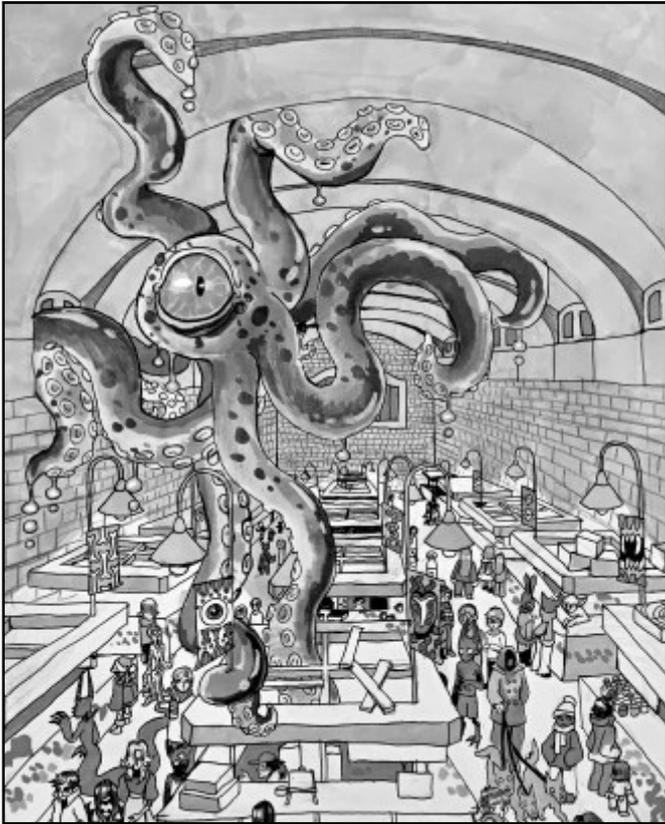


# Inkspot

Medina County Literary Review

Educational Service Center  
of Medina County  
Vol. 35, 2022-2023

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**Grace Karas**  
Medina High School  
Grade 11

Greetings! 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 continues to meet the levels of excellence our community has come to expect.

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 in Medina County are amazingly creative and thoroughly thought provoking. With amazing works from all ages and topics, the 35th 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



Grace Karas is a junior at Medina High School who has taken almost every art class offered. She is known for her playful artistic style and exceptional skill. Next year Grace will be in the AP Art Portfolio class and hopes to be a full-time artist someday.

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

While visiting the Westside Market on a field trip, I saw an octopus that fit neatly in a clear tub with all its tentacles visible through the plastic at one of the vendors' booths. I found the octopus to be the most exciting meat displayed at the market, and seeing the meat of so many animals made me think about what it would look like if one of the animals were alive. I imagined if the octopus was at a larger scale and had taken over the market. I aimed to create a fantastical scene with many people, developing an alternate reality of the market.

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

I like art a lot. I've been creating art since I was little. I've always had a place in the house to do art because my Mom makes art too, so she knows it is important. I have always been driven to create art, so I like doing it often. I like working with acrylic and digital art, and I like drawing the most. Also, I love to try new mediums.

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

I plan on being an artist in the future. I will find a way to do that, no matter what it takes. I like to play guitar. I have three cats, and I love them very much.

## Grades K-6

### So Long Snow

When I think about the winter I think of snuggling  
on the couch by a warm fireplace.

Drinking hot cocoa and taking in the calmness,  
as I know it will soon be over.

I look out my window and I see the flurries falling  
and just imagine the snowman I could make. I  
think of good names for it like Lilly, Mike, Alyssa,  
and Connor.

Then, when all of the flurries have fallen,  
I get bundled up to go out and make a snowman.

I name him Milo.

As the snow melts,

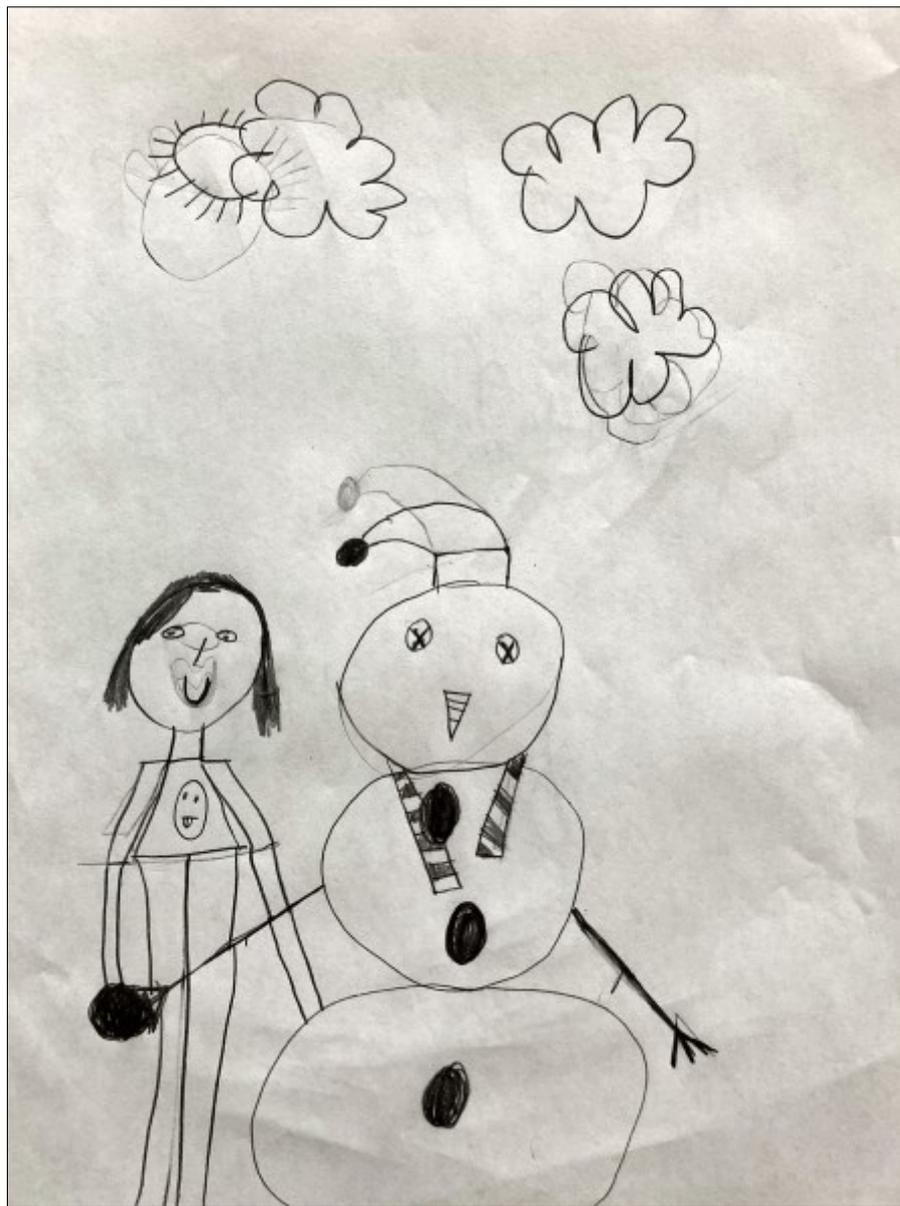
I say in a small voice,

“So long snow.”

**Charlotte Harris**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Kreeley Myers**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 2



**Eloise Lizewski**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3



**Aleissia Wagoner**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

## Summertime

Oh Sweet freedom!  
 Good times are now in reach  
 It's time to head to the beach  
 Jump in the back of a convertible car  
 Making memories near and far  
 Stick your toes in the sand  
 Run into the surf hand in hand  
 Let the waves carry you as they please  
 Splashing friends is such a tease  
 Build a sand castle on the shore  
 Grab a souvenir at the boardwalk store  
 Collect pretty shells in a pail  
 Send a postcard in the mail

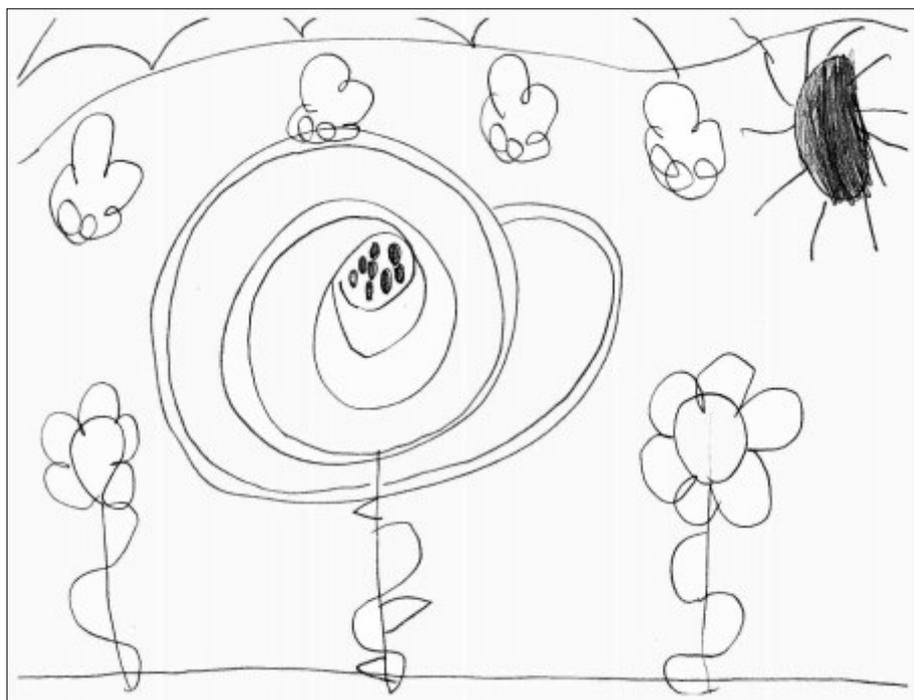
Back in town so much to do  
 Spend a day at the zoo  
 Festivals, fireworks, and so much more  
 Summertime in Wadsworth is never a bore

Watch a parade on Main Street  
 While you eat a Bidinger's treat  
 Scooping up candy sure is fun  
 Wadsworth Band is second to none  
 Socializing with neighbors and friends  
 I hope First Friday never ends

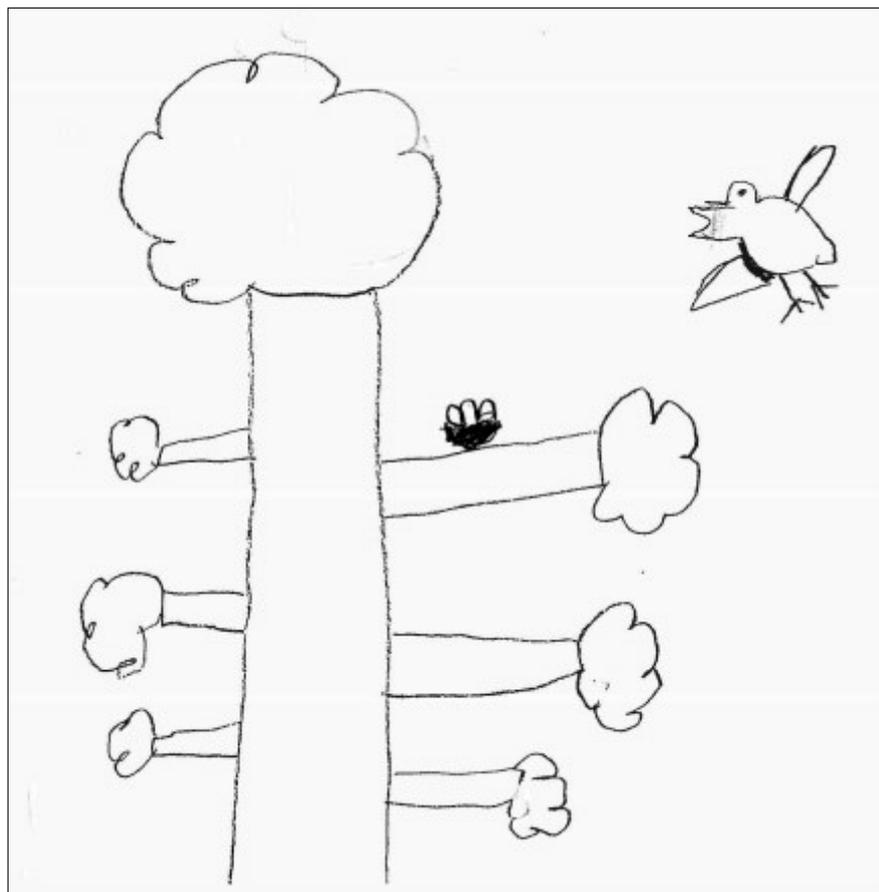
Or maybe pedal fast down my hill  
 Hair blowing it's such a thrill  
 Cookouts at a picnic table  
 Win a watermelon contest if you're able  
 Light a fire as the sun goes down  
 Gather for the best s'mores in town

Summertime is anything you want it to be  
 Lay back in the grass and read under a tree . . .  
 Just endless possibilities  
 Have fun, be safe, and do what you please!

**Brooke England**  
 Central Intermediate  
 Grade 6



**Penelope Shad**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1



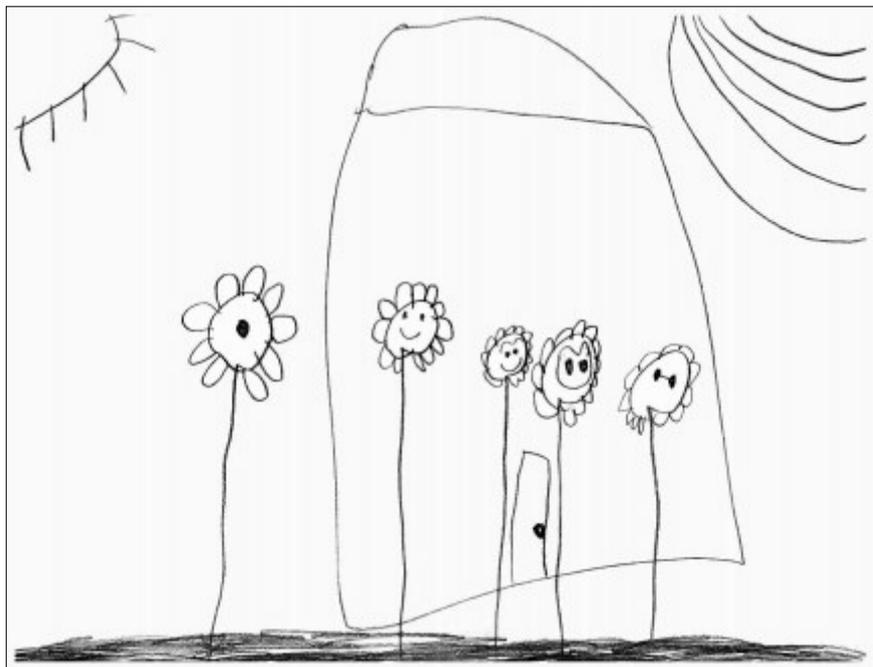
**Hunter Davis**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## The Little Seed

In the heart of a seed  
Buried deep, so deep  
A dear, little plant  
Lay fast asleep  
“Wake” said the sunshine,  
“And creep to the light,”  
“Wake” said the voice  
Of the raindrops bright.  
The little plant heard,  
And it rose to see  
What the beautiful  
Outside world might be.

**Adrianna Spithas**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

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**Kora Chaney**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

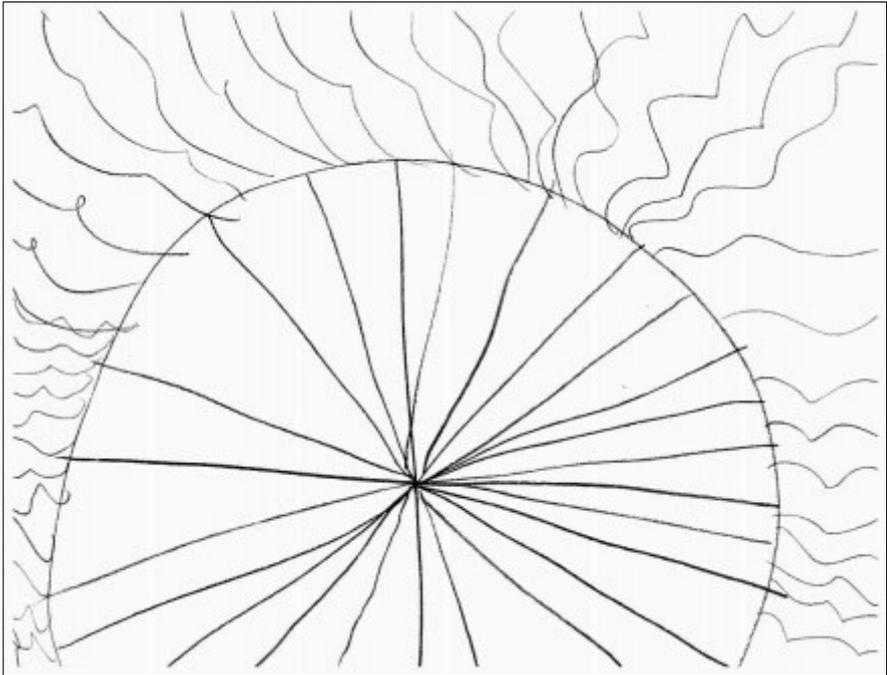
## Grassy Gilded Fields

Grassy gilded fields,  
mellow and yellow,  
lined with golden umber and Tiffany blue,  
that shines breathtaking light,  
a true reflection of the moon.

There are crickets that chirp,  
while the night is still young.  
Calmed and collected,  
taken under the bright wings that shine like the sun.

### Callie Titus

Central Intermediate  
Grade 5



**Kora Chaney**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

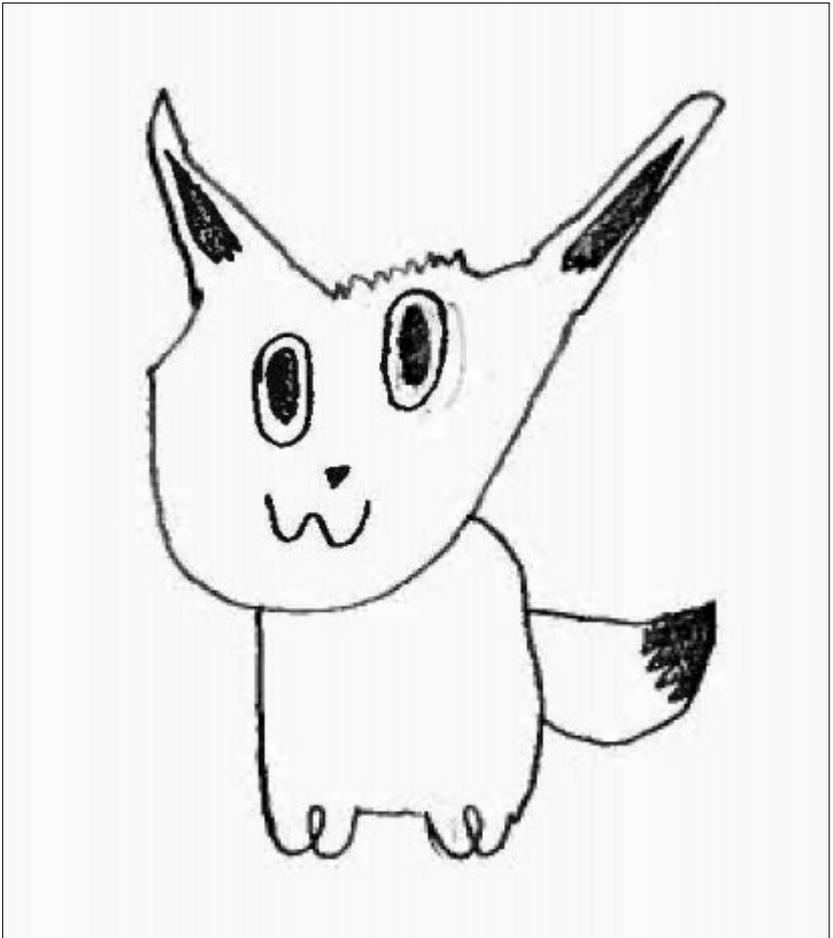
## The Setting Sun

The sun is setting.  
Pajamas of blue and pink.  
A blanket of clouds.

**Ava Lenc**

Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

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**Brooklynn Metzger**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

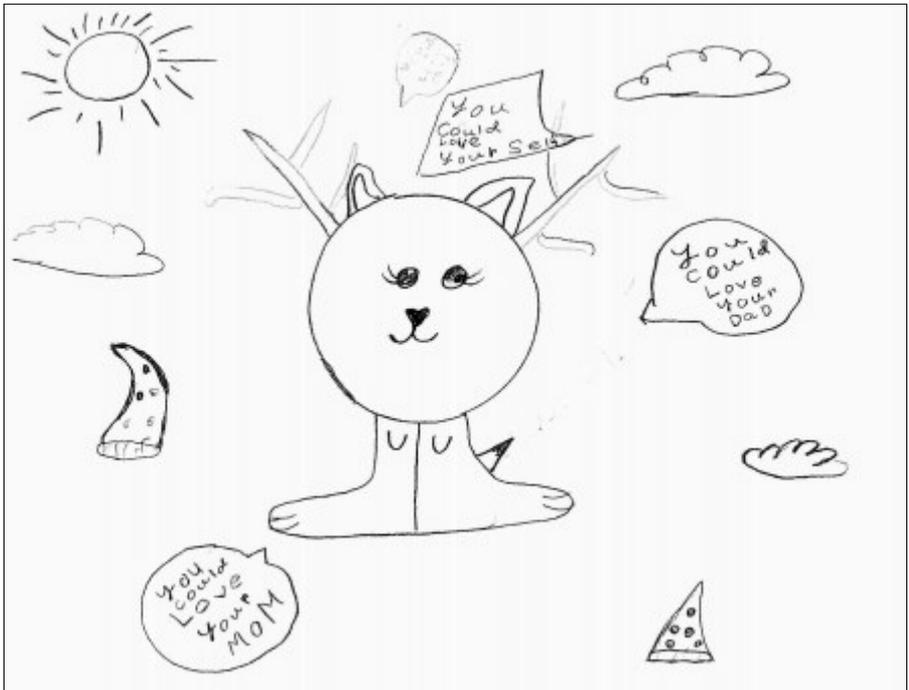
## All About Animals

Some animals have claws and some have flippers.  
Some bark and others meow.  
Some are tall and others are short.  
Some are cute and others are scary.  
Some are big and others are small.  
Some are eternal and others are nocturnal.  
Some live in water and some live on the surface.  
They are all important.

### Kenslie Weibel

Black River Elementary  
Grade 2

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### Anastasia Povroznik

Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## What If Animals Grew on Trees

What if animals grew on trees?  
For pets, I would have cats, dogs, and even bees.  
The tree would have an egg at the tip of the branch,  
and there would be an animal inside ready to hatch.

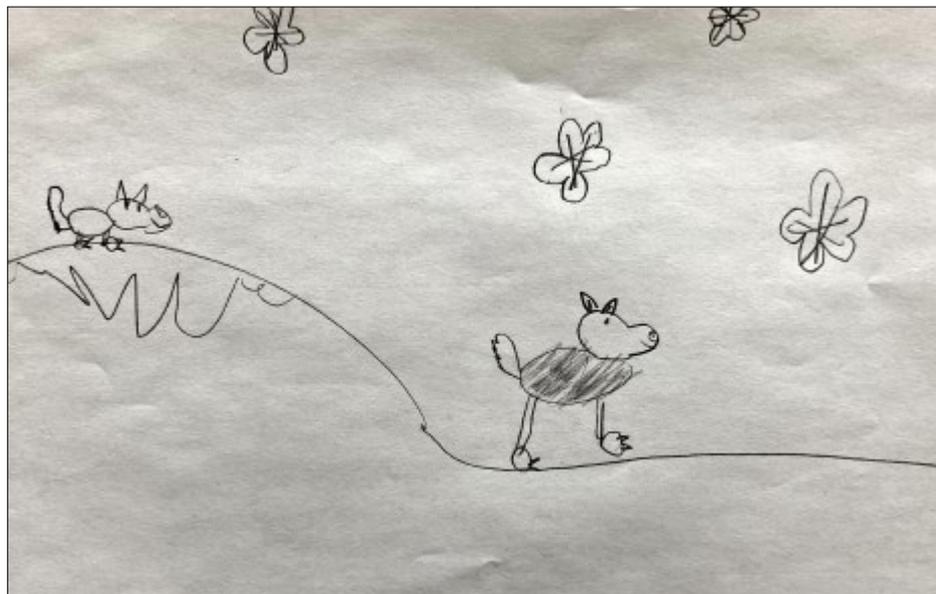
Maybe one day this plant will be real,  
and I will reveal it for that good feel.  
This plant will sell for over one hundred dollars,  
and my company will still get all the callers.

Everyone will want my special tree  
to fill the people's minds with glee.  
People will love their new pets that my tree will provide  
and if I didn't think of this, everyone would've cried.

Aw, man.  
My mom just said  
that this will never happen  
and it's all in my head.  
If this really will never happen,  
then who will be my callers?

It's all a mystery,  
and maybe it's all true.  
All the animals  
in colors of green and blue

**Iris Dierksheide**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Leah Chafin**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

## **Pets Grow on Trees**

Pets grow on trees  
I swear I'm not lying  
I saw it before  
In all of its glory

Cats grow in blossoms  
I saw one in bloom

Dogs burst from dandelions  
When they spread their seeds

Lizards' tails like branches  
Bursting free

Rodents grow from leaves  
They sleep, play, and run

Parrots sprout from where the trunk meets the leaves  
Almost at the top of the tree

Fish are grown in leaves that collect water  
That's where they thrive and splash like an otter

Snakes are grown where roots should be  
They squiggle and wiggle under the tree

Pets are grown  
I told you it's true  
The greenest fields  
Where the sun shines true

**Lexie Dawson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Stray Dog

Whines could be heard from valleys  
And people weren't bothered to check what could be creeping in  
the dark  
A dog hid behind the darkness  
And no one ever knew  
The dog could smell hotdogs from footsteps away  
But getting too tired to walk that far  
Eating scraps from those hotdogs were the best  
But the dirt traveling to his mouth felt worse than being alone  
His tongue scarred from licking water from the concrete  
And his ribs could be seen by anyone  
His fur what used to be tan is now black as coal  
And rocks stuck in the crevices of his paw pads  
The poor dog never knew that surviving would be this hard  
Without his mom

The dog breathed heavily one day  
Never knowing what would come  
Heavier and heavier the poor dog's breath got

The dog her echoing voices but he could tell it was a female  
His tail wagged when he felt pleasant fingers slide across his ribs

He finally woke up at  
At the comfort of a home.

**Isabella Ash**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Loralie St. Preuve**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## Chickens

The word chicken can be used for many different things  
 Like a person who springs at the slightest scary thing  
 Or maybe it's the animal who is rather odd  
 The chicken is perhaps the most flawed  
 Look at other creatures  
 The peacock has quite interesting features  
 And plenty of creatures are strong  
 One of my favorites is King Kong  
 But the chicken is still sadly a chicken.

### Gideon Barton

Central Intermediate  
 Grade 6

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## Monkeys

Monkeys are brown  
 Monkeys are loud  
 They spin all around

They dance and play all day  
 They are also big banana eaters too

They love be active, active  
 dance in their monkey pants  
 The monkeys are great animals  
 They are cuddly too

I love monkeys ohoh-ahah

### Declan Fincher

Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6



**Zack Sega**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

## Space

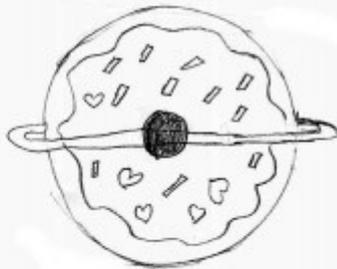
A black space  
A dark room  
Empty

Stars twinkle in the room  
Light  
Planets float  
A ring of ice and dust around one lonely planet  
Gasses engulf some planets  
Like the wrapper that covers a lollipop  
Black holes  
A lonely hole  
Sucks everything up  
The room is empty again  
A beautiful light  
Sun  
Don't look  
Eyes will burn  
Space  
What a wonderful place

**Alayna Nagy**

Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

Shoulda put a ring on It



**Vivienne Rescina**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Welcome to the Universe

Welcome to the universe  
It's as wonderful as diverse  
We sit here on this floating rock  
Trying to figure out who we want to be  
As time ticks around the clock  
Please don't go away  
Just listen to my plea

Yes, we may be tiny in the grand scheme of things  
Waiting here in this tiny galaxy  
Though, anything we do could impact everything too  
You could be an astronaut and traverse the universe of many  
lives  
You could even be an artist and create artwork that thrives  
Or you could be a police officer and help everyone around you  
Now, please tell me, what do you want to do

There may be more out there  
More than we could imagine  
But at any moment  
The fabric of reality could tear  
So, before that happens  
You can make a difference  
Who are you in this infinitesimal world of Earth

**Landon Johnson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Joanna Chen**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

## This World

When I wake up  
I see this beautiful world  
Everything's perfect  
No wars  
No guns  
No poverty  
No hunger  
All is peaceful  
No one to be afraid of  
Nothing to be stressed about  
Until I wake up for real

**Adrianna Spithas**

Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

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**Cataleya Grant**

Isham Elementary  
Grade 2

## Crystal Cave

There once was a cave different from the others,  
It glistened and glowed, some erie colors,  
With gems inside unlike any others.

The way they glowed, was magnificent in any way,  
With tunnels like funnels, and gems growing nonstop,  
The tunnels were filled way up to the top.

Who knows what else lurks in those caves,  
There could be anyone or anything,  
And did I see a monster wing?

By the wonders in the cave,  
I could go on whenever,  
And perhaps the gems will live forever.

### Hank Moats

Black River Elementary  
Grade 4

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### Vivienne Rescina

Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## I Look Into the Mirror

I look into the mirror and see a friendly deer.  
I look behind my back.  
It's on the towel rack.

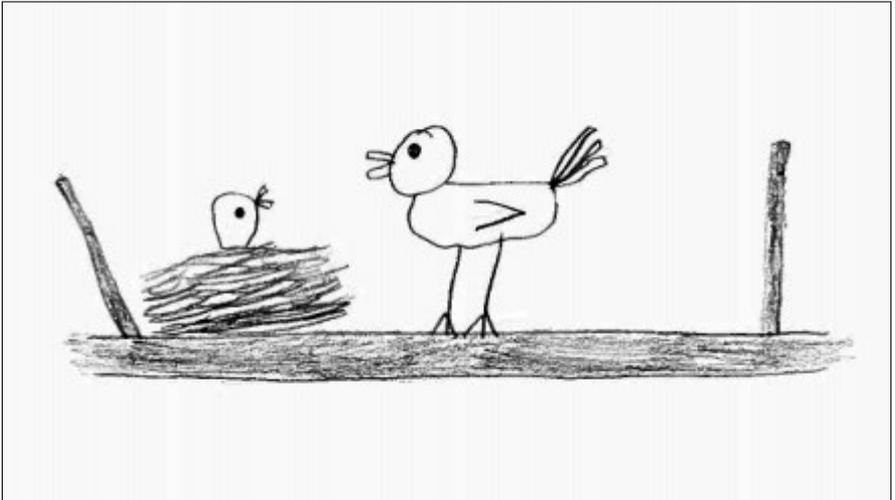
I look into my shadow and see a green meadow.  
The meadow looks at me.  
It turns into a tree.

I look into the light and see the first flight.  
Wilbur cannot see.  
So, he'd better flee.

I look into the window and see a pretty rainbow.  
The rainbow is getting weak.  
the rainbow starts to leak.  
It leaks into a stream.  
I wake up from this dream.

**Rylan Svenson**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

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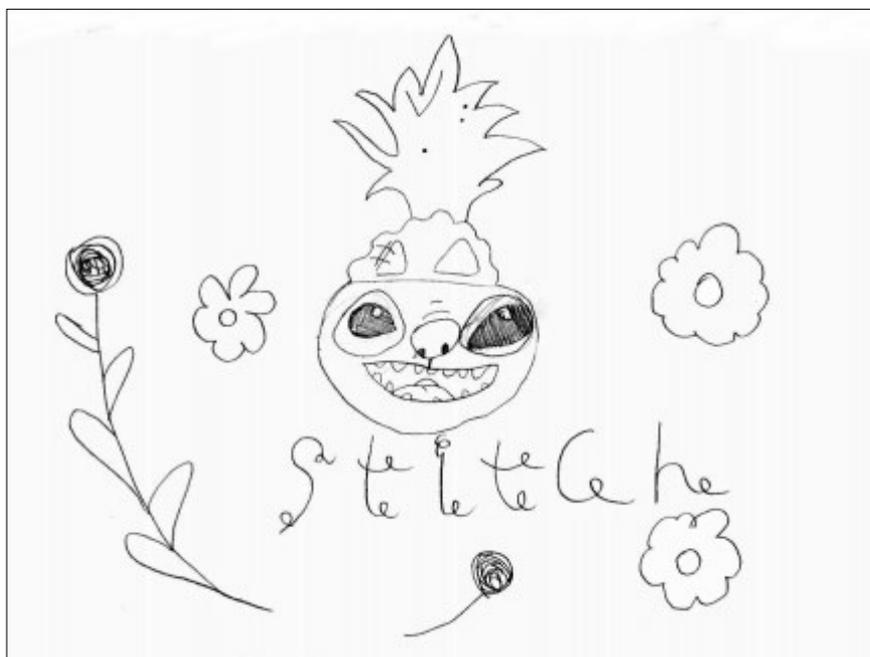
**Brooklynn Metzger**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Dreaming

I am a bird.  
I touch the clouds.  
I have wings that spread across the sky in the sunrise.  
I can fly to the highest mountain  
Until I wake up and see that I am just dreaming.

**Ashley Renner**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 5

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**Charlotte Lowe**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Unknowning

If only they could hear what I hear  
See what I have seen  
But they are unknowing

Boom, thunder rumbles faraway  
Swish, a bird flies swiftly  
Crunch, a deer moves through undergrowth  
But you don't hear me

A flash of red, a Cardinal  
Blue and purple, delicious berries  
White and brown, a soaring eagle  
But you don't see me

If only they could hear what I hear  
See what I have seen  
But they are unknowing

When I am here I am free  
I can roam and climb a tree  
I stalk silently my prey  
At last it sees me

A buck, proud and tall  
Strong as a brick wall  
Back I must shrink, to not be seen  
As it sees me, it winks

If only they could hear what I hear  
See what I have seen  
But they are unknowing

As I roam around, soft powder covers the ground  
And a frozen river I found  
Past me goes icy floes  
Along the river it goes and goes

Though they may be unknowing  
They could still learn  
But time is running out  
My place of freedom is shrinking  
And I'm the only one who can see.

**Jack Majka**  
Brunswick Middle  
Grade 6

## Never

Will we go beyond  
No  
But will it stop  
Not ever  
It will continue until we drop  
Forever  
It is yearning to us *surrender*  
But will we do that  
No never  
But shall we go on  
Never  
We are stuck in a void, the inevitable endeavor  
Can we get out  
No  
A plentiful bouquet of dismal and doubt  
Indeed  
The fear has been planted as a seed  
The seed will grow and grow  
Will it stop  
No  
Never ever ever  
To get out is to seek the treasure  
Now our unceasing tears are strewn about  
But come to consider  
Never say never

**Ava Hamm**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Leena Milano**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

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### Falling In Thoughts

I'm drowning in my thoughts,  
I'm floating in the rapids,  
Does anyone else smell burning,  
It feels like acid.

I fell into my thoughts,  
Deeper than a whale,  
But I fear not,  
Cause I throw up my sail,

A dreamy state,  
I fall into deep slumber,  
Turning and tossing and finally,  
Imagining how I was once deep under.

**Cody Cassidy**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4

## Poetry

What will I write about?  
 It could take all year to find out  
 I could write about a buzzing bee,  
 the tall white birch, or even a car zooming past me.

I could write a poem about a massive fright  
 which probably is too spooky to write about tonight.

I got an idea, but that won't work.  
 I've been thinking so long I've gone berserk.

I will wake up in the morning with a fresh mind  
 so I can poeTRY some more ideas.

### Nick Sherrer

Central Intermediate  
 Grade 6

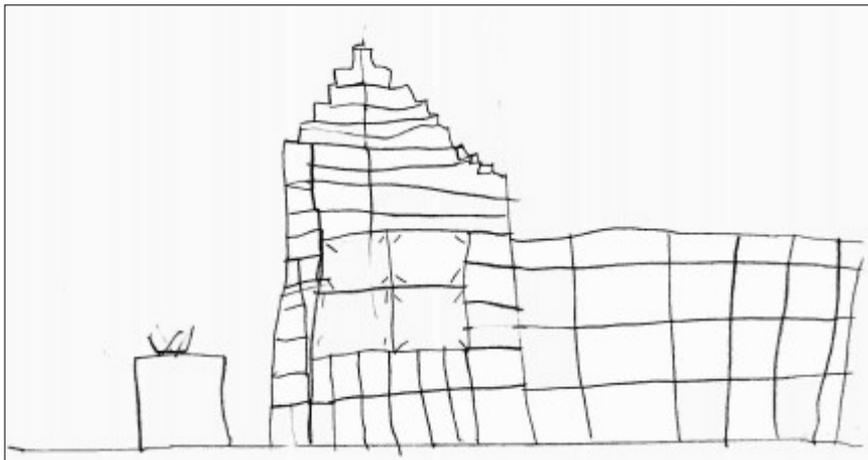
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## Can't Think

I can't think of anything to put on here  
 no good ideas are coming near  
 fruits? They are in poems all the time  
 besides, who wants a poem about limes?  
 Oh, shoot, I'm running out of time!  
 I can't think of anything to rhyme  
 I need to make a poem, but don't have enough time,  
 Oh, I've been writing a poem this whole time!

