  
My next match I feel nauseous,  
But my skills have sharpened,  
I fight for the pin,  
Go for the win,  
Hear the whistle blow,  
Stand up and my hand goes up,  
Only one thought was in my mind,  
I won.

## Cheer for the Underdog

Trying to break the wall between them and success

No one expects them to win

No one expects them to succeed

They're the underdog

They stand there feeling stuck and defeated

Wondering why no one can see them,

why no one can give them a chance,

why it's always the same people chosen

They live for the today and who can blame them

If there was a top 10 they would be 11

I watch as their smile fades when they don't get chosen for the part again

It's hard to see them live with the fact that they don't get chosen

That not succeeding is a routine, that its expected

So no matter what happens, always cheer for the underdog

And when the underdog starts to succeed, cheer for the new underdog

**Meredith Hire**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## Grand Canyon Flip

I went to Arizona,  
Specifically, to Sedona.  
But my highlight of the trip,  
I will call the Grand Canyon flip.

Canyon high in elevation,  
Crisp, clean air to my elation.  
Despite the majestic calmness,  
I had to spice up the dullness.

“Hey Kalli, come here quick.”  
She ran over real slick.  
“What do you want, brother,  
Before we get too far from mother”

I pointed at the scaly ledge,  
Just as she approached the edge. My mother turned white as my  
sock, Before she realized she had been mocked.

“Oh no, where did she go?”  
Mother wailed as she ran to and fro. Kalli’s head  
reappeared from below, As my mom was about to blow.

We both got in major trouble,  
While my mom took deep breaths double. Like I said, the  
highlight of the trip, Was most definitely the Canyon flip!

**Anthony Makris**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

## **Family Photo Album-Not Done**

I watch as families walk by hand in hand. I watch as they hold so much love and emotion towards each other. I watch how they care for each other. I watch them create memories everyday. I'm a part of this family, just less recognized. They don't love and embrace me like they do each other. They act like I don't exist. Or they just don't see me. But I am a part of these memories, I watched them all grow up to be their strong selves. I made a photo album of us, full of all the memories we carried. I savored this album for this was the only family I have known. I continue to watch them everyday and every night.

### **Kaylee Chalmers**

Root Middle

Grade 7

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## **God's Greatest Gift**

The word 'Mumma' comes from Finland. In Finland, they refer to their grandparents as 'Mumma' and 'Bapa'. My grandpa's side of the family comes from Finland and for many generations the grandchildren have called their grandparents by these names. These names are pretty easy to pronounce so ever since I've been able to talk, and this is what I call my amazing grandparents.

My parents got divorced when I was nine months so throughout my childhood, my mom and step dad have moved my siblings and I around different towns and states but I always

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continued visiting my grandparents. Eventually when I became of age to choose which house I wanted to live in, I chose my dad's who lived with my grandparents. Ever since I was a baby, my grandparents have raised me as much as they could and never failed to make sure I was always happy. That was when everything changed. In February of twenty-twenty we found out that my grandpa had been diagnosed with liver cancer. My Mumma nonetheless did everything in her power to take care of him till the day he passed away in early January. Mumma has a smile that can light up the darkest room and has the warmest heart. She is my best friend, biggest supporter, and the person that inspires me most in life and has shaped me into the young adult I am today.

Every morning I wake up to a call or text from Mumma making sure I am up and feeling good. Her number one goal has always been to make sure she has done everything possible to make sure I have an amazing day. Throughout the day I will continue to get texts or reminders to stay positive and keep a smile on my face even on rainy days. "Good luck today, I'll be sending positive thoughts your way." "Good luck! Hope you got a good night's rest. Continue to drink water and eat protein today. I

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know you'll do amazing things." These are just a few examples of good luck texts I get before every water ski show or competition. No matter what, my Mumma will always be my number one fan. The endless amount of love and attention she gives me, is something I could never repay her for.

Mumma is the type of person who believes in people when nobody else does. She can see the good in people when all everybody else sees is bad. Her number one rule she has taught me is to always stay true to myself. "Nobody can define who you are." When I feel like giving up, I know I can always go to her to pick me up and give me the best advice to encourage me to keep moving forward.

My life has been a crazy rollercoaster but the one thing that has kept me going, is knowing that I will always have one person in my life who will never turn their back on me. For someone who has had most people walk out of them, knowing that they have a person like this in their life is everything. Every holiday my grandma bought plane tickets to bring my sister and I back to Ohio and also a ticket to fly us back to Texas for two years straight. We only ever got to visit for about a week but Mumma made it the best week possible. My grandma has done

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everything in her power to give my sister and I the best life we could possibly live and will continue to do that until she can't.

My grandma didn't exactly have the easiest childhood. She grew up in the mountains of West Virginia with her three siblings, dad, and mother. Her dad went to war when she was very young while her mom stayed back and helped with the other kids. Her parents were also the type of people who wanted the very best for their children but also wanted them to understand responsibilities and how to take care of themselves. My grandma learned at a young age how to take care of herself. After she graduated high school, she went on to college at a private college in West Virginia called Salem where she majored in English and library science. She graduated Salem with a four year degree. After college, she moved to Ohio where she got her first job as a librarian at Cloverleaf High School. She decided she wanted to go back to school to earn her masters in media at Kent State University. It wasn't until after she graduated college that she bought her very first car because that's when she could afford one. Mumma tells me all the time about how accomplished she feels that she put herself through college and worked at the same time. I couldn't be more proud of her and all the

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accomplishments she has done in her life and that's why she is my biggest inspiration.

Mumma is the best gift from god someone could ever receive. Anybody that meets her, tells me how kind and warm hearted she is and I couldn't agree more. She has taught me so many things and I will never forget any of them. I don't think I could ever repay her for the things she has done for me. She tells me everyday how grateful she is that she has me but I feel the exact same way about her.

To my favorite person in the whole entire world: thank you for always believing in me, being my biggest inspiration in life, and giving me the best life a child could ask for. I love you to the moon and back.

Love, Taybug cuddle bug

**Taylor Steinback**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 12



**Veronica Berlovan**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

### **A Life to Remember**

She went by many names  
Mom, Gram, and GG.  
All were special and dear.  
She helped us all in so many ways.  
She made Thanksgiving meals,  
and Christmas dinners.  
She decorated and celebrated.  
This is a life to remember.

Ninety-Nine years of love.  
Ninety-Nine years of memories.  
She loved mail and baking.  
She loved her sisters, and brothers,  
her son, and daughter.  
She loved her grandchildren,  
and great-grandchildren.  
This is a life to remember.

This poem is dedicated to my GG.

**Henry Hartman**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Monica Horschler**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## The Routine

It was dark in my home. It was like this every day. I see the same gray gloomy skies day after day. My life is pretty gray too, nothing exciting happens. I have the same routine: I get up, eat, watch TV, eat again, watch more TV then I sleep some more. My life is like this for one reason and one reason only: my family. They disowned me after I said that I didn't want to be a doctor, I wanted to be a writer. I wanted nothing more than to fill pages upon pages with beautiful, magnificent words. My family was tolerant of this, but this was only because my Grandma was still around. My Grandma loved my work. She always wanted me to write her new stories so she could read them in her chair with her old fat cat Luna. My Grandma loved everything I gave to her. Even from a young age she cherished the artwork I gave her (which consisted of colorful scribbles, stickers and glitter). She seemed to love and cherish everything around her, but especially loved nature. I would always find her in her chair looking out the window telling me the names of the birds at the feeder and what noises they made. Until one day she got sick. Every day that I saw her, she would be in worse condition. After a while she wasn't able to tell me what birds were at the feeder and she didn't seem to remember what noises they made. Then not too long after that my mom told me that my Grandma passed away in her sleep.

At the funeral I couldn't bear to see her like that so I just stayed away. Her whole family showed up, all of her siblings, nieces, nephews, daughters and grandchildren were there. We sang the songs she always loved from little hand out sheets of paper. We all drove away in our cars sobbing, mourning the loss of my Grandma.

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My life was never the same after that, without my Grandma my work seemed useless to my family. Whenever I tried to show them my stories they shoved them aside and scolded me to get a real job and that I would never make it as a writer. I guess they were right about that I picked up some side jobs to get me by. All I could think about was being a writer and making my Grandma proud. Then one day I got a letter and it stated that I inherited all of my Grandma's belongings and money. So I immediately moved out and moved into my Grandma's old home. It was just like I remember it was small but very open. It didn't feel claustrophobic, it was just enough space for an old lady and her cat. It had lots of windows everywhere so my Grandma could see the birds. But sooner than later the memories, the grief, the sadness caught up to me. I didn't feel like myself anymore, all of my creativity was gone and replaced with sadness. All I could think about is how I was failing my Grandma. I fell into this repetitive cycle of me trying to write but then not having the will to. Soon my efforts to write were done and I fell into another repetitive cycle. I wake up, eat, watch TV, eat again, watch more TV then I sleep some more. I did this all in my dark gray home.

**Alaina Stewart**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8



**Lexi Sesock**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## The Gray Day

Yesterday was yellow

Sunny and sweet

Today is gray

Tomorrow will be too

Everything is shades of death

Blacks, whites, and gray

The city is under a blanket of grief

No one speaks

We sympathize in a silence thick with tension

It's crazy how fast

The colors may change

Some people cry

Others simply think

It makes us wonder

It makes us grateful

We are all suddenly aware

Of our wonderful lives

As the body is brought out

Hidden in a dark casket

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Yesterday was yellow

Sunny and sweet

Today is gray

Tomorrow will be too

**Megan Raklovits**

Root Middle

Grade 7

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**Nicholas Monastra**

Buckeye High

Grade 12

### **Shatters Like Glass**

This time I am quiet. No, silent. I don't dare move or even breathe, for if I do, she might ripple away. This is the second time. I see her in my dreams but this time she is not pale. Her face flushed with color and her stare is not blank anymore. She does not need to lay down with her arms crossed in a box. She can walk and run, just like she used to with me when we would play in our backyard. She crosses to me and I try to smell her hair. I promise myself not to forget it, but I break it in an instance. She shatters like glass.

I wake up and find my mom. I am crying because I miss my sister and I want her to be real this time, not just a dream. When I find her, her eyes are puffy and raw, she's been crying too. I ask her about my sister and she starts crying again and leans down to hug me.

She mutters to herself but I still hear her. *She was only 7*, she whispers.

I am only 5, but I do not understand yet. Maybe when I am older my sister will explain it to me.

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

They say that character is what you do when nobody is watching, but I disagree. I think that character is a combination of what you do when nobody and everyone is watching.

The craziest days always start normally. Elijah, a single father of two, began July 4, 2019, as he would any other day. But today was special. Just recently had his divorce come full swing, and he learned that his kids would be with their mother for the weekdays and with him on weekends. Even though it was a Thursday, however, the legal teams had worked out that the two parents would have the kids on alternating holidays, and the Fourth of July would be one of them where Elijah would have custody. Anyhow, he went to his ex-wife's house, picked the kids up, took them to his house, and left for work.

By the time he arrived at his work at New Directions Technologies as a computer consultant in Ridgecrest, California, it was already around 9:30 A.M. He set his things down, went over to his desk, and started working, just as he always would. Answering calls about technological problems, developing security procedures and implementing them for users, and secretly checking MLB stats while pretending to be productive. This cycle was the norm for Elijah Braxton. But what happened at 10:34 A.M. would be no normal event. Nothing Elijah could've done would have prevented the inevitable.

The ground started to shake. Pictures fell off the walls. Furniture was thrown across the floor like a last minute heave from a quarterback. Everyone was frantic: people running around the room, screaming at their family members through the phone. But then there was Elijah. Nowhere to be found. He was running. Running to his parent's house, hoping that he would arrive there before any damage happened. The ground was cracking

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underneath him, but he didn't care. People were wailing around him, but he didn't care. Buildings were crumbling and falling like Jenga boards, but he didn't care. All Elijah Braxton wanted in that moment was to see his kids and know that they were safe; so he kept running. And he kept running. And he kept running. He ran almost 10 miles in about 45 minutes.

He arrived at the house, but didn't stop running. It was in shambles. The middle of the home had caved in and it was on fire. Cement, wood, and all sorts of materials were all stacked up on the ground. And worst of all, Elijah had no idea where his kids were.

Elijah dug so much that his hands were splintered with wood, scrapes covered the landscape of his lambs, and his hair was shaggy and rough. He didn't know how long he had been digging for his kids, but he did see that the night had come. No sound had come from the rubble. No slight movement or motion. And so he dug through the night, with absolutely no thought of stopping until he reached the end goal of knowing that his children were safe.

Morning came and Elijah was met with his first human interaction in nearly a day. A local news truck had been roaming around monitoring and recording the damage of the earthquake, and when they saw Elijah they quickly made their way over. "It appears that this man is digging for someone or something underneath this rubble ladies and gentlemen," the news reporter said. "The damage of this disaster is truly terrifying." Despite the commotion, Elijah kept digging. He couldn't afford to stop. A matter of minutes could be the difference between his kid's life or

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death. But what happened about 30 minutes later was a testament to the kindness and generosity of fellow civilians. Groups of people crowded toward Elijah and started helping him dig into the pile of destruction. The news station came back to the location and the event of pure resilience was televised for millions. Elijah was a hero, but wasn't quite accomplished just yet.