### Joel Martin

Central Intermediate  
 Grade 6



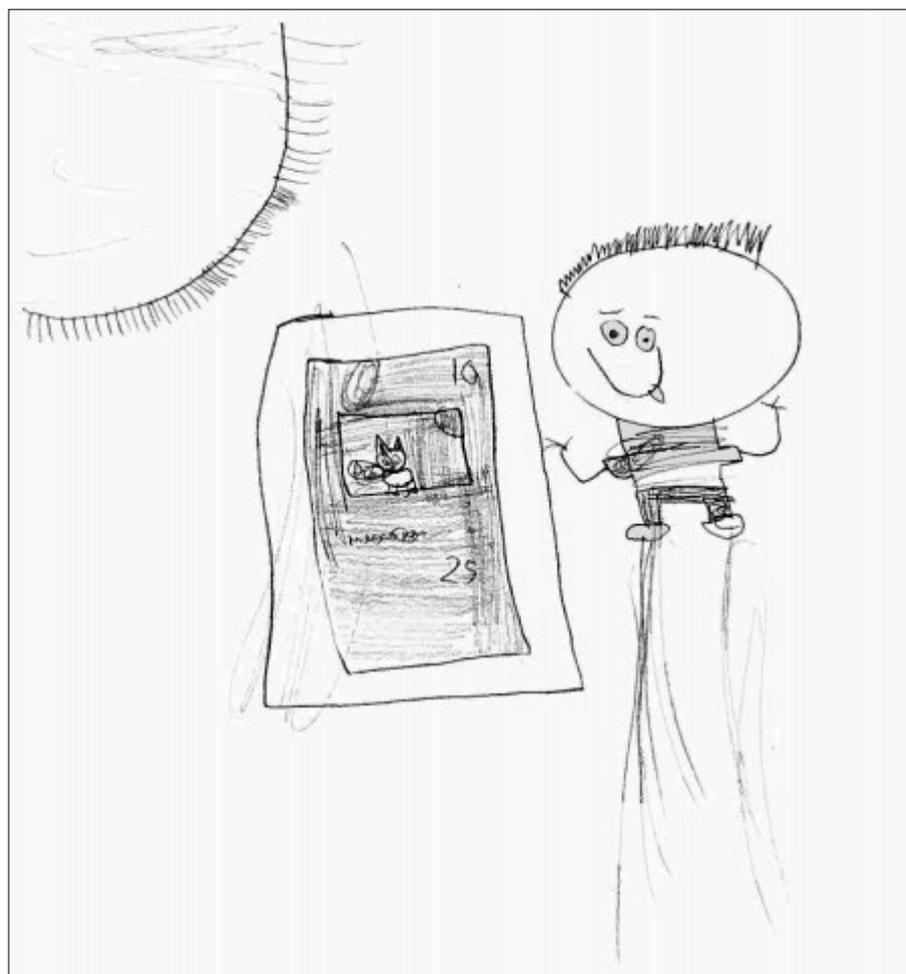
**Carter Gaub**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

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### The Pencil

Imagine that pencil in the hallway on the floor is you  
 Getting stepped on and kicked around and your lead stolen too  
 You want to get up and tell the kids to stop  
 But you can't because you think your voice is too small  
 Well it's not, so stand up for yourself because you are not that  
 pencil laying hurt on that floor  
 For you, you are a human being  
 You have feelings  
 So don't let the kids step all over you and kick you around  
 Don't let them steal your lead for that lead is your life  
 Stand up for yourself  
 You have a voice  
 So use it to change the world  
 It's all your choice

**Farah Gant**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Jacob Wolfe**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Fishhook

When reading a book  
It can be like a fishhook  
A hook that comes out of nowhere  
Just to grab you and not let go

You go in your nook  
To soon get hooked  
Into a whole new world that took you away from what life really  
was

It took you away to give you a look  
A look on how our world is presented  
You go so far into the hook that you start to overlook that it was  
all just a big  
Fishhook

**Claire Shipley**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

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## School

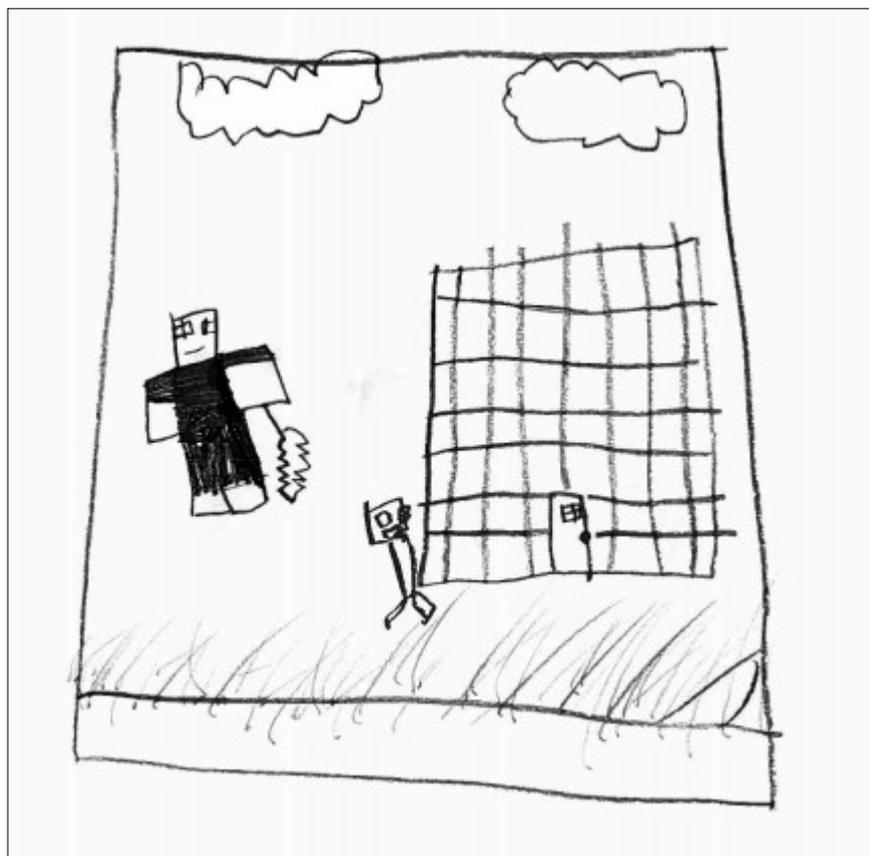
School can feel cruel  
And I'd prefer to go to the pool.

They say it's cool but it's really not  
Like when summer is hot.

All I do is learn and learn with my brain confused.  
Lunch is the only place where my brain can defuse.

Now I would complain all day  
But lucky for me it's Saturday.

**Hampton Davis**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Chase Boyer**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## My School Is a Castle

My school is a castle,  
But it's very far away,  
And every morning when I wake, It's quite a hassle.  
The principle is a king, the assistant a queen,  
But no one is on a lower level,  
For everyone is clean.  
The auditorium is a circus,  
Where ringleaders ride on unicycles,  
With their lions in a cage, and a clown named Marcus.  
The cafeteria is a restaurant, with knights and swords,  
Who serves us food from the daily lunch board.

The staircase is a giant spiral,  
Where people make videos,  
And the long long ascend makes them go viral.  
The gym room is as big as a house,  
Where after school hours no ones there,  
Not even a mouse.  
The humongous library has never ending stories,  
Where kids search among for hours,  
For their favorite category.

The playground outside might as well be a zoo,  
Where kids from this school,  
Might lose their shoe.  
The music room has endless tunes,  
Where the choir is practicing the daily warm-up,  
Their voices higher than a balloon.  
The art room has colors galore,  
Where artists of the school gather to share ideas,  
And even some paint spills all over the floor.

But the most important room of all, is my homeroom.  
Room eleven is my favorite, with the smart 6th graders,  
Doing all their work, on Google Classroom.

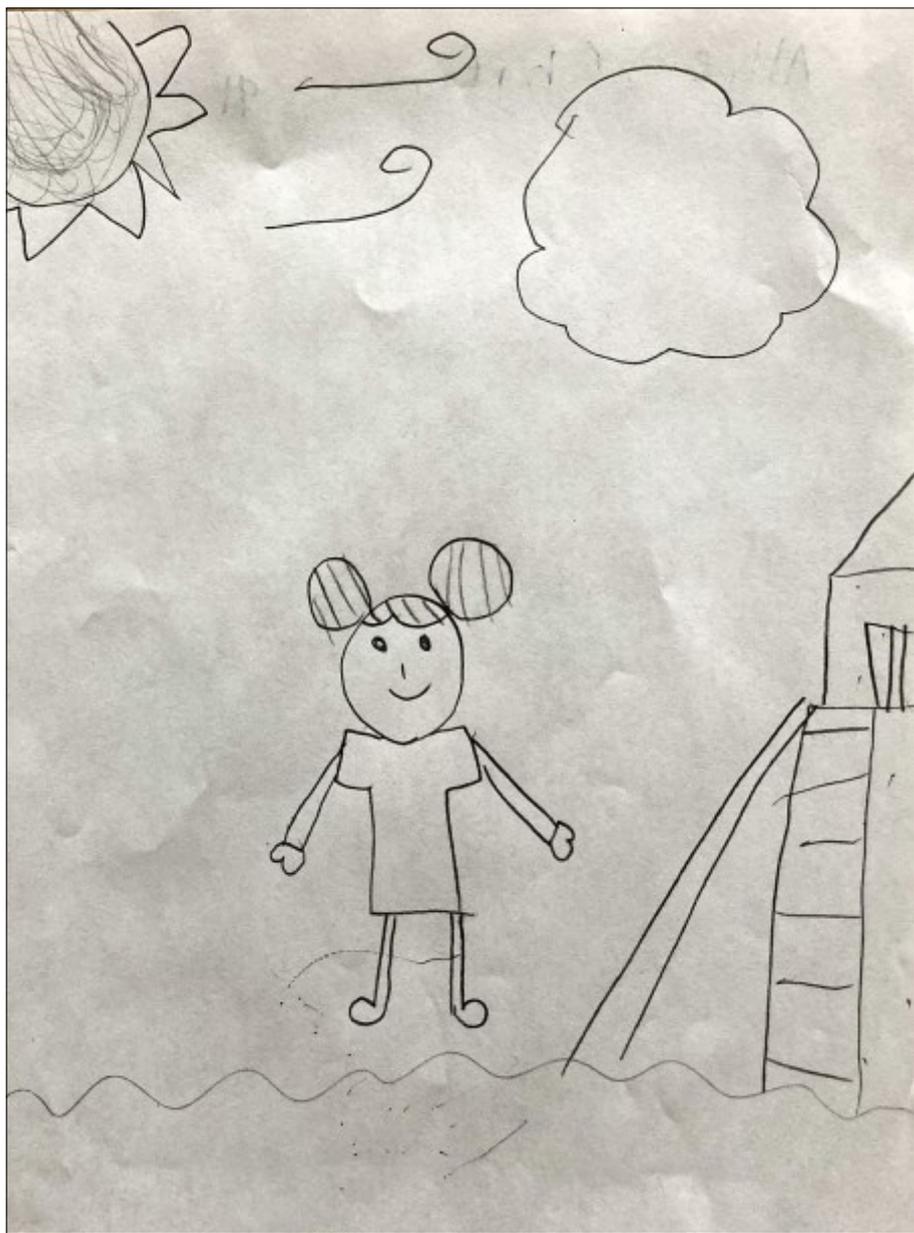
**Cassi Gorog**

Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

### **The Bell I Sell**

The bell I sell is actually fake!  
It doesn't ring, vibrate, or quake.  
But it creaks and whines  
While my family dines  
It is rusty and had a big crack  
The previous owner won't take it back!  
So this fake bell  
I'll have to sell.  
But really, I won't miss it at all  
When you see it, you don't go, "Oooh, Aaaaw!"  
Instead, you shout and scream and run away  
And hope to see another day . . .  
I sit outside and and wait to sell  
That horrible, horrible bell  
Here comes a bully and he says,  
"That's a bad bell! Ew . . . Farewell!"  
And jumps into a nearby well.  
YAY!  
I never liked that dude anyway  
He was my enemy . . .  
So I might keep this bell  
And make it my frenemy . . .

**Sam Lindon**  
Northrop Elementary  
Grade 5



**Allie Chafin**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 1

## Snow to Sun

Snow outside on the window  
Luggage on my bed almost packed  
Dark black car is now in front of my apartment  
Planes in the skies roaring

Waiting for the ding to board  
The ding arrives and I board  
Seatbelts click clack  
Hours ahead to sleep and read and watch  
Landing is a fumble to rumble

We get off and go to baggage claim  
I look outside  
And it is so bright it hurts my eyes  
The sun couldn't be happier than today

**Kendall Imes**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6



**Kenna Tannert**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

### **Sandwich: A Love Story**

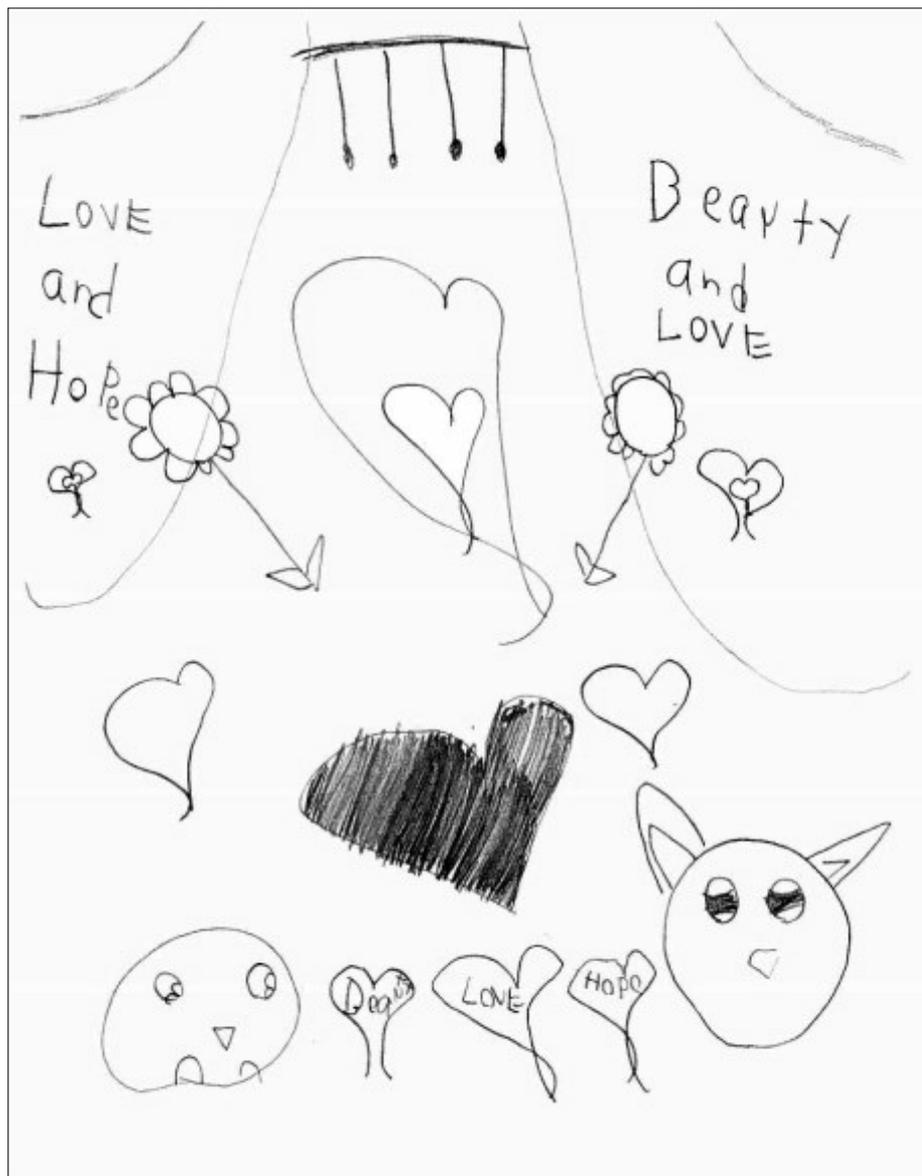
As I stare at my sandwich my mouth begins to water,  
The different ingredients ooze from the sides.  
I smell the turkey, the lettuce, and the bacon.  
My irises form into hearts as the waiter asks if I would like  
anything else.  
My mom stares at me, signaling for me to respond but I am  
caught in a trance.

I lift the sandwich, to see a pool of grease stamped on the plate.  
Once I calculate the angle of my first bite,  
I am in love.

Flavor rushes into my taste buds,  
Bite after bite the masterpiece shrinks until nothing is left.  
I leave no crumbs on my platter.  
I look around to see everybody looking in my direction, dazed.

I give the people a wide grin and leave the restaurant, satisfied.

**Brooklynn Bemiller**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Abby Phelps**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Seasons of Friendships

Friendships are like seasons that come and go

Some being your favorite and some you wish you could just let go

Summer being the one that brings you joy and happiness but can bring the risk of getting burnt

Winter being the one that always brings the cheers and excitement but can be a bit bitter

Spring being the one that sometimes rains on your parade but never fails to bring a little sunshine

And fall my favorite, if you fall we fall together kind of friend, the one you can always Harvest memories with

**Sophia McGinty**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

### **When the End Is Near**

I know it was coming sadly it's true,  
I know it was coming because of you,

Some people let go,  
And the rest say no,

Some people say why,  
Some people say goodbye,

Some people cry,  
Some want to die,

They fall in grief and feel worthless,  
But I know your purpose,

So when the end is near,  
Don't hide in fear,  
Let go of the past,  
Because the present is here.

**Kennedy Primeau**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4



**Rowan Wright**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4

## The Worst Feeling Yet!

The smell of sunrise,  
Meant time to wake up,  
I sprang out of bed,  
And put on some makeup,

I rushed down the stairs,  
And put on my shoes,  
Then ran outside,  
With nothing to lose,

I can't tell what's going on,  
But my heart has stopped,  
My eyes well up with tears,  
As my stomach dropped,

My body quivers,  
As the last car door shut,  
My nose starts to sting,  
My tears fall like a river.

All I see is a girl waving back at me,  
I will never see her again,  
I mutter to myself,  
And I never have and I am 10.

**Eleanor Ramsey**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4

## Nature's Calling

Bloom, Blossom, Bloom, Blossom,  
Flowers grow and grow,  
They don't need a show,  
They just grow once they know,  
And are sowed,

Bloom, Blossom, Bloom, Blossom,  
I know they need groomed,  
To be bloomed,  
She can't meet her doom,  
I won't leave her tomb,

Bloom, Blossom, Bloom, Blossom,  
Please give her back to me,  
So I can shout with glee,  
This big wise old tree,  
Can you set her free,

Bloom, Blossom, Bloom, Blossom,  
But now you're dying,  
And I can't stop crying,  
Friends are always lying,  
I hope you know I'm trying,

Bloom, Blossom, Bloom, Blossom,  
I have tried to cope,  
I guess I'll mope,  
I'm in a slope,  
There's no sign of hope.

**Riley Meffley**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4

## The Messenger

As you see me in the night, your dream is surely strong.

As you tell your mother about me, she's going to prove you wrong.

I didn't come from earth you see, it's you my child, who created me.

I watch you grow each and everyday

You continue to stick by me when conditions are gray

After any time at see you at your best,

I report back to your father in Heaven, where he's been put to rest.

I can say he's extremely proud of you so up high,

And laughs every time you stick your fingers in grandma's apple pie.

He wants you to move on from mourning,

And fabricate a new life, one better, and rewarding.

**Brooklynn Bemiller**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Greyson Reynolds**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5

## From Rage to Acceptance

Life is a constant game,  
Some predators hide, while others appear out in the open,  
A toxic waste infecting you.  
Life throws rocks at your window, dead of the night, when sleep  
is needed.  
Stress will completely compress my emotions, careless whispers  
from my brain  
No way to refrain.  
Is it me? The problem?

The obstacle course finally reaching the highest level?  
Or maybe it's my atmosphere.

The repetitive tears, flowing down my face, the taste of salt be-  
coming a travesty  
As I change and realize my mistakes, it is then I ponder on the  
people at stake.

My family, my friends,  
Is it those I have been pushing away?

The ones that make me happy,  
The ones that heal my pain?  
So now is my final chance.

If I could, I would have said this, far more in advance.  
I am happy.  
No one can tell me otherwise.  
Not here, not now.

I'm not open for compromise.

**Brooklynn Bemiller**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Caught in Life

I tend to feel trapped with no place to go,  
When I hit the brick wall, and fall so low.  
I feel as though I'll float away,  
Like a balloon on a windy day.  
When I feel a sense of overwhelm,  
It's like I'm a knight in battle without a helm.  
When life gets cold, and covered in frost,  
I seem to wander in fear like a child that's lost.  
When there's big problems I can't comprehend,  
My straight thinking loosely reaches its end.  
When I'm stuck in this mood, it feels like forever,  
But, internally I want to yell "NEVER".  
In the end I realize I'm just . . .  
Caught In Life

### Teaghan McCurry

Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



### Griffin Dunwald

Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

## **The Life We Live**

What is life?  
The age old question  
Life is like the universe  
Full of mysteries that never end  
We are the stars in this strange place  
Each shining in our own way  
States and towns are galaxies  
Formed of planets that are our homes and streets

Life is like the ocean  
Vast and deep  
With many things left pondered  
Never fully understood  
Oh yes, we can try  
But we can never fully identify  
The enigma that is life

There is no way to fully comprehend  
This life we live  
But until we can  
Live today and tomorrow  
And all the days after that  
Because though this life we live is a mystery  
Don't question  
Just be

**Leila Hughes**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Layers of a Life

Would you say that a rotting tree with a missing limb is beautiful?  
In a way, I say, it is! It truly is!  
Have you ever wondered how that tree got to be where it is?  
What was the story of its journey?

Did the seed float through the wind,  
Or cling to the coat of an animal?  
Did it travel in the hands of a loving grandma,  
Or in the beak of a beautiful bluebird?

These are all questions that may never be answered.  
The answers and secrets are all folded inside the tree's ringed  
layers of bark,  
Like the ingredients being folded into cake batter.  
We are the spatula, going round and round,  
Affecting the world around us with every stir  
And these things cannot be undone or separated.

How does the paper, made of that same strong maple tree limb,  
End up on a street in New York?  
Crumpled and dirty with a Nike shoe print in the middle,  
A woman's size 6, no 7.

How does the paper make its way into a recycling bin?  
Does a stranger of a rare beauty called kindness pick it up?  
Do children recycle it for a school job or project?

No matter how the paper gets there,  
What happens when a recycling truck comes rumbling to pick it  
up?  
Does it embark on another trip to a factory or facility?  
How will this same tree,  
Now a crumpled and dirty piece of paper with a Nike shoe print in  
the middle,  
Live its life to its fullest potential?

Maybe it will become something new entirely,  
Like a cardboard box—wait, no, a space ship.  
It travels throughout an exciting new galaxy,  
A young boy's living room.

*(Continued on page 54)*

*(Continued from page 53)*

It comforts that snotty-nosed little kid,  
More than new toys ever could;  
By being beat up, drawn on, scratched, and cut.  
It knows that the boy, with an intelligent mind,  
Loves it more than anything in the world.

Until one day, when the cardboard box, now worn and tired,  
Comes down from the attic,  
Carried in the loving arms of the not-so-young boy  
And into the recycling bin once more.

It is left inside the container until the familiar sound of  
A rumbling recycling truck comes again.  
Soon after, a taxi comes to take away the not-so-young boy.  
He is about to live the dream that the cardboard box inspired.

That box was the thing to ignite a fire  
Of creativity and curiosity inside the boy,  
Now known as an astronaut,  
Who may someday take a journey to walk on the moon.

Although this was once just a limb from a tree that nobody cared  
about,  
Maybe it was something more.  
Maybe it was a true example of real beauty.  
Maybe we, the spatula, need to stop worrying about baking the  
perfect cake.  
Maybe, just maybe.

In a way, we are like the tree, with many layers and stories  
hidden within.  
Some are full of happiness and kindness.  
Some are filled with sorrow and anger.  
Those stories are what make us whole.  
They tell the journey of a life, hopefully well lived.

**Kendall Elchico**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## **If You Feel the Need to Fly**

Some want to fly  
Others don't know why

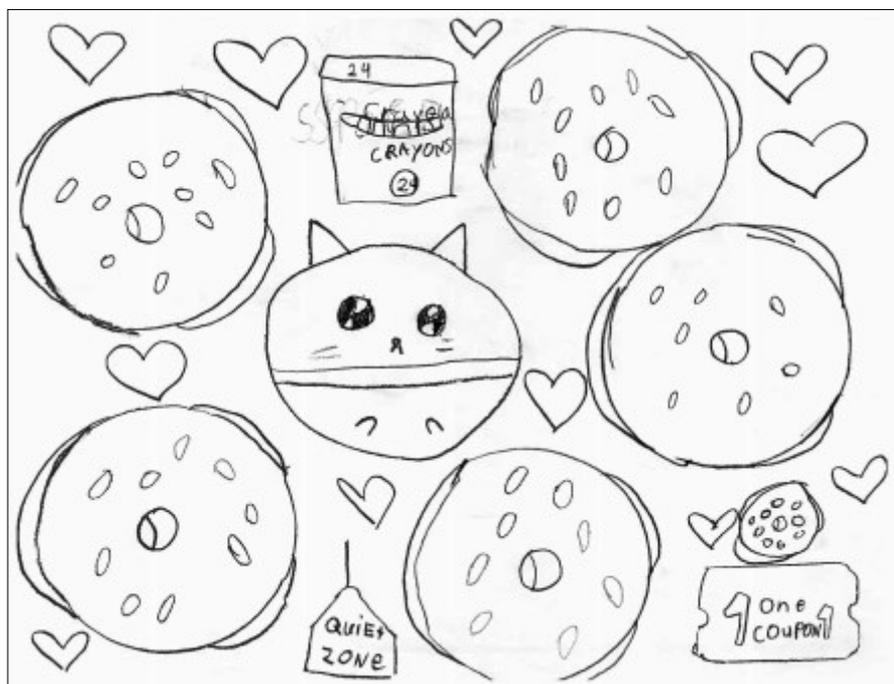
It leaves a scar behind  
That others can't decline  
It breaks people's hearts  
Until it forms into parts

Others may think it was their fault  
When it may have been from assault

People don't know how you feel if you aren't there  
They may think you just don't care  
But maybe you do secretly, just up in the air

Either way, do what you want, no matter how many it upsets  
But just know, it all leaves regrets  
That you may never forget.

**Zoe Jackow**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Leena Milano**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## **The Miracle of Slime**

The life of an 11 year old is rough,  
Just in one day I have tests, basketball, dance, and drama with  
friends,  
I am feeling stressed and I have had enough,  
Only with slime, my anxiety ends.

I get out the activator and glue,  
Next I put in my glitter and foam beads,  
Then to top it off, I add in my favorite shade of blue,  
Finally, I mix it until it meets my stressful needs.

Now I have my slime to stretch and squeeze,  
It is colorful and fluffy and delightful to touch,  
I feel my anxiety reduce by several degrees,  
My mood has improved ever so much.

I wonder why parents don't have slime,  
Maybe they don't have time.

**Delaney Sinkovitz**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Caleb Romano**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1



**Kane Patterson**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 4

### **Sticky Goo in My Good Pair of Blue Shoes**

The royal blue shoe was with a big crew  
Until the shoe stepped in sticky green goo,  
Now the royal blue shoe was stuck in  
Oozing green gross goo.

The good shoe was stuck in great big muck,  
Nobody had a cup of green tea,  
Nobody had dead sea debris,  
Marie had no nobody to see.

Marie had no mercy,  
With green goo stuck on her good blue shoe,  
Within a good long minute,  
Marie had shaken,  
Shaken awake Shall I say.

It was all a second long dream,  
Of gross green goo  
On her brand new pair of blue shoes.

**Ava Gribble**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Virginia Lingenfelter**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## My Grandma

She's my grandma  
 She makes cookies  
 She makes hot chocolate  
 She gives me hugs  
 She even gives me dill pickles  
 Sometimes she gets donuts  
 She even gave me a friend  
 She has a Tesla for fun rides  
 She is the best at homemade food  
 She gives me Mcdonald's and Chipotle  
 She is the best because she does so much for me

**James Miller**  
 Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6

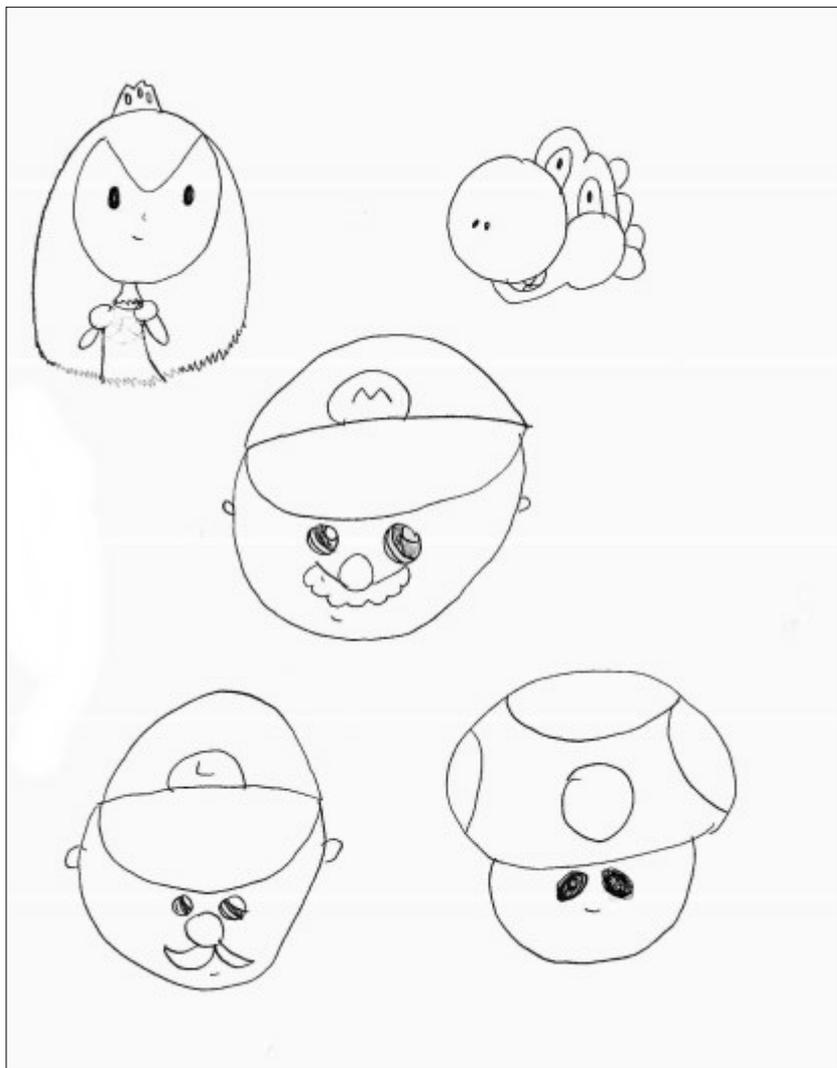
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## It's Probably My Grams

My Grams is  
 Special . . . my cup of tea!  
 When she gently places her arms around me  
 I can plainly see all the love in her heart there for  
 me!  
 She gives me lots of hugs and so much love!  
 Buys me gifts and all of the above!

If you see a crazy lady walking around town  
 Just know it's probably my Grams  
 My Grams is great, but not at playing cards.  
 She always tries to win, but doesn't get very far!  
 All though she's not that great at cards  
 She still wins at being my number one Grams.

**Briana Yannitelli**  
 Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6



**Charlotte Lowe**  
Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1



**Jannah Faysal**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5

## My Grandparents

My Grandpa is  
 As brave as a lion,  
 As strong as a gorilla,  
 As quiet as a mouse,  
 As kind as a capybara.

My Grandma is,  
 As brave as a honey badger,  
 As strong as a grizzly bear.  
 As quiet as a bunny,  
 As kind as a bird.

**Gianna Bucceri**

Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6

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## Yes It's My Grandparents

Yes it is my grandpa who lets me do more,  
 Yes, it is my grandpa who is more than just a  
 friend,  
 He lets us do things no one could imagine,  
 He is also a really good mathematician,  
 Yes, it's my grandpa who loves me more!

Yes, it's my grandma who really loves to sew,  
 Yes, it's my grandma who really loves to cook,  
 Yes, it's my grandma who is really good at LA,  
 Yes, it's my grandma who loves me more!

When you put us together,  
 Then you will see,  
 That we're just one big old happy family!

**Eva Sanders**

Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6



**Abby Vinson**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5



**Brynn Hall**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5

## Family

My grandpa-  
As strong as a lion  
As kind as a sheep  
As happy as a rainbow  
As smart as a computer  
As loving as a teddy bear  
As brilliant as a celebrity

My sister-  
My sister is loving  
My sister is kind  
My sister can light the whole room  
My sister has a big smile

My Dad-  
My Dad is amazing  
My Dad is hard working  
My Dad is loving  
My Dad is funny

My Mom-  
My Mom is the best  
My Mom makes the best food  
My Mom always cares about me  
My Mom goes shopping with me

My Grandma-  
My Grandma is an amazing baker  
My Grandma is always loving  
My Grandma is always helping me

You guys are amazing-  
Love you!

**Ellia Usinski**  
Claggett Middle  
Grade 6



**Hannah Dang**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5

### **My Mom**

She helps me a lot  
She cares for me  
She helps me save up for something I want  
Sometimes she tucks me in at night  
She is as intelligent as Albert Einstein  
She is as cuddly as a big bear  
She makes lots of friends too

**Jonathan Lambillotte**

Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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### **My Mom**

My mom is  
A patch of sunflowers in the morning  
A cupcake sweeter than the sun  
A star in the sky

My mom is  
As brave as a bear  
As strong as a cheetah  
As patient as an owl  
As curious as a monkey

**Courtney Snow**

Claggett Middle  
Grade 6



**Isabella Maust**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5

## Cheesy Love

When I first met you  
I was in love  
I enjoyed the view  
You are the only thing I think of

You're always on my mind  
You're just so beautiful to me  
The way you are so kind  
You are the only person I can see

I always talk about you  
I hope we last forever  
My feelings for you are true  
I love when we're together

### Ashlee Carpenter

Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

## Cooking

Cooking is my hobby  
Too much oil is way too sloppy  
Too much water is way too soggy  
Don't add too much sugar or you'll be sorry  
If not you'll be on the potty, don't be a bad cook or you'll be sorry  
Hot stove and hot pans, splatting oil on burning pans open oven  
There is open space over there, hurry  
Not any time oil is burning on a pan  
Hurry up hurry up, don't be late  
Mad people in chairs

### Eva Sanders

Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

\*This is made to look like a cooking pot on a stove



**Eleanor Ramsey**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4

### **Moldy Cheese!**

Cheese on the ground  
 Step around, step around.  
 If you look at it you will throw up,  
 No one dares to pick it up.  
 It sits there, growing old  
 'Till it's nothing but mold . . .

**Sam Lindon**  
 Northrop Elementary  
 Grade 5

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### **(Untitled)**

I thought it was funny  
 When you said, "Make it rain!" as in money . . .  
 But I didn't know at all,  
 That coins **HURT** when they fall.