Another 45 minutes passed and after everything the man had been through: picking his kids up, experiencing the earthquake, running 10 miles, and digging for his kids for nearly 23 hours, Elijah finally touched the hands of his 14 and 13 year old sons. He pulled them up with all of his remaining strength, stood up, and gave them the biggest hug that anyone could ever imagine.

**Kyle Schmeltzer**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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### **Only Middle Child**

Throughout my life I've always been an "only" child. I have a step sister, but at this point she was always with her dad. In the middle of August 2015, my dad brought home my new "brother." Cincere was eight years old and had a rough life back at home. My dad is someone who cares and he saw this and decided to bring him. I always had my own stuff: from action figures to stuffed animals, but now I was now sharing everything I ever owned. I felt like I made a friend that lived with me a ton and I could teach him all these new things. Younger me saw this as a source of fun and friendship.

Now I see it more as a window that I have severely learned from. Cincere lived right in the middle of Akron. His home is viewed as

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“gang ridden” and “unsafe” but he sees it as family and everyday life. He doesn’t worry about the same things we do. He’s always looking over his shoulder and worrying for his family. It put me in his shoes. I never knew their everyday struggles. While people were viewing them as thugs I was seeing them as people fighting for their lives.

We would usually have Cincere over monthly for about a week at a time. He always came back tired and would sleep on the couch for hours on end and would forget to shower. We always were doing things my family has done everyday from going out to eat, to playing football in the front yard. He just made it that much more enjoyable.

Then we went to Columbus for my sister's volleyball tournament. He always told us he could swim and man were we in for the treat. We went into the pool and he was ready for success. He walked his way over to the deep end and jumped in. He sank like a rock and my dad had to help him, but he never stopped trying. We opened our pool then next summer and he wore floaties for three weeks, but then he took them off and he finally was able to swim. It truly affected me so much seeing him accomplish something and it was something that made me realize that my roots of suburban life and his life of inner city life were so different, but it didn’t make us different from each other at all.

Three years after being in our family, we heard the news that he’d never seen a cow. That's all it took; then and there we decided to dedicate a whole day on a family friend's farm. The amount of happiness seen in his face on the way was incredible and made happy. We got there and all of a sudden it died. He was all nervous. I realised and asked him why and all I got was, “Bro . . .” I finally put the pieces together and realized that he thought that the cows were gonna be small. He said I thought maybe they would be like 100 pounds not 1000. When he finally saw that they meant no harm to him he calmed down. This made

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me see all I was taking for granted. My lifestyle, my family and hell even school.

In 2018, Christmas finally came around and Cincere finally got what he always wanted: an iPhone. I never was able to talk to him when we were at other houses, other than when we were planning to hang out. I could see into his personal life now more than ever before and it put me in awe. When I'd call him he would be in a new house or with some new kid. Or even once he was sleeping with his 16 year old sister by themselves. I was concerned but I was still comfortable with it. I could always talk to him and help him when needed and I learned more and more about his lifestyle.

Cincere is a pillar of who I am. He really changed me from an immature kid who is scared of talking to people. Now trying to understand everyone's lifestyle and angle's to try and understand their actions better. Today I'm not as worried about what people think about me. I am more worried about what people think about themselves and their personal well being. It inspired me to want to teach and help kids understand other peers and friends and understand that you can be from the Bronx of New York, or the suburbs of Medina. You aren't that different on the inside.

**Avery Skelton**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11



**Steven Clark**  
Black River High  
Grade 10

## **Ever Wondered What it's Like to be Perfect: A Personal Narrative**

Have you ever wondered what it's like to try to be the perfect child to your parents, the perfect student to your teachers, or the perfect employee to your manager? Well, to tell you the truth, it's rough. Working on weeknights right after school till close then going home to do homework, getting less than 6 hours of sleep, socializing so you don't become the quiet kid, and waking up to do it all over again. It gets so draining mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially that it takes a toll on your body. Imagine doing all of this — just to find out it's not good enough.

Trying to impress your parents is like an extreme sport that you didn't sign up for. "Get good grades," "Do your chores," "Do your homework," "Go get a job." All the things you hear from your parents replay over and over in your head till you have dreams at night. Dreams about failing and your parents kicking you out because you got a "B" on your report card or because you forgot to run the vacuum after school since you were trying to get your homework done before your shift at work. Our parents give us so much since they didn't have that when they were younger and we are so grateful for them giving us so many things. But what if you never wanted the materialistic things, you just wanted to

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hear those five words and feel validated. “I’m so proud of you!” That has got to be one of the best feelings in the world. Having your parents be proud of you while showing unconditional love, that’s a dream come true. But that’s only for the 4.0 GPA, goal-oriented, successful, perfect child.

Twelve years of school. It used to be so much fun to go to school, see your friends, and eat the packed lunch that your mom made for you with a little treat inside. Going out for twenty minutes of recess when you would make up games just to go home and tell your parents about. Elementary school was when you actually had fun learning and at the time, when the most important thing to you was going up to the pencil sharpener, not to sharpen your pencil, but to show off your new shoes. Middle school was when you started to care about what you wore, who you were friends with, and the way you looked. It seemed like it really was the most important thing in the world. Maybe at the time it was, but now it’s pointless. High school: that’s when friends who have been together since elementary school start to split up after you swore it wasn’t going to happen — where you realize now everything counts. You need to start looking for

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colleges, playing sports, doing every homework assignment and studying for every test to get a perfect score even though you lost several nights of sleep. Trying not to ask questions even though you are so confused because you'll get told that "you're smart so you can get it" or the fear of being judged. Getting involved because it will look good on applications. Pretty much doing everything you can to build yourself a future. They didn't lie when they said four years will fly by. But that's only for the four year varsity athlete, straight "A" perfect student.

At 16, everyone expects you to get your license, get a car, and get a job. That's how it's supposed to be right? Well, what if you're not ready to drive because you're afraid since you're now responsible for others' lives when you drive. What if you're not ready to make a really big purchase on something yet? What if you're not ready to go work with people you never met and start taking on a huge responsibility where people count on you? Who cares what you want or feel though, got to follow expectations. Nowadays, jobs are so desperate for help that they will work you over time with minimum wage. Half of the time they forget they hire high school students who have loads of homework every

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night, extra-curriculars and teenager activities that we can't answer every beckoning call they make. You try so hard not to call off when you're sick or things come up because you fear your manager will be so angry with you. You come in on your off days to help them out, cover your co-workers' shifts, and work five days a week. But you get no recognition because that's only for the never call off, hard-working, favorited perfect employee.

Life in general can be overwhelming. But having to follow the basic expectations of life can get so boring. It seems like we are all just trying to do everything the same way. I don't know about you guys, but I don't want to work the 9-5 job, come home, cook and clean, and do it all again. I want to make life worth living for. Have a family with a beautiful house with a Rottweiler on a couple acres of land. Have my dream career without hating the idea of going to work in the morning. Go on family vacations and make them so memorable. I'm tired of the "this is how you're supposed to do it" speech and attitude. Everyone's path is different and it doesn't make them less successful. You only have one life. Make. It. Worth. Living. For.

**Mackenzie Waggaman**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 12

## Me and Dad

The heavy footfalls  
The smell of old whiskey  
Or sometimes fresh wine  
And fresh lit cigars  
His raspy voice  
Humming a song long lost to the sands of time  
Alerted my inner self to the chime  
Half empty bottles clinking  
The squeak on the old stairs  
Time to move time to run  
Time to climb out the window to the old elm tree  
Which shuddered and cracked  
Barely supporting me  
Once on the elm I continue to climb  
To the old battered wood floor  
Balanced only on thick branches  
Tree house with a forgotten design  
I huddle up top  
The wind always blows cold  
I shudder and pray  
That I left the window closed

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Because if he cannot find me  
In his drunken state  
Then he cannot hurt me  
He'll stumble and shake  
Until he collapses  
Down on the termite ridden floor  
Hours sometimes a day will pass  
Until Dad will repeat this pattern once more

**Moss Parada**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

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### **The Hidden Oasis**

The girl walked down the bustling city street, to the edge of the road. She sees a deep ditch going down for what looks like miles, but only feet wide. The dirt is a pale red, full of shimmering red garnet and iridescent tourmaline. She steps as close to the edge as she can. The gems that line the hole crack off and tumble down, splintering and eroding the other jewels, causing it to look as if it is raining red blood drops.

The girl stumbles and falls down the hole; whether the wind pushed her or some invisible force that knew this was inevitable, she will never know. As she falls she sees the stones glow a beautiful phosphorescent green, in almost exact contrast to the beautiful reds and blues from the top of the hole. She falls for what feels like forever but can't be more than ten feet, not enough to kill, not enough to injure.

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Her eyes close. Now open. She's lying down, but how? Wasn't she just falling? She feels soft, dry, whispers against her skin. The long brown stalks of grass and wheat gently sway in beat with her heart. The wind sighs as if it's been a long day at the office. The sky is the blue of glittering Paraíba Tourmaline. Deep cerulean. Twilight. She sits up. Purple. Periwinkle. Pervenche. Indicolite. Felids of blue and purple, and lavender.

Flowers growing, swaying, staying. A tree with dark brown bark, and long arms reaching out to hug her is standing at the top of the hill. Green, red, yellow, orange, brown. Leaves falling, blowing, dying, decaying.

The wind starts screaming in her ears. The plants uproot and swirl in the air. The sky gets dark. Flash. Boom. Lightning fills the sky, lighting it on fire. Thunder booms, ricocheting off transparent walls. Glaring red and yellow. The smell of smoke. The girl sees that the tree has caught on fire, the leaves are gone. Her eyes close.

Now open. She is back squeezed into the spot in between her bedpost and her wall. Her ear is pressed against the thin, fading blue barrier. She can still hear her father yelling at her brother. She can hear her brother yelling back. *Crash!* She hears things breaking and knows that bad things are happening and that she should stay hidden in her room. Staying in her hiding place that takes up residence in her mind. She hopes that when she wakes up she will feel a little less crazy, hopes that her world hasn't SHATTERED.

**Mya Kennedy**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12



**Brielle Neimark**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## The Girl

Red as the Rose  
Orange hair like maple tree  
Yellow as the gold on her neck  
Green like the frog jumping high  
Blue like the sky  
Purple smell as lavender  
White as the moon  
Heart as big as the earth  
That is what I think of her

**Rhinoa Beverly**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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### The Girl at Table 4

She can't think.  
She can't concentrate.  
She can't listen.  
Her eyes keep slipping over to *them*.  
*They're* giggling.  
*They're* beaming.  
*They* moved *their* seat away from her.  
Shoving her out of *their* mind entirely.  
How can *they* be okay?  
She certainly is not.  
She's sleep deprived.

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Thriving on caffeine.

Her clothes are days, weeks old.

Crinkled and torn.

Her hair is a long tangled mess.

She's a mess.

Her grades have dropped.

All of her friends left her.

Her professors worry.

The only mask she puts on is for her family.

As well as they're concerned, she is absolutely fine.

But she's not.

She just had her first heartbreak.

She was too young.

She is all alone.

She is broken.

. . .

But I am only a perspective.

Someone from the outside.

Someone just telling a sliver of the story.

The story of the girl at table 4.

The girl who is certainly, most definitely.

Not.

Okay.

**Moss Parada**

Root Middle

Grade 8



**Ashley Powell**  
Buckeye High  
Grade 12

## A New Beginning

“You can’t stop Seven. We need to leave as soon as possible,” my mom whispered in my ear.

I jumped back into action, packing as much as I could into a duffle bag and my book bag that was originally used for school. But this was more important than homework. My mom doesn’t like to call it, “Running away.” She says it’s more like leaving town for now, until it’s safe. I stuffed the family picture carefully in the top of my duffle bag, not wanting to scratch the glass case.

My mother married young. She was naive, and couldn’t see the horrible man my father was. Once I was born, my father didn’t want me anymore. So my mother packed up and left, with a proper divorce of course and remarried when I was two. My new father was perfect. He tucked me in bed every night, made us the best pancakes for breakfast and always made me feel better. But those moments only lasted a short amount of time. I guess all good things come to an end. I drag my finger over my dad’s carefree smile. He hadn’t known cancer was destroying his once-healthy lungs at the time.

After his death, our family didn’t have enough money to survive, since our money came from my father’s job and he had lost it all from all the medical bills. My mother, struggling to keep us alive, had no choice but to say yes, when my grandparents offered to help us get started in another city. I was angry at her for a while because I did not want to move, but deep down I knew we had to.

The day of the move had arrived. I heard my mom softly approaching my bedroom, so I burst into action. I grabbed my bags, as my mom grabbed our cat. She put the cat in a spare bag, and ever so quietly walked out the door. My heart was racing, my stomach was doing backflips. We picked up the pace, but I paused for a brief moment to look at the house. I mean really look at it. I think back to the time when I scraped my knee on the driveway. My dad scooped me up and made me smile

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instantly. It was only a small and short moment, but it was moments like these I wish would last forever, like I could just freeze time and stay in La La Land forever. I can still hear his laughter, trying to convince me that the fall would make a great scar.

A small tear trickled down my peach cheeks, as I turned my back to the house, filled with lots of memories, for the last time.

### **Farah Holladay**

Root Middle

Grade 7

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#### **Just Scars**

I was always a pale blue

Scarless

Gray like the clouds before a rainstorm

Or the muddled puddles after

The color of tears if tears had a color

The pebbles on the bottom of a riverbed

Old sea glass cracked and splintered

A calm and flowing melody

peaceful

I was always a pale blue

Until I met you

You unlocked me

Now I am a flourish of brown as the broom sweeps out the wild mice

I am the sparkling orange of your soda pop

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I am the palest shades of the moon  
And the darkest shades of the shadows on cloudy nights  
I am the yellow of the sunflowers you brought me every day  
And the evergreen of your eyes  
I am the crimson of the mushroom caps in your backyard  
The mysterious blues of the oceans  
The honeysuckles of warmth  
The lavenders of wind  
I am everything  
well  
I was everything  
Until you left  
Now I am nothing  
the black of old tea  
The grays of dying flowers  
Dead sand after a windstorm  
The dirt at the bottom of the flowerpot that doesn't get planted  
with the flower  
The end piece on a loaf of bread  
The piece that nobody wants  
The cracked, damaged, colorless things you'll find on sidewalks  
Cause now I'm faded  
No more color  
No more emotion  
Just scars.

**Moss Parada**

Root Middle

Grade 8



**Addison Dressel**  
Medina High  
Grade 9



**Audrey Kane**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

**Prompt:** Don't fall asleep . . .

### **Deprivation**

Four days. Four whole days of me being alone in this room. Four days since they had to switch out the bed, the sheets, clean the walls. I still can't help but just stare. I only ever seemed to be looking at that bed and the adjacent window.

I can't keep doing it. My eyes weigh a thousand pounds. Every time I blink it gets harder and harder to keep them open. They hurt so bad.

My hands press suddenly into my eyes. My palms slowly rubbed themselves deeper and deeper into the aching organ. Deep dark bags hid under my eyes, the skin was smooth and puffed out. The rest of the flesh surrounding it felt frigid and damp, making my whole body feel denser than iron. I felt the muscles in my face tighten and contort disgustingly at the sensations.

I pulled my body in on itself with a groan before pushing myself forward. I needed to stay awake.

My feet planted on the floor as I shot myself off of the mattress, only managing to stay up a few seconds before my entire body reconnected with the soft surface. With the impact, my eyes fell closed. It felt so peaceful.

My chest felt light for the first time in forever, I sunk even deeper into the bed beneath me as my head began to float. A deep breath slipped past my lips, this felt so relieving.

I couldn't even formulate a full thought, all my mind was focused on was the warmth slowly engulfing me. Snaking its way around my entire body and dragging me deeper into the abyss. I began mumbling to myself as I slid more and more into the padding under me.

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My eyes scrunched lightly as a faint piercing break filled the before quiet air of my room. I rolled onto my side, away from the noises, I just want to sleep.

The broken shards of glass shattered even more as someone began to walk across them. My chest regained the intense tightness it had just lost, desperate to control my breathing.

Someone had just broken the window.

I churned in my place, a deep, dark feeling settling in the pit of my tight stomach. Eyes. I could feel their eyes staring at my seemingly asleep form. My lip began trembling violently as a small sob escaped my throat.

The figure gripped my arms violently and threw me from the bed. My body collided aggressively with the floor of my room. I gasped with the impact, my eyes finally opening back up, only to be left with the limited light offered by the moon. Though the light was plenty to see the deep red gushing my arms, having been cut to shred by the glass littering the floor.

Another nearly silent sob rippled through my chest while I gazed at all of the cuts. The figure wasted no time rushing back to me though. Easily flipping me onto my back he pinned my wrists under his knees that now rested on either side of my waist.

Just as I was about to scream for help a hand pressed harshly into my mouth. The insides of my lips were shoved into my teeth with such pressure metallic blood began to drip into my mouth.

Panic settled even deeper in my soul as I was immobilized. My feet dug deeper and deeper into the ground as I attempted to roll the figure off of me. My hands turned numb as I pulled and pulled them, needing a way of fighting back.

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The figure's free hand started toward my face, his other hand keeping my head from turning back or forth. His fingers slipped past my eyelids, shifting the plastic of my contacts before lifting the lens free. My muffled yelling became louder and louder as the filthy pads of the figure's fingers were placed once again in my other eye, ridding me of the limited sight I still had.

The figure quickly retracted, leaving me to kick and scream on the floor. It's all I could think to do, thrash on the floor. My body barely worked at this point, I couldn't stand, I could barely talk, and now, I couldn't see.

Hands once again wrapped around my wrists, I only struggled more. I used whatever strength I could find left in my body and fought to be let go. I heard yelling as more and more hands held onto me tightly, constricting more and more as I struggled. I yelled, kicked, and punched as much as I could but I couldn't stop one of the pairs of hands from leaving my body and instead puncturing a small needle into it.

A small shriek was followed only by silence as I was forced to watch the nurse inject a clear liquid into my arm. Short quick breaths left my mouth as I was lifted off of the blood-stained floor I laid on. I was placed back on my bed as I fought desperately to stay awake. The person was back, the nurses had to believe me. The glass, the blood, my contacts. They had to.

I was placed gingerly back onto the sheets, a couple of the orderlies vanishing for a moment before coming back. I begged quietly as they secured my hands and ankles to the bed frame.

"They'll kill me," I pleaded quietly, one of the nurses bent down to my level. Her hand traced my head lightly as she shushed me.

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“There’s nobody here with you,” she spoke smoothly, her hand brushing my hair out of my face. Another sob sounded as I leaned into her touch, silently asking her to trust me. She sighed before continuing, “You haven’t slept in days. You’re just imagining things,” She smiled kindly down at me but I only began tugging at the restraints more.

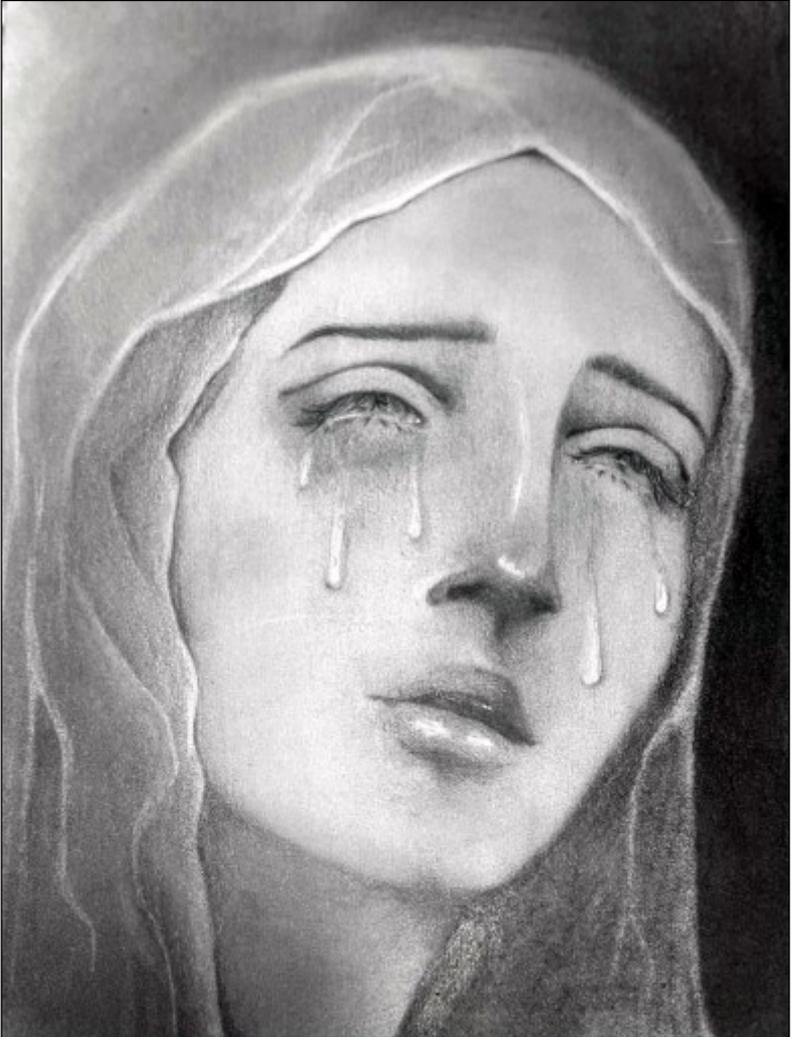
I shook my head frantically, once again mumbling to myself as I tried to keep conscious. “We’ll be back soon to fix up your arms, alright?” The woman stood back up as my body became weaker and weaker, I couldn’t even ask her to stay at this point, I couldn’t fight. All I could do was wait and sleep.

All of the ward workers cleared out from the room. My eyes blinked slower and slower as time passed. The glass crunched once more as the figure moved out from the corner. I tried to speak again as my head lulled to the side, though all that came out was a high-pitched moan.

The figure got closer and closer, eventually standing over the helpless husk I had become. Their hands dragged over the cuts littering my arms, I winced lightly at the action, almost unable to handle the pain of the shards still being lodged in my body.

My head dropped farther down as the pillow was removed from behind my head. In one swift motion, everything turned black. Whether it was the sedatives dragging me into sleep or the pillow swallowing my face and constricting my air, I don’t know.

**Gwen Strehle**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11



**Abby Pappas**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

### **A Crack in the Glass**

There's a crack in the glass where the light came through,  
It resembled a picture of the two of us.  
On the left was me and on the right was you,  
Leaving two open hearts ready to discuss.  
Love remains in a world of the darkest nights,  
When the sunshine comes in with its glowing lights.

It resembled a picture of the two of us,  
Your sparkling eyes and my open love.  
Speaking in terms of math, as an equal or a plus,  
Our equation forms a bond formed up above.  
But pens, papers, arrows and maps do not display,  
The love in my heart for you today.

On the left was me and on the right was you,  
Gazing across a star filled sky.  
Testing our love to see if we are true,  
Or if one of us is telling a lie.  
On a moonlit night as shadows move the grounds,  
As wolves howl, filling the night with their sounds.

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Leaving two open hearts ready to discuss,  
The sky high dreams festered in bliss.  
Ignoring the trauma and the fuss,  
As we sealed our vow with a kiss.  
Time trembles softly in the palm of my hand,  
As earthquakes rumble and unsettle the land.

Love remains in a world of the darkest nights,  
When owls roam and land in the trees.  
Echoing throughout all the sights,  
The owls hopefully call across the seas.  
Looking for something that might not even exist,  
The owl crosses that dream off his list.

When the sunshine comes in with its glowing lights,  
The world sings songs of rejoice.  
Peace is in your soul, so carefully pick your fights,  
Peace is a must, but is treated like a choice.  
Where the crack in the glass let the light come through,  
I carefully deciphered me and you.

**James Zielinski**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 12

## All For You

Never will it be the flower petals that touch my hand, or the river water that rushes against my feet, that replace you. Never will I feel your calloused hand fit to mine, nor your arms wrapped around me. I cease to hear your laughter, or your calm and loving voice. For while you are a memory of someone whole, I am a person of nothing more than a broken heart.

~Only for you  
am I whole

**Emily Burkey**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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## The Discovery

The playground was a place where you'd never find a child without a smile. All worries seemed to disappear as you stepped through the fence and onto the wood chips that covered the ground. There were a million different ways to have fun; the slide, the monkey bars, and my personal favorite, the sandbox. Something about the warm sand, soaked with sunlight, running through my hands was soothing to me.

The fun I had in that sandbox is indescribable. The greatest summers were only the greatest because we got to play in the sandbox. But something changed that summer day while I was playing in the sandbox.

It was a day like any other, the sun was as bright and the grass seemed just a little greener than the day before. As soon as I finished breakfast, I darted from the table and sprinted to the front door.

"Bye, mom," I said, still chewing my cereal, briskly putting on my shoes.

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“Just make sure you’re home befo-” my mom said, not even getting a chance to finish because I was already out the door.

And I was off! I ran towards the playground like there was no tomorrow. As soon as I got to the aged white fence surrounding the perimeter of the park, I ripped my shoes off and jogged to the wooden sandbox. I felt the stabbing of the wood chips underneath my bare feet, I didn’t care though, all the adrenaline was pumping through my body.

“Hey,” I greeted my friends who were already in the sand.