**Sam Lindon**  
 Northrop Elementary  
 Grade 5

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### **Riding My Bike**

As the blazing blinding beautiful sun shines  
 I think it's time  
 To ride my bike

As I ride down the sidewalk  
 The pedals move up and down  
 And side to side with my feet like a frog  
 The tires make a deep dark angry growl  
 My tires are an angry dog

**Jack Blinn**  
 Claggett Middle  
 Grade 6

## Not a Sports Kid

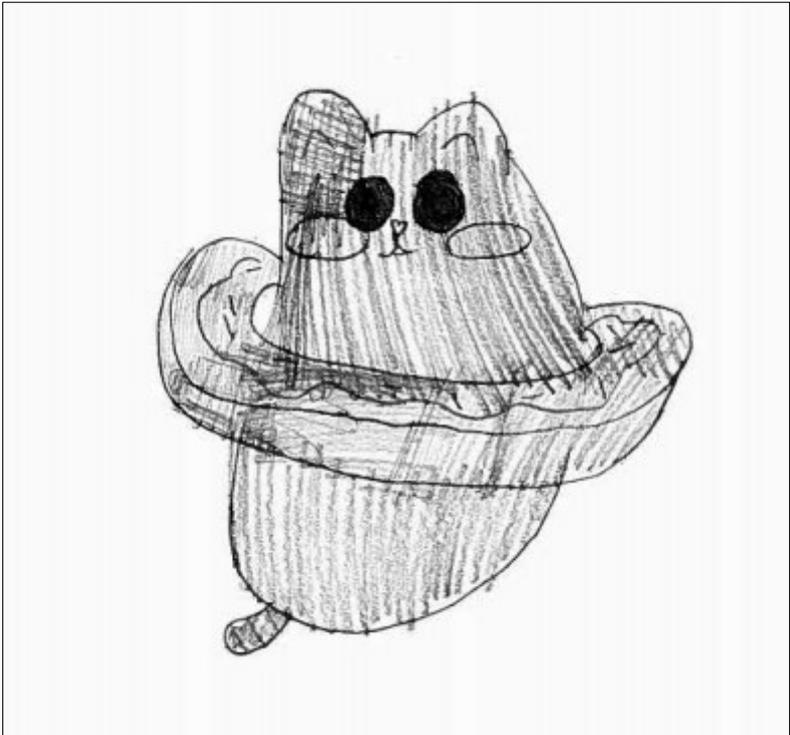
I really don't like sports you see  
They're really not my thing  
If I play soccer I'll fall and hit my knee  
Or the ball will hit my ear  
And it will start to ring

Sports are not my favorite  
They're like a dull pencil  
You still can write with them  
But it isn't preferential

**Jack Blinn**

Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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**Charlotte Lowe**

Buckeye Primary  
Grade 1

## Laptop

I'm coming home from a long day,  
I know exactly what I'm going to play.  
Tap tap tap goes the keys,  
Many things are happening on the screen.  
It's like a painted picture,  
A colorful abstract mixture.  
Click click click goes the mouse,  
I will turn the volume down so it's not too loud.

### Jack Blinn

Claggett Middle  
Grade 6

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## My Brother and His Trumpet

My brother has a trumpet,  
it's like a shiny new telephone.  
Or a golden treasure,  
lying in a chest.  
When he toots his horn,  
that terrific instrument plays clear notes.  
But it is a terrifying tyrannosaurus rex,  
I can hear the noise from my room.  
Sometimes I want to use ten teal pillows,  
to cover my two ears.  
But that's my bother and that terrific, tooting, trumpet of his.

### Rania Papakonstantopoulos

Waite Elementary  
Grade 5

### **Cheer Kid**

I am the pom poms I hold  
I am the yell in my voice  
I cheer with the crowd  
And make a lot of noise  
My shoes are as white as a cloud  
And I stand there proud

Hoping for victory  
It's a mystery  
I cheer louder  
For the crowd to be flattered  
The scores are close  
I cheer for hope

The game ends  
And, my friend,  
We won!!

I jump up for joy  
We won the football game!!

**Kaydence Neuman**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6

### Too Small for Basketball

The court so big and long  
 These players are huge like King Kong  
 I dribble the ball  
 And shoot the ball  
 I missed because these players are just too tall  
 They pass the ball  
 I shoot just one more time  
 My hand tilts just like reaching in a cookie jar  
 It almost went into the net  
 But they smack it again  
 I guess I lost the bet of winning  
 I look up and fall  
 I blame it on them being too tall,  
 I guess I'm just too small  
 For basketball.

**Vincent Londrico**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6

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### Dance Kid

I am waiting for a snap  
 I am excited for a nap  
 I hear the other dancers' shoes pat  
 It's our turn  
 It's our turn  
 I need to think of everything I've learned  
 Lights meet my face as I turn  
 My lipstick matte  
 I have the dance down pat  
 The rough of the crowd  
 The stage was really loud

**Addison Cole**

Claggett Middle

Grade 6

## Dance Competition Jitters

I wait in the wings as my nervousness sings  
I watch others dance, while my jitters expanse  
I listen to my name being announced by the judge, next thing I  
know, the lights of the stage make my eyesight smudge  
I get in my beginning pose, my breathing starting to slow  
I hear my dance team, as they crazily scream for me  
The pressure feels almost unreal, while my teachers and family  
squeal

Yet once the music starts, basting into my ears, I feel no  
sadness, nor any tears  
For I remember my one and only passion, so I start to dance,  
and my movements fasten  
*I'm doing it!* I think, my heart filled with glee  
I end my dance with my breath completely taken from me  
I get congratulated from everyone I know, but deep down inside,  
I feel like I've grown as a dancer

**Kinley Ferguson**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## The Comeback

All game long our team was down  
 Couldn't make a shot or get a rebound  
 Everything was going the other team's way  
 It seemed like a win wouldn't happen that day

In the fourth quarter things turned around  
 All of a sudden, our shots we found  
 Teamwork and hard defense we also did play  
 Their eleven point lead started to fade away

With four minutes left we were down by just three  
 That's when my teammate passed the ball to me  
 I pump faked a shot and the defender flew by  
 Nothing but net, now just one point from a tie

As the fourth quarter ended the comeback was complete  
 From down eleven to overtime, our fans were on their feet  
 When the final buzzer sounded we celebrated loudly again  
 We ended the game up by two points, Hoosiers for the win!

**Connor Mumaw**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## The Best Swim Meet

*\*Note from the writer: This is the story of a girl that is scared to join the swim team but when she did she loved it.*

"Hi," my name is Emma. I am 10 years old. I am in 4th grade. I live in Wadsworth, Ohio with my Mom, Dad, and sister Lilly (she is a brat). Some of my hobbies are writing, Reading, Art, swimming, and math. I do not like rain, smoke from fires, and masks. I am at my sister's swim meet. It is loud here.

I scream "Go Lilly!"

"Lilly has one more lap," said mom.

Then I look down and Lilly is out of the water. I scream with joy. Bye diary! See you tomorrow.

*(Continued on page 81)*

*(Continued from page 80)*

The next day . . .

“Hi,” again Diary! It’s me Emma. Guess What? My parents just got divorced. I am living with my mom and my sister is living with my dad. We are living with different parents because my school is closer to my mom’s house, and my sister’s school is closer to my dad’s house. We get to see each other on the weekends, and we switch houses every other weekend. I feel sad but I have to look forward to the weekends.

The next day . . .

Hi again! My mom just told me that she signed me up for the swim team. I stomped to my room then Lilly came running to my room. “What is the matter?” said Lilly.

“Mom just told me that she signed me up for swim and I did not want to.”

“It’s not that bad,” said Lilly.

“Yes it is” I yelled.

“Ok whatever you say,” said Lilly.

“Now keep it down I am studying for my math test!” said Lilly.

The next day . . .

Hi Diary, it is me Emma. Swimming is good. I like it. I have a swim meet in a little bit. I will check back when I get back!

1 hour later

I am back! The swim meet was good! I got in 3rd place! I have 2 more meets. I will check back in. Bye!

4 weeks later

I am back and the swim meets was good! I got in 2nd both times. My Mom and Dad said I did good. I have to go bye.

**Riley Nolin**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Virginia Lingenfelter**  
 Buckeye Primary  
 Grade 1

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## Victims

2,300 children go missing every day in the United States. I was one of them. Since then, I started the Missing Child and Teen Unit at our local police station and have become the captain of this elite unit. Imagine, the victim of a stereotypical kidnapping returning and being able to grow up in her hometown, and becoming a police officer.

“Captain Jalilah?” I turn away from the window of the spacious office of the MCT Unit captain- me. It’s Kim, my secretary. “You remember little June Greensburg, right?” She asks.

I nod. “Of course, Kim,”

“The kid’s missing. We have leads.”

*(Continued from page 82)*

The woman looks grim as I prepare my pack for a mass search.

“June! June!” yells echo throughout our small town as police and citizens alike search for the 5-year-old. I stand on the edges of the forest, comforting the Greensburg family.

“Excuse me,” a small voice says quietly over the shouts of the search. The voice belongs to a small child. Tears shake in his eyes as he tugs on the fabric of my vest. I recognize this small boy as June’s twin brother, Harry.

“When will Juney get back?” Harry’s upper lip trembles as he holds back a sob. It breaks my heart.

“She’ll be back soon. Okay?”

The boy nods fiercely as tears stream down his face. “Mommy! Give me one of those flashlights and those cool vests that are very bright. I’m going to help search for Juney!” Harry grabs the items supplied by his crying mother and runs into a group of teens helping the search. He is immediately hoisted onto one of the teen’s shoulders.

“Captain,” a tall girl, who I recognize as 13-year-old Taylor (who lives on my street), pants as she bursts through the trees. “We know where June is!”

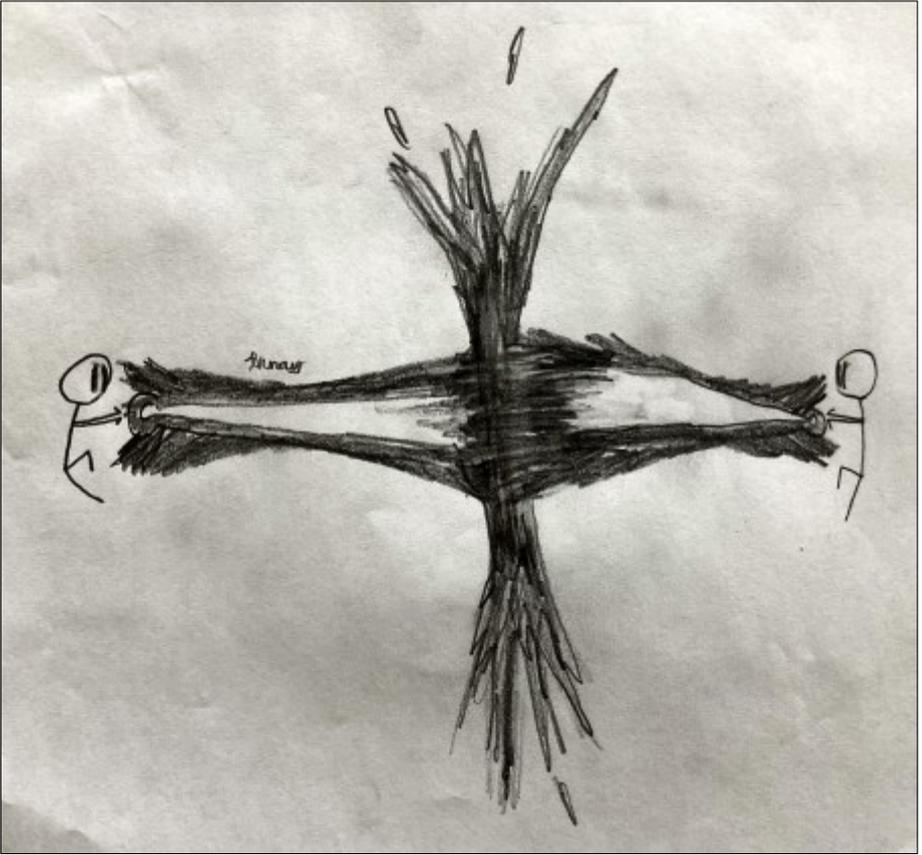
Harry runs through the trees after hearing the five words that this girl uttered.

I keep a tight grip on Harry’s arm, and on the other hand my flashlight. The entire town pushes through the forest. A child in a ruffled, rainbow dress runs out of a shed made of tree bark. She shrieks as tears stream down her dirty face. My officers arrest June’s kidnapper, and June is reunited with her family.

As she grew, June decided to join her heroes’ mission. She became part of Goldstown’s MCT Unit. When I retired, June even replaced me as captain.

**Aria Thomas**

Buckeye Intermediate  
Grade 6



**Henry Smith**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

## **Destruction**

All my life, the darkness fell,  
Like watching the light get dimmer above,  
It felt like falling into a wishing well

From sad, to misunderstood, to mean, to malicious  
Nothing could explain my feelings so enriched with viciousness

It brought delight to my sight to see the rain pour  
While the country I used to call home became nothing more

All the pain it brought me fueled my plan  
As the button that caused devastation stood still in my hand

All the horrible memories were left to rot  
As my soul recovered from the disturbing thoughts

Yes, I might have destroyed every link to my past  
But for all those who wronged me I got my revenge at last

**Rachel Bowen**

Root Middle

Grade 6



**Blakely Shank**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 3

## Lost

There I was all alone, “lost”, hurt, and scared. I was in the woods, gone far, far away from home. I tried to run away. I got my bags packed and left. I never thought to say goodbye. Mom was at work, dad was on the couch. I tried to explain that it felt like he was being unfair but it’s hard to say that stuff right to the face of a narcissist. He blamed everyone but himself, didn’t care nor realized what he was doing. I don’t know why he can’t get “childhood trauma” in his head. After fighting for nearly an hour I said, “You keep this up, I’m gone.” He had no care in his mind. So I packed my bags and left. But before I did, I made sure I took the dogs. I told him, “I won’t come back, trust me.” I gave my sister a kiss since she was sleeping and walked out.

I ran. I had to jump the ditch. It felt never ending, the fifth time I twisted my ankle really badly. Luckily, I came prepared with my small first aid kit. I wrapped my ankle and kept going. After a couple hours passed, I set up camp, pinned the tent and went to bed.

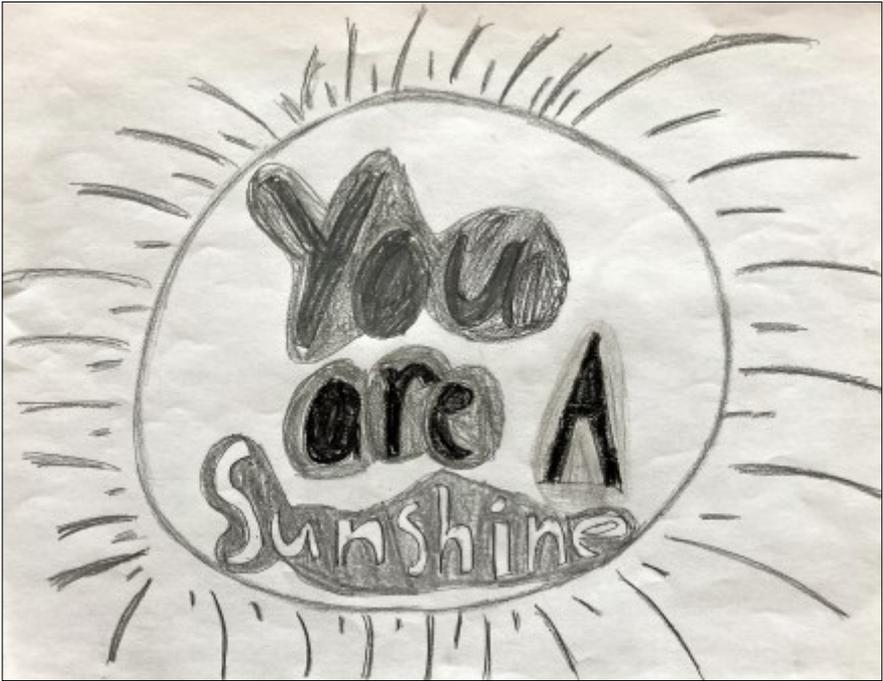
In the morning when I woke up, I took the dogs out super quick. After I let them out of the tent I ran back in to grab my backpack for a hike. A few minutes later, I heard some terrible noises, dreadful to be honest. I raced across the field where she first was. Then, I found my dog Phenix bleeding and suffering. I still had my first aid kit, from last night. I wrapped her up, called for Bella and carried Phenix back in tears. After I laid her in the tent and went back out to see what had attacked her.

Later in the field, I found geese and their eggs and then I knew what had attacked her. I went back to the tent and did homemade remedies to cure whatever the geese had if they had anything. That night all the voices in my head said “she was gonna die!” But, I knew she wasn’t, and I was right.

A few weeks later she made a full recovery and I decided to head back home. When I got back, momma busted into tears and shockingly, so did dad. I cried as well and that day I made sure I never felt that way again.

The moral of the story is that you belong even if you don’t feel like it.

**Rowan Wright**  
Black River Elementary  
Grade 4



**Susan Zebrowski**  
Isham Elementary  
Grade 2

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## DREAM

I believe the word *DREAM* is a word we misinterpret. When in reality it is a word we couldn't live without. I know what you might be thinking. I used to misinterpret the word *DREAM*, too. In fact, I doubted the word. I thought *DREAM* was a word like unicorn; something mythical you were obsessed with in kindergarten through second grade. Or, a place your imagination took you when you closed your eyes. But, I was very wrong. *DREAM* is a word of Passion, Persistence, and Bravery. All these words are strong words that make up a mighty person. the Wright brothers being one of the great examples.

The Wright Brothers were bullied, laughed at, doubted, and mocked. Did they let their naysayers intimidate them and hold them back?! Goodness no! They kept on going at it until they

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reached their goal; to have human flight. Once they reached their goal, their naysayers were impressed! All because of a *DREAM*. They wanted to build something that would fly with a person in it for fun. These brothers were Passionate. The Wright Brothers had a *DREAM*.

Anne Frank was a woman in history we still talk about today. Her efforts in writing her diary were incredible! The people talked about the war and stated Jewish people stood no chance. Did that stop Anne? Of course not! Anne kept on writing in her diary. To this day, we still appreciate what she wrote in her diary because it is a World War II reference for people like Robert Faurisson and more, who study Anne's touching diary. Anne was Persistent. She wrote in her diary, despite obstacles. She was determined to journal on those precious pages. Anne was a *DREAMER*.

Rosa Parks had a vision of freedom. She was just an ordinary person on the outside but in her brain she was a non-stop Imagineer. This intelligent woman was part of changing African Americans' lives. Without her, whites and African Americans might still be treated like two different species. Rosa put her life on the line by saying, "no" and kept her stance on what she believed in. Rosa was Brave. She stood up for her fellow African Americans no matter the consequences. She too, had a *DREAM*.

All of these people, the Wright Brothers, Anne Frank, Rosa Parks and more are *DREAMERS*. Think, if Thomas Edison would have given into his naysayers, we wouldn't have the light bulb. No freedom if it weren't for Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and more willing to stand up for United States rights by writing the Declaration Of Independence.

So much of what we have today would not exist if it weren't for *DREAMERS*. Whatever your purpose is, make that purpose a priority and relentlessly pursue it! Who knows, maybe you will have a *DREAM* and change the world!

**Larissa Miu**  
Northrop Elementary  
Grade 5



**Vivienne Rescina**  
 Buckeye Primary  
 Grade 1

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### In Herr House

I drag my feet across the hot, dusty sidewalk. My backpack feels like I threw an anvil in it. My head hung down, while my stomach felt like I had an earthquake inside.

I struggled to move each foot. My mind was in a never-ending loop.

*I . . . Want . . . Food . . .*

Suddenly, a strong wisp of smell brings my head up.

Is that... popcorn?

I get my second wind and start sprinting toward the smell.

Closer,

Closer,

Closer,

Until finally...

A house looms in front of me.

*(Continued on page 91)*

(Continued from page 90)

Now, this house is not an ordinary house. You wouldn't look at it and think "Oh well that's a normal house that belongs here!"

This house was tall, and slender. It had yellow siding with purple shutters. The roof was a deep blue, and many of the shingles were gone. The windows were broken and glass lay on the brown, withered grass.

This is where the popcorn smell was coming from. I didn't even care what the house looked like, or how shady it looked. I pushed open the rusty, black gate. It took me a lot of nonexistent muscle to push that gate open. It made a mournful *screeeeee* when I did.

I stepped onto the grass and it crunched under my feet.

I don't think grass is supposed to crunch...

I keep walking, trying my best to avoid the broken shards of glass.

I finally make it to the broken, warped deck and step onto it. The white paint-or what *used* to be white-was chipped and scratched. I step on a suspicious-looking board, and it splinters open beneath my foot.

"YIPE!" My foot falls through the deck and the razor-sharp edges cut my ankle on the way down. I can barely see tiny diamonds of red glint through my pants.

I sigh. *I'm going to get into so much trouble.* I think with remorse, as I pull my foot out of the hole. *If the cops don't get me, Mom will.* I shove that thought away and limp over to the door.

The door was tall and brown. It was wooden, with a golden door handle that had the letter A engraved on it. I slowly twisted the handle. It hadn't twisted smoothly though. It twisted as if it was made of gravel. I pushed the door open, and carefully stepped into the house.

**Chloe Spencer**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6



**Aaron Ash**  
Kidder Elementary  
Grade 5

## **The Bloodless Beast: The Society of the Time Corpse *Dedicated to Pepper and Poppy my two precious pets***

### Prologue;

The camera recorder beeped, “Three, two, one.” I say under my breath. I cleared my throat, “Hello, I am Benjamin Sisko and this is my presentation on the history of our town, Drutatira. Including, royalty, creatures and animals, wars, so on and so forth. So we came here due to founder Arwen, exploring and finding our land. She brought her fiancé, Dorwin and got married to her. They built a civilization. Eventually they had kids and their kids had kids and so on.

Many generations later, explorers discovered the animals on our island such as Drithvens, Plegons, Dogs, and the People of the Night. More people from the other lands came. Creating culture and difference during this era, year; two hundred yt The Queen and King mysteriously disappeared their daughter, Princess Chala refused to take the throne. She later disappeared. They found the Niece of Queen Chloe. Her name was Arianna but she insisted on being called Queen Ari. Later on Queen Ari got married to Liam and soon had twins Sirine and Sunny. Sirine did not inherit the throne and created her own society. Sunny wasn't pleased with the Society of the Time Corpse. But, Sirine discovered something life changing in three hundred yt, a way to travel through time. Later on about three hundred fifty yt Sirine fell deathly ill and sadly passed, giving the Society to her only son Chad who was at the time married to Clara and had Sue who at fifteen took up the Society. Now would be the time to explain the animals and what part of the island they take up or are mostly found. Drithvens are the biggest creature to walk on this island. Standing at twenty to twenty five feet fully grown. They have long skinny legs, a slender body and a flat face. They have crystal-like bones that stick out on the head forming a helmet and go down the back. The tail ends in a plume of feathers. Plegons are short creatures standing at two to three feet fully grown. They have coarse brown fur, beady black eyes, a bill for a snout, they have webbed paws and wings. Their tail curls at the end. Dogs are similar to the shepherd dog in other lands except they have spines that trail down their back and if startled the tail has a poisonous spine that retracts into the skin. I saved the worst for last. People of the night were discovered around six hundred feet and standing to their full height standing at seven to eight feet tall. They have humanoid

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features but they seem to be made out of black goo. They have razor sharp teeth and a long skinny tail. They walk on all four most of the time.

The Society of the Time Corpse did nothing for a while just discussing what to do with this new found power. Around one thousand yt, the Society got an alert for a time anomaly time anomalies were when a time traveler changed something in the past that would disrupt the future. When they tracked down the person with the time watch. Which gave them the ability to time travel. He was tracked down and was sentenced to death for causing such a big anomaly. But some Society member was furious she was going to not kill but hurt that person. She cut him with a Knife but when she cut him, he didn't bleed. Instead, his body melted and what she saw horrified her. Instead of a human there, now towering above her seeing a person of the night was rare. But one interacting or facing you was straight unlucky . . . The creature of eight feet towered above her she did not move for if she did she might die. The creature got down on all fours and its forked tongue slithered in between its sharp shark-like teeth. It searched around the room, unable to find the girl, but she was trembling so much that the knife fell from her hand clanking against the stone floor. The creature whipped around and attacked the lady. For about five minutes the creature tore at the girl until the guards were able to tie the creature down. The Society member was put into a coma. For three years, when she woke up she was asked many questions. But the one that made the Society of the Time Corpse worry, in her own words, was, "The last thing I saw before I blacked out, was the Person of the Night stealing my time watch and clenching it in its talons. "So the Society-" My mom peeked her head in the door, "Ben, it's time for- oops sorry I didn't realize you were recording. Ummmmm . . ." "Hi Mr. Johnson." She backed out of the room. I sighed, "Sorry Mr. Johnson. So as I was saying the Society declared that we must find the People of the Night and get back their power, but the People of the Night had other plans. They kept shapeshifting into people, killing off the actual Society members and causing anomalies. Up to today the King and Queen live happily and we are learning to wield magic. That leads up to today, see you tomorrow Mr. Johnson. I'm Ben Sisko. I'll see you tomorrow." I turned off my camera and went to bed thinking about the coming week.

**Piper Schoonover**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## The Hole

### Chapter 1: The Ghost Story

“I’m going to call up Avery since mom said we can have anyone over for a sleepover,” said Cassie as the girls sat in their bedroom.

“Ok I will text Layla if she wants to come over too,” replied Maya as she picks up her phone and unlocks it. *\*Ring . . . Ring . . . Ring . . . Ring\** as Cassie’s phone rings. “Aww man Layla can’t come over tonight she has soccer practice!” Maya exclaimed. “Avery did not answer! I guess she’s busy too,” said Cassie.

Oliva, the oldest, knocks on the door seconds later.

“Who’s ready for a ghost story?” Oliva says as she turns off the lights just as thunder strikes. “AHHHH!!!!!!” scream the girls. “OMG Oliva! You scared me half to death!” says Maya as she puts down her phone.

“Why do you do this every night?” complained Cassie. “I do it every night because I know you are just big babies and you guys can’t handle it!” exclaimed Oliva. “We are not big babies!” shouted Cassie pointing at her and her twin sister Maya. “Well maybe Maya is,” said Cassie. Maya looked at her sister in disbelief.

“Okay no need to fight, let me start!” said Oliva in a panicked voice. “Once upon a time, there were twin sisters named . . .” “Maya and Cassie!” yelled Maya. “Sure” said Oliva, annoyed at her sister. “They were camping when thunder and lightning started!” said Oliva as thunder went off. “The girls went in the tent but when they reached the tent there were holes covering their tent,” said Oliva as she clapped her hands together.

Maya jumps a little on the bed. “Haha, you got scared!” laughed Cassie. “I did not!” Maya says, trying to not smile. “Anyway, the girls look around to find no sign of any animal. So the girls went into their tent and found their friend with a pair of scissors but she was dead with a hole in her hand!” Oliva said as she clapped her hands together and the lighting went off. “Uhhhh okay,” said Cassie. “That was scary,” said Maya. “Hahaha now I am going to call Sarah if she wants to come over. See you suckers later!” Exclaimed Oliva as she walked out of the room and shut the door behind her.

**Hayden Lovell**  
Central Intermediate  
Grade 6

## Detective Casey Steel: and the Black Masked Bandits

The world is a mysterious place, and the bad things in the world are just covered up with a tarp. I am here to take off that tarp, and discover the world's darkest secrets. Hi, my name is detective Casey Steel, and I am the world's first twelve-year old detective.

"Donovan!" Casey shouted. Donovan rushed into the room, "Yes sir?" "I'm tired of sitting around all day. Would you like to play cards?"

"Sure sir, give me five minutes." \*soft jazz music plays in the background\* "Ah, this is the life." Casey kicked up the foot rest of the chair while he sipped grape juice in a wine glass." He took a large sip of the grape juice when, \*BEEP\* \*BEEP\* \*BEEP\* \*BEEP\* Casey spit out his grape juice. "Sirens?" Casey questioned. "Casey! We have a big problem!" Donovan stated worryingly. "What is it?" "A bank robbery! The Black Masked Bandits!"

I know what you're thinking. "But Casey, You're just a detective! You can't go out and fight the bad guys!" And to that I'd say, I can too!

"Charlie! I need a ride!" yelled Casey. "Ok, but this is the last time, and then you're going to get a personal driver." Said Charlie, Casey's brother. "How about I just pay you?" "Fine with me!"

\*LATER\* "Alright, I'll wait here and, uh, keep a look out I guess?" "Alright Charlie, don't go anywhere, I'll be twenty minutes, tops." Said Casey demandingly. "Alright, good luck." "Don't need it, but thanks. See you in a minute Charlie."

"Look, the Black Masked Bandits! There, in the donut shop!" exclaimed Donovan. The Black Masked Bandits were taking the money from the cash register. This was of no surprise to Casey. This wasn't his first rodeo.

Casey stood across the street from the donut shop, with his hands in the pockets of his suit pants. Donovan stood to his right, towering over him. After all, Casey was a twelve year old. Casey checked for cars, and then crossed the street, making his way to the donut shop. Donovan was chowing down on his finger nails, terrified as always. Casey got to the other side of the street. He stood directly in front of the donut shop. "Donovan! Get your butt over here!" Casey shouted. "Yes sir!" Said Donovan in a very, fragile voice. There's only three of them. What are they going to do? Casey said in a cocky voice.

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Casey fixed his suit, and calmly walked into the donut shop. \*DING\* The door made a bell noise as Casey walked inside. "Hey punk! What do you think you're doing here, huh?" Said one of the three men. "Why I'm here to stop you of course." The three men started laughing hysterically. "Why do you wear those masks? Everyone already has video footage of your faces, we know who you are. I'm surprised that the cops haven't arrested you all yet." Said Casey. One of the men took off their masks. "That doesn't matter, now get lost before I-" "Before you what? Call the cops? Oh! No need, I've already called them! And they're on their way now!" Casey felt good about that. However one of the men started charging at him. Casey, with his hands still in his pockets, just hopped over to the side and just like that the man had hit the wall. Casey stepped towards one of the other men and pulled down his pants. He was wearing rainbow underpants! The last guy fell on his knees laughing. \*WEEEOOOWWWWW\* "Hear that boys? That's the sound of police sirens, and they are coming our way!" The guy pulled his pants back up, and the other guy wasn't even bothered by the police sirens because he was still on the ground laughing. Casey pulled out his stopwatch, "6 minutes and 43 seconds. A new personal record." "Put your hands in the air!" The policemen started to cuff the Black Masked Bandits. Then of course, the paparazzi showed up.

**Liam Henry**

Central Intermediate

Grade 6

## Grades 7-12

### Months of the Year

January is the start of the year.  
February is filled with love.  
March is the beginning of spring.  
April brings rain.  
May has flowers.  
June brings summer fun.  
July brings independence.  
August is the beginning of school.  
September is the start of fall.  
October is filled with fear.  
November is the month of food and gratitude.  
December brings joy to the world.

#### **Leah Blake**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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### Winter

The winter breeze cold and dry  
The icy freeze while being on skis  
I soar down the mountain wildly free  
Never ever like before  
I could live in winter forever  
For then I would thrive  
But at some point  
I would take a dive into the summer vibes

#### **Kameron Chapman**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Sidney Frazier**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## Seasons

Spring, the pretty flowers and green grass  
And looking out the clear glass  
Seeing the green trees  
And the buzzing bees  
Oh spring, we will miss you

Fall will come with pretty leaves  
When they fall down from the trees  
The fresh smell of the cool air  
And the fun hayrides that blow your hair

Winter, the hot coco and yummy marshmallows  
Fun skiing trips with your fellows  
The cold air and the white snow  
Sitting by the warm fire and making cookie dough  
Snowmen and snow angels  
To Christmas day and the smell of warm candles  
Until it's all over again

Finally, summer, oh I love summer  
The warm and light feel of the nice summer breeze  
And the grainy touch of the sand on my feet  
Summer is hot and fiery and lots of fun  
But, it's not for everyone

Then it's all over and we are  
Back to all the reasons about the seasons

**Natalie Moser**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Beautiful Seasons

Smell the flowers in the air  
See the puddles splash  
Feel the sunshine at the fair  
Watch the bees dash  
Look up and see the pear  
Mindful of its mass

Smell the salt in the air  
See the waves crash  
Feel the breeze in your hair  
Watch the sand smash  
Look down at your chair  
Mindful of the trash

Smell the pie scent in the air  
See the leaves dash  
Feel the loving cozy care  
Watch the pumpkin patch  
Look and see the colorful flair  
Mindful of the catch

Smell the peppermint in the air  
See the icicles smash  
Feel the coldness in the air  
Watch the snowflakes crash  
Look at the frozen chair  
Mindful of the rash

**Ryleigh Bigler**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Natalie McAusland**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## **Christmas Time**

Christmas is so very jolly  
Deck the halls with lots of holly  
There are many people singing  
All the Christmas bells are ringing  
Put the ornaments on the tree  
Make sure they are very shiny  
Don't get on the naughty list by being bad  
Or else getting coal might make you sad  
Christmas morning you get a present  
And it is so very pleasant  
Hopefully there will be snow  
Santa will say ho ho ho  
Bake some cookies for Santa to eat  
Then he might give you a special treat  
While sipping hot cocoa out of your mug  
All cuddled up really snug  
The holiday Christmas is the best  
Now it's time to get your rest.

**Brooke Haude**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Tree

The center piece  
In the house  
Effervescent green leaves  
Fake or real

Twinkling bright  
With the little lights  
Holds so much joy  
Beneath  
On the 25th day  
Of the last month

Bring families closer  
While they trim the tree  
With no personal  
Opinion on the look  
Hideous or beautiful

Always stands tall  
Drawing attention  
But never says a  
Word  
The Tree.

**Caelyn Letner**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Josh Bodkin**  
Highland High  
Grade 10

## Falling

A simple leaf I am  
 Terror reigns as my brethren trickle downward beside me to their demise  
 A war between the wind and I  
 It crashes onto my tree, and slaughter has started  
 The terrifying rustle as my fellow leaves gently fall to their tragic death  
 Fatally, I'm unable to withstand the stream of air and I gracefully accept my doom  
 A fitting name fall is  
 A massacre every year of poor, helpless leaves  
 My soul escapes as I strike the ground, and all I've had is gone

**Ray Koeberle**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## Please, Please, Please

Humans, humans, humans please  
 Loosen the chain, around those big fat trees,  
 Humans, humans, humans please,  
 Feed me tonight, so I don't freeze.

Trees, trees, trees please,  
 Stop killing yourself, it's not that hard, so us humans can breathe  
 Trees, trees, trees please stop getting diseases,  
 Like pretty please

Flowers, flowers, flowers please,  
 Stop tickling my nose so I can breath  
 Flower, flowers, flowers please,  
 Stop suffocating us, I'd like to breathe

Bulldozers, bulldozers, bulldozers please  
 Stop banging and knocking over those poor, poor trees  
 Bulldozers, bulldozers, bulldozers please  
 Stop ferociously murdering our living trees.

**Brandon Dishauzi**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7



**Jamie Zickefoose**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

Look at the clouds  
Spilling great drops of rain  
While the painful strikes of thunder remain

Look at the clouds  
Right by the stars  
The stars for the dreamers that open their eyes

Look at the clouds  
Hugging the rainbow  
Making everything around just feel so slow

Look at the clouds  
That give a sense of freedom  
For everyone who believes and will be a part of the kingdom

Look at the clouds  
Up in the sky  
Fluffy and white

I wish I could touch the clouds  
Reaching up so high  
But it seems like something is holding me back in the sky

**Daniella Ripplinger**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Faith Rawlins**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## Nightfall

The stars that form around the torch-lit town.  
 The sun that rises and then sinks straight down.  
 The moon that constantly sheds its light.  
 The part of me that feels it's not alright.  
 The empty desolate roads I take home,  
 The streets I find myself always to roam.  
 The darkness that seems ever to grow,  
 The winds that always seem to blow.  
 The kids head in and stop playing ball.  
 The darkness pushes in and I start to feel small.  
 And all of this happens when it reaches Nightfall.

**Tyler Ramsier**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7

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## Wildfires, the Breath of Heat

A random, natural occurrence, or are they?  
 Spreading around, new land they will meet,  
 burning the land, distorting it to an ashy gray.  
 Natural disaster, started by humans,  
 the irony of hurting one's self  
 eventually, our self destruction will cause a revolution  
 destroying all that we have, even our self.  
 But really, Nature is simply taking back what was once its own  
 Burning urban areas back to desert  
 Like things were before we abandoned nature alone  
 before we destroyed it with maximum effort  
 But we could repair, we could save  
 we do not need carnage, we do not need raze.

**Ray Koeberle**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7

## Rain

drip  
drop

when  
will right?  
this will  
ever it  
really stop

## Rain.

big  
boom

The **thunder** S  
H M  
A R  
S O  
B W  
E **LIKE** S  
G U L  
U N L  
N THIS IS E L  
R M  
E S  
A T  
L I  
L N  
Y U  
N F  
O

**Paige Ross**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Jordan Hawkins**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

### **The Hurricane**

At dawn, he sees the wreckage of the rain,  
the white sand beach was all strewn about.  
But the thing that gave him all the pain,  
was the thing he saw that filled him with doubt  
The thing he saw made him blind with rage  
was the old family home that was destroyed  
The wreckage he saw was no longer of age  
Made a hole in his heart that was filled with void  
He fell on his knees sobbing with despair  
losing all hope with no future at all  
the house beyond all repair  
but in the distance, he hears a call  
A hope to rebuild  
So his life can be fulfilled

**Tyler Ramsier**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Jordan Hawkins**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

### **The Mountain View**

A cool breeze in the air  
The Sun began to hide  
Behind rugged mountains  
Stretched across the horizon

Darker and darker  
Stars started to shine  
A gorgeous full moon  
Now dominated the sky

The mountains  
Now too dark to see  
Would soon be back  
At the break of dawn

The peaks lit up  
With the light of the Sun  
Mountains and valleys  
In every direction

The beautiful view  
Comes and goes  
Light mountains, dark mountains  
The cycle continues.

**Riley Knechtel**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Jordan Hawkins**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## The Rushing River

The rushing river  
Has fast flowing streams

The rushing river  
Is filled with dreams

I remember those days  
At the rushing river

Where your dreams come true  
And memories are made

Swimming in the breeze  
With the birds watching from the trees

We threw out our net  
Splish, splash we all got wet

Skipping rocks in the creek  
We could hear the animals speak

We had so much fun  
Lying under the sun

When the sun was going down  
We started to frown

We fished all night  
It was a delight

The fish weighed many pounds  
So much fish we couldn't count

The rushing river  
Is made of dreams

The rushing river  
Has fast flowing streams

**Jackson Kraft**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

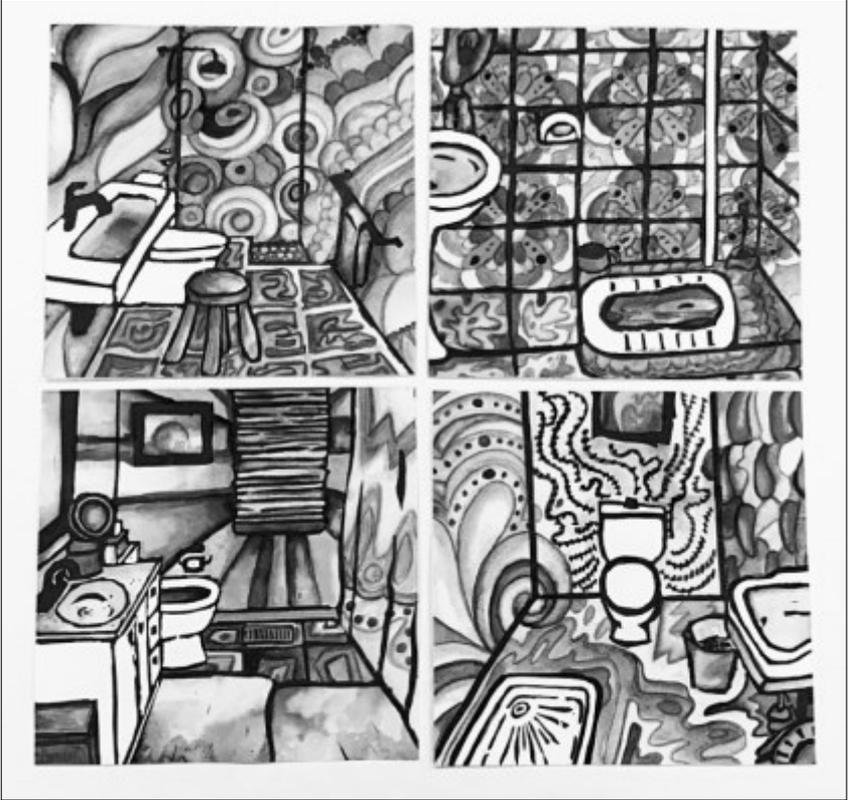
I wake up, look outside, and hear the birds sing,  
I watch a feather drop from one's wing,  
I don't know why I'm in such a good mood,  
As I go downstairs to eat some food.  
I decide to go for a peaceful walk,  
Observing every leaf and rock.

It truly is a really nice day,  
I walk by a house and see a dog play  
With its crunchy bone in the yard.  
Being in a bad mood today would be hard!  
The sunshine makes my arms warm,  
The breeze makes today better than the norm

And I hear some more birds  
Making chirps that sound like the words  
*"It's time to get up,"*  
OK, hold on, what?  
My body is shaken  
As if by a kraken

It seems weirdly fake  
But all of a sudden I wake.

**Desmond Morgan**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Jordan Hawkins**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## Dreaming Big

“BEEEP-BEEEP-BEEEP-BEEEP-BEEEP-BEEEP!” Jess sat up in bed and hit her head on the ceiling. She rolled her eyes. She had switched from sleeping on the top bunk in her bunk bed to the pull-out one beneath a month ago and was still getting used to it. “I must have sleep-walked and climbed up the ladder” she told herself. She rubbed her eyes and glanced down to hit the snooze button on her blaring alarm clock, but as she looked down she realized she was still in her usual bed. Her hand couldn’t reach her clock! She had gotten much taller overnight! She toppled out of bed and crawled to the hallway. Her twin brother Brian stepped out of his bedroom yelling. “Jess! Get your lazy behind out of bed and turn that darn . . .” he turned around and gaped at his sister as he watched her drag herself out of her room. “Jessie!” He yelled. “What are you doing? Why are you so tall?” he demanded, fear creeping into his voice. “I dunno! Help me!” Jess yelled. “Your clothes look bigger too” He observed. “Think those pants will fit once you shrink back down?” He jeered “Mind your own business Brian!” Jess shot back scornfully. “And to think Mom and Dad thought I had the growth spurt” Brian laughed as he stepped out of his room returning to his cocky self. As she crawled out of the hall Brian yelled from behind her “Hey Big Shot!” He laughed to himself. “How is Miss-too-big-for-her-britches going to get down the stairs huh? Thought of that?” Even though Jess scowled in the direction of her brother she realized he was right. With a frown she twisted and turned like she was trying to tie herself up in a knot. Eventually she managed to squeeze down the stairs and out her front door. She stood up. She was almost as tall as the tree in the front yard. She reached out to touch its crisp leaves. Just to wake up to her alarm blaring right in her ear. “Jess! Get your lazy behind out of bed and turn that darn alarm off!” she heard Brian yell. Oh no.

**Evangeline Sondles**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7



**Josh Bodkin**  
Highland High  
Grade 10

### **Ode to Hot Chocolate**

A forbidden delicacy  
So sweet yet just out of reach  
I'd climb mountains to have thee,  
I'd ride through a snowstorm on horseback,  
and swim through a dark, forbidding sea.  
For when one wishes to brighten up any time, anyway,  
You are always there in a crisp white mug  
Marshmallow icebergs bob  
One drink is like a hug,  
Like jumping in a pool on a warm summer's day.  
Different you can be  
While through you, I can not see  
You and only you, to me  
Are the very best treat.

**Evangeline Sondles**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Kaitlyn Pesarchick**

Medina High

Grade 12

## Figurative Language Poem

There was a big boom!  
 It came from the other room  
 I was scared like a cat  
 Then I saw a rat  
 My dad told me to settle  
 Then I accidentally kicked some metal  
 I went outside without a shoe  
 And then I heard a who, who

**Carson Skinner**

Buckeye Junior High  
 Grade 7

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## Where I'm From

I'm from bonfires and books,  
 And soccer and science.  
 I'm from music halls,  
 And concerts,  
 And karaoke in the car.

I'm from red wagons,  
 Katy Perry, and Twinkies.  
 I'm from carnations and daffodils.  
 I'm from coloring pages and colored pencils.  
 And from UNO and Monopoly.

I'm from bonfires and bingo  
 And soccer and snowflakes  
 I'm from playing,  
 Barefoot in the grass,  
 Alone.

**Chloe Clendenning**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8



**Alysha Syed**  
 Highland High  
 Grade 12

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### Where I'm From

I'm from the cheer practices for 2 hours each night  
 They seemed like forever, but never really were  
 I'm from the practices that you hate . . .  
 But still go to  
 I'm from the being yelled at while on the court  
 I'm from the keep doing it until you get it right  
 And not just one time, but at least 5 or 10 in a row

I'm from the endless nights I worked on projects just to do ok  
 But also from those endless nights that payed off  
 And the awards that came along with them  
 I'm from the experimenting in the kitchen day in and day out  
 I'm from the "Wow! This is amazing!"  
 And the "You can do better"  
 I'm from the doubts that come along with all of it

*(Continued on page 126)*

*(Continued from page 125)*

I'm from the Christmas' in West Virginia  
And the summers in Tennessee  
I'm from moving away from the place I loved . . .  
The horses I would ride whenever I'd have time

I'm from meetings and minutes  
I'm from the memories I have made,  
The experiences I have gained  
I'm from the hot heat  
Showing up in jeans and a flannel because I have to  
I'm from the award ceremonies,  
Whether the outcome of me after was happy or sad  
I'm from the picnics and people -  
Who have given me many opportunities  
I'm from the funny first times right before an important event  
I'm from the campfires, dances and trying of new things  
Even if the outcome was not what was expected

I'm from the friends I have made, that I will forever remember  
I'm from the secrets that only we know  
I'm from the crafts happening everyday  
And all the messes they made  
I'm from the wedding where those crafts actually payed off  
Along with my amazing multitasking skills  
I'm from the explorations and rides to who knows where  
But most importantly,  
I'm from the friends and family who made me who I am today

**Bailey Harris**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

Life is like an hourglass,  
With each speck of sand represented as a day,  
And as each day goes on,  
Your time span gets smaller and smaller,  
Don't let your time run out.

**Aubrey Sloan**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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**Aidan Simpson**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## Life

Life is like walking through a maze with your eyes closed. You can't see the obstacles before you.

Life is like a maze of mirrors. When you can see, you don't know what you're looking at.

Life is like a thunderstorm. Sometimes it feels as if everything is crashing down, but others, it's just what you were looking for.

Life is like a bottomless ocean. You are forever drifting, stuck in the currents with nothing to steady you.

**Adylyn Hudson**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

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## Future

Thrilled to start high school

Look forward to adulthood

Ready for the world.

**Anna Serger**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8



**Aidan Simpson**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## Pretending

We went from pretending with toy rockets and toy cars to pretending the smile on your face is real.

Pretending everything's okay so you won't break down in tears in the hallway because you're so stressed out with the world.

Pretending we were pirates on boats sailing the seas to pretending things aren't getting harder and harder each day.

Pretending that weekends aren't our escape from everything weighing us down, dragging us into the week we're forced to live out.

Pretending that we are soldiers in war fighting for our freedom, to pretending that everything isn't becoming the same old cycle over and over every day.

Pretending we still have a little imagination left in us before the real world hits us like a 10 ton bus going 120 mph.

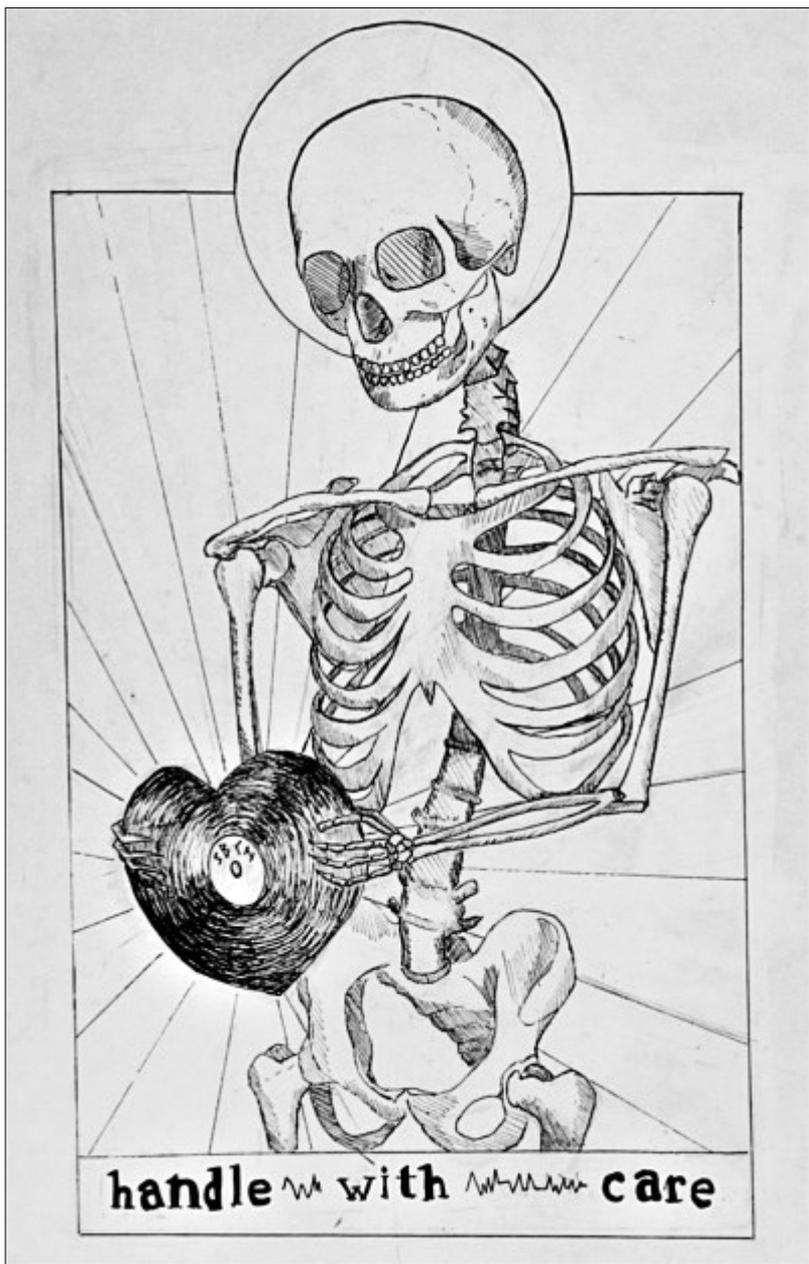
Pretending we were cowboys fighting Indians, to pretending we don't dread getting up in the morning to live our lives.

Maybe one day we won't have to keep pretending everything's okay, that the world lightens up on us and gives us a breath.

**Maxim Jordahl**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8



**Nolan Falkosky**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

People hurt inside and out.  
I hurt inside and out.  
There isn't an explanation for it, its life and its unfair.  
It hurts to think people hurt because everybody hurts differently

Some people can look at me like wow her life is amazing.  
But in my head its pacing or a big box of bouncy balls that just got dropped.  
It's scattered trying to find a memory of my mom but is worried about the hazards.  
My mom's my best friend  
Though I once thought life was perfect  
But life isn't perfect because two days before Christmas she got  
Diagnosed with cancer.  
And four months later was taken from my arms.  
Or just like when you finally decide to go pick up those bouncy balls that you dropped.

I kept asking God and doctors about this cancer  
But they had no answer  
My heart sooo much to know I won't have on mom earth  
Or how she won't be there for my future kids  
Or how she won't be there to help me pick out my wedding dress

But the one thing I'm stuck on is how I won't ever get to hear her voice.  
From the sidelines of my games to just asking me how my day was.  
So I guess what I'm saying is life isn't fair

**Savannah Blizzard**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Lizzy Magollaghan**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

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### **To All the Broken People**

Life comes at you fast. And like a sudden gust of wind, it will knock you over. We all know it. We all know that we will fall an innumerable amount of times. You get back up, slowly, but you do it. It takes everything you've got to crawl onto your knees, then onto your feet again. And just when you feel able to walk again, and inch your way further and further onto the journey we call life, the wind will come blowing again, and it will knock you down. Except this time, all the energy leaves you. And when you hit the concrete ground, you shatter. Like a mirror, you break, into uncountable tiny and intricate pieces. You furiously pick up the pieces of you left on the ground.

*(Continued on page 134)*

*(Continued from page 133)*

You try to piece the puzzle back together. But whatever combination you try, you will always end up with an imperfect sheet of cracked shards. And as you stare into the shattered mirror, you see yourself:

broken,  
Misshapen,  
tore up.

How could anyone love you?

A single tear will drop from your eye, and you can't stop it. Soon enough, you've become a black cloud over top of the mess you've created.

And when you've finally run out of tears to cry, all you feel is despair.

Hatred.

You pick up every fragment you can, but there are some you cannot pick up.

You leave them.

You stumble along the path, fragments of your shattered life spilling out of you as you force your way through life.

You've never looked back beyond that point. You've never accepted it. And you convince yourself that you never will.

But then, that gust of wind will bring something to you. It will reveal something to you. Just as you hope has disintegrated, life will spark a flame inside your heart. And you have a choice: you can either snuff it out, or you can feed it.

If you let the flame die, you will be forced to relive the trials you've faced. Your heart will fall, hit the ground, and shatter again. However, if you let the fire inside of you lead you, if you embrace it, it will grow and grow, and light your gloomy path.

Only if you are willing to walk backwards on the path.

Only if you are willing to get on your knees and pick up every little piece of yourself that you have dropped.

Only if you are willing to travel back to that dreaded scene where your heart first shattered and where you first became broken. If you take out all your broken pieces and fit them together. It will be far from what it once was. You will gaze into the mirror you cursed, and you will see a broken person. But if you are willing to see the beauty you once embraced inside of the mirror, the mirror will no longer be broken. It will be altered from the life you once had, but if you embrace it, it will be better.

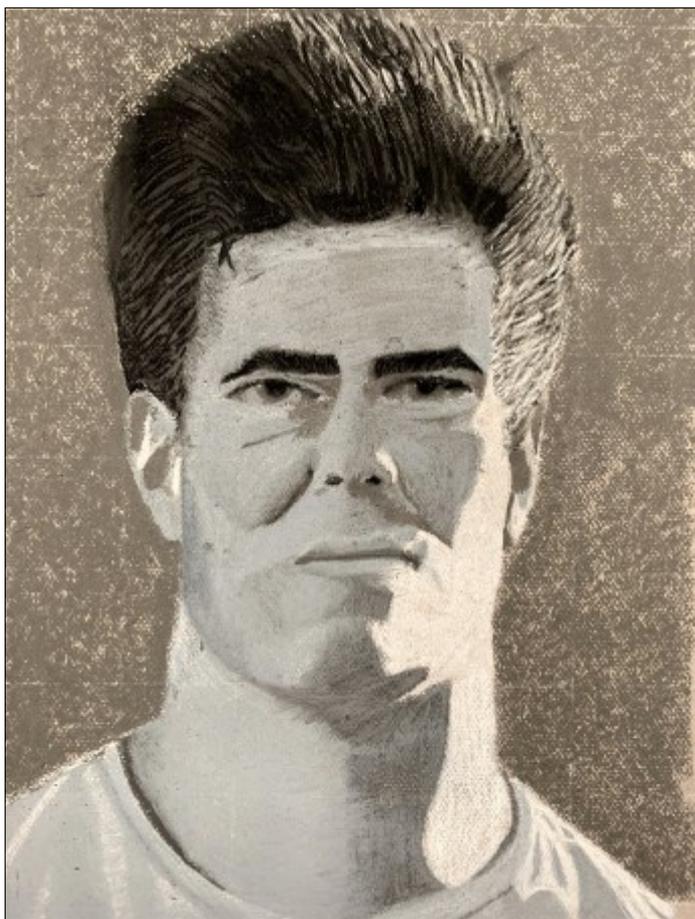
*(Continued on page 135)*

*(Continued from page 134)*

So to all the broken people: there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Yes, it will be miles and miles away. But the only way you are going to reach it is if you go for it.

**Jakoby Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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**Ben Colangelo**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

### When the Heart Starts to Beat

It happens every time,  
but one is never similar to the rest  
Silence, then BOOM, BOOM-  
the heart starts

Each one not quite like the ones before  
You may not hear it,  
but you know its there  
It grows louder and louder  
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

Fading out after every single beat  
The tapping increasing, decreasing  
You don't hear it, you feel it  
All at the same time that they hear it,  
but don't feel it

**Bailey Harris**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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**Lilly Barnett**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

### **Growing Up**

Growing up is pretty scary.  
When voices and dreams are coming true,  
Little old me  
Having fun and being free  
While present me is getting fees  
Little me grinning in shock  
Tying a knot so I can stop,  
Wishing I could swap with little me.

#### **Madison Wise**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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### **Growing Up**

Once in a long lost land  
Laid a girl who loved the sea  
She whistled, whistled with her hands  
And admired the bees and the sand  
Until one day her whistles stopped  
And no noise came from the land  
The bees still hopped among their flowers,  
But there was no girl along the sand

#### **Molly Norris**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Monica Horschler**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

When you were a little kid  
You wanted to be an astronaut  
A firefighter, a policeman/woman

When you were a little kid,  
You were happy, you were content  
You ran around all day, immune to the world.

But that little kid grows up.  
Their parents say 'Don't trust!'  
Or, 'money isn't free!'  
But you're just a little kid.

Then that little kid starts to try and fit in  
They try to do what other kids do.  
They try to be like the bigger kids.  
That little kid doesn't want to be an astronaut now.  
That little bundle of joy is immune.  
They have become numb to this world.

That little kid wants to dress like other kids,  
They want to fit in.  
They don't want to be different anymore!  
Because being *different* is weird.

Being *different* is gross.  
Being *different* is unwelcome.  
Being *different* will get you shot down.  
Being *different* will bring you down in this world.

So those innocent little kids are forced to be molded.  
To be like everyone else.  
But they are not like everyone else.  
But they are forced to.  
To be like the others.

So while you're a little kid, make it last.  
Don't try to be grown up.  
Be a little kid.

**Susan Hanchek**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Lauren Hollabaugh**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

## Tall Enough

I was a little girl,  
Not tall enough to sit at the adult table.  
I knew being  
Would be amazing.  
I thought I would feel tall.

That was wrong though  
I am now taller than my mom.  
Do I feel any taller?  
Do I understand everything the adults say?  
Do I feel any older?

NO  
I still feel short,  
Feel like a little kid  
Still sit at the kids table

Now I know,  
that my height doesn't change who I am.

However,  
My views on things are now different.  
I can see little kids play on the playground.  
Certain things aren't as important as others.  
I don't always need the newest toy.

So, maybe being taller is more than my height.  
Maybe I am older.  
I am taller.

**Eden Dierksheide**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Aubrey Riedl**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## **My Mother's Perfume**

### **My mother's perfume**

A warm embrace  
A safe space  
A happy place

### **My mother's perfume**

Her cheek against my head  
Checking for fever again  
Caring

### **My mother's perfume**

A calm essence  
Sleeping peacefully  
Reassuring

### **My mother's perfume**

Laying next to me  
To keep away nightmares.  
Empathetic

### **My mother's perfume**

Fancy dresses  
Curling my hair  
Beautiful

### **My mother's perfume**

Giving me confidence  
For the next school day  
Endearing

### **My mother's perfume**

Holding my hand while walking through stores  
Always being prepared for what I may need  
Idolized

### **My mother's perfume**

There whenever I need  
To wipe my tears or laugh with me  
Best friend

*(Continued on page 144)*

*(Continued from page 143)*

**My mother's perfume**

Worn everyday  
To remind me of her  
So I can be,  
Happy,  
Caring,  
Reassuring,  
Empathetic,  
Beautiful,  
Endearing,  
Idolized,  
And, my daughter's best friend.

**Emily Burkey**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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Her heart like glass  
It could break really fast  
It broke so easily  
She started to be wheezy  
And with a BOOM! and a CRASH!  
She fell down quicker than the flash  
She woke up in a daze  
To find out soon she would be amazed

**Piper Elliott**

Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7



**Alexis Mutch**  
Highland High  
Grade 9

## Sister Talk

### *Casual Conversation*

hello  
remember me

hi

you leave me on delivered 4ever

sorry  
everyone has  
It's not personal

i'm everyone

### *Shopping Hauls*

I bought something Stoney clover today don't kill me  
It's really cute actually

send picture  
then i can decide if it's worth wasting my energy on roasting you  
I don't have it with me

### *Arguments*

u know what I mean u just want me to say what you want to hear  
or you have a flawed argument

oh sadie

### *Talking to Our Parents*

Show daddy he'll think it's cool  
tell mama to call me back I miss her  
and u ofc

### *Locating Each Other*

ohr nor  
where are u

i thought we were leaving

### *Sister Love*

i miss u.

I miss you too

## **Sadie Ross**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Allison Ricco**  
Highland High  
Grade 10



**Alex Wojtylak**  
Highland High  
Grade 10

## **Brothers**

Sometimes we fight  
Sometimes we hug  
But one thing is certain  
We always love

One is the oldest  
One is the youngest  
The middle one  
With something extra special

From tall to short  
Brown hair to blonde  
Brothers look different  
But we share the same blood

My brothers are my best friends  
Today and Tomorrow  
There for each other forever

**Matthew Dee**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Friends

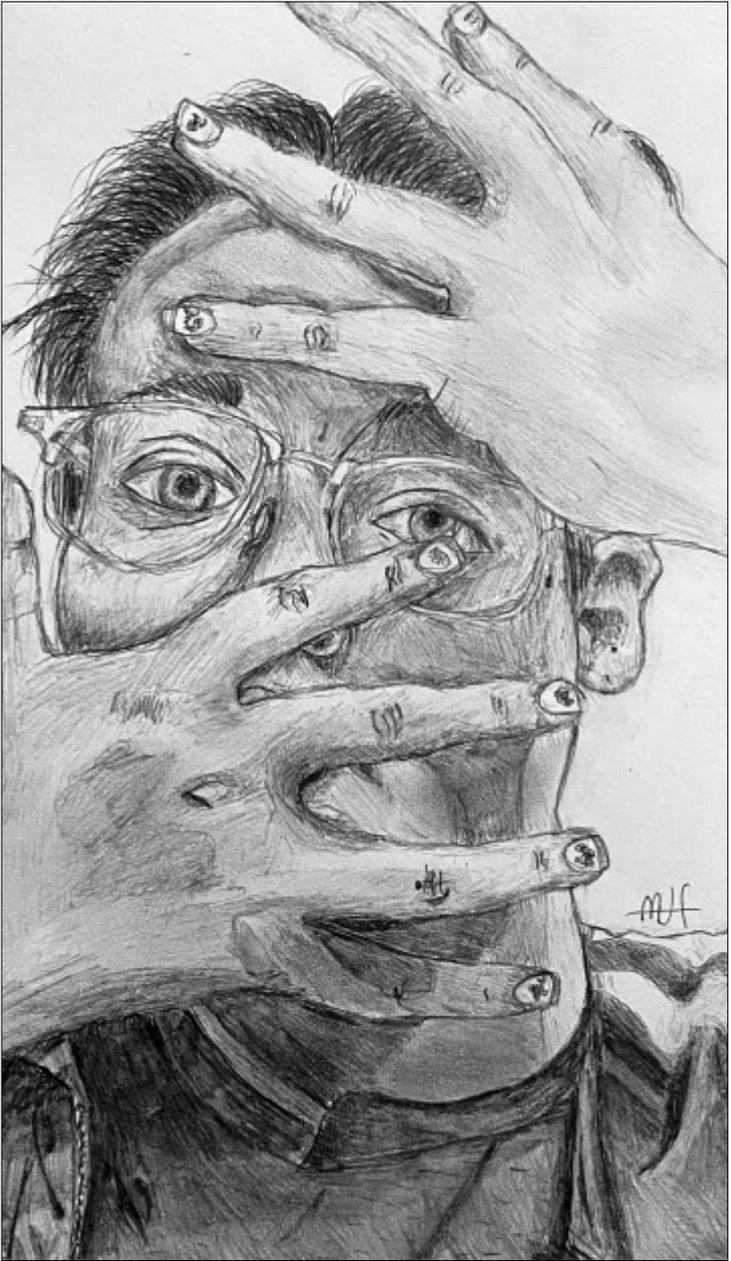
What makes a good friend?  
I believe it's someone who stays 'til the end  
Someone who always supports you in all you do  
Someone who's always kind and true

A friend will go anywhere for you.  
There's nothing they won't do  
A friend always has your back  
They keep your life on track

A friend cares about you.  
Loves to help you  
Can't live without you  
Glad they have you

So what is a friend?  
FAMILY!  
A real friend is a part of your life.  
A part of your heart.  
A piece of your family.  
A friend is everything.

**Luke Rainey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Monica Horschler**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## Find Me

Every spark of humanity,  
***I have left.***  
Can be classified as nothing  
***But memories.***

And even though I am  
***Still alive,***  
There is almost nothing  
***To find***  
When you most certainly,  
***Find me.***

My life before was very...  
***Difficult.***  
It was full of agony and misfortune and  
***Discomfort.***  
But throughout it all,  
***One thing stayed the same.***

Knowing that one thing, will help you,  
***Find me.***  
Please, please, use that specific detail to,  
***Find me.***  
Eventually you'll have to,  
***Find me.***

You will,  
***You will,***  
Find me.  
***Eventually.***

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

I'm still in morning  
With nothing to do is just so boring  
I can't really move  
I just want to hear a groove  
With such a rainy day  
It's always in May  
I'm just so tired  
I finally get inspired  
I hate the feeling of being stuck inside  
Being cramped in a house makes me want to go  
outside  
As I play in the rain with no worry  
My eyes start getting blurry  
Waking up in my bed  
I feel a dread  
It was just a dream  
That's a relief

**Elena Montoya**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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Mind racing as I walk through the halls  
So many thoughts at once  
Trying to contain them all  
So many kids trying to get to so many different  
places  
I feel so trapped  
Looking around  
My eyes finally catch  
You.

**Izzie Honigman**  
Medina High  
Grade 9



**Sophia Nigro**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 10

**Faith Rawlins**

Medina High

Grade 12

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Walking through the halls  
My eyes wonder  
Looking for another pair of wondering eyes  
I catch many pairs of eyes looking at me  
Which I return with a simple smile  
But the truth is  
I was looking for a certain pair of eyes  
Your eyes.

**Izzie Honigman**

Medina High

Grade 9



**Kegan Prothero**

Highland High  
Grade 11

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I always wonder why I'm trying to change so much  
 And the simple answer is  
 I don't want to be the same blue eyed fake blonde girl  
 You fell in love with  
 I am constantly reminded of you so  
 I want to be someone else  
 So I dye my hair black  
 I stop wearing my glasses that you love so much  
 I start straightening my hair so you didn't see  
 My wavy beach type hair  
 I change the way I dress  
 But still deep down I am still that blue eyed fake blonde  
 You fell in love with  
 No matter how much I try to change myself  
 That girl is always still there  
 Waiting to come back out

**Izzie Honigman**

Medina High  
Grade 9



**Megan Cross**  
Black River High  
Grade 11

Everyone warned me  
 Everyone told me it was a bad idea to like you  
 It started as a joke a first  
 A way to get back at my ex to say  
 Then I caught feelings like I always do  
 I pushed them down till they went away and they did  
 Then they came back  
 I let you into my heart and fell for you and your stupid words  
 One mistake that should've cost the relationship didn't  
 I thought I saw a different side of you  
 But then again I should've listened  
 You were like the rest.

**Izzie Honigman**

Medina High  
 Grade 9

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**Love Runs Deep**

Glimmer runs in the air  
 as love is spread throughout.  
 Love is everywhere.  
 Couples with smiles, cruising the square.  
 Laughter and smiles seen everywhere,  
 For all but one,  
 me.  
 It saddens me to see everyone together  
 while I'm alone.  
 Though, I'm content for others' happiness  
 Sparks inside me ignite  
 when I see how much in love they are.  
 Even though there is no one for me,  
 this Valentines Day,  
 my heart goes out to everyone  
 On this February holiday

**Icie Eaken**

Root Middle  
 Grade 7



**Kieran Jeske**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## Love

What is love?  
 A question, I find myself pondering often,  
 Another question,  
 What is love to you?  
 Because when I see it,  
 Love is fights late at night,  
 Hitting, screaming, slamming the doors.  
 Love is when he--

"He? Who is he?"  
 "Just a friend"  
 And that's true.  
 "Just a friend?"  
 "yes"  
 "your cheating"  
 He says that,  
 As he squeezes my hand,  
 until my knuckles begin to fold.

That's not love.  
 Let me restart.  
 Love is when you hug,  
 Embrace the one you desire,  
 As they pierce knife through your back,  
 And you smile.

Wait, that's not love either.  
 Love is everything said,  
 When nothing is said at all.  
 Instead of piercing  
 knives through your back,  
 They plant thorns around your neck.  
 And you watch your tone with him,  
 you can never leave.  
 "No one else will love you as much as I do"  
 And I believe him.  
 I stay.  
 I stay and watch,  
 As he disobeys, every rule he's put down,  
 then leaves.  
 No one will love me as much as he did.

*(Continued on page 161)*

*(Continued from page 160)*

That's not love,  
 Because it wasn't a happy ending,  
 I didn't get my prince charming,  
 And now I have no love left to give.

So what is love?  
 I don't know  
 I have none left.  
 and Cinderella lied.  
 Because my prince charming never stayed.

**Corrine Hinkle**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

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## The Dangers of Love

Love is known for causing people to do crazy things. Things they may regret later but in that state of love anything can seem worth it in the moment. The overwhelming feeling of new opportunities from the relations overcomes our common sense, making us act reckless and even dangerous. I can attest to this, in the name of love I became my worst nightmare. I was reckless, I was dangerous, and head over heels for the wrong men. Men whose desire was to cause pain to purity of the longing for love. The recurring question is always "How far would you go for love? ", all the answers I've witnessed can't even comprehend how far I would go. To prove the depth of my love, to prove my devotion, and my dedication. Over and over again I prove and prove how far I will go. But I've never been shown the same love in return. Love is hypothetical, what you put in you very rarely get back. People wishing to be shown love know deep down that they wouldn't show it in return. But that never stopped them from delivering disappointment to every person they come across. I was ready to give up on love, put my willingness towards something else. But just as I was about to give up on love he came into my life, someone willing to prove how far he'd go in the name of love. On paper, we would make such a reckless duo, both willing to go out of our way for love. I knew

*(Continued on page 162)*

*(Continued from page 161)*

this love was a dangerous mistake waiting to happen. I shouldn't have fallen so fast, I know the pain it causes too. But being let down so many times I became desperate and my wants overcame my common sense. All I know is this will either end with the most perfect mistake out there or the most catastrophic ending since Romeo and Juliet.

**Gabriella Loughner**  
Brunswick Middle  
Grade 8

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**Addison Dressel**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## Heartbreak in a Fairy Tale

Fairy tales once taught naive minds that love was some perfect thing without flaws. That when the prince said “I do” he respected the commitment he had made towards his queen, as time would tell that wasn't always how the story carried on. As time passed on, the imperfections slowly showed, revealing that the happily ever after didn't always last as long as it implied. The King and the Queen slowly fell out of love for one another, the prince began to love only himself, and the old wicked lady became happy all by herself. These once pure stories began to be corrupted by hate. Which was never shown on the pages in the peaceful little book. The perfect worlds made from these little stories couldn't handle the heartbreak that was from Mr. Perfect falling for another woman, and betraying the one he had sworn he loved. If only there once pure love lasted as long as it was meant to. If only it was just that black and white, if there was a clear difference between hate and love. But over time the two blended into a gray, leaving the difference between the two blurred to the naked eye. If the difference was just as clear as it once was then maybe the queen could have stopped the heartbreak that was coming her way, stopped the betrayal the king would leave for her to find. All the brokenness that could have been avoided if the black and white weren't so grayed together. Oh how hearts would be full of love if it were. But this wasn't how the stories turned out for many. The love these silly little stories had was what every little girl dreamed of since she first heard them. From that point on every chance she saw to have that pure love she would take without the skip of a beat. But just as the Queen had realized, that poor young girl who just wanted to find her prince charming realized the harsh and painful truth. The fact that the love she sought could only be found in the pages of that silly little pink book that's now stuffed in the back of her closet in that cold dark college dorm room. Collecting dust in the darkness with the rest of her dreams stashed away, being forgotten with the rest of the world.

**Gabriella Loughner**

Brunswick Middle

Grade 8



Kaitlin Horner  
Medina High  
Grade 12



**Gillian Kozopas**  
Black River High  
Grade 11

### **The Twisted Knife**

The words you say,  
The way you defend it,  
Twist the knife  
That you forced in my back.  
I feel blood spill out of the gaping wound,  
With each  
"I'm sorry."  
"I didn't mean to."  
"It was nothing."  
And with every word,  
Crested with your lies;  
I see clearer  
And clearer;  
That the knife was there  
Much before you did it.  
No, for the knife was there  
Since the moment you laid  
Your provoked eyes on me.

**Grace Piepho**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8



**Riley Kubitz**  
Black River High  
Grade 11

The tears warmed my cheeks  
 My hands *shaking* until I could take no more  
 All I needed was to breathe  
 I just need to count to  
 F  
 O  
 U  
 R

But every time I try to calm down  
 It just gets worse  
 The anxiety **creeping** towards my lungs  
**Suffocating** me in endless fear

It's not as easy as people say it is  
 I can't just tell myself,

"You're  
 okay"

My vision is foggy and my head is clouded  
 I just wanna **go home**

Nobody understands how bad it is  
 The shadows of it follow me everywhere I go  
 But they just tell me I need to  
 "B  
 R  
 E  
 A  
 T  
 H  
 E  
 "

"You'll be fine"

I can't be fine when my every thought is accompanied by  
*What if I don't feel good*  
*Can I go home*  
*Who's home?* Nobody, nobody's home, **can't go home**

(Continued on page 169)

(Continued from page 168)

It's a **good day** when I don't cry  
 It's a **good day** when my lungs can accept the oxygen I offer  
 It's a **good day** when my mind is focused  
 It's a **good day** when I can think about  
 ANY  
 THING  
 ELSE

**Emily Burkey**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

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### The After

Love was bound by just the simple phrase, till death do us part. But as time aged the simplicity of this sacred love didn't always live till the final breath. The purity of these shared memories ease and torment the wandering mind. Re-living the memories as though they were so recent, antagonize the present with your absence. Keeping my eyes locked on what once was, instead of the present. Those peaceful memories being stripped from the safety of my arms, leaves a painful void unwilling to be filled. The absence of light makes the darkness scream with torment. The light was the radiant joy from the moments spent together where the radiance of your laugh made the stars seem dim. When the light was gone, there was just darkness, nothing could describe what came next. The loneliness, the sorrow, the regret, the miserable sleepless nights, could only be described as "after". After the goodbye nothing was the same, the sun never shined as bright as it once did, and that one song that once brought us joy now only brings despair. In the after, pain and sorrow was a regular occurring thing. It was as though each step carried dread, dread I couldn't escape. With every step, I feel as though I'm falling deeper and deeper into this endless void filled with the constant reminder of the past. The agonizing torment feels like daggers from the dead and buried memories. I've tried to let these exhausting and tormenting memories go, but each time I do the thought of losing what we once had is threatening. The possibility of me eventually letting go seems so impossible yet the misery from the pain makes me want to

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*(Continued from page 169)*

believe. Believe that this pain could end, and I'd be able to see the light as pure as it was before, before the pain came and before we had our last laugh. Before everything changed and I saw love turn into hate with the blink of an eye. Before the words "I love you" became such a painful simple sentence. Letting go would grant me to see love as love instead of a burning threat, aiming to hurt. If I could just simply let go and breathe air as pure as it was, then I could be free. I'd be rid of the after, and back to the pure before.