“Awh,” I sighed, jumping into the beautiful golden sand. “So what are we gonna do today?” I already knew what I wanted to do.

“Well, we wanted to pla-” my friend started.

“How about we dig and try to find the dinosaur bone?!” I announced not being able to keep quiet for even a second more.

“Mason, you know there is no dinosaur bone, right?”

“It was just the older kids trying to mess with us,” my other friend said, clearly annoyed that I’d even bring up that topic.

But I knew there was a bone down there, I just did. I also knew it was no use trying to explain myself to my friends. So we parted ways from one another and did our own thing; I dug, they played. “I know it’s in here, I know it,” I motivated myself, sweat dripping down my face.

“We tried to tell you, Mason,” my friend finally said. “You should just come over here and play with us. We do need a bad guy for this game,” they said.

“*Maybe they were right, maybe I should just stop now,*” I thought to myself. “No. I have to keep going,” I said aloud.

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“Your loss, not ours,” my friend said. But right as she said that I struck something hard, something that didn’t feel at all like sand. I kept digging trying not to get my hopes up, but it was hard not to. “Hey,” I mumbled, not believing it.

“Hey!” I shouted all of this suddenly becoming reality. “I found it! I found the dinosaur bone!”

My friends whipped their heads around staring at the deep hole I had spent hours digging. “That’s impossible!” my friend said not wanting to be wrong, oh but how wrong she was! I had found the bone no one had even thought was real, I couldn’t imagine the look on the older kid’s faces when they realized that a kid multiple years younger, had succeeded at something they’d failed at so many times.

Only it wasn’t a dinosaur bone, as we’d find out. In fact, it was a beef bone that a stray dog had buried a couple of months ago, explaining the old look of the bone. Although it wasn’t a dinosaur bone like we’d hoped, that discovery would make for the best summer story ever.

## **Lincoln Marks**

Root Middle

Grade 7

## Abandonment Issues

The old plastic playground.  
Dancing in the woods.  
Chalky hands knees elbows.  
Curling up playing games on the floor.  
Memories . . . they surround you.  
Bloody noses.  
Benadryl.  
Running in the baseball fields.  
Apple Picking.  
Study Buddy.  
Memories. Memories.  
You.  
Truth or dare.  
Apartment plans.  
Rolling around on the floor.  
Snow ball fights.  
Tears at night.  
Hugs that were always warm.  
Memories Memories. Memories. Memories.  
Memories torturing me.  
Because you left.  
And I can't accept.  
That you're never coming back to me.

**Moss Parada**  
Root Middle  
Grade 8

### **Just a Memory**

She was standing next to him, baking. A smile grew on her face as she grabbed a handful of flour. She turned to throw it at him only to see he had grabbed some sugar, ready to throw at her.

“Aaaaaah!” she yelled as he hurried to throw more sugar at her, “Hah! You missed!” she laughed when it flew by her, missing her by inches. The kitchen had turned into a mess, baking powder was on the floor, along with flour, sugar, and everything else they had used. She threw her flour at him, hitting him at the back of his head when he turned. He turned back around to her, his smile making her heart flutter.

She ran and hugged him, “I love you!!!” she sang, both laughing, being held in each others arms.

Tear drops hit the screen and the video went black, then returning to her baking, about to repeat again, “If only you had stayed home that night”, he said, standing up, turning off the video recorder and leaving the room.

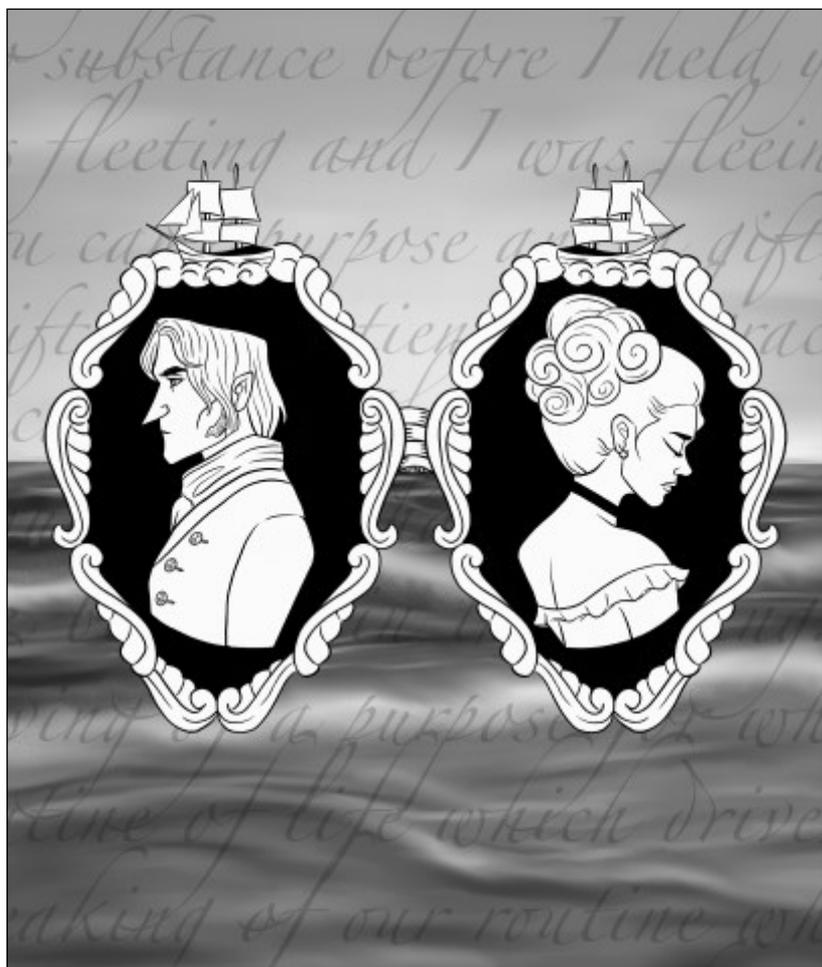
**Emily Burkey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

I am from TV,  
From shampoo and body wash,  
I am from with the blue shutter's house,  
And cummfy home,  
I am from the rose bush,  
The rose bush whose long gone limbs I remember as if they  
were my own.

I am from the white elephant and turkey bowling,  
From mom, dad, and brother,  
I am from being on time to not being on time,  
And from forgetting things.

I am from don't let the bedbugs bite, and Santa knows when your  
sleeping,  
And not many stories to remember,  
I am from turkey bowling,  
I am from Cleveland and America,  
Mac n cheese and ribs,  
From no stories that i remember,  
A tractor that was given to me from my uncle,  
Tucked in my closet for safe keepings.

**Max Morgan**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Audrey Kane**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## The Woods Beyond

When I was about seven,  
I lived across the street from a park.  
I would play on the playground,  
sometimes even till it got dark.  
But the real adventure was exploring the woods beyond.  
What would I find,  
a cave, a pond?  
I thought it was safe, not harmful at all.  
But little did I know,  
I was wrong.

Once, I was balancing on a log  
practicing perfect poise  
In a place I had recently found.  
And suddenly, there was a noise.  
“Snap!”  
A bunny a few feet away.  
I got excited and started a chase.  
Would I follow it through a rabbit hole,  
find a magical place?  
End up in a fairytale?  
The possibilities were endless  
as I ran down that trail.

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I was flying through the emerald leaves,  
flowers like little dots of color all around  
The world was a vivid painting,  
Then suddenly I couldn't feel the ground.

I was falling,  
gravity pulling me down,  
down, down, down, down-

I stopped.

While I was falling, I had held on to something.

A tree branch.

I finally noticed where I was.  
I lost the bunny I had seen,  
and was standing on the edge  
of a small ravine.

I sat down, shocked.

I would have fallen down,  
if I hadn't stopped.

It almost happened.

Almost

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Finally, I got up, and started walking back.

The world seemed dimmer, faded,  
as if it had cracked.

From that day, I was always wary,  
After all,  
my almost fall had been scary

And so I learned,  
like you might've too,  
to always look  
before you do.

**Diana Ludu**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

## The Gift Our Eyes Often Can't See

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Some day, I will leave this house.

I will leave the land I love

And the people I grew up with.

I will be left to fend for myself

In a world that is so unfamiliar to me.

And it won't treat me fairly

Because I will have to work hard to succeed,

to survive what the world throws at me.

You taught me that.

And my dear \_\_\_\_\_,

when the world requires me

to show respect,

or resist neglect,

I will.

I will look them in the eyes,

Use my words as tools;

not tools used for destruction,

but for a purpose.

Helping build people up.

You taught me that.

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And why I have aged dearly  
you may be an ocean away,  
or looking down on me,  
but you'll only be a memory away.  
Because I will remember the day when you  
took me in the middle of my conversations  
to look someone in the eye when there speaking;  
taught me how to use my words  
as more than just worthless waves spilling out of my mouth;  
told me that friends will leave you as the world turns, but family  
will stay. They are the ones who are right beside us. The ones  
who are one call away from lifting you up. The ones who you can  
be most vulnerable to. The ones who are always there.

So, my dear mother and father,  
Thank you for those days.  
Those days when you embarrassed me.  
Those days when I didn't care at all.  
Those days when I pretended to not hear you.  
Those days that I will never forget.  
Because they truly are what will allow me to make it in this world.  
Dear Parents,  
When I leave this house,  
I need you to know

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*(Continued from page 265)*

that the footprint you left on me is what makes up the majority of me.

And when you leave this world,  
You won't be forgotten.

**Jakoby Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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### Grey Skies

The girl walked to the bridge between the ocean where the sandy hill meets the bright gazpacho. The moonlight, almost sunlight, sparkled on the dark, blue, briney tide. The sun starts to rise, turning the cloudy sky a milky grey.

The grey of the dawn is the girl's favorite color. It's the color of infinite tomorrows, of silence, of peace, of dreams. It consumes everything dark and makes it bright. The sea glitters as if covered by a blanket of ice and snow. It looks as if it could be dark and dreary, but to the girl it looks prettier than the brightest sunset. But in a snap the moment passes and the sky is back to its light shade of azure.

The sun shines. The quick moment of peace and happiness, the moment of the dawn at its apex glowing light colors, is gone. The girl feels sadness settle in her soul. She wanted this moment to last forever; to stretch forward and backward into time until the happiness of the moment evaporates into a gentle wind.

She tries to treat this rare sunrise as a gift, one she might never see again. For her, tomorrow is a fluid thing, slipping between her fingers, dripping all around her, splashing her, and yet she can't catch it. Everyday could be her last, the universe wishes it so, so it is decreed. The king of chaos, of lights and darks, of good and evil, of beauty and grotesqueness. Yet, the ruler over everything, chooses to take the girl, smaller than a speck of dust.

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She will stand tall and take this mandate with dignity. Even though she is only fifteen, she is braver than the oldest man. She turns walking from the promenade. Grass swaying, tears falling from her cheeks, blowing away in the wind like a kite. She thinks, *Hopefully this will not be the last time I see the extraordinary grey skies.*

**Mya Kennedy**

Root Middle

Grade 8



**Mallory Kostecki**

Black River High

Grade 10

## Time

Time is a curse that drifts along the moon,  
 Bordering the sky against the dead night.  
 Healing is process that cannot start soon,  
 For the wounds bare you a pain and fresh sight,  
 And gently caress the battles you fight.  
 Gently I clutch on to my yesterdays,  
 A path composed of fate's different ways,  
 In sorrow it leaves a pathway of tears.  
 Even though a battle scar always stays,  
 Time will find its way through all of the years.

**James Zielinski**  
 Brunswick High  
 Grade 12

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### Shame on Me?

It shouldn't hurt right? It shouldn't make me want to cry, or to curl up and think about anything I sent to you, and everything you didn't send to me. I shouldn't want to delete everything just because you left me on read for 2 hours. I guess it shouldn't make me watch my phone at 12:38 A.M. waiting for my phone to light up with that message from you. Although it does, it also makes me hurt, and curl up and think about where I went wrong. I do not understand you, and when I try to let you understand me, I am left with a tear slipping off my cheek, as I check my messages again.

"Hey!"

"I just wanted to say..."

"I like you lol"

"I don't expect you to like me back"

"Hello?"

**Emily Burkey**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7

## Broken Hearted

life is a fickle thing, isn't it?  
always playing games with you.

you could love someone so much, just for them to be taken by a silly accident like a car crash, maybe a natural disaster; a hurricane or volcanic eruption that consumes everything in its path.

it seems that we're just little pieces on a game board, moved around for the enjoyment of the forces greater than us.

they could also be relieved of life by something uncontrollable and out of your hands, such as a terminal disease or a war between countries.

everyone dies at some point.

everyone dies for a reason.

it just doesn't feel as if it is the right time for that specific person sometimes.

so when that special light that illuminates your entire life, that is the sole purpose for you breathing every single day, suddenly flickers before being snuffed out of existence, the heart starts the crack.

and though it may surprise most, a cracked heart can not be easily repaired.

as the days drag on, the crack widens and splits more, getting

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bigger and bigger until that once full, beating heart, longs to be with the one it became so full for in the first place.

what happens then?

it breaks.

the shards stab into the rest of the chest, running red down the stomach and legs before puddling at the bottom of your feet.

a broken heart doesn't seem so dangerous when it's just an idea, a thought floating through a mind. . .

but it can be devastating when that idea becomes reality for a person who has lost

everything.