**Gabriella Loughner**

Brunswick Middle

Grade 8

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## **Blue**

Blue is the  
brightness that fills the sky, scraped by buildings and covered by  
clouds  
deep ocean that swells in waves of foam, its beauty can contain  
or consume  
rain that seeps down the windows when the sky is no longer  
bright  
slick ice that one can not see in a winter blaze  
happiness from sunny summer days  
sadness and the tears that run down a face

**Madeline Beck**

Medina High

Grade 10



**Kaitlyn Pesarchick**  
Medina High  
Grade 12



**Meah Cerne**  
Black River High  
Grade 10

## Pencil Smudges

The reset begins at 12  
The past year of crazy events,  
The sad sadness  
Undo like pencil erasers,  
Leaving some marks.

This happens just like any other thing,  
The recyclable things, the holidays.  
Things becoming new and fresh,  
As simple as a circle.

The weight being lifted off your shoulders  
Goes somewhere else, away, gone and forgotten.  
We start the year slow and easy.

Look back to the wasted time spent,  
Things I wish I had done  
Leave smudges of erased graphite.

**Max Papajcik**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## **A Broken Pencil Has No Point**

A broken pencil has no point  
A broken pencil has no use to the world anymore  
A broken pencil is forgotten about and lost

Replaceable  
A broken pencil is replaced

Maybe the pencil is happy that it's broken  
That it no longer has to meet everyone else's demands

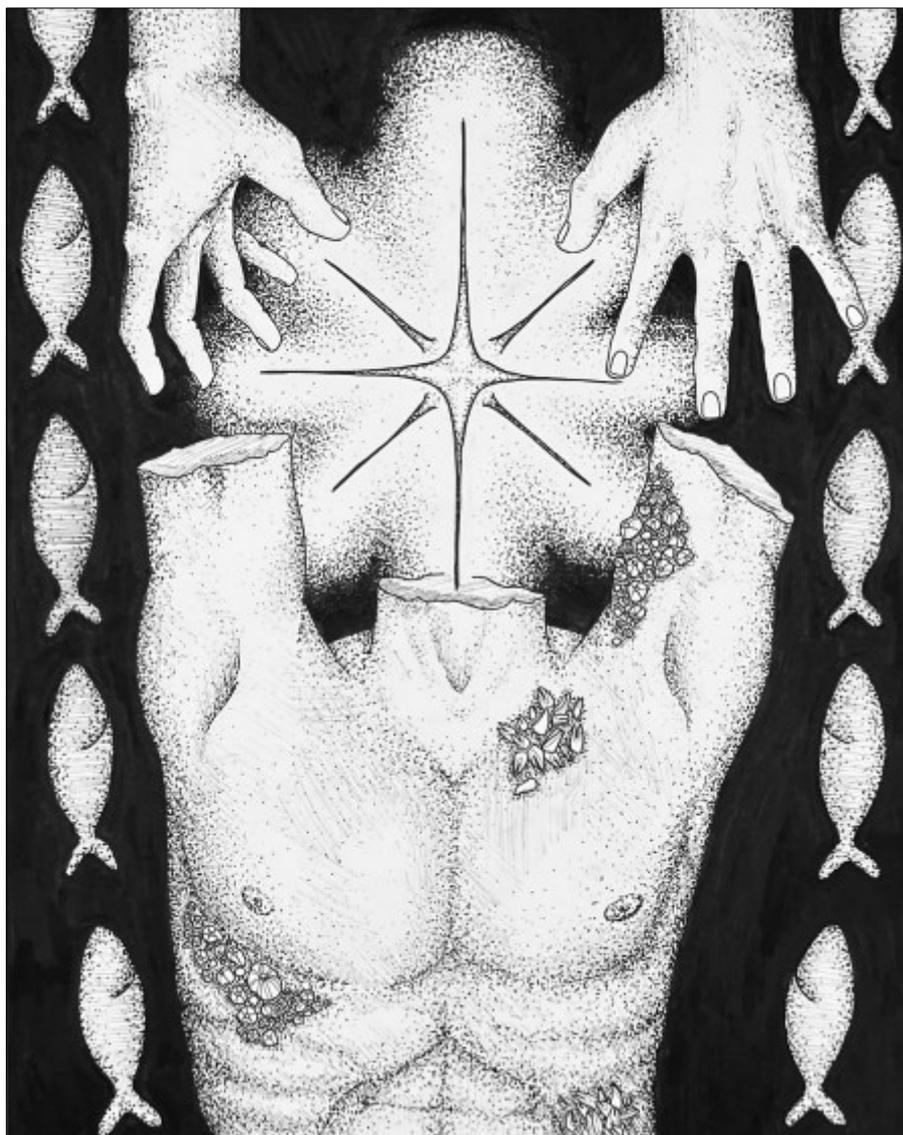
But a pencil can be sharpened again  
Can be sharpened just to be used to its breaking point again  
As long as you have a pencil sharpener, time, and patience, that  
is

But I don't have patience  
I use mechanical pencils  
I just use and use the lead until there's nothing left to give  
Until the pencil is discarded  
Left to try and find broken pieces of itself that's spread too thin  
Over hundreds of pages

I'm a mechanical pencil and I'm almost out of lead

**Monica Horschler**

Medina High  
Grade 10



**Leo Cockrell**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## Erase

Letters on sheets disappear within seconds  
One by one the words come off  
Soon enough all you can see are blank slates  
Be free of all mistakes  
Erase the mistakes

So much of any year is erasable  
Books upon pages  
Little rubber marks everywhere  
So little yet so much

With the papers becoming useful again  
There was one last impossible task to do  
Which was to add different words to these journals

Quick doodles, wanting to rewrite every page  
Only the things I didn't write  
Shaking erase marks off every page

**Austin Scott**  
Medina High  
Grade 9



**Hallie Haislip**  
Black River High  
Grade 12

**Torn**

From my head  
To  
My toes

I hope you all know

This generation is *torn*  
From their feet  
To their nose

Most are silent  
Don't say a thing

However  
That's not the case  
For all  
Human beings

Most  
Sit  
And  
Suffer  
In  
There  
Pain

*Momma help me . . . I'm getting bad again*

These other kids  
Will tell you  
You're not enough

But you need to promise you'll never give up

Even if in pain  
Everyone has to keep trying

People need you

Just close your eyes  
And relax them

**Isabella Lewis**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

She's standing in a field.  
Hoping that if she stands there long enough.  
The wind will take her away.

She wonders if she even belongs in this world.  
This world where everyone and everything in it is **Perfect**.

A world where everyone has a **mother** who loves them no matter what.

A **father** who tells them jokes to try and make them laugh.

And a **sibling** to bicker with about every little thing.

A **Family** to make them feel loved.

A world where everyone has someone at school who they can talk to about anything.

Someone who can make them laugh at any time.

Someone who can help you with the one math problem you can't figure out.

A **Friend** at school who makes them feel like they're not alone.

A world where everyone has at least someone to make them feel **Special**.

Not her.

She floats through this world like a ghost.

Hoping that one day a miracle would come her way.

Or the wind will just carry her away.

**Sadie McKenzie**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7



**Allison Ricco**  
Highland High  
Grade 10

## Forever Unfinished

My heart longs for symphonies,  
Symphonies that are finished  
but only by my hand

My unfinished symphonies,  
they haunt me like a dead rival would  
People say it only takes a simple word:

"Sorry"

But if it just takes a word,  
why do they always long for more?  
Perhaps it's because I've never been good to  
them

I've always been a hiding monster,  
waiting for the right moment to strike

If only I never had.

**Keira King**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

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## Friends Are Forever!

"Friends are forever!"  
Clearly, that person hasn't been to middle school.  
My friends want something in return,  
Friendship only exists when it's convenient.

I get it, they're "under pressure."  
But how can they be so cruel?  
Kindness; that's what they need to learn.  
I don't care if you're a genius.

Let's all go to dinner, but don't tell her!  
I feel like a fool,  
When will I ever learn?  
I'm done with having lenience!

**Sadie Ross**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8



**Karleigh Goble**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Outcasts

When stars align,  
Will heaven step in?  
Will it save us from within?  
Will it be our life line?

Question everything in our path,  
deciding right from wrong.  
Fighting the future with our past.  
We are just a pawn,  
in a game that was uncast.

What lies ahead,  
good or bad seems unlasting.  
Alone and misled,  
dreaming is a waste,  
if you are the only star shining.

In a galaxy full of darkness,  
fighting to be in the spotlight,  
every star is the same.  
Except you and I,  
we are a completely different design.

**Alyson Piazza**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Separate Lives

Different houses  
Different kitchens  
Different families  
Different traditions.

My life feels scheduled  
Not considered, "Leveled."

I love them both,  
But I feel split in two.  
Like a puzzle piece  
That needs glue.

**Addyson Opalka**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

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**Ava Workinger**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

“So you never cared?”  
No.  
I cared so much  
It destroyed me  
Or it was my  
Incapability to let people go  
So I did care at one point  
You just pushed me to  
Not care at all.

**Izzie Honigman**  
Medina High  
Grade 9

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### **Hate**

Love is so cliché  
I wish the pain would go away

Soon love will die out  
Hate will clog its plentiful spout

Love will shrivel up  
Pour more hate into my cup

**Luke Rainey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Lucas Kennedy**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## Hurting Hearts

I don't think you realize  
Just how much I like you  
I didn't really fantasize  
But boy I started something new

I watched you in halls smile and talk  
I wanted you to notice me  
Notice me while you walk

I took the time and the effort  
But it was never enough  
I never wanted to get hurt  
But you made it so tough

You were in my dreams  
You were all I was  
But I took it the extremes

I planned out the times  
Talked to your friends  
I gave you all the signs  
It's like there's no end

I took the time and you didn't notice  
When I finally got better  
I came into focus

You looked at me more than ever  
All I ever wanted was to get better

I was finally over you,  
But it seemed like I just now came into your view

Now we have to start all over again  
This time, you are a penny, and I am a talisman.

**Emily Burkey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **The Whirl Within**

She was a storm,  
full of emotion.  
One thing went wrong  
in the midst of the ocean.  
The hurricane formed  
just as she warned.  
She gave all the signs,  
demanding all eyes.  
Skewing her route  
of mass destruction,  
preparing herself  
for imminent corruption.  
The rain comes dashing,  
The thunder is clashing.  
By the end of the storm,  
Her new self would form.  
The clouds became clear,  
Bright skies were near.  
She doesn't have to fear,  
a rainbow will appear.  
The storm never lasts forever.

**Madeline Moore**

Cloverleaf High

Grade 11



**Lucas Kennedy**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## MixEd SiGnals

### Plural Noun

**Definition: when someone acts inconsistently or says one thing but does another**

**Examples:** I have been talking to you every day, saying good morning or goodnight. It hurts sometimes but I try to make it right. The thought of you never leaves my head. When you send a chat it's like an alarm to get out of bed. But just when I am about to see, what it is you've sent to me. I remember the things you have done that make me want to scream. You reply 3 hours later, with a response that needs a translator. You give the least thought to things that mean the most. However my heart looks past them like a ghost. You say, "ok" when I want you to ask me what I am doing. I try to leave you on delivered because it is just me pursuing. I want to lie and say these things stop my feelings, but my heart will never receive it's healings. Because it keeps coming back to you, even when I beg it not to. *Pitter patter pitter patter, my heartbeats true, but not for love, for the idea of you.*

**Synonyms: contradictions, **your texts**, inconsistency, **your actions**, lack of clarity, **your words**.**

**Emily Burkey**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## I'm Sorry

I'm sorry

I'm sorry for keeping you up all night trying to work things out

I'm sorry for everything being my fault.

Normally people like me would say it's okay.

But is it really okay after it has been repetitively said, repetitively said, repetitively said?

Responding back to feed the tension like I feed myself. Are you gonna get seconds of that?

Does that fit or are you trying to make it fit like you try to fit in with everyone else

Part over whole. This is only a part of your life over the whole big picture of the future.

Crying isn't buying you more time in the world.

It is wasting some of the time you have left.

Love is a four letter word but hurt is also another.

We hide our fear and cover how scared we are with a smile. Just how we like to cover up our scars and hide them like how we hide our feelings.

I'm sorry

I'm sorry for misjudging you or for you misjudging me

I'm sorry you don't think I'm good enough for you or that I think

I'm not good enough for anyone

Don't worry about me.

Someday I'll be free.

And I can't guarantee I'll be less damaged.

Selfless.

Selflessness is an illness I have that can or can't be cured.

People say I'm selfish and mean but how can I be those things when I'm more concerned about others needs.

Distracted, distracted, distracted, oh look I got a snapchat notification.

I'm sorry, what was I talking about?

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I'm warm, I don't feel good.

I'm sorry I think I have a fever of happiness that could break at any moment.

Beep, beep, beep, oh look, it looks like it broke. Like my heart did after all those comments were said.

But don't worry if they hurt my feelings because apparently it is all "just a joke".

If you think it's a joke then why am I crying instead of laughing?

I'm sorry, do you think me crying is funny or is it just another joke?

I'm sorry

**Skylar Schroeder**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

### **The Man Who Broke the Bad**

Walter got a diagnosis.

A solution he needed to find.

He entered a state of neurosis.

To cook was the only thing on his mind.

Walter's empire grew

and Heisenberg was known.

He did things that were awful, but he knew,

He still can't see his children grown.

All for Skylar Junior and Holly.

To provide when he's all gone.

It still filled him with melancholy.

Ruining his reputation with the family from dusk to dawn.

Was this what he wanted in his picture frame?

Even then, he still says "Remember my name".

**Griffin Day**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## Sorry

Others say that Sorry people  
Aren't sorry for anything  
But she was  
All of it

She was sorry when she showed up late  
She was sorry when she cracked his screen protector  
She was sorry when she sat by someone else at lunch  
She was especially sorry for being rude and making harsh jokes

And she really was sorry for taking over the project  
And she was sorry when she interrupted  
And she was so, so sorry for fighting

"You apologize too much," he said.  
"Sorry."  
"You think you broke the world from the inside out."  
Stop it, he told her.  
She wanted to apologize for saying sorry too much

Sure, she was self conscious  
Insecure  
Unsure  
Worried  
Broken down  
But she was not a Sorry person

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Footprints

When were younger and trudging through the snow,  
I would walk in your footsteps you placed left and right.  
You punched holes in the snow in two separate rows,  
As we traversed our backyard 'til the dawn of night.

Your stride was as long as the two legs I had  
I would have to jump from footprint to footprint.  
The fun we had just as two young lads,  
These memories I have do not fade, do not tint.

Yet something changed, and it snows no longer  
The memories in snow we have ceased to recreate.  
Despite this the case, I will still wander  
Through a world, not the backyard, but a whole new slate.

I jump in your footprints, trying to emulate  
The impact you had on me, mirrored onto the world  
Though I will fail to fully reciprocate,  
I see something new from these treasures I've perled

Your footprints are too big for me to wholly fill  
The empty space is far too great  
I will walk right beside the footprints you've willed  
And hope new footprints someone will create.

**Jakoby Currens**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Janelle Gehman**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

The wind blows and brushes my hair,  
 It makes it imperfect like the old pictures of me swirling all over.  
 The mean words people have said blow me around,  
 And the girl I was trying to be gets shoved to the ground.

My time spent in the hospital,  
 Is still in my head.  
 I can never forget what me and my family went through.  
 All those days were sad and gloomy,  
 And I wish the wind could take them away.

All my accomplishments are strong as a rock.  
 They will always stay with me,  
 And I will always be proud.  
 The wind can not blow them away  
 They will forever stay glued to the ground.

A big gust of wind comes and blows,  
 All the bad things that are light and unimportant I can now let go.  
 They blow like a tumbleweed getting farther and farther.  
 The good things remain and are all I remember.

**Gabi Sunday**  
 Medina High  
 Grade 9

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### **Anna My Beautiful Anna**

I don't know how to write  
 but if I did it would fix  
 Fix the minds of everyone  
 Small, big, far, and wide  
 Everyone would know the beauty that may not meet the eye  
 that I see all the time  
 Everyone would know what she means to me, how she fixes my  
 mind  
 How it came to be to someone as sweet as she but I stay, my  
 thoughts stay . . . meaningless without her  
 No person truly knows what it's like to have a being like one of  
 Anna  
 She doesn't live down the street and she does not know the  
 wires of your mind

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She is simply there to be loved by specifically you  
 She may not know you like how you wish she did  
 Anna might never speak to you or me without need  
     Anna can love no one if she wishes  
     She can hate you without regret that bleeds  
     Bleeds into her thought and makes her grow weak  
 Yes she could care less what happens to you and me  
     But the way I see  
 to know you continue to admire her that is the beauty that you'll  
     never catch sight of  
 The wish of being her to know that someone as detailed and deli-  
 cate as her could bring pure essence to someone's small shriv-  
     eled heart  
     Could be the brand new start  
     Of something truly beautiful  
 The thought of being the one that holds the grand offerings of joy  
 and happiness of everything could only remind you of her  
 When you see Anna walking by you know everything must have  
     been perfect up to that very moment  
     Life will be ok if you love, and befriend her  
 There is scarcely a time to get a glimpse of someone as beautiful  
     as she with a heart so fluttery, light, big and, bright  
     That when she passes by and says "hi"  
     She makes you feel soft and warm inside  
     Loving her is a gift of life  
 Anna is more than just right she is more than a golden star shin-  
     ing bright  
 The brightest shine that shines so bright that even the hate of all  
     the world could not resist the most elated relaxing wish  
     Of her heart  
     If there is a chance to be me and see  
     The beauty of she  
     Then never forget the majestic one  
     Have the biggest heart to one of hers  
 And remember Anna, my beautiful Anna.

**Athena Diamond**  
 Brunswick Middle  
 Grade 8

### Season's Love

It falls like autumn leaves, or summer rain  
Still I sit here, wallowing in the pain  
The voices always hurt me  
Please just let me be

I want a new place  
Full of dresses, tied in lace  
Where I can lay back and scream  
A hideout to build my self esteem

It's fallen like winter snow, or spring flowers  
Still I sit here, wanting to cower  
Then you come along, nothing but joy and smiles  
You bring me happiness,  
You'll twirl around filling me with love  
Wish we could just stare at the stars above

Don't ever leave me, I swear I'll break  
I'll apologize over every little mistake  
So be careful if you love me, you'll lower your head in shame  
I'll tell you I love you back but others will go up in flames

I'll fall gently to sleep, Oh, I just want someone to love  
You'll sing in a voice, just as beautiful as a dove  
I laugh and wave, for the first time in a while  
And for once in my life, I'll look at you and smile

**Bethany Hofmann**

Root Middle

Grade 7

## Why Someone in the World Is Sad

I was walking around the pier, after what I just heard I didn't know what I wanted to do anymore. So I sat at the end with my feet dangling in the water. Then it started to rain but I didn't care anymore. There was no point for me to move. There was no point for anything at all anymore. I sat there on the pier for hours until my mom called me in for dinner. I decided to go inside even though I knew that I wasn't going to end up eating. I was completely soaked so my mom gave me a towel and told me to dry off. My mom made me my favorite food but I didn't care at all. Not even the slightest little bit of compassion towards anything. I decided to just go to my room and started sobbing, crying, and I even ended up throwing up once or twice. I ended up crying and crying but I never ended up going to sleep. It was going to be a lot different now that my Grandpa wasn't going to be here.

**Collin Ely**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

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**May 17, 2018**

The pitter patter of our bare feet hit the warm pine colored cement, as Greer and I swung the racket to aim at the neon green ball. The sun was winking down at us, as the contrast of its blue and white background helped make its bright rays stand out. We were all glistening on our foreheads because of it. Lilly and Quinn watched patiently, waiting for one of us to call it quits. When eventually Greer answered their request.

"All right guys, one of you can sub in for me," Greer replied.

I was out of breath standing, waiting for one of them to take Greer's place on the tennis court when, strikingly, a phone went off. Quinn was the closest to it, and she investigated to see who the phone belonged to.

"Hey Kik, this one's yours right?" Quinn asked.

"Oh yeah, hang on," I commented, while setting my racket faced down parallel to the cement. I met with Quinn to receive my phone, only to realize that it was my father who was calling. I slid my finger across the bottom of the screen, which caused it's

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ringing to stop. "Hello," I responded, "what's up?"

"Hey," replied my dad, following with a long pause between his words paired with a sigh "you need to come home now. You're at the park, correct?" I had coughed up the words,

"Yeah, what's wrong?" My mind raced, *was my nana sick, was I in trouble, why is he being so direct?* My thoughts came to a stop when I heard a faint cry in the background. It was my mother.

"Just come home now please, we will talk when you get here," uttered my dad while hanging up the phone. I could feel the tears start to swell in my eyes, my vision went foggy. Something was wrong, but what? Without saying anything, I booked it towards home.

My house is a half a block away from where the park was located. All I could focus on was the fact that I had to get home. Barefoot, I ran through the creek while letting the sharp stones peirce the bottoms of my feet, but I paid no attention to them. My feet met the mossy cement steps, and once they completed those, the street. I did not look both ways, ultimately I did not care. I knew I needed to be home, and I was not there yet. All my mind had the capacity to focus on was getting me home. Next, my feet touched the recognized ground of my neighborhood's sidewalks. My eyes wandered looking out for obstacles within my path, while also looking at the clouds breaking the harsh beams from the sun. I had been running for so long, I noticed I was almost to my house. As though it was instinct, I pushed myself to run faster. Faster towards my home, faster away from the park, faster towards the chaos which waited for me behind my front door. The sun struck down now making me exhausted as if I had just ran a marathon in the desert. The pounding of my feet hit the cement harder each time they met. I heard my throbbing heart within my ears, and I could feel its call behind my eyes. Suddenly my feet touched the grass telling me I was in my yard now. I had hopped from, one, two, three, stones on my princess path up to the stairs leading me to the front door. The house had two doors guarding its entrance, one that was crystal clear like a fish bowl, and the other as black as night. Yet when I approached the door, the black was nowhere to be seen, only the inside of the house was visible.

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When I peeked through the doorway I could see my mother. She was leaning against the corner of our fireplace that held the television. She wore her green fleece sweater that contrasted against her bright red eyes and swollen face as she held her crumpled up, snot filled tissue. She had been crying a lot. Seeing my mom in that state urged me to open the glass door. When I turned to my left I saw my sister and my father. My sister who was also red in the face did not say a word, but my father, nibbling at a jar of peanut butter broke the silence.

“Have a seat Chiara,” he said. Without saying anything I worriedly sat down like I was directed to. “There’s no easy way to say this love,” my dad cried as he spoke, “but the doctors found a tumor in my lung two weeks ago. When we went back today they told us it was stage four kidney cancer.”

My heart stopped, the world around me stopped, everything stopped working. My vision went blurry yet again, my heart pounded even louder, my breathing quickened, I felt as though I was standing outside of my body watching this “scene” that would have impacted the main character for life. But it was me, I was the character and I was living in it. My only reaction was to cry and hug my dad as if it was the last time I would see him. My mind had a million thoughts running through it. *How much longer do I have with him? Does this mean he will be in the hospital soon? Will he end up losing what he has left of his hair? How is nana going to take this?* But I only had the energy to release one question from my mouth.

“How is this going to change things,” I asked.

My mother replied with, “We aren’t sure yet,” she paused while wiping a tear, “but it’s not going to be an easy process for us at all.”

The only person who was left to find out about this curse was my other sister, Tori. Tori loves my dad, it’s almost like she idolizes him. My dad used to be her soccer coach when she was five, and now she is 19 with a newly received scholarship for her performance of the sport that was introduced by him. With her still being at practice, my mom told Kylie and I to go wait downstairs and talk if we needed to. Turns out Kylie knew my dad had the tumor two weeks ago, but she didn’t know it was cancerous at the time. My mom only told her because she was the oldest and felt she would need time to process it with my

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mother. An hour later we heard our front door open, we knew it was Tori. Within another fifteen minutes she was downstairs next to Kylie and I, all huddled in her bed. My eyes were stuck on the ceiling trying to distract myself from reality by counting the squiggled star shapes above me, without realizing it, I too then fell asleep.

After we all woke up it was eight o'clock at night, and the shadows of the house darkened along with the rest of our spirits. My mother told my sisters and I we would need support throughout all of this, and we should text our closest friends about what had happened. Without hesitation, I went upstairs and noticed my phone was at twenty percent. The blaring red sign was screaming and told me it needed to be charged. I called four of my friends that night. Brooklyn who had been my best friend since kindergarten, Madey who I had only been friends with for a year, then Delany and Joy. The last two soon showed me their true colors by expressing to me that I was "overreacting," about the situation. Brooklyn was the only one who had cried on the phone that night when I told her, that is how I knew she was the only one who truly cared about my dad's health.

After I called everyone, I reached up with my tired arm to scratch my eyes. Soon realizing I had cried so much that they were raw under my bottom eyelashes. With my eyes growing heavy I fell asleep.

The date today is currently September 6, 2022, over four years later and an abundance of situations has occurred within that time. My dad's first hospital visit was June first in 2018 where he had his first surgery to get the majority of his tumor removed. Once it was taken out, the tumor weighed five pounds and was the size of a football. This tumor had engulfed his left kidney, meaning that too needed to be removed. Two years later by November of 2020 my dad wound up in the hospital again for a spinal infection that put him on his deathbed in the ICU. He somehow escaped and came home three months later. But more recently my dad had another trip to the hospital, only this time he never came back home. He was forcibly sent to the "prison" after two weeks of not eating or drinking anything and stayed in bed. When he arrived at the building in July of this year, we were told one of his lungs had partially collapsed, and his only kidney he had left was failing. My mom was scared that if he did come back

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home, I would be the only one who would be there to find him in a state where I needed to call an ambulance. So she decided he needed to be put in an assisted living facility.

I was the only daughter available to help my mom with this search due to both of my sisters now being moved out or in college. The first two places we looked at had told us they couldn't take my father because he was "too young." But thankfully our last, and only chance left in Medina, told us they could take him. My dad has been living there for over two months now inhaling 6 liters of oxygen daily, alongside his choice of hospice care.

Now everyday after school I visit my dad before I go to work. I know how to fill in the sign in papers for visitors when you walk into his building. The receptionist knows my name, and often asks me how school is going. But when I walk into room 252 with the label "DELappi" the conversation stops. My dad hardly speaks anymore and only answers with a simple nod or shake of the head. We were told he only has a few weeks left, so my mom and I are doing the best that we can to be happy around him. Ever since May 17, 2018 my whole life has changed, making it a day I will always remember.

**Chiara DeLappi**

Medina High

Grade 12



**Madison Slivka**  
Highland High  
Grade 11

## Final Breath

People always talk, sometimes joke about their final breath, and fantasize about the apocalypse. For every person, every religion, this means a different thing. Judgment, angry gods, whatever the case, this is an openly debatable topic. But, even though it is not an uncommon conversation, it still remains a fantasy. Therefore, I was entirely unprepared for the events of the day as I lazily rolled out of bed.

My room, the walls a deep pink color I loved at age six but now despise, is small and crowded. I guess you can call me a hoarder but my room is just super tiny. My mom was just walking out of her room when I walked by on my way to the stairs. Even though we have only been living in our small house in Ohio for two years - since my dad passed away - I know it by heart. The third stair creaks with enough weight and so does the seventh. I know that seven is supposed to be a lucky number but I despise it because Daddy died on the 7th day of the 7th month. I carefully avoid the seventh stair but Mom steps right on it and it groans with her weight. Maybe that was a sign about how bad today will be, but at the time I didn't recognize it. I just continued down the stairs and rushed through my morning routine.

I ended up having to chase the bus, again. I might need to start getting up earlier. I had to sit next to Ronald Davis when I finally caught the bus (at the next stop), and I hate Ronald Davis. He is slimy and gets awful grades and keeps flirting with me even after I told him I was definitely not interested. I mean, come on. But apparently I didn't take that as a sign either. I just sucked it up and dealt with it, like I do every day. Don't complain, just make it through the day - that's my motto.

I rushed through the squeaky clean hallways of my middle school, lined with trashy lockers from when the school was built 20 years ago. As I ran through the hall (and almost tripped) I heard a kid start cussing and banging his locker. I laughed then, but it became less funny when I found my lock was jammed too. I said a no-no word or two before going to find a teacher. In the end I was over 5 minutes late for the first period. And boy, I must have been really tired because I didn't notice that as a sign either. Turns out the day went somewhat smoothly, that is until 4th period.

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“Can Aliza Simmons please come to the office. Aliza Simmons.” I was sitting in the middle of math class when principal Huggins came on the loudspeaker. And said my name. I felt my body tense up and sweat beads form on my hands as I stood up and walked to the door. Everybody went “OOOOHHHH”, because you know how immature middle schoolers are. I walked through the hallway to the principal's office with shaky hands. I definitely took this as a sign. When I got to the office I saw my mom there. And she had been crying.

I was rushed out to the car before I could ask any questions. Finally I spoke up. “Where are we going?” I asked with a trembling voice.

“The hospital,” My mom replied in an unusually firm tone. I didn't need to ask any more questions. I knew what this was about.

My grandmother and Mom's mother had been in the hospital for about three months with brain cancer. She had been through countless treatments but the cancer always came back. And now, judging by my mom's frightening tone, she has gotten worse. I truly was scared for her and for my mom, who couldn't bear another loss this soon after dad. Maybe I couldn't either. My hands still trembled.

We got to the hospital where they directed us to her room. My Uncle and Aunt were already there. And they were holding hands, praying. Then I saw her, frail under a gray blanket, hooked up to countless machines. I waked over to her bed and took her surprisingly cold hand. “Grandma”, I whispered, my voice barely audible.

“It will be okay, sweetie,” She said in a voice quieter than mine. Then she took her final breath.

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

She is the sunshine when I'm in a storm  
 She is the lullaby to my long nights  
 She is the blanket when I need to warm  
 She is the firefly that's brighter than lights  
 She is the toolkit for when I break down  
 She is the song I'll never get bored of  
 She is the bright smile when I start to frown  
 She is the sweet chocolate box sent with love  
 She is the chord to my every dull note  
 She is the blossoming rose to my thorn  
 She is the cause of every poem I wrote  
 She is the thread when I'm tattered and torn  
 She is the reason my hopes are so high  
 But she is up there, floating in the sky

### **Bailey Whitacre**

Cloverleaf High  
 Grade 9

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### **All My Fault**

My rash was spreading, pulsing, hurting. This was all my fault, all my fault, all my fault. I don't understand why and how this happened, how could the experiment go wrong. We took every precaution so this thing wouldn't happen. I quickly pulled down my sleeve as soon as I heard someone walking in the hall, they didn't know. "What are you doing in here?" Jason asked me. "Just cleaning up the work space." I replied with a slight smile. They can't know I got stung, they just can't. "I can't believe this happened," He murmured. "Everyone knows what happened now, the president informed everyone." He stated. My face felt hot and my rash was itchy like crazy. "What's wrong Emery?" He asked me with a worried look. "Nothing!" I shouted and walked out. Who knows what they would do if they found out. I had to get a cure or I would be dead. Luckily the last experiment that we did with this to find a cure only helped but never fully got rid of it and that's what I have been taking.

No one was safe anymore, absolutely nobody. Pretty soon these creatures will be infesting every country on this planet. Everyone will die I thought to myself, no one is going to make it out alive. A little while later I decided to sit on the sofa and turn on the news channel. "So I see that you've seen the news." Lilly stated. "Just turned it on." I replied. "You know people are mad,

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they want us gone.” She said as if she didn’t have a care in the world. I nodded my head showing that I wasn’t in the mood to talk to her. I just wanted this to go away and never ever come back. But instead of her going away she sat right next to me on the couch. After an hour or so of doing nothing but sitting there Jason came running in. “WE HAVE TO LEAVE!” He shouted. Me and Lilly both shot up from the couch with an astonished look. “They’re trying to get rid of us, they want revenge!” He trembled.

We quickly but cautiously packed our most important belongings and followed Jason to the front of the building. We were the reason this was happening, I can understand why they wanted us dead. Me, Jason, and Lilly were the only three that didn’t leave after the incident but everyone else left before the whole world knew. This was my fault, now everyone had to deal with the consequences. When we got to the front of the building Jason unlocked it swung the door open. “Oh my.” Lilly gasped. It was much worse than we thought. People were dead on the ground, cars crashed, and there was trash everywhere. This is all my fault. All because of the reckless act. All the sudden shots were getting fired at us. “Run!” Lilly shouted and just like that, the people were after us. As soon as the gun fires stopped, we did too. But not for long, we saw a swarm of them from the distance. I don’t think they spotted us but we definitely didn’t want to wait and find out. We started heading north, maybe it would be too cold for them over there.

We ran, and ran, and ran. I was so tired, we were all tired. When we finally took a rest it was already dark. I tried to get away from them so I could put the cream on. When I reached in the book bag to get it, it wasn’t there. It’s gone? How could this possibly be? My rash was worsening by the minute, I didn’t have much time. Maybe I could ask them. No, they can’t know. When I got back I could tell they knew something was up but I just went into our little fort we had made and closed my eyes. I woke up to the sound of a high pitched scream. I quickly ran outside to find Lilly lying on the ground and Jason hovering over her. “What happened?” I asked. “She got stung by hundreds of them.” Jason replied. “I just went to go get water, and now she’s going to die.” He said with a cold tone. This is all my fault, all my fault, all my fault. I was lucky that I only got stung by one, she on the other hand won’t last long without treatment, even a little would

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help. But I forgot it and now we had to deal with the consequences. I went out to find something to help Lilly in the pharmacy not far from where we settled down. Everything was gone, it was like a ghost town in the movies I used to watch. Something that I will never get to do again.

When I returned back I saw Jason sitting there with his head down. "She's gone." He mumbled. I stood there in shock, I didn't realize these creatures can kill someone that fast. This was my fault. But why was I still here? Jason sighed and got up. "We have to keep moving," He stated. "We don't have much time before they come and find us. Jason walked as I stood there. I quickly checked my rash that I had developed from the sting. My rash now looked worse than bubbly skin. This wasn't good. I jogged up ahead to catch up with Jason. We walked towards the horizon. This was all my fault, all my fault, all my fault.

**Skyla Haslip**

Black River Middle

Grade 8

## Gone

I wish you weren't someone I used to know.  
When I see you I always freeze.  
With a heavy heart, I let you go.

You were so happy you seemed to glow.  
I was stunned by your expertise.  
I wish you weren't someone I used to know.

Your face was perfect like fresh snow.  
If that's all you can foresee.  
With a heavy heart, I let you go.

I hope in the end that you grow.  
Like a flower or a tree.  
I wish you weren't someone I used to know.

You make my emotions overflow.  
If only it was different than what it seems.  
With a heavy heart, I let you go.

Your absence left me full of woe.  
I can only wish to dream.  
I wish you weren't someone I used to know.  
With a heavy heart, I let you go.

**Eva Taylor**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## For Our Love Shall Never Break

*“For our love shall never break, though the distance, though the time. Your heart in mine will keep this man alive. With you not by my side I must live with the memories we made- For I dream of the moment until we are reunited together. When I get to hold you in my arms.-Forever yours, Edward ”*

Dear Diary June-12-1814

“I found myself looking through his things again. After promising myself for so long that I wouldn't look at his stuff. For each time I do I hurt a little more. Remembering that my husband is gone. The more I think of this the more the sorrow becomes more torturous. I try my best not to think of it. But how could I not? He was my husband, no he still is and forever will be, even when the coldness of death tries to separate our love. Since it brings so much pain to look through it you might ask, What brought me to do that? I ask myself the same thing sometimes. I wonder why I repeatedly put myself through the pain. I have no real reason, it just happened. I suppose it was caused by me reading his letter again. Is it wrong? That's the last thing I have from him. My husband, Edward, had left for battle eight years ago. I haven't gotten any news, if he's alive, if he's dead, or missing. No news at all. I have been tormented by the unknown of this. The unknown has mocked me. It made me laugh. What's a woman to do? I have stayed in my house ever since he left. I fear if I do leave then he'll come home to an empty house where I am not there. He shall get the idea that I had left him. I have been mortified to leave, for the fact he could come home with me not there, so I refuse to leave. However I can't stay here all the time. I leave to go to my neighbor Katherine's house now and then. But that is the only time I leave my house. With all this time alone it gets me thinking. Do I think of the worst and move on? No, I will not, many people say I should but I just can't bear the thought of losing him. It's not possible, the Edward I had last known was and shall still be a fighter. He shall want to see me when he comes back, after fighting all this time in this horrible war. I must stay so when he comes back he will see his loving wife. I shall stay in this house to wait for my love.- Until tomorrow when I write again, Emily”

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My signature, it's as if it's a dance my hand will never forget. Emily. I set my journal down on my small oak table as I set my gaze outside, through my window. I feel a sorrow grow over me, the sadness is overwhelming, but somehow I find myself used to this feeling. I then released the breath I had apparently been holding. I wipe the tear from my eye with the tip of my finger. It sits on my finger heavy. As if all my sorrow was in it. I snap out of my trance and wipe the tear on my gown. I slowly walk out of my room, and with every creek I jump. Every creek was as surprising as the last. I wasn't used to the sound. I was only used to the silence. Nothing but it. As I walk down the aged stairs; Step by step. Creek by creek. I slowly walk into the kitchen, it feels cold and dark. It always has, since he has been gone. The sun never shines here nor in the rest of the house. Oh how I would love to feel the sun again. But then I come back from my thoughts and it all goes black. All I see is black, all I hear is silence, I feel nothing. The spontaneous change of scenery should have startled me, however I don't even break to blink.

As I stand in the blackness something changes, I feel a tingling sensation on the tips of my fingers. But that quickly changes to burning, my fingertips feel like they're on fire. But I don't do anything. I just stand there in the black void and let it happen. I then blink and I realize I am in the kitchen, standing in front of the stove. For once I see that the sun is coming in, the room is glowing, it feels happy. I look down and see my hand is in the pot of boiling water. My hand jumps up in pain. I then hear someone running up from behind. I'm frozen. Who could be here? I then feel someone put their hands on my stomach and then on the palm of my hands. I then hear in a low voice. One that I've longed to hear.

"Emily my love, What are you doing? You could hurt yourself!" a familiar yet alarming man said behind me, it couldn't be. It can't! It's impossible.

"Edward . . . Is that you?" I say as my voice shakes. I didn't know how to feel, it couldn't be real. I turn around with his arms still on my waist. I then see the man I've longed to see for so long. I see his little stubble of a beard. He never liked to keep it long. I see his brown hair that he always kept neat, and his green eyes. Oh how I've missed those eyes. I stop for a moment in disbelief, how is he here? I then put my hand on the side of his cheek and caress it. He was really here.

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“Of course it's me. Who else would it be?” he said with a little laugh. That laugh, the one that could make a whole room smile. As I go to put my arms on his shoulders and give him a hug, the moment I lay my arms on him I close my eyes just to live in the moment. It was perfect. But then when I open my eyes, he disappears, gone. My hands are still in the air, as if I'm hugging a ghost.

“Edward?” I called out. No one responds. Who would respond? I am alone and will forever be alone. I put my back against the wall, and I slowly fell, feeling the burn from my back and the wall rubbing together. However this pain doesn't faze the pain which I feel in my heart. Why? Why me? Why can't I have my husband with me? I finally hit the ground and it broke me. I start sobbing and sobbing. Where could my husband be? After about ten minutes, I got up to pat my eyes with a towel that was on the counter. I slowly walk into the bathroom, to fix my makeup. Who was I kidding, what's the point in wearing it? I never go out, I never see anyone. There was no point. As I stormed out of the bathroom, I decided to go outside on the front porch, to enjoy the fresh air. But first I needed to get my journal. As I slowly walked up the stairs I started to hear whispers. I couldn't make out what they were saying, and I didn't want to. I then ran in my room to escape all of the whispers. But as soon as I laid my hand on my journal I felt another hand on. I scream from disbelief, but when I look down there's nothing. I quickly grab my journal and dart downstairs. As I open the door, I take a deep breath in and out. I needed to collect myself. Edward wouldn't want me to be all sad about this. But I couldn't help it. I loved him, who knows maybe he forgot about me. I then sat on the porch swing and tried calming down. I just stare into the emptiness of the front yard. There was nothing there, no happiness, no sun shining and illuminating everything. Just darkness and loneliness.

**Gabriella Loughner**  
Brunswick Middle  
Grade 8

## Repetition

Countless sleepless nights, staring at the ceiling as if anticipating for it to collapse. Looking up at the dim night sky through the opening from a covered window, the light breeze coming from the crisp outside slowly pushed against the curtain. It danced with the wind in a hypnotizing motion. Back and forth, back and forth over and over again till the wind decides to dance with someone else. My mind, toning out the chaos from the surrounding world. A routine I've become used to, violent words are thrown around, the saltiness from my tears flood onto my flushed cheeks, and the end of the night finishes with a rush of emotions. I'm accustomed to this routine, I find the repetition of it to be agonizing. I become numb to the pain these nights bring, I can predict how every single fight can end, from me going through this routine so many times, it's nothing new. I'm never surprised when the first round of words are thrown. I know the topics they'll include, the names of various people it will involve, and all my past wrongs that will be brought up. It's as though it's a script I know by heart, I can't figure out if the repetition of these nights are soothing or frightening. The fact I know what's coming and what dreadful words will come calm my nerves. But the fact that we've been stuck in this routine and never break it scares me. It scares me how over and over you witness my bitter tears fall but it never cracks the mask you wear. The mask you wear to either protect yourself from these events, or to hide your face from me so I don't see how my tears bring no effect to you. How the sorrow I became acquainted with never bothered you. For these nights all I know is to look up at the stars and hope that they may bring some hope to these cold bitter nights. Some nights the resilience from these bright stars brings some comfort but on others the same stars mock me, mock me for still trying to change the routine. But as soon as the night falls I know this routine won't change, that my tears will still fall with no effect.

**Gabriella Loughner**

Brunswick Middle

Grade 8

## It Can Always Get Worse

I remember that day  
 The day everything got worse  
 when I thought it couldn't.  
 A week after that  
 again it got worse I thought it couldn't.  
 A month after that  
 again it got worse when I thought it couldn't.

Never think it can't get worse  
 because I thought that too.

That thought just left me with more pain . . .

**Sofia Soto**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

### Blue

Blue is like water rushing past my feet  
 Blue is beautiful  
 Blue is like breathing in the scent of rain  
 Blue is calm  
 Blue is the feeling of closing your eyes after a long day  
 Blue is serene  
 Blue is missing you  
 Blue is icy  
 Blue is feeling that something is missing  
 Blue is distant  
 Blue is heartache and fear  
 Blue is unwelcome  
 Blue is supposed to be loyalty  
 Blue is anger  
 Blue is like having your heart broken over and over again  
 Blue is sinful  
 Blue was my favorite color  
 Until blue reminded me of you  
 Now blue is no more than  
 My least favorite  
 hue.

**Emily Burkey**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

## The Question

There is one thing I cannot help but wonder?  
Why do we, as humans, feel a need for praise and approval?  
Why do we await the clapping at the end of the show?  
Why do we work extra hard when we know that some sort of  
prize or recognition,  
might come our way?  
Why do we have some sort of deep down desire for fame,  
and being able to leave a mark on this world?  
Is our own esteem not enough for us?

Why do people write music to be played in front of a crowd?  
Why do we write stories to be published?  
Why do we perform in shows?  
Why do we sing in front of an audience?  
Why do we create art to be sold or put in a gallery?  
Why do we invent with a hope to get rich or improve other's  
lives?

What is with our concern for others?  
Is "keeping our eyes on our own paper" too hard?  
Must we always compare ourselves, either consciously or without  
even knowing, to others?  
Do we really believe that our life has no meaning if someone else  
is not there to take note of it?  
Why, if we created something WE loved,  
would we change it simply to satisfy the feelings and comments  
of others?  
And why do we lie to make ourselves sound better to others?  
For we are all guilty of the same crime, being human.

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Acceptance

'It's not that big of a deal'  
but I still hold it close to my chest  
Nails digging  
Fist clenching  
Blood boiling

In my arms  
Is the paper that could-  
No  
The paper that will change everything.

I'm so close to just ripping it in half  
So it can't warp anything  
And everyone will forget about  
The paper that changes everything  
Because who will forgive me  
If the paper doesn't say

'congratulations!'

**Molly Marcum**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## I'm Tired

I'm tired.  
Of being the person,  
You go to for help.

I'm tired.  
Of being the person,  
You hate on for the littlest mistake.

I'm tired.  
Of pretending,  
To care about You,  
When all I care about is making it through  
This year  
So I can abandon You in high-school.

I'm tired.  
Of you dumping,  
Your problems onto me,  
Like a sailor would dump a bucket of  
Slimy fish onto the deck of the boat.  
*A SPLAT*

And I'm tired,  
Of Your metaphorical destructiveness,  
Breaking every life You enter,  
Cracking, my body, with every word You say,

I'm tired of this.  
And I hope You get this by now,  
It's all because of You.

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## You Wouldn't Know

How do I tell my brain  
That I don't need to be there for you anymore?  
That I don't need to check on you  
Or ask about your day  
That I don't need to comfort you  
Or stick up for you  
LEAVE THEM BEHIND  
I scream at my thoughts  
FORGET THEM  
I want to shout  
But even though  
You never did those things for me  
I'll still do them for you  
*stupid, stupid, stupid*  
I hate you  
But I will always be there  
Until my heart realizes  
What it does to my brain  
I will always be there for you  
Not that you would know  
What that's like

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Nothing to Show

“You’re so dramatic”  
“You’re lying”  
“Yeah right”  
“It’s all for attention”

Well I wish that words left cuts on your skin  
I wish that actions could make blows  
I wish that manipulation could gash my hands

I wish that hate could turn my arms blue and purple  
I wish that fear could make me bleed  
I wish that lies could make black circles around my eyes

I wish that the things they did, and said,  
I wish it would all leave marks  
Anything to prove to you  
It’s all real

I wish I had something to show for the damage that’s been  
caused  
I wish I had something to display, and get help for  
I wish that everything they did could show up  
I wish that I had scars that show what I’ve been through

But I masked  
And covered up  
And pretended  
And imagined  
“Everything was alright”

So you don’t believe me now, when I have nothing to show  
No one else understands, they think it’s an excuse  
Because there’s no way to prove emotional abuse

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Social Anxiety: Words From the Mind

Social anxiety is like hearing the laughter in the hallway, thinking they are laughing at you.  
 Not being able to breathe like you have a noose tied around your neck.  
 You try and try to get it off but it has you in its grasp  
 like the stereotype put on you when you walk into a school.  
 Like there's a million pairs of eyes that are glued to you like you're an animal in a zoo.  
 But instead of a zoo,  
 it's your own mind.  
 Anxiety keeps me trapped in my bed  
 making me feel sick to my stomach.  
 Keeping me hostage as everyone else goes free.  
 People say "It is fine."  
 "You have no reason to be nervous."  
 They act like mindless zombies thinking that it is so easy to stop.  
 Like I am able to just pause my own thoughts  
 like music playing on my phone.  
 No

It's not that easy to stop  
 My brain runs the same mistakes over and over and over again  
 Never letting me forget  
 The simplest errors I have made in my life  
**ERROR: 1124 WARNING: SYSTEM SHUTDOWN**  
 I shut down from the world,  
 Almost as though I put myself on autopilot  
 No emotion  
 No empathy  
 Just there  
 There in the world  
 There in physical form  
**But are any of us truly there?**  
**Ever free from our own thoughts**  
**Ever free from the zoo called life**  
**Ever free from our anxiety?**

*(Continued on page 222)*

*(Continued from page 221)*

I'm being kept as a prisoner in my own head  
I've received a 3 life sentence  
Yet I never committed any crime  
Wrongly accused and being trapped  
No voice to be able to defend myself

No  
It's not that easy to stop  
My brain runs the same mistakes over and over and over again  
Never letting me forget  
The simplest error- sorry I've already said that  
I forgot  
I forgot  
I'm sorry  
**Wait what am I sorry for**  
**I did nothing wrong**

Did I get too loud again  
Sorry  
I'll stop talking  
It's all my fault  
I'm sorry

**Will Prew**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Empty Headspace

I can feel it happening again  
The clothes are piling up  
When I reach my tipping point what happens then?

Do I finally get a break?  
Do my hands not shake?  
Every night I lie awake  
But there's nothing more they could take

My head pounds as tears run down my face  
I can't handle this  
Maybe I just need an embrace

I get asked, are you okay?  
Not, do you wanna lay down today?  
I have little reason to stay  
But I would never leave,  
I just need to make it through the day

I get encouraged by so many people  
Just to have my spirit broken and defeated  
My whole life is becoming lethal

The people I trust are leaving me  
All I want is to be free  
But so many people guarantee  
"You're okay"  
And I just agree.

When you finally realize you're here it's too late  
You can't go back  
Just deal with your mental state.

**Emily Burkey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Fear

A constant sense of fear drifts past me  
 Or so I thought  
 But instead of it just leaving, it stays  
 It drowns me, for who knows how long

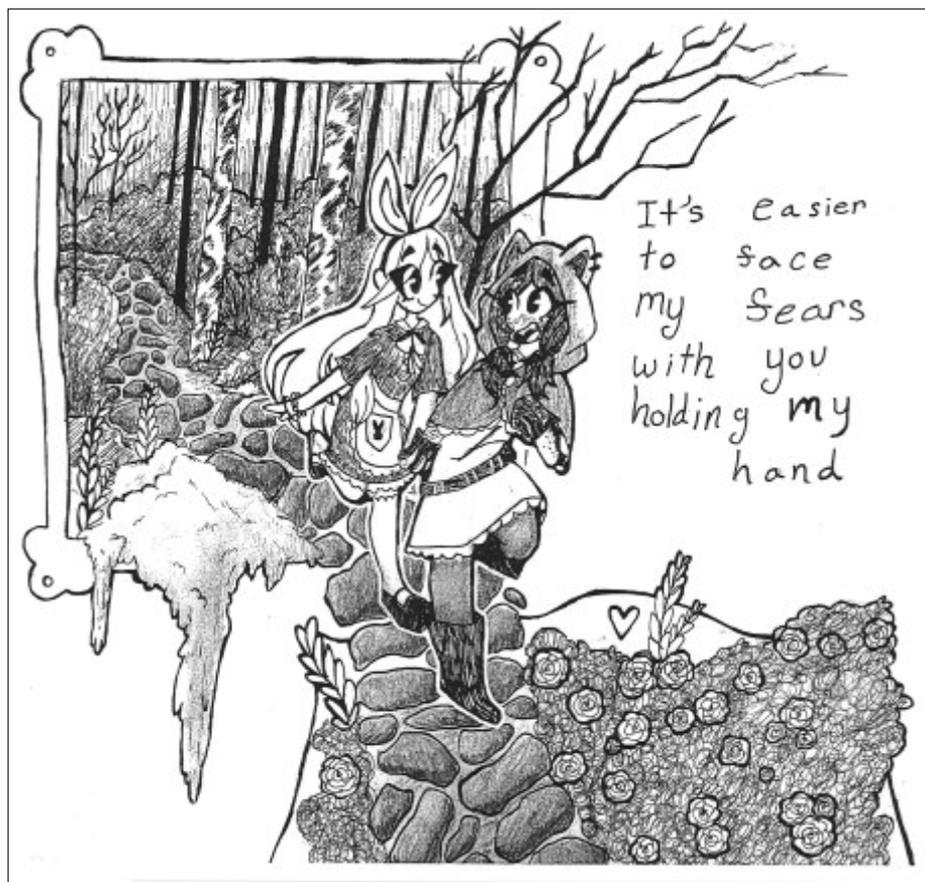
I can feel the tears starting to form  
 Everything now becoming blurry  
 The memories all appearing at once  
 Then, all of a sudden, the feelings begin to fade  
 away too

Thoughts pass through my head as I wait...  
 Someone is lost as someone arrives...  
 Is it really just nothing?  
 Or is it more, much more than what's just on the  
 surface?

I breathe trying to calm down the nerves  
 In, hold it, out, and again  
 In, hold it, out  
 Just trying to keep myself from having another  
 breakdown-another panic attack

5 different colors  
 4 different textures  
 3 different sounds  
 2 different smells  
 And 1 taste  
 Then repeat-  
 That's my motto-  
 The only way to keep the fear away

**Bailey Harris**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8



**Chloe Pozega-Strickfaden**

Black River Middle

Grade 8

## Muscle Memory

I know this  
This has been ingrained into my head since day one.  
Day one of so far five-thousand-one-hundred-ten

I know that the sound of my alarm tells me to get up  
I don't remember how to do that or where to go,  
But my feet seem to know after all these years

I know that I need to eat three meals a day  
I don't remember the last time I was hungry  
But I do remember people asking me if I ate today

I know that I need to do my schoolwork and get good grades  
I don't have the energy, and I feel burnt out in everything  
But my brain somehow focuses my eyes on the paper

I know I need to sleep because it's good for you  
I've come to find the ceiling patterns more familiar than my own  
eyelids  
My heart still remembers to send me dreams, and get me to bed

I feel as though I am on autopilot  
My shell of a body is steering  
As if I've been in a coma  
And I'm returning to an older, more fragile body

I can't see past the few days ahead of me  
And so I thank the universe for muscle memory

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Panic Attack

When I start to panic,  
I don't stop.  
It keeps growing and growing  
Until I break.

I start to snap my fingers.  
Left, right, left, right.  
My heart beats faster,  
Loud as a steady bass.  
My eyes dart around,  
So fast I'm dizzy.  
I start to cry,  
Steaming tears from the middle of my eyes-  
But eventually I'm fine...

I start to snap my fingers.  
*No, no, no, no!*  
My heart beats faster,  
*It's too much, make it stop!*  
My eyes dart around,  
*Why is everyone looking at me?*  
I start to cry,  
*I need to escape, I need to get out, everything is so loud-*  
I stand up,  
I leave the room,  
I hide.

Then the tears dry,  
I wipe them anyway,  
And press down,  
The feelings of danger that always inhabit my mind.  
I put on the mask that was pulled from my face without my consent,  
And I go back to my life.  
Still *Just Fine*.  
Still *Panicked-*  
**No? What are you talking about, I'm fine . . .**

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## The Race

Blood in your veins  
Your heart in your head  
As your color drains  
You are alive but almost dead.  
Your mind sets in  
As you step on the block  
You set your chin  
You listen as they talk.  
You forge your way  
You can't die  
Nobody is here to play  
Some just watch you fly  
You focus hard as the pictures blend  
You want to win but you can't let it end.

**Caelyn Letner**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

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## Always On the Go

Go, go, go.

That's the only thing I know.

Every second of my life is never slow.

I know I need a break, but things just get thrown my way.

My routine needs to flow, since I am always on the go.

**Brock Martin**

Black River Middle

Grade 8

Music is my everything  
I may not create music, but to the people who do  
Thank you  
You have saved me so many times  
Music is amazing  
Music is beautiful  
Music is my everything  
Music is like therapy  
Music is MY therapy  
So music can be your therapy too  
It can be Rap  
It can be Rock  
It can be Country  
Music can save you if your feeling down  
Music can make your day much better  
Music can be whatever you like it to be  
Music can do whatever you like it to do  
Music is as good as anything you can think of

**Landen McCloud**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **Throw It Away**

We should throw it away  
The textbook still there  
Do it today

Throw it in the bay  
Throw without care  
We should throw it away

But we have no say  
It is not fair  
Do it today

The teachers vote “yay” for the textbook to stay  
But we were not there  
We should throw it away

The textbook is not okay  
It has no flair  
Do it today

Why must it lay  
The waste of air  
We should throw it away  
Do it today

**Peter Arnold**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## I Swear

When there is nothing more to discuss.  
And they leave you in disgust.  
All you know is it hurts them.  
Is that what you were trying to do?  
Sometimes you just got to think  
*What is happening?*  
And never know anything  
except  
When birds don't sing  
They just fly to the sky,  
Your world stops spinning  
And you will never find out why.  
Things that migrate south  
Don't always come back north.  
You just have to keep living  
And hope things don't get worse.  
Keep on walking  
Even if the sky goes gray,  
Because the clouds will keep raining  
After you tell them to go away.  
Just stop crying  
It's nothing you can repair  
The world won't fall apart just because they aren't there,

I swear.

**Eva Taylor**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## Wings Are Broken Here

Once the pen in my hands flew across the page  
Leaving inky lines and loops  
They curved and slanted  
Ideas flowing from the veins in my hands  
To the tips of pens  
Faster than my brain could think them  
My eyes could see them

Stories of soaring birds  
Towering forests  
Mountains of grey and purple  
Seas with soft lapping waves  
And knights in shining armor

But the wings are broken here  
The trees are black and ashen  
Boulders and mountains become headstones  
Lapping waves become a violent storm  
Shining armor begins to rust

Frustration tears the page  
Scribbles of anguish fill the space instead  
The desire to write something beautiful  
Is stronger than nothing else

But alas,  
All the wings are broken here

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Yellow Rose

My petals are faded  
My stem is brittle  
I am not loved  
I am not hated  
I watch in agony as I am passed once more  
It wasn't my fault I was deprived of my life and put  
in a store  
I muster strength as another person does pass  
They pick up the pink rose next to me  
I realize I am last  
I wish for once someone would see me  
I'm really not considered pretty  
I'm the wilted yellow rose  
Never quite accepted as the rest  
That's when someone new walks by  
An elderly woman  
We are ancient  
A relatable perspective  
Aged like me  
She reaches to grab my stem  
And that's when I was chosen as the rest of them

**Megan Raklovits**

Root Middle

Grade 8

Down the street from Mr. Fren  
And across the house of many men  
Was a home of a boy  
Playing with his toy

The boy looked around  
And walked around the town  
But this boy was bound  
For a journey without frown

And he went through this town  
Spreading joy, and nothing else,  
To all people around

Weather helping a child  
Or singing a song  
If one was feeling mild  
He'd help them grow strong

And at the end of the day  
When the boy was tired out  
He wouldn't fray  
As he had no doubt

That a beautiful dream awaited him  
When the whole town eventually went dim

**James Lane**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### Figurative Language Poem

All alone  
Like a lonely bear  
On these lonely days  
I wish they would go faster than a hare  
On these lonely days  
nothing feels fair  
On these lonely days  
I smell sadness in the air  
On these lonely days  
I wonder  
Is there anybody out there

**Zack Simmons**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

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### Figurative Language Poem

The umbrella wailed when it blew away  
So sad it wanted to stay  
Over the hill blowing in the wind it blew  
Faster than a tornado it flew  
When finally it stopped it went CABOOM  
It took flight very soon  
Soon again it would blow away  
Even though it should stay

**Emersyn Schneider**  
Buckeye Junior High  
Grade 7

### Figurative Language Poem

The bag weighs a ton  
 Walking into the house with a Hum  
 My Mother being a bum  
 As the house sang  
 I drink my bang  
 In my room trying to hang  
 My friends deny it as an awful shame.  
 Man, my friends are so lame.

#### **Brock Kosh**

Buckeye Junior High  
 Grade 7

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### Run-on Sentence

Sometimes I wish I could only write in run-on sentences  
 Because then it means I can get out what I need to say  
 And I don't need to worry about all the commas or periods or  
 Semicolons or all that fun stuff  
 Because what I really need to worry about is making sure  
 What I want people to hear gets heard  
 And I can show them my heart without  
 Keeping to the metronome of my heartbeat  
 And it just feels like a limitation  
 Whenever I need to separate my thoughts  
 Because in my mind they are all together.

So maybe I would be able to use a run-on sentence just this once.

#### **Jakoby Currens**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7

## **The Eternal Stories**

I need character's I can hold on to.  
I need stories that change.  
I need authors who know the way,  
To write books that are a little strange.

Themes of despair,  
love, and pain.  
Reletless antagonists,  
Who have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

I need characters who never move on from their-  
Stories that change everytime I go-  
Back to the books in which I hide from my-  
Life that my family always tries to provide.

I need character's who will never leave me.  
I need stories that are never the same.  
I need others who I know agree,  
That books should go on forever,  
So we'll never be left lonely.

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## **The Greatest Valuables**

I am sitting in my room, all alone.  
Curled up in my bed, with a book in my hand.  
Nothing distracts me, not even my phone.  
I'm taken away to another land.

The house is busy, there's things going on.  
But with my good headphones inside my ears,  
That wonderful story is where I'm drawn.  
These books help me overcome fears.

The words are there just for me to enjoy.  
But I get wrapped up and lose track of time.  
While the characters get caught in a ploy.  
Adventure, danger, drama, maybe crime.

Whatever the themes, stories will unfold.  
Books are the greatest valuables to hold.

**Chloe Clendenning**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## I Will Not Write a Poem!

Wait!

Stop!

I'm not going to write a poem!

Poems are for people that can't write stories, but are too old to write just sentences.

Actually, I take that back,

Some poets can't write sentences either!

If I were to write a poem it would clearly bring me down.

And all of the meaningless rhyme,

Don't they know how much time,

It takes to find something that will rhyme,

Why I wouldn't pay a dime,

For I'm,

So sublime,

That I would never pay someone to find a rhyme,

That has that special chime,

That poets seem to love.

And all of the basic irony and meaning put behind each word in each line,

Why waste so much time?

When people out in the world are starving,

And people are jobless,

And homeless,

And people are abused,

And bullied,

And the world is getting warm,

And politics, don't get me started,

So, why write a poem?

Why not make a difference?

You see, I am not on that level of ignorance,

Therefore, I will not write a poem.

This is entry two, and I have come back with new information.

Did YOU know there was something called "free verse"?

**Olivia Weinberger**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

**I Will Not Write a Poem (and definitely not a villanelle)**

I will NOT write a poem.  
They may want me to,  
I will NOT write a poem.

They tell me to write about whatever comes to mind, if they only knew,  
My imagination is so thin you can see right through,  
I will NOT write a poem this time.

I guess I could write about that time when I learned to play the kazoo,  
I would run through the house as if making a Broadway debut,  
I will NOT write a poem.

I suppose I could write about the time I tried Kung Fu,  
Quit after just one month, but I guess I learned a thing or two,  
I will NOT write a poem this time.

Or I could write about that time at the zoo,  
Some crazy kid hit a worker with his shoe,  
I will NOT write a poem.

Look, I've just done it again, my predicament is true,  
I cannot not write a poem even when I try, now it's time to start a new,  
I will NOT write a poem this time.  
I will NOT write a poem!

**Olivia Weinberger**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Poetry

Poetry is the most confusing thing,  
It hurts and organ called my brain,  
It make me feel gloomy like the rain in the spring,  
But I'll try my best not to complain.

My rhyming is worse than my singing,  
Which is saying a lot,  
When I write I only feel like crying,  
But I'll give my writing my best shot.

Why are we even writing poetry,  
Did someone think this would be fun,  
Did they want to punish society,  
Who thought that they won.

If I have to write a poem,  
I'll make it against poetry,  
It only makes my brain numb,  
And it gives me too much anxiety.

**Gracie Gale**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### **Miss Our School**

Old and crumbling, I will say goodbye around now  
Plaster walls will very soon come down  
Although its bricks are red our hearts are blue  
We're replacing something so old with something very new  
It seems so wrong to leave our school

I'll miss its patched-up walls and murals too  
Its giant halls, our white lunchroom  
I touch them now as I walk by  
I breathe out the summer sky  
I'll close my eyes and say goodbye to Central Intermediate  
School

#### **Evangeline Sondles**

Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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### **The Hockey Game**

Only quarter past twelve, gym games were coming to an end. As a young boy I enjoyed playing hockey with the older kids. The gym is full of light and as cold as always. I am protecting the goal when the unexpected happens. Bang! The puck was smacked towards the goal as the hockey stick smashed into my eyebrow. Blood dripping and teary eyes as my vision went blurry, the gym teachers running over to the scene. Laying in the office waiting, the doctors glued my wound shut. There can always be a risk when it comes to having fun.

#### **Brandon Colosimo**

Medina High  
Grade 12

## Friday Night Lights

The stands are filled up  
People ready for the game  
The lights are so bright

You get butterflies  
Waiting in the locker room  
The game will start soon

Put your helmet on  
Running out of the tunnel  
The crowd goes crazy

You score a touchdown  
All your teammates get hyped up  
Our team is winning

Defense takes the field  
The opposing team is scared  
The crowd chants defense

We won the big game  
Our rival was defeated  
It was a fun night

What a football game  
The Friday night lights are off  
Everyone has left

Practice has started  
Now preparing for next week  
One game at a time

CHAMPIONS!

**Brysen Hall**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Perfect Ending

It came flying on the ground towards me, a little dust came up, in the glove, time to throw. "OUT!" the umpire shouted as the ball I threw smacked into my team mates glove. My last year playing, I was in the championship. In the moment, it felt like the lights were shining on me, like the world was watching. The sun glared down; it was humid. One play from the win, I looked towards the batter. Moments later, it was over. Perfect ending to a perfect sport, dream accomplished.

### Talan Posey

Medina High  
Grade 10

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I'm deep down in my thoughts when suddenly I realize that the volleyball is coming right for me. I quickly hit the ball over the net, perfect hit. Score! The crowd cheers and the game is over. The whole way home I thought about how I made the winning hit. My mom and dad both told me how proud they are of me. I go home, take a shower and get cozy in bed. My parents both tell me goodnight, and I go to bed. I woke up the next morning so excited for volleyball practice that day after school. I ate the waffles that my mom made me for breakfast, and headed out the door shortly after that for school. I got to school and everyone was telling me great compliments about last night's game. After school I headed for the gym for volleyball practice. We practiced and practiced until it was over. After that day when I made the winning hit, I thought that everyone would wanna hangout with me and I would have so many friends. But that didn't happen for so long. My life went back to normal, to my old lonely self. I had my best friend, Jill, but I just wanted to know what it would feel like to be popular for a month. Two weeks later, the worst thing that could ever happen to anyone, happened to me. We were in the middle of a really hard game, the other team spiked that ball right to me. As I would always do, I tried to hit it up to one of my teammates for them to hit it right back to the other team. Right when I hit the ground, my ankle twisted and I fell right to the ground on my back. My back and ankle felt horrible. My mom rushed me to the hospital that night right after the game. The doctor told me that I had to get a few x-rays and they would give

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me medicine for it to feel better and then we would probably be on our way out of there. It felt like we were waiting forever just to see the x-ray results. Right before the doctor showed us the x-ray results, she told me the worst news ever. She told me that I broke my ankle and broke my back and that I may never be able to play volleyball again. I felt like I was about to pass out from this terrifying news. I told them, "no you can't do this to me, you have to do something! Volleyball is my favorite thing to do!" The doctor responded with, "I'm sorry, there is nothing we can do, unless your parents wanna pay \$15,500 dollars for surgery." My mom said she will have to talk with my dad but for now all that could help me was a brace and a lot of rest. I really hoped that they would say yes because volleyball made me really happy. I ended up staying in the hospital for a few days until my parents had figured it out. I had a boot on my ankle so that it would heal. After a few days my parents finally had made up their minds, they said they would pay the \$15,500. I was so happy, I thanked them so much! The doctor explained to us everything we needed to know. She said that after the surgery it would take up to 6-8 months for a full recovery. The doctor told us it was a 95% chance it would heal right and a 5% chance it wouldn't. I prayed to Jesus it would heal the right way. A few weeks later, after waiting, I finally had my surgery. My back was still in pain because of the surgery. My doctor told me that after a few days it should feel better for me to start walking again. I started going back to school. My back was still hurting a little. After that incident I actually got to feel what it feels like to be popular for a month. I was still best friends with Jill, of course. After I started feeling a lot better, my volleyball coach asked if I wanted to try out this season. Of course I said yes. That's all I was waiting for this year, the volleyball season. The volleyball season came so quickly. Since I had my surgery, I only had a few months to practice. Tomorrow was volleyball tryouts, I was so scared I wasn't going to make the team. I woke up that morning and ate the best breakfast, my mom's waffles. After the school day, I went to the gym for tryouts. After I finished I felt pretty good with what I did. The coach said we would get the results back in about 1 week. I was literally counting down the days until I got the results back, there was one day left. Which means we get the results back tomorrow! The week went too slow, it felt like a year.

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But the day finally came, I was sitting in class waiting to get the envelope. I finally got my envelope, I waited to open it in study hall. 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 open, I MADE IT!! I was so happy my heart was pounding so fast. I was so excited to tell my mom and dad that I made it when I got home. It was the first practice and there were a bunch of my friends that made it. I was finally living what I wanted. I trusted in God, and now I was so happy. Finally I had a bunch of friends and I always hung out with them. It was the first volleyball game and I was doing great. I am so happy.

**Ella Dolgowicz**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

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### **Softball, More Than a Sport**

Imagine you're about to step in the batter's box with two outs, bases loaded, you're down by three, and you're facing the fastest pitcher in the league. Well, that was me. I nervously walked up to the plate with my bat in my hand. I could hear my family cheering me on. "Mac Attack! Mac Attack!" That was my nickname. I took a deep breath and stepped in. The pitch was right down the middle! "Wham!" Suddenly the crowd roared with excitement. I was in shock that I just hit the ball over a 300 foot fence. The rest of my team stormed the field of excitement. It took me a while to realize that we just won the Little League World Series.

The next day at school everyone was talking about how we, Freedom Fastpitch, won it all. As I walked in class my teacher congratulated me and said she thinks it's the farthest any thirteen year old has ever hit a softball. The rest of class was great! We filled out a paper and had a science experiment. The bell rang very loudly. As I walked down the hallway to head to my next class, I ran into Joey. Joey was one of the kindest 7th graders ever. He was always there for me, but today he was acting a bit weird. He looked me dead in the eyes and said, "I know you didn't hit that homerun. I mean look at you, you're short, and your arms look like noodles." I was confused because I didn't even tell him that I hit a homerun. He usually gives me a compliment, but today was different, he made fun of me. I don't get made fun of

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*(Continued from page 246)*

often but usually it's just people calling me short. I tried to ignore him, but the thought of him saying that just wouldn't leave my mind.

As soon as I got on the bus I told my best friend, Stella what he said to me. She was surprised because she used to be Joey's best friend. Our bus ride home was extra long today because the buses kept breaking down. We had to get on four different buses until we got home! As soon as I walked inside our house, my mom greeted me with a big hug. She quickly reminded me how proud she was that we won the World Series. She took me to the kitchen and said that we could go anywhere for dinner. Without hesitation I shouted, "Olive Garden!" On the way there my parents asked me if anyone knew that I was the one who hit the homerun. I said, "Yeah, but only a few people." My dad replied, "Who?" "Well the softball team and.... Um... Joey." I whispered. I told what happened earlier that day, and that I didn't know if I was going to hang out with him anymore. They were silent for the rest of dinner. They noticed I looked pretty sad. To help cheer me up they decided to get me ice cream after dinner.

The next day at school I tried to avoid Joey. However, it was kind of hard because he was in most of my classes. He walked past me in the hallway and gave me a disgusting look almost like he was angry but also jealous at the same time. As I walked into math, with Joey right behind me, Mr. Jacob said, "I'm sorry your sister lost the World Series." I was confused, but then I realized he wasn't saying that to me, he said that to Joey. As I sat down I saw the back of his shirt, it said Henderson, the pitcher's last name. I suddenly realized why he was mad at me. I stopped his sister's team from winning the world series. I started to doze off, but then I realized we had a test that day. I slowly answered each question but it was hard because all I could think about was softball. I barely got anything done. After class I went up to Joey and said that his sister played great and she has a chance at winning next year. He scowled and walked away.

I sat right next to Stella at lunch and told her what had happened. She said he'll get over it and probably forget in the next week. As we were eating, Joey walked up to me and said that he was sorry for what he did and it wasn't right of him. I

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agreed but didn't say anything. But as he walked away from the table it looked like he was almost trying to hold in his anger. We talked about a few other things at lunch like Stella's swim meet. She took first in all of her events. The bell rang and I quickly hurried to my next class, history. It was a boring class. I had no friends in that class. Before I knew it, the last bell of the day rang.

I had softball practice right after school, so my mom picked me up today. As I walked onto the field I saw someone wearing a hoodie that said Henderson. She turned around and I realized it was the pitcher, Izzy. Unlike Joey, she greeted me with kindness and congratulated me on our win. She then quickly apologized for what he brother said, and told me it would never happen again. I then replied, "Thank you, you played great as well. I wish I could have you on my team." That's when the rest of my team came out and told me that she will be on our team next year. I tried to hold in my excitement, but I couldn't, the whole team started jumping up and down cheering her name.

**Mackenzie McFarland**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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Bump, set spike. Claire sat on the bench watching her team inch closer and closer to victory. They were playing their rivals, the Eagles. Claire was so excited for her team. They had made it this far before, but they lost. They still needed thirteen more points to win but it was still better than the Eagles. It was the Eagles' serve, so Claire's team, the Mighty Bears, went into their defense. Claire loved watching her team score points and have fun, but she was having a hard time keeping her enthusiasm up like the rest of her teammates.

Claire broke her hand when she was outside. She remembers the day like it was yesterday. There hadn't been a sunny day in a month so when the sun was finally out, Claire, like every other kid in her neighborhood, went outside.

She played volleyball, basketball, softball and soccer. When she was playing soccer she tripped over a hole in the ground. She caught herself with her arm and as soon as she did, she

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realized she made a mistake. There was a shooting pain in her wrist. She looked at her wrist. It hurt really bad, and she had never broken something before, so that made her nervous.

Claire got up and stumbled her way over to the garage, but all she could think about was her wrist. Now when she took a step, her wrist seemed to ache with more pain. She stumbled again and almost fell a second time. She steadied herself and kept focusing on getting to her house. She kept telling herself, "when you get home, you can put ice on your hand and you will feel better." Once Claire was inside she walked over to her refrigerator and opened the freezer. There was no ice. Ugh. She couldn't believe her luck.