**Bryce Goodin**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Mommie Dearest

I remember their fight,  
Too small to understand.  
Scurry away in fright.  
And she's gone like the sand.

She had never come back,  
I had taken her place.  
Promised to never crack,  
I had taken her face.

'Mother' was my new name.  
Her daughter needed one,  
So our role was the same.  
Why couldn't I go have fun?

I burn bright as the sun,  
Misplaced anger isn't fun.  
I just wish I could run.  
But I'll never be done.

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Her daughter still needs me.

Try to leave, oh good luck.

The role is mine, you see?

Now I'm forever stuck,

As a three year old me.

I certify that this poem is my original work and has not been copied in whole or in part from any author's poems in print or posted on the Internet.

**Alice Genkin**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11



**Riley Kerber**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

She's coming from the boat, she's finding love and light in new places, she's getting married. She's having beautiful children, she's watching them grow. She's staying around through loss and love, she's holding on to the good and the bad. She's staying *strong*. She's growing older, she's seeing us do the same. She's sitting in her chair, she's talking about her shows. She's giving us hugs, she's pinching my face, she's being stubborn when the check for the meal comes. She's smiling.

She's going to the hospital. She's tired but she never fades. She holds on to what she has. She's sleeping more often, she's forgetting names. She's losing her will to eat and drink, she's slowly slipping away. She's holding my hand one last time. She's gone now, but she continues to be many things: she's the cardinal flying past the garden, she's the feeling of comfort, she's the beauty in everything we do.

**Brielle Stronsick**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 11



**Riley Kerber**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## The Gray Monday

When my alarm goes off, I shove the covers off of myself, yawning, and it is like having a bucket of icy cold water dumped on me. I shiver, and pick up a jacket from the messy floor of my room. I shrug it on, and pad down the hallway to see what the thermostat says the temperature of the house is. My bare feet making a slapping sound on the cold hardwood floor. I stop in front of the thermostat, and try to squint my eyes to make out what it says. Everything is a blur, as I left my glasses in my room. I roll my eyes, thinking to myself, *"It's not worth it, it's probably broken again."* I don't have enough fingers on both of my hands to count the amount of times the thermostat has broken. Twice it broke in the summer, and one time was in the middle of July. It was record temperatures, with the highest most days being 100 degrees fahrenheit. It was blisteringly hot, and I swear, you could fry an egg on the sidewalk. My siblings and I hung out at friends' houses with air conditioning all week so as to not die of misery in our own house.

I sprint back down the hallway to my room to retrieve my glasses. I haphazardly stick them on my face, and everything instantly comes into focus, like a lens on a camera focusing. I

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open up one of my dresser drawers, and pull out a pair of thick, heavy, fuzzy socks. I bought three pairs at Walmart the other day just for this reason. I slip them on my numb feet, and put on a pair of sweatpants. I slide back down the hall in my socks towards my brother's room. I notice his door is closed, which is strange. It's usually wide open, warmly welcoming anyone who wants to drop by to visit him. I'm about to knock on the door when my stomach drops in realization; *it's Gray Monday.*

I should probably explain this. My twin, Martin, has always been a kind, funny kid to everyone, even his three annoying younger siblings. He is the kind of kid who offers you the last cookie in the cookie jar, even if he is the first to find it. All the teachers love him, and everyone wants to be his friend. He's the student council president, tutors kindergarteners after school, and helps out teachers when they need it. Everyone who meets Martin can't help but like him. One Monday, Martin had been tutoring a kindergarten student, I think her name was Sophia, when our Dad called him. Martin was busy, so he silenced the phone and kept helping Sophia. After the tutoring session ended, Martin called Dad back, but he never picked up. It kept ringing

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and ringing and ringing. It was an eternity before Martin finally got Dad's voicemail. Confused, he called me next. I had just finished softball practice, and reluctantly picked up the phone, wanting to fall back asleep on my cozy bed. "Gabby?" He had said to me, and he sounded a bit worried. "Yep, it's me." I replied tiredly. He went on to tell me all that had happened, but I wasn't that worried. I hung up, and went back to sleep. I remember waking up to my Mom shaking my shoulders, in a panic. I had asked her what was wrong, but I think she was too shocked to form a sentence. All she got out was "Hospital. Emergency." I quickly stopped asking her questions, and instead packed a small bag with some essentials I might need. I recall asking her where Martin was, but she had clenched her jaw and drove towards the hospital even faster.

I remember walking into the hospital, smelling the chemical scent of cleaner, and everywhere I looked, everything was the same blindingly white color. I walked with my Mom, holding her hand, which was squeezing mine back tightly, as if she were lost at sea and I was her lifeline. We quickly walked over to the front desk, and the lady there asked why we were there, and

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suddenly, my Mom could speak again. "We're here for Richard Bright." I froze at my Dad's name, my heart stopped in my chest. I looked up at her, and my eyes must've been as wide as saucers. I don't remember walking to my father's room, or anyone talking to me. I do, however, remember Martin's face. He was sitting outside of Dad's room, sitting ramrod straight, his face pale. Terrified. I had never seen him like that. He was always so happy, smiling. This was the complete opposite. I tentatively sat in the chair next to him, staring at him all the while, but he never acknowledged me. I remember my Mom taking me to a small room to explain to me that Dad had gotten into a horrid car crash on his way to pick up Martin, and would probably not live. I didn't cry. I was too shocked for that. An hour later, our Dad passed away.

I understand, now, why Martin thinks it was his fault. Dad had called Martin to see if he needed to be picked up. When Martin didn't answer, Dad didn't wait to call him again to ask. He just started on his way to the school. He got hit by another car, and then rushed to the hospital. We all tried to tell Martin that none of it was his fault; he never listened to us. He tried his best to go

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back to his normal self, but I knew it was all a lie. He has had on a mask ever since that first Gray Monday, a mask to hide what he's really feeling from other people. The only time he ever takes it off is on the anniversary of our Dad's death. Even if it's not Monday, Mom, my siblings, and I call it his "Gray Monday." Martin doesn't come out of his room, doesn't eat, and doesn't talk to any of us at all. This is his fifth Gray Monday.

I sigh, and head back to my room. I flop down on my bed, left feeling miserable from the reminder of Dad's death. I lie there for a while, pondering life and death. I think of how people grieve. I know I cried a lot after Dad died, but Martin didn't. I imagine his mind is full of dark gray rain clouds on these days, raining down all the tears he didn't physically shed. I guess this is his way of grieving. His Gray Monday.

**Abigail Demczyk**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Heartbreak

I need to stay here. I have to. But the urge to run away is great. I want to hide forever in the warmth of the fireplace with my dad's gentle voice in the background, the soft lullabies he always sings, even if I am not a little kid anymore. I want to sob and scream at the world just like a little kid would do if they fell and scraped their knee. I wish I understood what pain really is. I would be more prepared to be here in this one place I prayed I never would see. Nothing could ever be worse than my pain. This heartbreak and loss. How could the world be so cruel? My feet need to stay planted on the ground, because my father deserves to have his loved ones with him during this time of despair.

I wish I could run and not stop until I reach the warm and open hugs of my father. But that's not how the world works. The world is made to be a trap. It's made for your heart to be filled with love, just to break it over and over again. Heartbreaks can be from a lover that didn't choose you. It could be a parent's divorce leaving you with the struggles of moving back and forth, choosing between your family. And some . . . can be from a loss. A great loss that is far worse than could be imagined. That is the worst. You have to deal with the empty condolences, and over cooked casseroles, people trying to mend the bruises on your heart. I have to watch my father's lifeless body get lifted and carefully placed in a deep hole and buried never to be seen again. No one should have to go through something like this.

Life isn't fair at all. Life is like a test. A test to see if we can handle something so awful and a test to see how we recover, pick ourselves up, and move forward. I know I am going to have to keep moving. But I don't want to. I just want to stay in my father's arms forever, with his soft voice and warm hands. His kind blue eyes twinkle down at my red blotchy eyes when I cry. But no one can hold me anymore like that. Now I have to hold my mother. Even though I only lost one parent, it feels like two. My mother blocked out the real world, sinking into darkness. Now I

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have to keep her afloat, I pull and struggle to keep her head above the lake of darkness of despair, because if I don't, she will be gone forever, drowning in the lake her own tears make.

She was my last hope to be happy again. Now I am her last hope. I am my own last hope to be happy. A small teenage girl, with so much on her mind, so much to take care of. So much stress that the world has put on her shoulders. I wish this time would just end. I wish everything would be happy again. But nothing will change soon. So I am going to have to rewrite mine and my mother's future.

## **Farrah Holladay**

Root Middle  
Grade 7

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### **The Shot**

The last drop fell into the test tube, and I could sense that they knew. They were growing restless, scuttling around under my skin. They knew that it was near the end for them. The parasites that had inhabited my body for weeks knew something was coming to end their lives. *They're going to kill me*, I thought. *They know that a pesticide has been found and that their short lives inside of my body are coming to an end.*

I have tried to tell everyone here in this bright white place that the parasites know more than the scientists think. The response is the same from everyone, though. "Go lay down. You are speaking nothing but nonsense." I know they are wrong, though. These repulsive beings have a conscience.

I was on a camping trip one weekend with my family. When I woke up one morning, I had these odd holes in the bottom of my feet. After multiple full body scans, it was clear that a sort of parasite had eaten its way into my body and created a series of tunnels through my muscles. Except, I was not the only one.

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Millions of people around the world had died from this parasite eating through their vital organs. I was admitted to this place as a test subject, to try to find something that would kill the pests but would cause no harm to the victim. For a while, nothing had been achieved. One day, though, a nurse came in to tell me some news from the head scientists.

She said, "Today is your last day of testing. Our scientists think that they have found a treatment that is effective and will not cause you harm. Please follow me." I was led to something that resembled an examination room where they drew my blood and checked my vitals. The head scientist came in with a cart. On the cart was a syringe and sanitizing wipes. He grabbed my thin, pale arm with his icy, gloved hand. After cleaning an area of my upper arm with a cold sanitizing wipe, he sunk the syringe into my skin. All I felt was a burning sensation and then the world went black.

**Gabby Bright**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

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## **Red Day**

I found a box of letters in my grandmother's garage labeled, "My love". I always knew she cherished these letters, but never once let us touch them. My curiosity got the best of me, I had to know what was so dear to her, so maybe I could keep them safe while she's gone.

I open the first letter and notice my grandmother's messy handwriting.

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October 1, 2018

*Not all days can be good days. No matter the day, I try to be there for him, but on some it can get tough. Its not easy watching someone whom you love slowly wither away and become nothing.*

October 1, 2018

*Chemo brain is what he has. They gave him the option to get a surgery and live a little longer but he wouldn't go for it, god knows why. All I know is that our time is cut short, the time that we were supposed to have a lifetime to live, its been taken away from us. My precious boy will soon die.*

October 2, 2018

*Every morning as I wake I wish and I wish for a green day. Those are the good days. Its days where he can get up and walk around. Its a day where he is feeling alright and remembering things. Its my favorite day.*

*Some mornings are yellow days. These aren't the best. Its days where he's weak but tries to be happy, although I can tell he's in pain.*

*Red days. Days that make me sick to my stomach. These days are the days when he forgets everything. I'm terrified that one day he will forget me. These days he's always curled up in bed with five blankets or in the bathroom throwing up the whole day. I always hope that the day won't be a red day.*

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October 14, 2018

*Today is a green day. That makes me happy. Today I was telling a story and asked if he remembered, although I knew the answer, it was worth a try. He tries hard to remember, he thinks if he doesn't i'll be disappointed. I could never be disappointed in him.*

October 18, 2018

*He told me it was a yellow day today. He's gotten very weak. I try not to cry every time I see him but its hard. Its like I'm watching him wither away day by day. I cannot bear to lose him. What would I do without him?*

October 20, 2018

*Today is a red day. He's been throwing up all morning, I wish I could help but he doesn't want me to see him like this. I can feel tears sting my eyes. I love him so much but he has gotten very weak.*

October 21, 2018

*Once again its a red day. He won't stop shaking, it scares me.*

October 22, 2018

*Red day. I can't bare it.*

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October 23, 2018

*Today was another red day. He asked me to stay with him. He asked me to hold him. I hope its not for the last time.*

October 24, 2018

*He got out of bed today. He went and laid on the couch with me, I could tell he was in pain.*

October 25, 2018

*He's been too weak to even talk. I always remind him that I love him anyway.*

October 26, 2018

*He hasn't gotten out of bed once today.*

October 27, 2018

*He told me I love you. It was hard for him. He has grown extremely weak. I know he doesn't have much longer, I just need to accept that.*

October 28, 2018

*He fell asleep earlier, I try not to wake him so he can rest. He told me it was a yellow day.*

October 29, 2018

*He didn't wake up.*

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October 30, 2018

*I feel like my world has been taken from me. I have no willpower to go on.*

November 3, 2018

*I found a note under his pillow labeled, "My love". I almost broke down. He wrote this for me before he died.*

This was the last note my grandmother wrote on the subject. I didn't know she went through this, she was good at covering it up. She was really strong. I go to set the notes back when I notice the label on the box was actually a letter.