Her dad's biggest pet peeve is when there is no ice in the freezer, but he wasn't home right now. Her father was an engineer, and his work recently asked him to stay in Florida for a couple weeks. Right now it was just Claire and her mom at home. Since dad wasn't home, the ice hadn't been refilled.

Claire had to go downstairs to their second refrigerator to get ice. She was going to tell her mom about what happened, but figured that she would wait until her mom was done working out.

Once she was back upstairs, Claire put the ice in a bag and sat down at the kitchen table. It was then that she realized how swollen her hand was. She held up both her hands side by side, and the one hand was almost twice the size of the other one. She knew that she would have to tell her mom right away.

She walked down the stairs, careful not to trip on her mini volleyball. She opened the door to the workout room. Claire found her mom and told her what had happened. Before Claire could even finish the story her mom grabbed her hands to see how much her hand had swollen. Her mom told Claire that she would take her to the hospital. Claire's mom then told Claire to call her dad and tell him what had happened. Claire did as she was told then she refilled her bag with ice. Claire was so nervous on the way there and her hand still ached even with the help of the ice.

When they got to the hospital, Claire started to feel sick. She was really nervous about what the doctors might say to her. She looked down at her hand and it seemed to hurt even more than before. The worst part of it all was that Claire had to wait a couple hours for the doctor before being seen.

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Claire took out her really old iPhone and started to play games, but she was too nervous to focus. Claire gave up and started studying the people around her. She did that a lot. She could stare off into space, but still hear people talking.

A lot of her teachers at school didn't like that she did that, but they couldn't really argue because she was a good student and always got good grades. Finally, a doctor, who had been rushing in and out of the waiting room, saw her. The doctor asked her a series of questions. Then she took x-rays and then went to see what was wrong.

The doctor came back a little while later to tell her the news. She broke her wrist! Claire froze. She was like a statue. She didn't move for five minutes. What had she done? If only she saw the hole. If only, she hadn't tripped? If only, she hadn't gone outside that day? There were so many things she could think about. Oh no! She realized what this meant for her sports, especially volleyball.

The doctor showed Claire's mom the x-rays and she told her about what this meant for Claire. Claire couldn't believe it. She knew what came next, and she didn't like it. Claire waited as the doctor put the cast on her hand then she got up.

"Mom, can we go?" Claire said.

"Uh, yes," replied Claire's mom. Claire didn't wait for her mom. She pushed past the nurses and injured people until she was out the door into the fresh air. Claire didn't even wait until she was in the car to let the tears pour out of her eyes. She couldn't believe it. No more volleyball. Claire felt like her chest was getting smaller.

She was so sad that when her mom asked her if she wanted to go to Casa Del Rio, her favorite restaurant, she said no. She just wanted to go home and sit in her bed until she fell asleep. When she got home she did just that. She changed into her pajamas even though it was still light outside, and she brushed her teeth. She crawled into her bed and sat there thinking about how terrible her day was. She couldn't believe how such a sunny, bright day could make her feel so sad and crumbly.

She didn't want to think about volleyball and her teammates, but she couldn't get the thought out of her head. No more volleyball.

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Claire had always been good at volleyball, but it wasn't just that she loved volleyball. Volleyball was her life. Claire knew that there was nothing she could do. She couldn't go back into the past with a time machine. She knew that she wasn't going to be able to play volleyball and that made her cry even more.

"Ugh," Claire said. Her head hurt from all the crying. She looked at her clock. Nine p.m. She couldn't believe it. It felt like she had been sleeping ten hours, but she had only slept for three hours. She tried to fall back asleep but it was no use. Normally, when it was this late and she had nothing to do, she would grab her miniature volleyball and she would pass it against the wall. Claire didn't have the heart to do that now, so she went into the family room and snuggled up next to her dog, Tiramisu.

Tweet, tweet. "Huh," Claire said. Claire realized that she had been daydreaming about how she broke her arm for so long that now her team was only five points away from the win. The Eagles still had a chance to win since they were only seven points away. Claire scooted up in her chair to watch the game unfold. Ruby was up to serve for Claire's team. Ruby took a deep breath and served the ball over the net.

"A-C-E, ace, whoop, whoop, ace," screamed Claire's team. Four points away from victory now. Ruby took the ball again and did the same thing. Three more points Claire kept repeating those words in her mind over and over again. Ruby once again took the ball and served it only this time the other team passed it, set it, and spiked the ball. The other team spiked it to Ruby and she shanked it.

"Ugh," Claire said. But Claire quickly realized that their setter had gotten to the ball and passed it to the outside who then spiked the ball down the line for a kill.

"Whoo-hoo," Claire yelled. Ruby was trembling. Now, they were only two points away from victory. Yes!! Ruby served an ace. Claire was trembling as Ruby got the ball and was walking back to serve. The other team was shouting, but Ruby's team was dead silent. Everyone was afraid that they would startle Ruby, and then she would mess up her serve. Ruby looked so scared. Claire knew that this was a lot of pressure on Ruby. Claire was best friends with Ruby in grade school, but this year they had drifted apart.

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Claire decided she would be the first to shout, "Let's go Ruby! You got this!" Ruby looked at Claire and smiled. Then she took a deep breath and served the ball.

Time seemed to stop as Ruby made contact with the ball and it flew over the net and fell to the ground on the opposing team's side.

"Whoo!" cheered Ruby's team as they ran onto the court. They couldn't believe that they had won. Claire got up and joined the rest of the team on the court. Her dream since grade school had now come true! She only wished that she was able to play, but this was the next best thing, winning and cheering on her team to victory!

**Angelina Gambaccini**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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### **The Game**

I am in the championship game of 12u City League Baseball. This is my first ever season of baseball, so I am not the greatest player. Honestly though basically nobody is, each team has a few good players but that's it. My team was the most well rounded team by far. Almost our whole lineup actually could hit the ball. We also had great pitching and defense. We had a pitcher that pitched near twenty innings and gave up two runs the whole season. So clearly our team is well rounded, but the other team has a reason that they are in the championship. They had the two best players in the league. One of their players usually plays travel baseball and the other is just a really good athlete. One of them throws faster than any kid by probably near 10 mph and the others throws the second fastest in the league. Then the same two kids also have the highest batting averages in the league by probably .200. This team beat us both times we played them in the regular season, but we finished with the best record. We knew we were the two best teams, but who was better?

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The first inning both teams pitched their second best pitching, clearly saving the other one for the end of the game. By the end of the first innings they had scored two runs and we had scored zero. In the second inning though that changed. They had the bottom of their order hitting so they ended up going 1-2-3. Then we started really hitting the ball a ton and the runs just started counting up. We hit a single, then we got a walk, then another walk, then a double (that scored three runs). Then we got back to back outs, but then we hit another single, and then another single. Then finally another double, by then we scored five runs and we had the lead. Going into the third inning they had their two best hitters hit. One of them hit a single after his teammate got walked. Then their other best players hit an absolute rocket up the middle, or so everyone thought. The pitchers caught the ball and threw the ball to second because the runner ran all the way to third. Then the runner on first base ran all the way to second base and we threw it to first, now we're out of the inning. This is the last inning for both of the starting pitchers, but then the best pitchers are coming in. We had the bottom of the order hitting for us, so we knew the chances of us scoring many runs again were low. We try though and end up with the baseball loaded with our best hitter at the plate. On the 1-2 pitch he smokes one that everyone thought was gonna get past the shortstop, but then he makes a crazy diving play and then fires the ball over to first base for an out to end our inning. Now we are in the fourth inning when both of the best pitchers come into the game. They have the middle of their order up and they started hitting some balls to the outfield. They pile on two runs and make the score 5-4. Then when it was our turn to hit we just couldn't handle how fast their pitchers were throwing and we went 1-2-3. Our pitching wasn't doing the best and was throwing a lot of balls right down the middle of the plate. He didn't stop by giving them back to back singles and bringing up their best hitter. On a 2-0 pitch he puts one right down the middle again and they smoke one to the right field gap. They chased the ball down but by then they scored two runs and now have a guy on third. They also have their other best player up to the plate and he singles and brings in a run. Luckily they didn't score anymore runs but

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the damage was already done. The score is now 7-5 and we need to score runs to keep us in the game assuming they aren't done hitting. Now it's the bottom of the fifth inning and we have only two more innings to score two runs or we lose. With two good at bats we find a way to get people on first and second then with one of our best hitters up to the plate. He hits it in the air and it flies. Everyone wonders what will happen, will it drop? Will it get caught? After what felt like a whole minute the ball dropped deep in left field. All the runners are sprinting as fast as they can trying to tie the game. The lead runner scores with ease, then the second runner barely scores and now we have a guy in scoring position. Then comes the best hitter, with the score tied we could take the lead. On a 3-2 pitch he hits one right up the middle and we take the lead. Sadly they got out of the inning, but we are happy with what we had done. The score being 8-7 we knew anything matters. Coach decided to put me in center field, trusting that I would catch a ball if it was hit to me. With them having one of their best players up to the plate to lead off the inning we wondered if we really would win. He gets a single because of our shortstop making an error on the first pitch of the inning. The next pitch the runner steals second and is now in scoring position. With no outs and them in position to score everything gets very intense. Then on a 1-1 pitch the batter rockets one to deep center field. Everyone goes crazy and the runner is off trying to get to home plate. I lock onto the ball and start running backwards trying to prevent this from becoming a hit. I run as hard as I ever have and jump . . . I caught the ball! I fire it into second base as fast as I can so I can get the double play. The runner doesn't even notice that I caught it and we get them easy out at second. In the span of ten seconds everything changed in the best way possible. Now all we need to do is get one more out and we are champions. On the 0-2 pitch the batter swings and misses! We are champions! We all run to the mound all screaming and excited as can be. Coach tells us to huddle up in the outfield, like we do after every game. We all ran as fast as we could because we were just so excited. Coach has us all get on one knee and tells us how good of a season we had. He tells us that we improved so much throughout the season into this championship team. Then for the first time all season, coach announces that he will be giving out a game ball. Everyone is wondering who it will go to because all of us impacted the game

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in a great way. Then coach says that the game ball goes to Ajay! I got the game ball! In my first ever season of baseball I have already won a championship and a game ball! He explains if I didn't catch that ball in center field we would have most likely lost with no outs and a guy on third base. On the way home I even got to stop at a dairy queen in celebration. Reflecting on it makes me remember how a game can shift with just one play. The question is though, would I become a champion again?

### **Ajay Hill**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

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### **The Game**

They won the tipoff, but we got the ball to start the game. I brought the ball up the court, he picked me up at half court. We took a shot and made it, but they came sprinting down the court for a contested layup and it fell. We went on a six-zero run, and at the end of first it's 12-6 us. Second lineup comes in and they start horrible, giving up four points less than a minute in. They came back and just like that were down sixteen fourteen at half time. Start of the third they came out hot and made three straight shots. 22-14 were down. At the end of the third it's 24-16. We came out blazing hot in the fourth 2 point game now but they got an easy layup. Three minutes left and their center brings it up. He pushed off WOAHH, he threw my teammate to the ground. He's really hurt with a broken wrist. They both got a foul, my teammates out for the game and now the rest of the season. We're down four with one minute left. I stepped in front of the big guy and perfectly he fouled out. We should win this now. Our ball, I brought it up and shot a midrange bang. Down by two with thirty seconds left. We press and get the steal and the bucket 19 seconds left now. Tie game, we press again and we get a steal. I sprinted up the court, dribble through two guys and got the layup up by two with ten seconds left. There, rolling the ball up, I stepped up and I got the steal. They poked the ball out with 3 seconds left. I'm passing the ball in and giving it to the center in the corner and they don't foul for some reason. Great game but we won by two for our teammate.

### **Rylan Cummings**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## Modern-Day Sisyphus

You hear the shot before you see it. Then again, from my vantage point, it's unlikely I would have seen it at all. I guess it doesn't really matter what it looks like when the sound is all you need. When that shot rings out, all that's in your head is: go, go, go. Lined up with nearly 150 other guys, all facing down a field and the lone gunman it presents, I feel less nervous than normal. There's still some jitteriness, but if I focus on the run instead of the finish line, I find I'm more relaxed. The anticipation building in the air is palpable as we all hold our breaths, and the man in the field raises his arms, as he said he would. After a moment, he holds up the gun further. Finally, he pulls the trigger.

I take off fast, but not too fast. I successfully avoid someone's spikes digging into my shin instead of the damp ground. Navigating the opening of a race is like walking a tightrope, you can't act too aggressively for fear of depleting your energy early in the race, but you can't let anyone push you around either, you need to walk the line in the middle. I lightly elbow the guy next to me to overtake him, before falling victim to the same trick by someone else. The sheer quantity of runners causes the ground to sound like a herd of elephants is stampeding through. Out of the corner of my eye, I watch some poor guy trip on his own foot, getting himself trampled and taking down at least three of his fellow runners. The thought of their spikes piercing his skin forcefully enters my mind. As the field slowly morphs into a smaller path, I escape through the bottleneck and press on. Everyone is settling into their usual placement; as always, I'm a little behind so-and-so and way ahead of what's-his-name. I hope I can shake up the sequencing soon, but in my heart I know it's unlikely. Just as I'm improving my time and fitness, so is everyone else. As we move past the densely populated crowds of the spectators and the cheering becomes distant, everyone eases into a lighter pace. The area of 100 meters in front of me has become sparse, everyone good enough has already moved ahead, everyone else has fallen back. Except for one.

Around 70 meters ahead, there he is: Jersey Number 143. Of course. My past couple meets I've faced this same opponent, he's always just beating me by *that* much. The closest I've come was in Mentor, where I passed him up until the final break for the finish line. He had somehow mustered up enough strength to outspurt me. His green jersey mocks my envy, and my repeated defeat at his hands has begun to make me feel like I am a

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modern-day Sisyphus, the tragic mythical Greek figure cruelly condemned to push a boulder up a mountain, only for the boulder to slip just at the precipice. Each and every time I get the boulder so close to the mountain's peak, but never quite at the top. These meets of stagnant placement and mediocre performance despite my best efforts, make me feel a lot like Sisyphus, and my competition with 143 acts almost as a microcosm of my struggle.

"I'm gonna get him," I think to myself as our first mile comes to a close, "this time I swear to God." We pass the first mile sign as I begin to creep up on him.

"Let's go, Medina!" I hear a woman yell from the sidelines. I turn towards her with hopes of recognition, they are hopes in vain. It's strangely common, these people you've never seen and never will again have some urge to encourage you. Initially I welcomed it as common courtesy and kindness, but after years and years I find it's become appallingly impersonal. To them I'm not even a person, just the school for which I run. I shake my head slightly.

"Focus on the task at hand," I think, "what does it matter what they cheer?" I fix my gaze on 143. His arms swing with momentum, his legs slam onto the ground with power, but his feet bounce back up with a rhythm akin to a jazz drummer. His head is locked in place as if he were to move it, the whole machine would shut down. As I stand in awe of his form, I become self-conscious of my own. I feel as if the mountain has grown taller, the boulder heavier. I am Sisyphus.

"Am I too sporadic? Too heavy on my feet?" I shortly fret before quickly regrouping. "He's not Usain Bolt, he's about ten feet ahead of me, he can't be *that* different from me." I extend my strides as we cross the halfway point of the second mile. I notice now that the sun is beginning to set, and for a brief moment I marvel at its golden light projected onto the clouds. As my head returns to Earth, the crowd picks up again towards the mouth of a forest. I take note of familiar faces amongst the congregation and prepare to speed up. The shouts blur together, but I make out "Nick" and "Medina" amidst the cacophony of cries. We enter quickly into the forest, as if swallowed whole, and sound and light are suddenly bisected, half of what they once were. My eyes adjust as sunlight occasionally blasts through gaps in the foliage like natural strobe lights. I look up just as we enter a slight

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clearing. The light returns to its former glory as if the heavens themselves have been opened to present to me a holy gift, and I bear witness to an event of staggering importance: 143 trips on a root.

“Finally, a fighting chance.” I exclaim mentally. 143 regains his balance, but cannot reclaim his pace. All it took was one little root to throw him off. The boulder reaches the summit, right on the edge. 143, practically panting, takes one glance at me, before falling back. I feel a burst of energy as we reach a downhill. I let gravity do the work, carrying me downwards as I stretch my legs into the longest possible stride for maximum distance. I reach the bottom just as the second mile concludes. I dash through the woods like a fox, evading roots highlighted beforehand by course managers’ impossible-to-miss neon paint, and trying to focus on breathing. I’m still running, but I am unable to shake this feeling of victory, of hard work paying off.

Suddenly, I overhear labored breathing from behind. I fill my lungs and refuse to exhale, checking if it’s my own. The sound continues. The air escapes me like a balloon deflating as I realize a horrible truth: he’s right behind me. The boulder slips. I try speeding up, but the breathing only follows me like a duckling in my bid for victory. We run towards a small crowd, the majority of which is wearing green jerseys, identical in shade to the one worn by 143. I scan their eyes, trying to ascertain 143’s proximity. I watch their boredom get replaced with excitement as their eyes track something immediately behind me. Their faces light up as they yell.

“C’mon Brandon!” “You almost have him!” “Pass him up!” “Run, Brandon run!” They spur, to my frustration.

“He has a name.” I think as I bolt past the crowd, hoping, praying that wasn’t the boost he needed. The breathing slowly but surely begins to make its way from my back, around my left side, until suddenly green fills the corner of my eye. My strides become longer, my pace faster, but “Brandon” overtakes me nonetheless. The boulder pours over the peak. We arrive at the end of the forest, shooting towards the light at the end of the tunnel. We escape, a large field stretching out in front of us, the finish line maybe 600 meters ahead. The sun, in all its blazing golden glory, shoots its cosmic light onto the Earth, causing all to sprout dark tendrils from their feet that mirror their every move. I marvel at its beauty, I think about its more than striking

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resemblance to the *Apocalypse Now* poster. I force my thoughts back to the race. Brandon's ahead of me, but not by much, victory is not impossible. 500 meters from the finish. It seems each time I increase my speed, Brandon is prepared to do the same, like he knows what I'm going to do before I do.

"Screw it." I think. I bolt, my legs flying forward and backward so fast I feel like they're zipping in circles, like the Road Runner from *Looney Tunes*. I pass Brandon. 400 meters now. My hair is drenched in sweat, I can taste the salt on my tongue. It feels as though time itself has stopped, the air has turned to molasse. 300 meters. I look to my left, Brandon is barely behind. I miraculously find the energy to press on. My face morphs into some grotesque expression of exhaustion and rage. 200 meters. Spectators' cheers become deafening as the finish line grows closer and closer. I think I even witnessed some recoil at the sight of my grimace. Last 100 meters. I put in a final kick, leaving Brandon in my dust. I grit my teeth as sweat stings my eyes and I break through the finish. I am Sisyphus, at the top of the mountain. I slow to a stumble and walk on towards the table organizers have so graciously adorned with consummate cold cups of water. I turn to face Brandon. A short, diminished, and slightly defeated boy stares back.

"Hey," I say, extending my enclosed hand for a fist-bump, "good race."

**Nick Brewer**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

Hello, my name is Grace,  
and I really don't want to fail.  
I know of my favorite place,  
In my head it's in great detail.

It's a place I feel very safe.  
But, some will say,  
because of my brother it's slightly unsafe.  
It's where I love it best on a Friday,

My favorite place is my home,  
Well, my room to be more exact.  
Where I can sleep on my bed made of foam,  
and I can finally relax.

Anyway, I hope you have a great day,  
Even if it is midweek.

**Grace Sharp**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Grass

Walking on the grass  
There's no room on the sidewalk  
They take it all up

Look over shoulders  
Excluded from the circle  
Why am I left out?

Catching up to them  
They left me at my locker  
But walk together

Sitting in back row  
Not one of my classmates  
Had saved me a seat

Organizing plans  
Because if I don't - they will  
Be made without me

For once in my life  
I wish someone thought of me  
Before I did them

**Reese McQuaid**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

### Questions for the Universe

The Universe.  
 Ah, what a big and expansive place.  
 Who created the Universe?  
 Does anybody know?  
 If the Earth wasn't here,  
 Well, uh, nothing would exist.  
 Or would it?  
 It makes me dizzy and my mind cloudy.  
 So many questions,  
 So little time.

**Jamie Walter**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

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### Nature

After all the time we give in Nature you'd anticipate it wouldn't be  
 a stranger To us  
 Nature can pretend as if an eraser  
 Some of us go outside if there's danger  
 But when we go outside we should give respect by means of  
 what well-kept earth is  
 Next opportunity you take a walk with deliberation into Nature  
 hold dear the advantage of the earth

**Addison Stone**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8



**Jordan Hawkins**

Medina High

Grade 12

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### **The Beach**

I love the beach.  
The pretty sun.  
The sandy feet.  
The pretty blue with the light hue.  
Our minds askew to what we view.  
The sea.  
Where I can be free.

**Delaney Diak**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## The Seashell Pact

Ever since her one friend in Villagarcia moved away, Maria made a pact with her mother. Her mother would speak to her own friends and find someone for Maria to meet. Maria would be polite, talk, and hang out until her mother picked her up. The friendship wouldn't click and Maria would never see the girl again. She would suck it up and move onto the next one. That was the cycle of the pact that remained unbroken. It was a pact that Maria hated, but she endured it for her mother's sake. She had already come to the conclusion that finding a friend was hopeless. Claudia only said hi and went to a concert with her father. Marta and her posse hung out with her once and didn't want anything to do with her afterwards. Lucia's friends laughed at her for sharing her dreams that they saw as 'for babies'. Maria knew that these next girls were no different, but she went on with the meeting anyway.

"Girls, this is Maria, Mari's daughter . . ." The woman's voice trailed off. She waited for Maria to finish the rest. Maria avoided eye contact.

She briefly lifted up her hand and gave a quiet "Hi."

The group of girls clad in colorful swimsuits were more enthusiastic. They quickly introduced themselves one by one. The woman's daughter was Laura. The short one with the baseball cap was Ines. The brunette with sunglasses was Carlota and the tallest was named Paula. They wore bright smiles and immediately asked Maria questions about her life. They asked how she was, where she was from, if she had any friends, and what school she went to as they dragged her to the rough sands of Villagarcia's beach. Maria laid her beach towel next to the girls' and sat down. They continued to carry the conversation so that all Maria had to do was listen. She observed them and listened intently. They were friendly like Claudia. They had history like Marta.

Once a natural pause came to the conversation, Carlota looked over at Maria and asked, "What do you like to do for fun, Maria?"

Maria was afraid of this question. Her answer was mocked the last time she shared it. She thought of giving a more acceptable answer but she realized that it didn't matter. They would probably make fun of her anyway, so she shared her dream.

"I like making picture books," Maria finally said.

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“Like, for babies?” Ines said what she was scared of hearing. Paula gave Ines a look and turned to Maria. “Well I think that’s lovely. Do you draw and write them yourself?” Maria hesitated and wished she hadn’t answered the question to begin with. Ines’s blunt remark made her face flush with embarrassment and she greatly appreciated Paula’s support. She paid attention to the expressions of the girls. They were curious. They wouldn’t laugh at her like Lucia’s friends. Maria continued and steered the conversation this time around, now that she felt invited to. Laura changed the conversation to her favorite picture books when she was younger. Carlota talked about her interest in entrepreneurship ever since she sold her old sunglasses for 7 euros. Paula rambled on about a boy she liked while twirling her braid around her finger. It was small talk but Maria enjoyed it regardless. It was a kind of deep conversation she missed dearly. Maybe, she thought, it could work out this time.

After talking for what felt like forever, Ines announced her boredom and escaped to the ocean.

“Ines! Wait for us! What if we want to swim too?” Paula got up and went after her. Laura followed suit and Carlota chased after them. Maria joined them at last. She hesitated to get into the water. She hated the nail biting cold of the ocean against her skin. She was much more comfortable in the cigarette butt littered sand. Ines, who was one with the water like a fish, swam up to Maria. “What’s wrong? Why aren’t you getting in?” It sounded more like a complaint than a concern.

“Oh, it’s nothing. The water is cold so I take a while to-” Maria was interrupted by Ines’s splash attack. The immediate splat of salt water on her face made her more upset than she expected. “Just swim already!” Ines continued to relentlessly splash her. Finally, Maria took a big step into the blue and retaliated with a bigger splash. With each attack, Maria took one more step into the ocean and began swimming with the group. Ines did not stop, as she continued to attack her friends, who joined in with splashes big enough to drown her. Maria found herself laughing at Ines’ misery and at the fun of it all. Of course, eventually the cold got to her and she couldn’t bear it any longer. Maria trudged through the water towards the shore.

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"I'm gonna dry off!" She announced to anyone who could hear her.

Maria traversed the poking rocks of the ocean floor as she returned to land. Her foot touched something lumpy and cold. She stepped away and looked down. Stuck in the wet sand and bracing against the current, was a seashell. She crouched down and picked it up. It was white with beige and orange colors blended throughout like watercolor. She brushed away the sand and moved her fingernail across the ribs. It was small enough to fit in her palm.

"What's that?"

Maria turned around and saw Laura peeking over her shoulder.

"A seashell. I think it's called a cockle," she replied.

"Can I see?" Laura asked. Maria handed her the shell. As soon as Laura took it, Carlota, Paula, and Ines came to see the shell. Paula recognized it at first glance.

"Hey, that's just like the shells we sold last year!"

"Oh yeah, we made like 50 euros off of those," Carlota chimed in.

"We should set up the shop again," said Ines.

Paula looked down at the waves at their feet. "The tide's already coming up. I don't think we have time to look for seashells,"

The girls pondered the situation. Maria took back the shell from Laura and glanced at each of them. She had completely lost the conversation. Carlota broke the short silence. "Hey Laura, didn't Alice get you that bracelet kit last year?"

Laura stared at Carlota and suddenly perked up. "Oh yes! I think it's somewhere in the garage. I'll ask Mama for the keys,"

The group suddenly ran off to find Laura's mother. Maria reluctantly followed. She failed to understand what was happening. Laura approached the woman from earlier, who was peacefully sunbathing. Laura's mom sat up and spoke with Laura. She looked at Maria and smiled.

"Are you having fun, Maria?" she asked.

Maria smiled back and nodded. Yes, she thought, she was having fun.

"Well then, go on and entertain yourselves girls," she spoke as she produced the keys from her bag.

"Thanks, Mama!" Laura and the group scurried to put on their sandals and followed her to her apartment building.

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Laura's garage was cold and had junk in every nook and cranny. There were tons of boxes and storage containers filled with old toys and clothes. Her family's bikes were mounted to the wall, along with jump ropes and deflated soccer balls. The shelves looked eager to be dusted. Carlota dragged out a heavy storage container. There was a construction paper sign that was taped to it that read: *Las cosas de Laura*. Laura and Ines threw off the top and the girls began searching. Maria dug through and took out piles of construction paper and sticker packets. Carlota and Paula returned to the shelves to look for the shop's set up. "Found it!" Laura announced and took out a large, purple suitcase. She opened it and dumped out the sea of glittery beads and rainbow rubber bands. The girls gathered around and got to work. They strung together bracelets and necklaces of all colors. Some spelled out phrases like, "Wow!" and "Super!" Maria held up the ones she created and questioned if anyone was actually going to purchase these. Once their merchandise was complete, Carlota and Paula took the table and chairs and led the group out to the boardwalk. Carlota set up their station by herself. Ines put up the cardboard sign that read: *Pulseras! 5 Euros*. Maria set down the seashell in the middle. She placed a price sticker for 1 euro, a more reasonable price than the bracelets. The group waited and talked to the families and dogs passing by. A few customers, all elderly, bought the shiniest bracelets and left wonderful tips. Maria and Laura got to work replacing the empty space with new products. Ines took the money and returned change with her handy fanny pack she stole from Laura's garage. Business continued as the girls chatted and sold. Maria wondered why they did this every summer. Laura and Paula thought it was fun, and Carlota and Ines liked the money. This wasn't a bad way to spend her summers. Going to the beach, enjoying the sun, swimming and splashing, and ending the day with some money. Maria liked the thought of it. She hoped they thought the same.

"Wow! Look at all of these! How cool!" Maria's mother observed their market with a smile. She had gotten Maria's things for her. Laura's mother was at her side.

"Would you like one ma'am?" Laura asked. Maria's mother reached for her wallet in her purse.

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"Of course! Choose one for me, please," she said and handed Laura a bill. Ines took the money instead and Laura gave her a rainbow bracelet that Maria had made herself. Maria's mother put it on and smiled. "Oh how pretty! You girls are so good at these!" The mothers spoke with the girls. Maria looked at her mother, at the sun sinking into the horizon, and the girls she spent the day with. She knew it was time to leave. She didn't want to go. She hoped the girls would speak of a next time and that the pact wouldn't continue.

Maria looked at Laura's mother. "It was very nice having her. She can come back anytime if she wants to,"

Maria's mother smiled and looked at Maria. "You ready to go?" "Yeah," Maria lied. She exchanged goodbyes with the girls. Just goodbyes. Maria took her things and followed her mother.

"Bye, Maria!" Laura leaned over the table and waved. Maria turned around. She smiled and waved goodbye to the girls for the first and last time.

**Andrea Marting-Tabora**

Wadsworth High

Grade 12

From the hot days in Honolulu  
To the big icebergs in North Atlantic Ocean  
I love this land

From the rolling hills of Kansas  
To the beautiful mountains in Bhutan  
I love this land

From the dry desert in Australia  
To the rivers that flow into oceans  
I love this land

From the waterfalls in Canada  
To the reverse waterfalls in Brazil  
I love this land

From the people who watch over us every night  
To the ones who go out and fight.  
We can never forget the ones that live here today  
I love this land

**Tess Highsmith**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Jordan Hawkins**  
Medina High  
Grade 12

## **Snow Away From Home**

It had been just 2 days since I had landed here in California, when I had arrived, it was warm and sunny. Considering this, I went to my hotel room, did a little swimming, then went to bed to recover from the jet lag. It was night when I had awoken, just to see it was 2 days later! Not knowing what to do, I went to the lobby to get some snacks, but, to my surprise, no one was there. The lights were all off aside from the room housing the vending machines. I buy myself some chips and decide to go on a walk. But, when I got outside, it was not warm like I had expected, it was snowing! In front of the hotel was a small sidewalk and docks along with boats that could take you exploring wherever you pleased in the waters. By now, it had been snowing so much that you couldn't even tell where the sidewalk ended and the dock started! I stood there, used to the cold snow, just looking into the beautiful white haze. While I stood there, I began to think about how my trip here in California would pan out after this extravaganza. Days after, the ice began to melt and boats were finally able to go out into the water again. It was sadly my last day in California though, so I packed in as much as I could and savored it all. From the beaches, boating, shopping and the amazing food. All I hope is that next time I come, it will be a little bit warmer.

**Bailey Harris**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## The Waterfall

The waters along the lake crash  
 the repetitive forever fall  
 the pounding waters violent clash  
 but really it is all so small.  
 The noise will rise above the lake  
 the noises are a warning sign  
 the brave want to partake  
 but be wary of falling to its harsh design,  
 but if you somehow do,  
 You should not cry for help  
 Even if all around may be blue  
 Leave the place and do not yelp.  
 So now enjoy the waterfall  
 and unlike I, try not to fall.

**Amos West**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## Ocean

I wish they could hear the loudness  
 What's really within the ocean  
 The rage of madness  
 With all the trash and commotion  
 Deep within i promise there is treasure  
 Dig deep and really look  
 When you find what's really within, you will find  
 pleasure  
 The loudness has really overtook  
 Beauty in disguise  
 Slowly drowning but making it out  
 As they all despise  
 Without a doubt  
 But take a look and think  
 What's really within the water  
 And let that sink  
 Now what's left to offer

**Lillianna Carcione**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8



**Abby Huml**  
Highland High  
Grade 12

## The Growth of the New Year

Older times,  
 the stress of the schoolhouse,  
 large impending walls  
 overgrowth like mossy stones,  
 Intertwined with the city.

So much of any year is susceptible to the growth,  
 Pages of homework and sheet music.  
 Under the green swirling vines of eternity,  
 So little has no space for the roots.

When there was a town and suddenly naught but a valley,  
 The cement cries, suddenly soil.  
 Build again with the smallest of structures.

Quick growth, slither of stresses and sakuras,  
 only the weight of things not done,  
 May stand tall after the vines calm.

**Lillian Torres**  
 Medina High  
 Grade 9

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## The Caged Creature

Gnawing  
 Watching  
 Waiting for food to arrive  
 It seems friendly  
 But is truly ravenous  
 Long teeth  
 Cut and tear  
 Beady eyes waiting for an opportunity to  
 Feast  
 Guinea pig

**Jon Dailey**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

## Flowers Gone Dark (New Year's Poem)

Petals fall every so often,  
 The lack of confidence emerges,  
 As colored petals turn colorless,  
 Time fades.

To grow a new beginning,  
 To repeat and restart,  
 To find a new light,

Reforming of one,  
 Creates a new path,  
 For the fear of people exits the old,

As one restarts,  
 Another dies,  
 Only to be left with another

**Lilliann Kirsch**

Medina High  
 Grade 9

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On a bright sunny day,  
 At a farm full of hay,  
 Pondered a boy,  
 "Hey, hey, hey"  
 Said the boy today  
 He got an idea,  
 Could do it in nearly any way,  
 He ran to a pig  
 And pursued in a chase,  
 He slipped in some mud,  
 And dirtied his case,  
 He got back on his feet,  
 And resumed his pace,  
 He had lots of fun  
 On this bright sunny day

**James Lane**

Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8



**Tori Tessmer**  
Brunswick High  
Grade 11



**Kaylie Tirk**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

I stand there in stupefaction, everything around me is still.  
 My heart is pounding like a drum in my ears.  
 I have finally found the door,  
 That will show me the future of humanity.  
 Many before have tried;  
 But none have come back alive, to the small-scale town out of  
 the mountain gate.  
 The place I call home.  
 For only the pure of heart can restore the balance that we have  
 lost.  
 I reach out my hand to the intricate door, it is smooth yet wildly  
 etched to the touch.  
 It relaxes the tension in my body,  
 But for only a moment.  
 From the corner of my eye I notice sinister figures, Played out  
 along the rim of the door.  
 Spinning a legend of the beginning,  
 But now we'll know the end.  
 I push the door firmly expecting it to be cumbrous, but it's lighter  
 than a feather.  
 It opens to a hollow cavern, I step in to find another door  
 expectantly.  
 The door behind me closes and disappears, telling me to  
 continue.  
 I open the timbered door, but it only leads to another empty room  
 and door.  
 I open the next but it is the same as before.  
 I start to run, opening door after door.  
 Till it feels as though I've opened a hundred or more.  
 I'm breathing hard as I open yet another,  
 It opens casually.  
 But on the other side is not a door but a passage  
 Into eternal chaos.  
 Relief turns to turmoil as I walk through the skewed arch.  
 I walk until I can't see the flame from the passage.  
 Suddenly, I notice I'm stepping on something crunchy  
 And the cool air turns boiling hot.  
 It smells awful like the burning of rotten flesh,  
 My eyes and lungs burn.  
 Soon every part of my body feels like I'm turning inside out,  
 "The more you come, the more you fall. None know the Great  
 Mother's rage,

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But you shall soon learn!" A powerful voice screeches till my ears bleed,

I try to speak but no sound comes.

Who is this person? And what do they want?

"The beginning always falls away like the leaves, and disappears to something new!"

It grows quiet, as I think over the meaning of his words.

Before I realize it I can make out my surroundings,

And terror roots me to the spot.

All around me there is fire and destruction for miles on end,

I turn around and there is molten rock flowing from the mountain.

Then it's gone.

All of it

And I look down at the village in the steep valley.

Even from here I can hear the dogs howling hauntingly.

I start at a trot down the mountain, I must warn them of the disaster to come.

There's a deafening rumble from above and I look to see smoke advancing from the mountain.

My trot turns into a run as I scale the mountain, not caring if I fall . . .

Hours later the village is gone and so is the world.

The only thing left is chaos and his whims.

**Jordan Hawkins**

Medina High

Grade 12

## Old Sea

I lean against the rotten wood railing, the splintered wood intertwining itself with the loose threads that hang from my jacket. I look out at the sea, its untamed waves spray a mist of water that clings to my skin. My hair is damp and knotted, like a tangled mess of rainforest vines. My eyes are squinted and my lips part, I can taste the salt against my tongue.

The Sun slowly sinks into the horizon, like the repeating flap of the sea gulls wings that fly overhead is some sort of lullaby. Pinks and orange bounce off the clouds, the colors flash against the ring that hugs my finger. Slowly rotating the circle of silver, I can sigh at the feeling of my rough skin. The deep, indented timelines that run across my face are evidence of adventures and smiles. It will never get old, seeing the sea, but I know the sea sees that I am old.

The ocean is a lifelong friend, one I will never forget. I will never regret the day that we met: the salty mist, the brilliant hues the Sun created as it set. I have lived through this same scene millions of times and never has it felt like this before. I drag the ring off my finger, the carved stone clear of any scratch. It looked just how it did the day my lover got down on his knee and gave it to me, right here by the sea.

I can't tell if the droplets that race down my cheeks are my tears or the sea's. I hold the ring to my lips and hesitantly kiss it goodbye. Once my lips part from the piece of jewelry, I drop it into the welcoming arms of the sea. I could only wish my lover was beside me as the ocean pulled its new treasure down into the deep.

**Samantha Horvat**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Shattered

I am shattered far past repair  
The mirror's reflection betrays me  
I don't recognize the other person's glare  
Who am I? And who is me?