*My love,*

*I'm sorry our story had to end like this. If you're reading this then I guess that means I died. I hoped to keep this letter and never have to give it to you, but I guess all things must come to an end. Listen to me, I want you to go out and meet someone new, and have a beautiful family. Don't hang over me forever, then again don't find someone right after I die. You may be wondering why I chose to not have surgery, well you're the reason. I could never be selfish enough to have you go through what you went through longer than you were meant to. You know I love you my darling dearest. I love you to the moon and back. I could say I love you a million times and it still would not express how much I truly do. But my love, I do love you.*

*Until we meet again,*

*Yours forever*

*Charles*

**Kaylee Chalmers**  
Root Middle  
Grade 7

## Johnson's Yearly Formal

The yearly formal was arriving soon. Once someone received the letter, they were invited to join the largest party of the year. If you got a letter, you were considered top of the chain. It was a choice of life or death, starting with one letter.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Brooks,

We are formally inviting you to our home for our yearly formal.

We hope to see you there.

Much excitement,

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson

It was a strange letter, Aliyah had said she wouldn't ever get invited so when the letter arrived in her mailbox, she was confused but ecstatic. There were a lot of papers along with the letter that she had to read through. Some were about dress code, others were the guest lists, one was a conclusion letter. It didn't seem unique until the last line.

"This year's dance is going to be the most memorable ever.?" Aliyah read out loud. Her husband already said he wasn't going, which Aliyah found odd. He had always shared the same excitement to go as her, but recently he had started becoming more aggressive when someone brought it up. Aliyah didn't know he had started to grow hatred towards the Johnsons and the formal. And she had never seen her husband become so defensive about something, even about things he truly cared about.

Other letters were arriving all over her town saying the same thing as hers. That the formal was going to be memorable. Aliyah had thought that nothing bad was going to happen, so she decided to go.

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There were four months to prepare. Aliyah had to get a dress, jewelry, shoes, anything that she would need for the formal. She had gotten a beautiful light blue dress. It was covered in sparkle from the sleeves to her skirt. She got shoes to match, light grey ones with gems glued all around. Aliyah had also gotten a new purse, new diamond necklace, and even went to get her hair and nails done. Aliyah had prepared herself for the most important dance she'd ever go to.

While Aliyah had been shopping, she didn't seem to notice her husband's absence. He was gone from the house more frequently and for longer periods than before. Sometimes, he would be gone for the whole day without her realizing it.

The time flew by and before Aliyah knew, it was the day of the formal. She had gotten ready in her beautiful dress. Aliyah looked around the house for her husband, which was the first time she had noticed he was gone. She looked in her driveway to see just her car sitting, not her husband's. She had just figured he went out to a friend's house for the night while she was at the formal.

It was a huge place, lights lighting up every room of the building. She was taken by a gentleman to the door as another parked her car. The inside was just as lovely. Chandeliers hung in every room, the floor plan was open from the front door to the dance floor with one giant chandelier hung over the floor. The house was decorated beautifully with winter-themed designs. Aliyah was amazed by the house and fantasized about living there.

A few hours had passed and Aliyah was having an amazing time. She saw a few friends and danced with them, a few gentlemen asked for a dance, and she was living the night of her dreams. That's when disaster struck.

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Lights flickered, the house shook, heavy metal slamming together. They were boxed in a room. That's when the screaming started. People were falling, small flashes of light coming from doorways, people were fighting. All chaos broke loose. People were laying on the floor, some were scared, others dead from being trampled. It took Aliyah a minute to realize what was happening, but when she did, she started running. She followed the crowd, cramming through doors, trampling over people, others were fighting over getting out. Everyone was terrified.

It was pitch black when Aliyah heard gunshots. The lights flickered and she saw the chandelier over top of her swinging. She tried to run, but she was too late. The glass shattered on top of her and many others. She screamed in pain. The overbearing weight was crushing her lower body. Minutes felt like hours, then she heard glass crunching beneath shoes. Someone was standing in front of her.

"Hello, Aliyah, just the person I wanted to crush." A low, raspy voice spoke. It was familiar. Too familiar.

"Who do you have over there?" A different muffled voice yelled out.

"Oh nobody," The low tone came near.

She knew who this was, but she couldn't think of the name. The lights flickered to reveal the man. Her husband sitting right in front of her.

"Hi, honey."

**Mave Dell**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 9

## My Secret Place

A hiding place. A secret place. Some may use it to get away from life, others to play a childhood game of hide and seek, and some may use it to hide from danger. For me it was the last option. A quite terrifying option.

My family and I are in a cramped hiding place, no room at all to move around. Sweat drips from my forehead as I hear the floorboards above us creak. My mind is racing with thoughts of “what if”. What if they find us? What if they hear us? What if they get to us? I look over to my little sister, Eva, trembling with fear. It breaks my heart into a million pieces to see her like this so scared, I'm supposed to be the big sister, the one who always protects her. But how could I, for I was scared too. I look to my mother who has her hand over her mouth quivering. I could tell she was trying to be strong and brave for us, she has always been our rock and she intends to keep it that way, but in her eyes I could see the fear. Lastly, I look over to my father and see *nothing*. His expression is as stern as a stone. How could he not be scared, especially when his whole family is scared? I look at my dad for a long time observing and noticing. I notice he has tension in his face and a look of *regret*?

This spot used to be a favorite of mine. The spot we are hiding in used to be *my* spot; a cozy spot under the staircase, with pictures all over the place, fairy lights strung upon the wall, and a raggedy mattress on the floor. I would hide away here for hours, but now we were actually hiding. The place once filled with light was now darkened with the fairy lights ripped off the ceiling and on the ground. The place once filled with happiness was now filled with undeniable fear. Fear of what could happen. It's strange how a comfortable place can turn into a hideout from something *dangerous* in a flash of an eye.

We have been hiding down here for hours. Never once has any of us let out a peep of a noise. They would find us if we were to. We stayed huddled up in this confined space, listening

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closely. Every time we thought they had left, we heard more footsteps. At times the footsteps would grow more intense and fear would build up in us, but then they would grow quiet once again. Eventually it seemed as if there were more footsteps, as if someone else had joined. I listen intently to our deep breaths filling the room. It's gotten hot. It's gotten really hot. I feel drowsy, like I'm going to pass out, yet I don't, because I have to stay strong, not for me but for my family.

The footsteps, they're louder. Immensely louder. It's a terrifying feeling each time I hear them. A feeling that rumbles deep in my stomach, a feeling that just makes me want to curl up and cry. My whole family had the feeling. We huddled closer.  
*Shaking.*

Footsteps right outside the door.

Footsteps are close.

Footsteps are loud.

Footsteps are captivating.

The door leisurely crept open.

It's hot.

Really hot.

Then we were overcome with darkness.

Our hiding place. Our secret place. We thought it was safe, but no hiding place could keep us safe forever.

**Kaylee Chalmers**

Root Middle

Grade 7

## Her

Her.

Tiny alligators on the rim of her glasses.

Eyes full of mystery and curiosity.

A smile that lights up a room or maybe just the door to my heart.

Old rock and roll shirts. Flannels. She looks so swag, so cool.

Hair that swishes back and forth when she giggles. Blond or color. At her shoulders. So soft.

Her.

Made of pure magic.

Crystals in her pencil pouch. She spells me. A good witch.  
Abracadabra. You stole my heart.

She plays percussion. Ba dum. Ba dum.

She could play the beat in my heart when I see her.  
Badumbadumbadumbadumbadum.

The way she moves, it's like she's dancing her way throughout.  
Swish Swoosh.

Your scent turns me blind beautiful girl. You have always smelled  
like flowers to me.

A bright rosy spark in the darkness and cruelty of this world. A  
bright spark in my world.

But not fragile. Never.

She is brave and curious. Strong. So strong. My girl..

She takes risks and explores. Boom!

Talking to her makes everything else seem blurry and dull.

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*(Continued from page 293)*

I always lean in closer and she mirrors it. Sometimes she winks at me from afar.

I do little things to make her smile. It works. Her smile makes me smile.

She draws stars and smiles in my notebook. And aliens. And cute quotes. And spirals.

She giggles at my dad jokes. I pick each one with perfect clarity and make sure each one is special and unique. Just. like. her.

Every time she talks, I almost fall over, dizzy with the sound of how beautiful her voice is.

She could be anything, do anything.

She deserves the world. She deserves so much.. She deserves everything..

She is so pure, so amazing, so gorgeous, so beautiful, so magical, so unique, so special.

I don't understand how no one else sees it as clearly as I do.

I want to support her and validate her and hug her.

Woah.

I would trade my life for one hug from this girl. I would trade everything. Her hug would probably collapse me. I would stumble. Knock us both over in a pile of giggles.

I want to make her laugh when she needs it and cuddle her when she is upset.

I want to beat up anyone who dares try to hurt her.

I want to be there for her through ups and downs and mediums. Through everything!

*(Continued on page 295)*

*(Continued from page 294)*

I want her to know I love her. I love you . . .

And for her to say it back. I love you too . . .

But she'll never know.

What if she found out?

Would she hate me? Be disgusted? Would our cute stims fall apart in one moment in time?

So I guess I will stay as a friend.

A friend.. Her friend..

her.

### **Moss Parada**

Root Middle

Grade 8

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### **One of a Pair**

I could hear the loud chime of the clock tower withering away as I ran. Midnight. Oh, how much of a predicament I have gotten myself into. I continue to run all the way down the cascade of stairs wishing and hoping that he wasn't following me. When I looked back, he wasn't. There was no prince charming running after me, telling me not to leave him. There was no man that was so consumed in me that he decided to do whatever it took to find me. The last slither of hope I had washed away with the wind. I glance down at my sparkling glass slippers, twinkling in the moonlight. I slowly reach down and slide a singular glass slipper off my delicate foot. I gently place it on a step, just in case a prince charming will come by and find it and decide to go to every extreme and find me. Gracefully and swiftly, I glide away wearing my last lonesome glass slipper. Humming, thinking, and dreaming that one day a prince charming will scavenger the village to find me.

### **Kaylee Chalmers**

Root Middle

Grade 7

Balance is tricky to achieve  
Despite what others think or believe  
It's difficult to meet in the middle  
When you're either too much or too little

Sometimes I think there's no in-between  
Only the minimum or the extreme  
I hate that it has to be like this  
Leaving you confused, disoriented, adrift

You were once too quiet  
And now you're too loud  
You once were too humble  
And now you're too proud

You were once too nice  
And now you're too aggressive  
You once were too cautious  
And now you're too impulsive

This balance you are sure to find  
Give you peace and heart and mind  
This comfort that you have long-awaited  
Within yourself, you have created

**Keira Hutchinson**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## **Bookshelf**

A bookshelf

Many different pockets of universe

For yourself to immerse

Many of stories

That take you away from yourself

If only for a short point

It can be relaxing

To feel as though you're in a different world

Cause' this one can be harsh

You may have to find the right story

Find the right universe

But that's all because

You need to immerse

**Jack Mallory**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## **A Magnificent, Terrifying Time**

Inside the colorful dressing room  
The director calls us up with a boom  
Everything is set  
However, there is much to fret

Me and my friend  
Are terrified, you can't comprehend  
The stage floor like midnight  
Then comes a little light

*zoom*

The curtains began opening  
It flies by leaving us hoping

If you weren't nervous before  
You'll be, watching people flood through the door  
My mistakes pace through my head  
At this moment I feel I might be dead  
With everything in place  
It's time for me to show my face  
I feel my heart race  
In the end, everything I ace

**Jenna Parry**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

## One Million Things

The stress of perfection,  
The jumpy, anxious horse,  
The, worry and fear,  
The judgy components of course.

The rhythm and dance,  
The one tiny mistake.  
Only a single misstep,  
Can take away first place.

The struggle of loss,  
The victory of wins.  
The love that you have,  
It always has been.

The sounds of the hooves,  
Your breath trembling in fear,  
As you go into the ring,  
Hoping you come back clear.

The money you spend,  
The Hours you take,  
The falls that you fall,  
The memories you make.

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*(Continued from page 299)*

An unbreakable bond,  
One you will never let go.  
It's worth every second,  
For the trust that you grow.

**Kathryn George**  
Highland Middle  
Grade 7

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**Dust Kofner**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## The Creatures

Take care when walking the hall  
For he deceives the likes of all  
That his tricks make fall  
But please don't fret, as long  
As you do not hear the song  
But if you do hear it,  
You stay still, you do not sit  
In the distance sounds a scream  
Some from creatures whose eyes gleam  
So when you walk along  
Beware eyes that seem wrong

I gaze in pure fright  
At my self-reflection sight  
As I stood at the sink,  
My eyes were gleaming ink  
What shock! I am now them  
The opposite of a gem  
It won't stem - it can't stem!  
Alas! Can I not escape  
The weight atop my nape?  
Alas! The work is done  
For none can stop what's begun  
Next time you walk along,  
Beware my eyes that are wrong

**Alysha Syed**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## Emotions

Emotions go through our heads everyday  
We feel them when we work and play.

One thing that we cannot hide  
Are these emotions deep inside.

Happiness is laughter on a face  
A smile and sparkling eyes feel like a warm embrace.

Sadness is lonely and dark in the night  
Reaching for hope and warmth in the light.

Surprise is the excitement of a child  
Opening presents, they go wild.

Fear is like a monster under your bed  
Trying to get into your head.

Trust is a friend that holds you tight  
Keeping your secrets out of sight.

Anger is like a wall of bricks  
Falling down after just one kick.

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*(Continued from page 302)*

So many emotions fill our lives  
Sometimes they cut as sharp as knives.

Emotions can be sweet or sour  
They usually change about every hour.

Emotions are normal no need to hide  
Don't just push them away to the side

We cannot hide our emotions on our face  
We just have to put them in their place.

**Lauren Decker**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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### **As Time Passes**

As time passes, you learn new things.  
As time passes, you grow with one another.  
As time passes, you get let down.  
As time passes, you pick others up.  
As time passes, everything changes.

As time passes, people fade away.  
As time passes, people disappoint you.  
As time passes, people help you grow.  
As time passes, people are only brought back in memories.

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*(Continued from page 303)*

As time passes, everything changes.

As time passes, you change.

As time passes, people change.

As time passes, worlds change.

As time passes, futures change

As time passes, everything changes.

As you look back, you remember old friends.

As you look back, you understand more of the pain.

As you look back, you cringe at lost opportunities.

As you look back, you'll realize a lot has changed.

Going forward, you will find more people.

Going forward, more people will find you.

Going forward, there is always hope.

Going forward, everything changes.

As time passes, you learn new things.

As time passes, people disappoint you.

As time passes, you get let down.

As time passes, people are only brought back to memories.

As time passes, everything changes.

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## A Breath of the Past

I had a breath of the past. I was walking and a breeze came by me. It came by with a scent, a scent I remember so well it was almost as if I was being sent into a memory. It fills up my nose and goes through my lungs. It travels to my brain and fills my head with thoughts of *when will that ever happen again*. I always try to follow the scent, wanting the memory to stay with me, for it is only a glimpse of what I wanted to be a movie. I wish they would last forever, they make my heart leap and lips twitch to a smile. However, they only last as long as that breeze, and breezes move on to the next person in a heartbeat.

**Emily Burkey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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## The Sin in My Heart

My heart beat fast  
Faster than ever  
I didnt know the sin I did could do this  
To  
Me  
I heard it's been found  
I keep replaying what I did  
In  
My  
Head  
I wonder if I  
Made

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A

Mistake

My heart beats faster as I continue to think

Did I

Do

Something wrong?

**Kylie Campbell**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

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**Smile**

One smile can raise your spirits,

One smile can lift a soul,

One smile can start friendships,

One smile can set a goal.

One smile can drown out sorrow,

One smile can light the dark,

One smile can convey happiness,

One smile can ignite a spark.

One smile can make a difference,

One smile can show you care,

One smile is all it really takes,

So smile everywhere.

**Robert Beatty**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## Rhyme Scheme

I have to write a poem, I have to think of a rhyme.	A
On my computer, RhymeZone is pulled up in a dime.	A
Oh cool, that has a nice flow	B
Just knocking these rhymes out row by row.	B
Eh, that didn't have to great a rhythm	C
but I gotta stick to the algorithm	C
Okay, first stanza down,	D
What to do next,	D
Woah, changed the rhyme scheme.	E
Wait, now I'm perplexed.	E
I have to stick to the basics, and can't go outside.	F
Because when I do, there's nowhere to hide.	F
Can't show my true skill, have to follow the crowd	G
Can't be yourself, nope, not allowed.	G
But outside of the box, there's a sense of freedom.	H
And honestly, right now, I really need some.	H
Sometimes in life, we need to change the Rhyme Scheme	I
Because life doesn't have a set theme.	I

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I've learned in 4th grade that poems don't need to rhyme,	J
But now that I've spent all this time	J
Climbing this uphill climb	K
called writing a poem,	L
I'm scared that no one will respect me,	L
If I break the rhyme scheme.	L

**Jakoby Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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### Keys

I hear the click of the key unlocking the door.  
The door swings open.  
Of course it does.  
That's what keys are meant to do.  
You place the key into the slot.  
The teeth of the key fit into there, pushing some bars up.  
You turn the key, unlocking the door.  
There's nothing special about that.  
That's it.  
Nothing else.  
Keys open doors.

But keys also create doors.

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*(Continued from page 308)*

The 88 different keys on a piano

That helped introduce the world to a new era of music

The 88 keys, that opened the door of imagination

The 24 key scales. Major and Minor keys

that helped all music develop

The 24 keys that opened the door to possibilities.

The 101 keys that are on a computer,

that allowed me to make this poem

The 101 keys that opened the door of opportunity.

Keys don't just open doors.

They create them.

They open the door to endless possibilities, opportunities, and imagination.

They're a key part in everything.

**Jakoby Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

### **Bugs Point of View**

Those creatures think they are superior to me, I think not. I may be 5 feet shorter, but people still do fear me tremendously. I crawl. I crawl for days trying to get to my destination, just to have those ungrateful creatures not watch where they are going, and almost behead me! I am getting tired of humans thinking they can just march around and step on us with their huge feet, so I plan to get my revenge. I sit in a crack on the pavement outside of this despicable human house and wait. Oh how they will get my wrath when they exit the house, for I will no longer take all this tossing around. There, I see the human exit their abode, heading this way. I can hear the stomps of their huge feet. That's when I decided to make a run for it. I will go run and attack this human. I scatter across the pavement as fast as my six legs can take me. Hear that? Six legs, humans only have two, therefore I'm far more superior. I am close to the human now, ready to make my move when all of a sudden I'm eloped by a sudden blackness. That darn human stepped on me with their big feet! Oh just you wait, for one day us ants will take over and you will be sorry for ever stepping on us, for one day we will step on you.

**Kaylee Chalmers**

Root Middle

Grade 7



**Aidan Simpson**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## The Girl Who Flew to the Sun

An emerald green mountain far away from civilization had been rumoured to have the tallest trees and fields of flowers, prettier and more colorful than the rainbow. The fragrance of the flowers are your favorite things like cookies straight from the oven or the smell of a blueberry candle. Some even smell like concepts, such as a warm hug or the color purple. The best part was when the sun rose; the varieties of green on the trees became autumn. It was like King Midas ran for hours in the fields. The clouds were warm and tinted with orange. This sounds like heaven, almost a dream but for a young girl who lived on the mountain, it was to be a nightmare.

Raven was an only child who was homeschooled by her mother and father, and had no contact with the outside world. Her parents were strict, giving Raven no free time. She spent every hour, every minute, every second studying. Despite how much she read her books, there were questions that puzzled her like "Who are your friends?" or "What are your favorite games?" But one stumped her the most, "What do you do in your free time?" No matter how many times she reread her notes, she would never find the answer. "Free" was ripped from her dictionary. It was like she was shackled down, cuffs on her waist, ankles, neck; anywhere you could think of. But during breakfast, at sunrise, she was able to be free for only a moment.

While Raven's parents prepared what she would have to learn for that day, she would sneak off. Her hideout was as simple as it gets, just a swing on the very edge of a cliff. If you weren't careful you would fall right to the soft grass, but it wasn't soft enough to keep you safe. You could see the white cotton candy with highlights of amber in the bright orange sky. It was stunning. Raven would swing, listening to the birds' choir and watching their trapeze acts. She swung her feet front then back, front then back, over and over again. It was almost like she was the one

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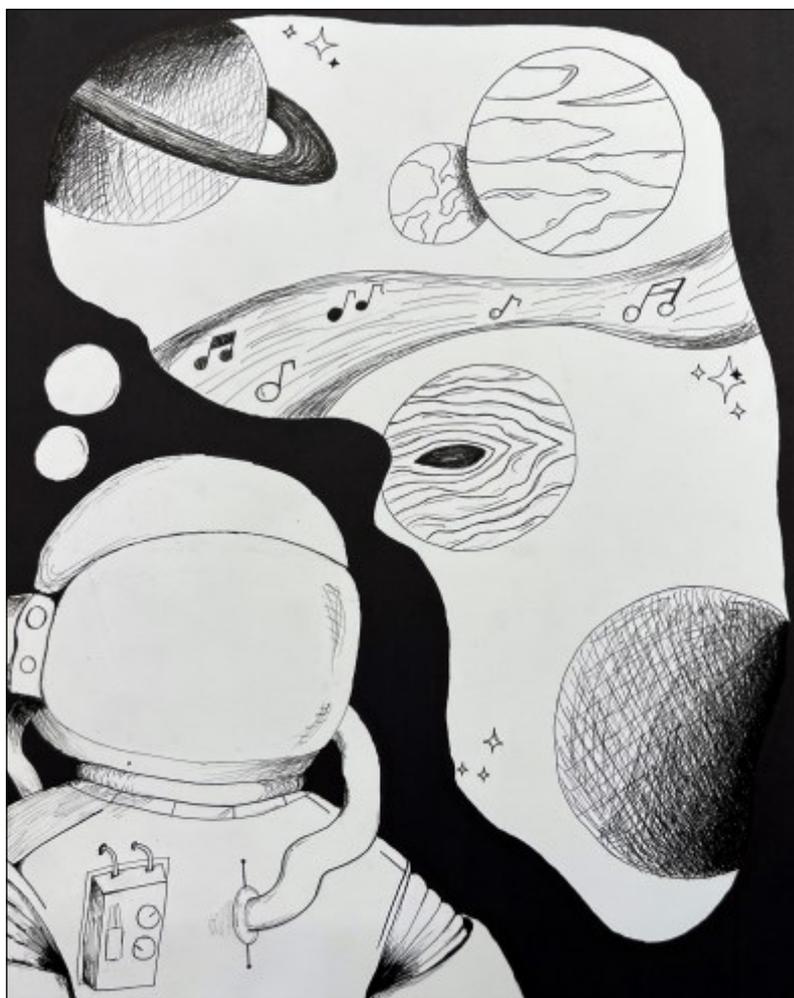
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flying instead of the birds on that swing. The shackles of life were loose. Once the golden sunrise was over, it was Raven's time to return to her classes.

Raven was on the swing once again, stuck daydreaming, thinking about the flowers and the birds' tunes. That day, she lost track of time, so when she came back to reality, she already saw the sun. She didn't walk away though; she couldn't help but look at the sun, turning the mountain into a November day. The clouds swirled around the sun and the sky turned from black to orange. Raven wanted to see the sun closer, it's hypnotizing spell pulled Raven. So Raven grabbed onto her swing. One step back. Two steps back. Three steps back. She then ran and flew so high in the sky and so quickly, the shackles broke. She understood now what free was. It was this moment, thanks to the sunrise. She was so mesmerized by the new feeling that she let go, but one shackle was still able to pull her down. Instead of screaming, it was laughter while she plunged down. She believed she was flying closer to the sun instead of the ground where her grave would lay.

Thanks to Raven, the tales of the mountain changed. She was known as the girl who never knew the meaning of "free," but the sun helped her discover it. The sun gifted her a pair of wings that belonged to an angel to help Raven make her way to her heaven of freedom. She is free to make friends with other angels and play any games she pleases, but most importantly, she is free to swing while watching the sunset.

**Chloe Pozega**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 7



**Malea Easton**  
Medina High  
Grade 11



**Sarah Riley**  
Medina High  
Grade 12



**Sarah Riley**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## **Bargaining For the Birthday**

There once was an old caveman who needed to get a present for his wife's birthday. He decided to go to the marketplace and see what he could get. His eyes immediately caught the sight of a beautiful painted ring, chiseled to perfection. He walked over to the man working at the stand and pointed to the ring. The worker shook his head as he looked at the caveman and his torn and ragged clothes. Way too poor to get the ring he thought. But then the worker thought of an idea, he tried to communicate to the caveman that if he could find a top-notch, quality bottle of milk for the child of the worker, he could have the ring. Instantly the caveman ran off to the nearby ranch, hoping to be able to get the best bottle of milk he could find.

The caveman approached the farmer hastily and pointed to the bottle of milk on the top shelf. Just like the worker at the stand before, the farmer shook his head seeing nothing the caveman could trade with. The farmer then thought that the caveman could do a favour for him to get the milk. He poorly communicated that if the caveman could go buy a brand new horse for him with the salt that he gave the caveman, the caveman could have the milk. The caveman then took off with

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the bag of salt in hand. As the caveman jumped, sprinted, panted, and repeated, some of the salt cascaded out of the bag. The caveman approached the marketplace again, but this time ran to the horse salesman. He handed the bag over to the salesman and waited for the salesman to hopefully say it was enough. As the others did before him, the horse salesman shook his head and handed back the bag of salt.

The salesman then thought that if the caveman helped him out, then he could make up for the missing salt and pay for the horse. The caveman was giddy and tried to explain that he could help in any way possible. The salesman gave a small smirk and explained that he needed help to tend to the horses, clean up the stable, and help count the profits of the day. The caveman was reluctant to help the salesman that much, but he decided that it was worth it for the ring. Hours later, when the caveman was exhausted and ready to quit, the salesman finally showed up and told him that he had worked enough to get the horse. But before either of them could react, the horse was bitten by a nasty tick and started jumping and kicking around. The horse knocked over the salesman and picked up the caveman. The caveman thought

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it was a good opportunity to ride the horse away, off to the ranch. As the horse ran through the marketplace like a bullet, the sun was slowly setting, the caveman's hair flowed gracefully through the wind, and the other market-goers watched as the horse ran off toward the ranch.

The caveman crashed through the closed gate of the ranch and got launched into the air over to the farmer, who was ready to close up the shop for the night. The farmer wasn't exactly ecstatic about the gate being destroyed, but he did promise to give the milk to the caveman if he got him the horse. The caveman yanked the bottle of milk out of the farmer's hand, since the market was going to close soon. The caveman ran as fast as he could toward the shop with the ring, only to find out that the ring had already been sold to another person earlier that day. The worker was so happy to see the bottle of milk that he yanked it out of the caveman's hand, never to be seen again. Defeated, the caveman slowly walked home to his wife. As he walked in, he saw his wife showing off the beautifully chiseled and painted ring she had bought earlier that day.

**Josh Adkins**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Red Eye

The planet was smaller than expected. The deep purple skies floating above, churning like the ocean. Rory looked up to see her mothership floating high above. Waiting. She sighed, scooping a sample of the soil into a little vial. A small robot flew over, carrying a tray of the tubes. A rainbow of colors. And none of them are safe. Rory reached out. The little bot slowed to a stop. "A beautiful little Moth," Rory said wistfully. She tucked the sample into the tray and sent the moth back up to the mothership. "Delivery logged 10:45 ER Time," it said as it buzzed alive.

Rory watched it fly into the distance. Up and up and up it went. She reached into her pocket, pulling out a small orb. Her fingers fumbled with it a moment. Rory flipped a switch and it decompressed into another Moth. The Moth flew along behind her as Rory walked off.

Suddenly the little machine buzzed. A bright red hologram appeared, "Danger Detected: Movement Below." Rory stared at it for a moment. She waited for the hit. A rustle in a bush. Anything. But the world was silent. She felt her body tense up. "The Moth isn't wrong, it's never wrong," she thought.

Then she felt it: the low rumbling of the ground. Pebbles beneath her feet began to shift and jump. The bot started to fly up. It was leaving her. "Can't lose information, but screw the people I guess," Rory muttered to herself.

She jumped up trying to reach for it. This was her project, and she couldn't fail. Even if the planet was marked inhabitable, it was still one less to search. Her fingers barely grazed it, knocking it slightly off course. But it was out of reach now. It was gone. And with it went her hope of escaping the earthquake.

The shaking got worse as Rory ran to find an open area. "But that doesn't make sense! This doesn't make sense," she yelled. "I was so thorough, I swear I was," Rory whimpered.

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It was mandatory. She had spent months collecting data on the planet, and there wasn't any sign of danger. Not one. "And just to be sure, we even avoided the edges of the tectonic plates," she cried out.

"What went wrong! I don't understand," Rory said, rubbing her face.

She had made it to a clearing in the jagged rocks, far enough away so that a landslide shouldn't kill her. Rory grabbed a flare from her pocket and lit it. The rumbling was so loud now she could feel it in her chest.

She fumbled with the flare a moment. Sweat slick on her hands. Rory quickly lit it, and fired. "They'd send help for her, wouldn't they?" she thought.

Her back and legs were sore from running, her eyes red from the dust. Rory couldn't hear anything but the crushing rocks around her. They tumbled and fell. Rory lit another flare: her last one. Desperation clawed at her chest.

"You'll die here, won't you," she told herself. The flare shot high into the air. It lit up the smoke and dust as it went up. A gleaming eye of red, flying high into the sky. Her last hope.

She fell to her knees staring up at it, tears running down her cheeks.

Then she folded. Rory lay there. They weren't coming back and she knew it. Scientists were disposable, and she had too many dreams.

Then she heard it: a quiet buzzing against the storm. The Moth flew up to her.

Rory jumped up, clawing to read the message. She was safe! "It'll be okay," she thought.

Then the message lit up. Rory's face fell. "Goodbye, Red Eye. Thank you for your service. You will be remembered," it

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read off to her.

Rory stared at it. Empty. "That's it," she said. They'd gotten what they'd wanted from her.

She stared up at the crumbling mountains, and Rory felt herself crumbling too. She lay down on the soft earth. Closed her eyes, and waited. Not for anything in particular. Just lay there, because that was it for her.

She heard another buzz, a Wasp. A robot solely for messages. It landed on her nose, probably from one of her coworkers.

"The planet has eyes, we can't help you," it whispered into her ear. Rory nodded. "They wouldn't have helped anyway," she thought.

The rock rumbled in her head. A final mountain came down. The rock tumbled toward her. And it all went black.

**Alice Genkin**  
Cloverleaf High  
Grade 11



**William Karkoff**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## The Winter Olympic Dream

Once there was a little girl named Lucy. She wasn't like the rest of her family. The rest of her family was boring and didn't like to do much, but Lucy was adventurous and loved to explore. Lucy also liked to try new things. When she was young she read a book about Olympic skiing. Lucy instantly knew what she wanted to do when she grew up: be an Olympic skier. She read books and watched movies on famous Olympians to learn as much as she could about skiing in the Olympics.

When she was in 9th grade, she was walking down the hallway in her school, when she came upon a huge poster that said, "Snow Skiers Wanted!" in huge bold print. The poster also said, "Even if you have no experience, you can join! That's how you learn!" When Lucy saw the sign, her heart leapt for joy and her eyes widened. "I'm finally getting a shot at this! This has always been my dream!" Lucy thought to herself.

She read the poster some more, "Please see Coach Collins for more information."

"Oh, no!" Lucy said softly. Lucy absolutely despised Coach Collins. For one reason, and one reason only. She was her father's ex-wife. Coach Collins was the one who divorced her

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father. After Lucy heard the story about what Coach Collins did to her father, she very much hated her.

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Two years later, Lucy was zooming down the ski slope. She felt the wind in her hair. Ever since she started downhill skiing, she loved it! She was a little bad at it in the first place, but after a lot of practice and perseverance, she did it. Even though Lucy was only sixteen, she had high goals of becoming an Olympic snow skiing champion.

She learned to like Coach Collins, but she still wasn't extremely fond of her. Her sophomore year was the best year of her life; she went to competitions and won first place in most, but some second place. She still felt really good about herself, but she never bragged about it. That was one of the reasons why everyone liked her.

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A year later, Lucy started to get trained by her personal trainer to go to the Winter Olympics and compete. Even though she was only a junior in high school, Coach Collins said that she

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had talent, and that she should most definitely compete in the Winter Olympics when she got older. When Coach Collins found out that Lucy was trying out for the Olympics when she was a junior, she told Lucy that she didn't mean that early. Lucy didn't care and just kept on working hard to achieve her goal.

One day when she was practicing, she had a terrible accident and blacked out. She had to go to the hospital right away. When Lucy woke up in the hospital, she asked the nurse what had happened. The nurse said that while she was practicing, she fell and something slit her cheek open. She blacked out from all of the pain. So when she opened her eyes, she was here. They brought her to the hospital to give her stitches. The doctor said that she would be able to go right back to skiing and that this injury would not affect her skiing at all.

The next day, she went right back to skiing like nothing had happened the day before. She really had to work hard now because she wasted a day in the hospital and the Winter Olympics were a week away, and Lucy would be going to Alaska in a few days because this year Alaska was hosting the Winter Olympics.

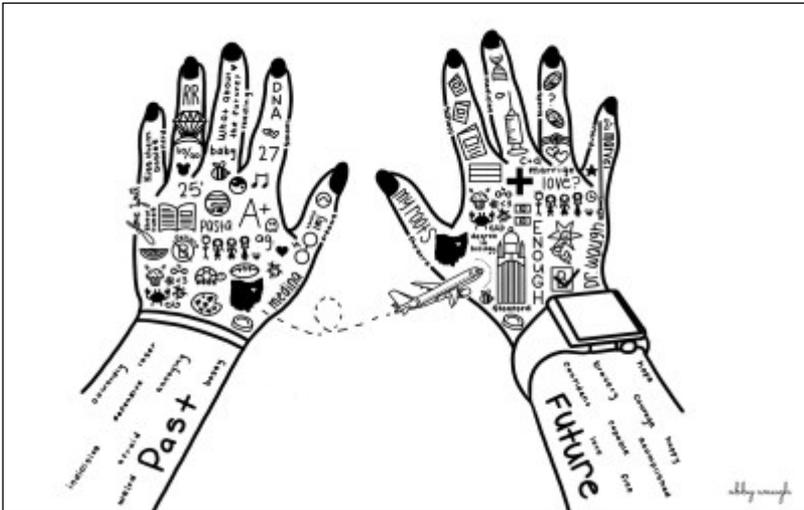
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A couple days later, she arrived in Alaska. When she got to the site where everything was set up, she signed in and went to the hotel since it was late at night and the games were the next day. The next day, Lucy was really nervous as she was driving to the site. When Lucy got there, her stomach cramped up from all of the excitement and nervousness. It was too much for her to digest at once. She thought to herself, “Just do your best. Just do your best,” as she clicked in her ski boots to her skis. And then she took off like a bullet.

Since the games lasted a couple weeks, she was gone for almost a month. When she returned home, she was tired and went to bed. Lucy woke up to the sound of her alarm for school. She thought, “Wow! It is really nice to be back in Ohio!” When she arrived at school, she saw a huge crowd of people outside. When she came to the front door, everyone from the high school, middle school, and elementary school were there! Everyone yelled, “Congratulations!” Lucy was very surprised. When she walked into the school, everyone was constantly congratulating her all day on winning second place in the Winter Olympics!

**Ava Workinger**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 7



**Abigail Waugh**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

## Completely Gone

I walked down the street,  
Taking up a moderately brisk pace.  
The sun was on the rise to my right,  
While the moon was to my left.

Everything was quiet.  
Everything was calm.  
Everything was, well, gone.  
Everything but the road ahead, was gone.  
Utterly gone.

Completely gone were the fields.  
Completely gone were the farms.  
Completely gone were the millions  
And millions of tiny specks of gravel.

I walked down the street,  
The flat, gray path.  
Floating in the abyss,  
Completely gone were my everythings.  
Just gone. Completely Gone

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Sarah Vordran**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

Today is the day I watch the Gladiators,  
fighting at the Colosseum.  
The sights from the top row is an outstanding view,  
you can see everything,  
though it blurs with how quickly they move.  
The sounds are just glorious to me,  
the sounds of dying men,  
Make me move ever closer to watch them painfully die.  
Oh, such delight!  
The handcrafted weapons that lie before thy hands  
waiting to be covered in blood, excites me  
it's always a mystery  
of what weapon they will use and who is going to die next!  
It pains me to see slaves  
thrown in the ring not knowing any skills  
but watching them run in fear causes  
a giggle in the crowd.  
At the Colosseum, the Gladiators are up for a fight.  
The chances of living for victory or dying for loss.  
The cruelty of this is an interesting dilemma.  
To watch the losers squirming on the ground  
begging for mercy  
I'd say I'll be coming back every day!

*Vale Amicis Meis Epularer.*

*Goodbye, My Friends*



**Domonic Minichello**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

**Unrequited Love**  
**The Story of Echo and Narcissus: A Poem**

Dashing young hunter, alluring artist  
Cursed by Hera, and prophesied obscured  
Cant speak her own, cant see modest  
Unrequited love, the reason they failed

Wandering through the land, plunging hereupon  
Into love, while he looked on aimlessly  
With no voice of your own, it's hard to rat on  
Unrequited love, he moves on swiftly

Rejection is inevitable  
He is incapable of loving  
Most, but himself, are sent off in a hobble  
Unrequited love is cruelly breaking

**Natalia Vujas**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



## 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 34<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Inkspot* proves that the art of writing is alive and well in the schools of Medina County.

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

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

Rotary dedicates the *Inkspot* to the 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