I have been told I have a "golden heart"  
Is that what you really think of me?  
You wouldn't be saying the same if you saw my part  
I must disagree

The mirror has shattered  
I see myself no more  
I only gaze upon a man who is tattered  
Someone who is unable to be restored

The glass leaves gashes down my skin  
Reminders of the things I have done  
Those who I have hurt and my sins  
I can no longer run

Because I am now shattered past repair  
The girl I used to be is no longer there  
And I see your face filled with concern  
But who I was, and what I am, will never return

Spiraling into despair  
The mirror gleaming back  
Unaware

**Monica Horschler**  
Medina High  
Grade 10

## **That One Person**

There's always that one person, that one person that makes you happy every day. The one who makes you laugh when you are about to cry. The one person every time you look at them, you remember how much they mean to you, and how much you never want them to leave your life because they're just so special in every way possible. Every time you're with them, you always have the biggest smile on your face because they make you feel like the best person in the world. The person who saw that you had a space missing in your heart and came and filled it with love and happiness. The one person who keeps you motivated and lets you know just how amazing you are to them. That one person you could talk to for hours and never get bored. That one person you want to be around forever because they make you feel so happy and loved. That one person that came into your life and made it way more better. That one person that loves you for who you are. That one person that will ask you how your day has been. That one person you could facetime for hours and hours every day. That one person you could joke around with for hours. That one person you would stay up all night and talk to. That one person you could tell anything to because you know you can trust them. That one person that will remind you even if you make a mistake don't get mad about it because not everything is going to be perfect. That one person you want to hang out with forever because they make you happier every time you're with them.

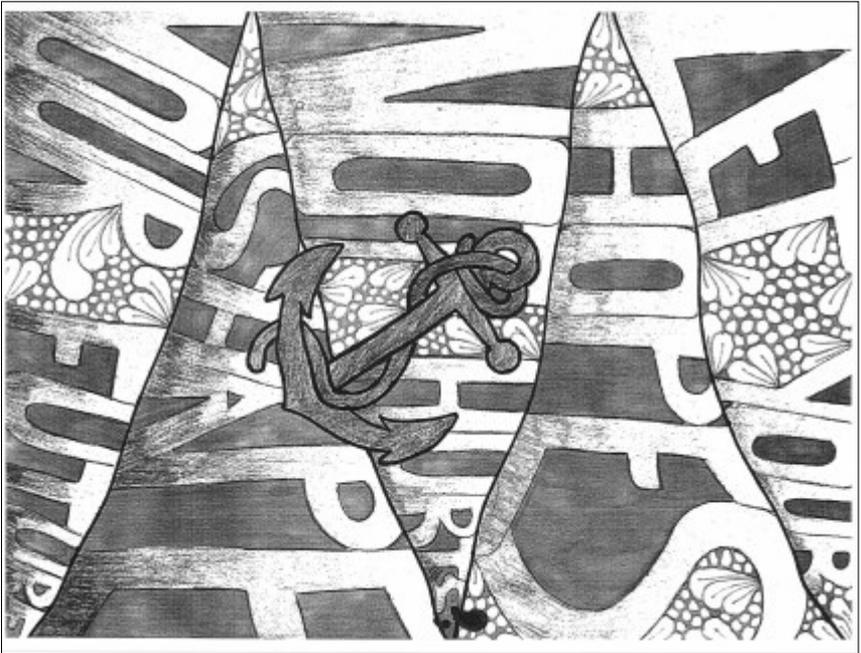
**Marissa Rankin**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Grandmother's House

A beautiful, happy place to stay  
And a magnificent place to play  
When I come here, my grandparents welcome me with grace  
Not one thing could ever replace  
They give me love and cheer  
And always hold me near and dear  
Grandmother's house is a place we come together  
A family as beautiful as a heather  
With magical places all throughout  
I love this place without a doubt  
With many places to run and roam  
This is a place I will always call home.

**Rhaine Zander**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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**Hilary Mechling**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Hope

Is not something you can  
 see nor taste nor hear nor scent.  
 You simply feel it,  
 yet you cannot touch it.  
 That is hope.

It can appear to you as many different things;  
 A feather,  
 A light,  
 A wave- no, a blanket- of darkness that threatens to suffocate  
 you . . .  
 But no matter what, it does the same thing,  
 if we fight for it.  
 That is hope.

Hope  
 is like a candle.  
 It lights up a dark room,  
 an endless box with no corners,  
 No walls,  
 No roof,  
 No floor.  
 That is hope.

You are simply floating  
 in the endless darkness,  
 unless you swim after that light.  
 No matter how tired you get,  
 it will wait.  
 It always will.  
 Because that is hope.

When you touch the flame  
 it will burn. But the energy, the light, it  
 gives you, will feel beyond words.  
*That* is true hope.

**Gale Lipscomb**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

## The Swing

A little girl sits on her rusty swing like she does every day, at the same time, in the same shoes, and in the same high bun her mom does every day before little Layla goes outside. Anyone that watches her play just sees a small girl talking to herself, jumping off her ancient swing, back and forth, back and forth. She gets on, does a few kicks, and throws herself off the swing again. The girl flicks off the pieces of grass that are sticking to her knees like warm, muddy glue. I don't just see a shy girl that is too scared to make friends. I am the puzzle piece that makes her fly. I am the puzzle piece that makes her imagination soar.

Flying to the ocean, hanging out with the birds, and laughing together at the funny monkeys in the jungle we sometimes visit. It's the gentle laughter I hear from her every morning that gives me the strength that keeps her happy. Today, she is feeling a little down. She isn't swinging that much; her feet lightly shove the earth. I feel like she is losing faith in me. Even without her laugh to power me, I need to make enough energy to make her soar farther than we had ever flown before.

Just then comes a gust of wind that is about to shove her into the sky. A few small gusts that brush her skin that shows her something's coming. Something amazing. The wind perks up, and Layla starts to kick. She kicks harder and harder until her hair is flinging back and forth, front and back, side to side. I hope little Layla will hold on tight. The trees shake. The grass flies from the earth. She is ready. It's time to fly, one last time. I am Layla.

Every day I fly. Every day I imagine. Most people don't believe humans can fly. But it's true. Or so I used to think. Today my papa yelled at me. He is tired of me tracking mud into the house, or patching up my ripped up knees from flying. He told me something that sent daggers to my heart. He told me that flying is just foolish imagination. I ran from the house. I sat sadly, digging my bare feet into the squishy mud under the swing. I had never been on the swing before without predicting where I would fly to next. But today, my thoughts are blank. Just dry and empty. Completely alone. But as I was about to leave the swing forever, I felt it again. A soft blow of wind. I know this wind is different. This is the same wind that made Layla fly. Not the scary wind that makes a house creak, not the cold wind that sends snow into people's eyes. Not the dangerous wind that demolishes buildings. This is my wind. Again, I feel a small push. The wind wants me. With a huge smile on my face, I push and

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push the ground with my feet, until I can kick the air on my own. I hold on to the chains tightly. I feel my skin burning, but I can't let go. This one will be big. If I let go I will fall. I intend to fly. The wind tickles my neck, and I feel it. The biggest gust of wind I have ever felt. I must time it. Almost there. Just right at the highest peak of the swing, and . . . fly!

What happens next is amazing. I fly past colors of all kinds. My hand extends to the soft fluffy clouds. My grin grows even more. I finally made it to the clouds! Now this is really flying! I see the jungle, and the ocean. I see the most beautiful garden ever, as big as a city! I see kids my age laughing, and animals running through the park. I see a flock of birds, as big as the clouds, calling to each other, amazed at the biggest bird they have ever seen. But I am no bird. I don't need wings to fly. My arms are out to the side though, because it feels nice that way. The soft warm air can reach my whole body this way. I start to slowly lower myself to the ground, clouds still under my feet to cushion the blow. I see my rusty swing. I feel the grass on my feet. Perfect landing. Perfect fly. I somehow feel this is goodbye. I'm not sad though. It was the best way anyone, or nothing had ever said goodbye to me. I throw my arms out to the side again, to tell the wind goodbye. I feel the wind all around me as my hair jumps around. My laughter grows, then I feel the wind seep away through my fingers. I know it's the end, but I will never ever forget.

**Farrah Holladay**

Root Middle

Grade 8

## Fair Tears

It was the hottest day of the summer. Not a single cloud was in sight. There was no surface that the sun couldn't reach and spread its exhausting heat onto. It reflected off anything it could find as if a flashlight was constantly shining in my face but within less than a second it all became darker and colder than before. Everything seemed to have been painted in a shade of death but to every other eye in the fair, nothing had changed.

"They left me," I whispered to myself. "They forgot about me. How could they have forgotten me?" I walked the hay square that made up the sheep barn three more times before I came to the conclusion that I was left behind. My family had forgotten me in the sheep barn. I thought about searching for my parents but then I realized that if I did, it would for sure be a death sentence. I remembered the words my mother rehearsed with me.

*If you get lost, do not go wandering around. Stay where you are and wait for me or another family member to find you.* I could hear my mother repeating these words and it gave me relief. Her voice in my head helped the sheep barn brighten back up into its exhaustingly hot state while everything outside the barn grew into something even darker, like the evil forests that my children's books talked about. I didn't dare walk outside the sheep shed. I waited for my mother to find me. *She could never forget me, right?*

As soon as my breathing became manageable, I took the time to walk around and enjoy the extra time I had with the sheep. After a while, an imaginary bond with the sheep started to form. I started giving each sheep their own names. Fred was the one with really long horns and a bad temper. I avoided petting him. Bruce was a thick black sheep who never minded being pet, especially by the young children. Princess Leia had long horns that curled out as if two large hair buns were shaped on the side of its head. And directly next to Princess Leia's large protruding stomach lay nugget and french fry. These were Leia's babies and these lambs always seemed to attract the majority of the crowd that walked in the barn. They were indeed cute but they couldn't compete against Bob. Bob was shaped like a meatball and had a lower body that seemed to be only made up of endless fur. A split second of fear rushed through my body every time I reached into his fur that my hand would get lost in his bush of hair. Bob slept with his head on the opposite end of the gate and a single butt cheek poking out between the thick horizontal planks. His

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drowsiness made me like him even more since I knew that he didn't have the energy to bite my little sausage fingers. He became a very reliable option when the other sheep annoyed me.

Before long I finished naming and talking to all the different sheep. It felt as though an hour had gone by. I walked towards the entrance with a hope that my family would be waiting outside of the barn for me. I saw tall figures rush by to see the other animals that start on the other side of the sheep barn. Others walked sluggishly towards the exit as though they were walking in a knee deep lake that only ended when they arrived at their car. I saw many different people yet not a single family member came in sight. The initial fear I had when I first realized I was left behind started to catch back up to me. I took a few laps around the hay square before I stopped to look through the entrance again. Nothing but unfamiliar faces glared back at me. Thoughts that my family was never going to find me ran through my head. Thoughts that I was purposely left behind. Many thoughts came to mind only to feed off of my growing fear. I walked around the hay square and watched everything turn dark. I rapidly paced towards Bob's cage. Tears started to fill my eyes as I continued to pet the sleeping fat sheep. I made an effort to hide any emotion but this became harder with each passing minute. I looked for someone that could help me in any way possible. That's when I saw the plump policeman. He munched on a glazed doughnut while intensively watching a thick sheep get shaved down to nothing but skin and bone. His presence gave me a sliver of relief. I thought deeply on whether I should get help from him. I didn't want to come off as the scared little boy that lost his parents at the fair. The only goal at my age was to be a big boy, so I came to the conclusion that I would give it a few more minutes.

"Just keep petting the sheepies . . . keep on petting the little sheepies," I whispered to myself in hopes of reassuring myself a little longer. I stuck my hand in the thick fur of Bob's butt cheek and walked a few more laps before the tears filling up my eyes became unbearable. I looked for the plump policeman at the back of the barn only to find a pile of fur and a single hairless sheep in the middle of it. It felt as though the blood had just rushed out of my body. I started to panic. At this point the tears couldn't be held up by my eyelids any longer. Water streamed

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down my face. I missed my mom. I missed my family. Nothing but seeing my family mattered anymore. I started walking towards the young lady that had been sitting on the stack of hay bales since I had been there before I caught the eye of a different skinny policeman stopped in the middle of the dirt path. He looked as though he was trying to figure out whether he should look at the sheep or the bunny rabbits that stayed in a similar barn directly in front of the sheep barn. I sprinted out into the dark evil forest that my mind illustrated and raced for the policeman. I ran as fast as I could towards the tall figure until I was so close that the only way I could see his face was to look directly upward. I attempted to make words but only murmurs came out. The policeman looked down at my whimpering face and barely reacted as though he had seen this kind of thing multiple times a day.

“I am going to need you to repeat yourself young man,” the policeman said with a soothing relieving voice. I attempted to speak again.

“I . . . I lost my family. They . . . they left me . . . can you help me . . . please,” I cried. The police officer smiled and guided me towards a small shed-size building. He opened the door for me where a large round desk and tired old lady welcomed me. I was seated next to another young boy that seemed to have been crying not too long before I came. The policeman vanished and reappeared only this time with a sprite in his hand. The sprite wasn't a regular size but what looked to be the size of two tuna cans stacked on top of each other. He gently handed me the Sprite and told me to wait tightly as he vanished out of view again. I drank the sprite and listened as a muffled sentence loudly rang from the speakers that were spread throughout the park. Relief warmed my body knowing that I was in good hands. Before I could finish my sprite, a family barged into the small building. I looked up in hopes to see my mom but only saw the mother of the kid sitting right next to me. A few “sorry's and “I love you's were shared amongst the family before the kid was finally yanked out of the shed and never to be seen again. This made me miss my family even more but I knew they would be coming soon now. The policemen were on it and they never failed. Another hour had gone by before another family rushed into the small space of the building. I looked up a little slower this time, prepared for another disappointment but for the first time on

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that hot summer day, I was not.

“Mom!” I screamed. “Dad! Aunt Lola! You guys found me! What took you so long.” A mix of emotions ran through my body at the sight of my mom, dad, and aunt. My family seemed to be happy to see me but not as happy as I was.

My mom started with a sigh of relief and then replied, “I am so sorry Joey, we didn’t even realize you were gone because the family split up into groups and I thought you . . . and they thought you . . . there just happened to be a miscommunication and I am sorry.”

“Oh so that's why it took you guys three hours to find me.”

This time my father responded, “Uh buddy, it's only been fifteen minutes and we were all in the rabbit barn for that time.”

“Wait, Wait, so you are saying all I had to do was walk across the dirt path to the rabbit barn! You have got to be flippin 'kidding me!” Me and my family laughed as we walked out of the shed onto the dirt path that now seemed to be anything but evil. My family and I spent the rest of the day enjoying the fair, and I got to see Bob one more time before I left.

Although scary in the moment, a memory was made that day and it has shared laughter and happiness throughout my whole family and for years to come. Memories like these are what bring people together.

**Joseph Storm**

Medina High

Grade 12

## Always Be Ready

It was a normal Friday morning. Noah woke up, brushed his teeth and got ready for the day. He brushed his teeth, ate breakfast, got dressed, and headed off for his day. As he walked to his bus stop. Smelling the crisp autumn air Although this seemed like a normal day soon Noah's world would be flipped upside down. You see Noah was a normal kid in 8th grade who did normal things he enjoyed golf, the outdoors, and video games, other than the fact that his dad was NBA hall of famer Steve Nash . But after today this would all change.

Ring! Ring! Ring The sound of the first school bell. Noah attended Washington Middle school in Tennessee. As he stepped into his first class of the day (also his least favorite) he saw his friend Robert soon after the bell rang and off to the second period he went. But as he was walking in the hallway something seemed off. Soon he would never see his life the same.

Once he turned around the corner he saw large men running toward him. They had masks around their face covering up both eyes and nose but a bit of their mouth stuck out. The next thing Noah remembered was he woke up in a hospital bed he heard the faint beeping and clicking of machines. He was conscious but unsure what was happening.

Soon the doctor came in. "Oh my gosh you're alive," he said. Huh Noah said softly. "What happened, why am I here, am I okay?" he said. The doctor replied that you were attacked, jumped, and beaten by two men.

Who were they? Noah replied. They were ordinary people but the fact of They were hired by LeBron James to get you. Why? Said Noah. Because the doctor said He felt he was robbed in the 2005 Nba season he felt as if he should have won MVP in the 2005-6 NBA season instead of your father. He sent those men to get you, he continued. Noah replied but why me? The Doctor replied because your father has guards on him 24-7. You do not and he wanted to hurt someone close to Steve. So they got you.

"Am I going to be okay?" Noah asked. Well you were in critical condition, you're doing better now but let's keep you here for a little while until you are doing better.

"Thanks Doc" said Noah, "that was a close one".

**Logan Price**

Wadsworth Middle School

Grade 7

## The Woman

The woman reclined back into her chair. No one was with her. No children of hers, no husband. The cool summer breeze drifted through the open windows, and she sighed and took a deep breath of warm air. She was, as some might say, far over the hill. Her face was not as wrinkled as one should be at her age. She had long white hair, but it had a faded green color at the tips. She turned her forearms up to give them some sunlight. In doing so, a tattoo was revealed. It was something modeled after a traditional henna tattoo, a vine with a flower in the middle. It wound over her forearm and towards the edge of her wrist. There was a scar on her right upper arm. It was small, but it was tremendously pink compared to the tan color of her skin. The woman brushed her hair behind her ears. Piercings climbed all the way around her left ear. The right only had four.

The woman laughed and tilted forward, examining her tattoo and allowing the memories to flood back. The laugh was happy, full of love. She laughed at her stupidity at being young. She laughed at all the chances she took. She shook her head remembering the time she had gotten her tattoo. She and her friend had sat in worn fake leather chairs. She remembered looking through a catalog, contemplating their choices: either Chinese calligraphy or henna. Thinking calligraphy was cliché, they had both chosen the latter. It had taken time for her to pierce her ears. She had a piercing in her left ear for each of the people who had left her. The right had a piercing for each of the people who had loved her. Four. Four people had loved her—her friend and her family. She played with the tips of her hair—green because it was her favorite color, so there was nothing special about that. She closed her eyes and ran her finger over her arm, thinking of running with the bulls in Spain. She was fast, but the bull had caught up to her, lightly grazing her tricep.

She remembered the way her heart had beaten so fast when she had fallen from the sky. The way the water felt when she had swum in the Indian Ocean on her visit to Bali. The way the rain pelted her face when she went dancing. She recalled the smile a Greek man had given her in Santorini. She looked up at the space where her television should be. Instead of a large black screen, her wall was full of pictures, each one from a different place. The woman smiled contentedly and hummed a beat of a song she had once heard in Cairo. She was finally happy. Alone, but happy.

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The girl closed the book and looked outside her window at the cold snow, feeling an odd sense of waking from a dream or maybe *deja vu*, but in reverse. She twisted a curl of her hair, green at the tips, and thought for a moment if that was really going to be her. She ran a finger over her right tricep, feeling the scar the bull had given her. She turned her forearm towards the ceiling. Bare. She looked at her friend, gave her a mischievous smile, and said, "What do you think about tattoos?"

**Catherine Harig**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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### Power of the Piano

The first time it happened I had no idea what was going on, at first it felt like a dream but then things escalated, quickly. It started when I was only 12 and my father was still with us. It was a normal day at school but when I came home, the day turned.

My dad started yelling and making me to random chores because he was upset. I was so mad at him because I was supposed to go to a friends house and had to miss out because I was busy. I went in my room after I finished and was as mad as could be, I was tired of him making me miss out on my childhood because he was so serious about the house being spotless.

I layed on my bed which at first is what made me think I was dreaming because I could have easily fallen asleep. However, I went over to my piano and started playing a serious tune to get my emotions out then I found myself in a black room. All that was in the room was my piano and me. My music was gone too but I didn't care. A lot of times I just made my own tunes so that's what I did.

At this point I was still mad so I thought about my dad and made a wish that I completely regret. I continued to play the deep tune and made the wish then from behind the piano came some kind of vision which showed one way my wish could have came true . I didn't stop playing but closed my eyes.

Next thing I know, I have returned to my room and my mom came in crying. She said my dad was in an accident at work. One of the machines malfunctioned and made an explosion and he was stuck in the middle. I started crying, could it have been real?

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Could my wish have actually come true? Was it because of the vision and the piano in the dark room? I had no time to think these questions through because my mom rushed me to the hospital.

My dad passed before I even made it to there. I went home and decided to play and wish again to see if it would work. I wished for my mom to make me a sandwich and began playing the same thing happened and a few moments later she came in and handed me one. I was shocked and now realized that I had the power to get whatever I wished for.

The only thing was I knew this was dangerous and I had to be careful. I couldn't let anybody find out either. Not even my mom, I knew how upset she'd be if she found out that the incident with my dad was my fault. I went to bed hoping I would wake up and it would all be a nightmare. Unfortunately that wasn't the case.

I was too scared to use my new power for weeks because what if I wished wrong or something happened and I caused another death. A few weeks later I decided to try again. I wished that my mom would let me go to the trampoline park with friends because she had said no before. I followed the same pattern and sure enough she came in and told me I could go because I have been through a lot and handling it very well. At first, I was terrified every time I used my power but I got more comfortable with it as time went on.

I then wondered if the power was me, or the piano. I decided to play the school piano and wish for something. Sure enough, my wish came true. I was thankful it wasn't the piano because that could have been really bad if the piano were to fall into the wrong hands. I have gotten more comfortable with my power and only wished for good. I helped my friends when they wanted something but never told them about my power I simply said I would help them and their wish came true.

I did always wonder what would have happened if I didn't play that night of my dad's death? Would I still have found my power? Would my dad still be with us? Would my power have went to somebody else if I hadn't found it? My mom came in my room interrupting my thoughts and she said there was something she needed to tell me and I would be the age where it would effect me . . .

**Michaela Kinder**  
Black River Middle  
Grade 8

## Tears of Ivory

Dust was illuminated gently by the slivers of sunlight that peaked through the cracks of the roof. The sun was caught inside of the small attic, where it smelled pungently of mothballs and the air was heavy to breathe. I watched as Maryl released the latch and climbed into the attic, making a deep eye contact with the shrew sunray that now peaked in from one of the cracks. I watched her hands, acknowledging how they were now stained with the paint of aging as they began to pick up some of the miscellaneous clutter that had become scattered around over time. She dropped a ceramic bowl into a box among other old clay projects, and taped it shut. She made her way back down the ladder and placed the box in the hallway that held the attic, and headed back up along the ladder. Upon reentering, Maryl's eyes were met with a box arranged in a far corner, overflowing with paper. She walked over slowly, and picked up a piece from it, the aging paper left crumpled and creased. Her fingertips began to run over the desolate folds gently, smoothing the deep creases of the paper. Her eyes scanned across the pages as she managed a soft smile, reading the titles of the many sheets of music she once loved so dearly. She shuffled through the box carefully, as she hoped to never forget the notes of her favorite songs that were once the background noise to her happiest memories. She adjusted herself into the floor and continued to reminisce upon the old music, digging through the box. She felt around with her boney fingers, pulling out a Tchaikovsky piano concerto. Her fingertips frayed the edges while she sat on the ground staring at the page, as she appeared to be transcribing the notes back into her mind. The sheet was old and the page was beginning to fade into yellow, but before long Maryl's face grew wet within her period of reminiscence. She looked like something of a tragic painting; appearing to be hearing the lost song of her late lover, left with the distant rhythms ringing within her mind. I watched so desperately, reaching out into nothing. I could do nothing more than watch as she cried at the sight of my music.

It was something of a distant memory now, the first time I had played piano for Maryl. I could never forget the endless accolades she had accredited me with after listening deeply as I poured my soul within my very first performance of the piano concerto. She was beautiful, her ivory silk dress against her deep brown hair. The room was vast and filled with tones of yellow.

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We talked over champagne after my first performance and she enthralled me with stories of her journey of learning the violin, and didn't fail to charm me with her blunt charisma. She had the most beautiful sparks in the green of her eyes while we talked the evening away. I feel as though I could never forget the way I met Maryl, even as I watch her now as she sits alone, caressing the very sheet music from that night with her delicate fingers.

I watched as Maryl clutched the written musical notation of our once newfound love, and continued down the ladder. She held it close to her, almost seeming to hug the paper. She shut the attic and walked slowly upon the salmon colored carpets. As Maryl made way into the living room, I watched as she stood in the doorway, and as she was starting to stare at the piano in the corner of the room. Her legs moved slowly, so slowly that it seemed graceful, as she started to reach out for the piano. Her face looked grave yet reminiscent, and her hair was still a deep brown, now peppered with grays along the sides of her face. The subtle light of the window behind the piano illuminated the deep imprints on her face from a once consistent smile that faded long ago. She grew close to the piano, and continued to stare slowly. She was staring so deeply, she had such focus on the layers of dust buildup from the years of the piano being left within its lonesome. Maryl shifted the sheet music into her left hand and opened the cover of the piano with her right. The black and white keys seemed to smile at her in a similar way that the music notes emitted from the piano once filled the air of the room with a comparable joy. She sighed softly.

"Oh Marley, how I miss you." She said to herself, quietly. It had been a long time since I had heard her say my name. I wished so dearly that I could call out to her, to once again hug her and feel her skin reunited with mine, but I supposed there was some sort of wall between us now. I hoped so dearly she would keep talking to me, trying with all that was left within my soul to reach out to her with my presence. No matter, I knew while she was living, there was no ethical way I could reach her; all I could do now was continue to watch. She wiped the dust off the piano bench with her sleeve, and sat down softly. She placed the sheet music on the piano and laid her fingers down along the keys. I have never seen her play piano.

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"A,B,C,D,E,F,G,A" She said under her breath, refreshing her memories of the notes of the keys that now sat below her fingers. She inhaled sharply and played the opening F, but before moving to the next note in the sequence, she paused and stared into the sheet music with confusion. After a few seconds, she played the next note, quickly, and then stopped again to think of her next move with her fingers. She played another note, again, and stopped. This time she did not continue. She threw her head in her hands and I could tell she was beginning to recognize the song. As she uncovered her face, it was wet again. Her hands fell back on the keys. I grew closer to her now, although she could not feel me. I placed my hands on top of hers as if they were my own. I knew she could not feel me, I knew she could not possibly acknowledge my presence, but for that moment, she stopped crying. Her hands moved along the keys as I read the music and played, almost along with her. It was almost like her hands became mine, and in unison we played the very first song we fell in love to. She ripped through the chords in a beautiful wave of passion that flew through the song, the dynamics were expressed so beautifully to an extent I had never heard before. There was such a truly wondrous string of notes that were now emitting from our fingers. Alas, before either of us knew it, the last chord was played and the adrenaline of the song was now over. Once again, it was quiet. I stepped away from Maryl, and I watched as she began to cry the most beautifully sincere tears of ivory. She sat at the bench and wept with a smile, grabbing my urn that sat atop the piano. She kissed my urn gently and placed it back on the piano. I watched and she grabbed the sheet music again, just as gently as before, and shut the lid of the piano. She carried the music back up the stairs, and she entered the hallway that held the attic. Again, she opened the latch and climbed inside; and placed the music back into the box carefully. "Until next time, my love." Maryl said softly as she began to leave the attic.

The shrew sunbeam that came in through the crack of the attic caught on the wedding ring that Maryl still wore. She twisted it around on her finger and shut the attic as she cast a beautifully lonesome smile.

"Until next time." I replied, as the attic closed.

**Sarah Kerrigan**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## Sweet Dreams

There's a girl named Isabella, who's 12. She is always happy and joyful. She loves everything pretty and flowery. Isabella was the happiest person everyone knew until one day where everything changed. The day that made her life go from being happy, to being nothing.

One day, Isabella and her family were on a road trip. It was Isabella, her mom and her dad. They were having a great time, going from place to place having a bunch of adventures. Isabella loved her family and the fun that they had. She was always with her parents just having a great time and forgetting about everything bad. While they were in the car they stopped at a small park to check it out, it was a small park but a nice break from the car. They got out of the car and saw butterflies and bees going up to each flower. There was also a pond that they walked around looking at all the little animals they could find. They found frogs, snakes, and little fish swimming in the pond.

Once they were done at the park they got very hungry and went to a restaurant on the side of the road. They stayed there a while and left soon after. Their road trip was going very well so far and nothing bad seemed to be happening. But after that restaurant everything changed. They were in the car driving down a small rocky road, when Isabella saw a big field of flowers down below the cliff they were on. She looked out the side of the window at the beautiful looking flowers. There were blue, purple, and yellow flowers. They were full of beauty which Isabella loved. But suddenly the flowers weren't next to the car anymore, instead they were in front of them. The car went crashing down the cliff, making cracking sounds while falling. Isabella couldn't hear, or see. She blacked out.

When she woke up she found herself in the middle of that flower field just laying there. No sight of the car, her parents, or the road they were just on. It was quiet except for the sound of birds chirping, and the small breeze of wind. The silence was taking over her mind and she started to worry. Where was she? Where did the car go? Where did her parents go? Were the most

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important people in her life gone? She looked around. Nothing. Just the sweet smelling flowers. She stood up confused, wondering what was happening. All she could do was think, she couldn't see anything past the field. She went back down onto the bed of flowers, and fell asleep. Was she asleep? No. She was in heaven.

**Ava Reese**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

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### Gone

My father going missing was not the first thing on everyone's mind. Probably because no one was supposed to know about it. Many people knew him, but everyone believed the police. Who wouldn't? The police made up this story saying he went on a trip leaving me for a month, but I know what really happened. Or some of it at least. All I know is he went missing. Whether someone took him or he had to hide, I don't know. I know I will find him. I just need to figure out how.

A week earlier

"Dad, are you coming?"

"Yes, Sadie, one second. I . . . I need to . . . Umm . . . grab something," Dad replied.

"Ok?"

We finally got to the car. He began to pull out of our garage, but stopped, only to start again.

"What happened?" I said.

"Nothing, I just thought I forgot something else," he answered.

That is when I noticed his hand. Bruised. All purple and blue.

"What happened to your hand!" I stated.

He quickly responded, "I hit it on my dresser this morning."

I was still in shock about his hand but I believed him.

"Oh ok."

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## Now

I remembered what had happened last week, but I never put it together until now. How could I think anything of it? What does it mean? I thought I knew everything that was going on with him. He never kept anything from me, unless it was better if I didn't know. How could this be something I should not know?

That night I couldn't sleep. I had so much on my mind, so much to do, but not enough time to do it. I had to go back to school the next day because they gave me a full day to collect myself. I had people constantly watching me because people say I am too young to be alone. If a babysitter wasn't watching me that meant the police were. If they found out what I was doing, I wouldn't ever be able to find my father.

How do the police want me to react? Do they want me to just accept it? I can't. I won't. I will find him. It was just me and him till the end, but that end couldn't have come to the final end that quickly.

Lost in my thoughts something came to me. I don't know how, or even why. All I know is that something told me to go into his room and smash the one thing he loved the most. The sound of glass breaking, the banging on the door, all of it in my head turned to silence. The silence only lasted for a few seconds and then everything came back in a flood of sound and emotion. The one thing my father held so dearly, broken into a million pieces. The door finally burst open and Amanda, my babysitter, found me on the floor crying. She ran to hold me in her arms. My head on her shoulder. My tears falling on each cheek slowly, but fast enough that I couldn't see anymore.

When my tears stopped falling, I looked at the colorful glass statue of my father's favorite baseball player. That is when I saw it. A piece of paper wedged in between the player's hat and head. A note! At that moment I fully stopped crying, pulled away from Amanda, and said that I was ok.

"The police are on their way," Amanda said with a guilty look on her face.

"What. Why?" I replied.

"You locked yourself in and wouldn't let me in. I had to call someone," she said

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At that moment she looked away. This was my chance to grab the paper before the police got here. I turned my back facing the table where the glass was all over. My hands were carefully folding behind me. I grabbed the paper from off the table. As soon as I grabbed the paper the police came walking in the door. After one hour of questioning I was finally able to read the note. It stated:

Dearest Sadie,

If you are Reading this letter now, you have gathered the clues I have left for you.. I can Barely hear the thought of how you must be faeling right now. I am sorry. Please forgive me for lying to you. I had to keep you safe. No one can know why and where I am. Put every clue, including this last clue together.

Dearest Regards,

Father

My father loved leaving me clues as a little girl. He knew I would find the clues. Of course he knew. He knew everything before it happened. He was one step ahead. He always said if you weren't one step ahead you were one step behind. Inside the note there was a one-hundred dollar bill. He said this is the last clue, but what could it mean? Why did he give me money? I studied the letter for ten minutes and then found it. My father never makes mistakes with grammar. He made several mistakes here. Some words are spelled wrong. Some are capitalized. "You" is spelled with a "u" instead of "o". If I do this to all the words the letters I am left with are u,t,h,b,e, and a. There are two letters that are capitalized R and B. What if they are the beginning letters of words, but why would regular words need to be capitalized? What if they aren't just regular words? What if they are names! That leaves Ruth for one word and Bbea. I unscrambled the last word and the only word to make sense was Babe. Babe Ruth, of course! My dad's favorite baseball player, the statue he hid the note in! What about the bruise and the money? He had to give me a clue to where I could find him. "Babe Ruth and the bruise. Babe Ruth and the bruise." I kept on repeating it to myself, trying to find something that I had missed. A location meaning street or road, as in where he has to be. I looked up "Babe Ruth's most famous baseball game." What

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came up was a game of the 1932 World Series, at Wrigley Field. It was the game where he called his shot. He said that he would hit a home run before he batted. He pointed to the spot and hit it there. I realized that Wrigley Field was in Chicago, where we live! Of course it was the most famous game! My dad always talked about it. What would bruise have to do with Wrigley Field? Players, when they get hurt, they take an ice bath (for a bruise), in the locker room. The Wrigley Field locker room, that was where my father was located.

I ran downstairs to ask Amanda to take me to Wrigley Field. Amanda said that there was a game going on right now. Why would my dad be there if there was a game going on? There would be people watching everything. The only way to get it was to pay. The money my dad left me was for the tickets! I told Amanda that I had tickets for the game, but these tickets weren't normal tickets; they were tickets that cost eighty dollars to see the locker room. There was only one ticket left to see the locker room, so I bought Amanda a regular ticket. This was my one chance to finally find my father and bring him back home.

We walked into the building and I told Amanda about my special ticket. She agreed, thinking this was something I wanted to do to remember my father. After security, I went into the locker room, but my father was nowhere to be found. He wouldn't just be in plain sight. I had to get security out of the room so I could look. The only thing I could think of was to wait. Wait until they leave. I had to hide for that to happen. I hid in between two lockers filled with black coats. The security guard must have heard shuffling because he came over. He stood right in front of where I was. This was it, if I got caught it would be over and I might never find my dad, but I was in too deep already and I would have no excuse to say. He moved two steps closer. One more. I could now feel his breath. I felt my breath was as loud as an earthquake. Just like I felt how much I was shaking. One more step and he would find me. One more step and everything would be gone for good. Just then a loud muffled noise came from the security guard. I couldn't see anything and I was too scared to look, but it must have been his walkie-talkie. "We need help in section P row 7. We have a crazy customer who ordered and ate, but didn't pay," said the muffled voice. The security did a quick check, but apparently not thoroughly enough, before going

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to help the other guard. He turned off the lights and left. I knew that had been pure luck, but the room was pitch black and silent. I had to use my memory to find the flashlight I saw earlier in the cabinet. I carefully crawled out of the cubby making as little noise as possible. I stuck my hand out from my sides feeling where everything was. I was able to find the cabinet, just in my grasp, in the darkness. I opened it and grabbed what I thought to be the flashlight. I heard a click and saw light. I looked everywhere trying to find where my father was, but nothing. I was about to give up, but the light of my flashlight saw something. Something familiar. It was Babe Ruth's old jersey in a golden frame. I thought to take it off the wall to see if it was another clue, but only one side would come off. It was a secret door! Hidden behind his jersey. I shined the flashlight through the frame and I saw him. My father. He saw me and started to smile. I started to climb through the frame before my father stopped me. He said once you come in the door will shut and won't be opened until someone else will find the hidden door. I helped him out of the door. I hugged him, forgetting everything just for this moment. I heard footsteps walking slowly down the hall. Every step my heart raced faster. We couldn't go into the door. We were stuck. I stood there until that person was two steps in front of us. If only I had known that getting in was the easy part. The hardest part was yet to come. In plain sight, the hardest part would be getting out. All this work was only just the beginning.

**Maddie Stoner**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## A Bit of Bending

Four people stand around a wooden table each peering at a piece of parchment with scribbles of words jotted down in black ink. This city has always been a strange one, no matter if you come from faraway lands or have lived here your whole life, you still can't wrap your head around it. The best part is that everyone has a place here, fighting in faction wars or even opening their own shop. These four were slightly different, most of them are completely new to this environment, but for some reason, their fates collide. One of the members, a skilled humanoid in the art of deception whose name sums them up quite well: Nameless. Their face was completely featureless, a blank slate of sorts. No nose, no eyes, no mouth, and yet they can see, hear and smell perfectly fine. This creature's pallor was matte white as if they were in an old film. The lightbulb above them flickers in a fitful fashion. To this person's left, there was a huge scruffy-looking man, the kind of person you'd avoid in everyday encounters. The man had shiny long blond hair in contrast to his sharp features, he stood at 6'5 towering over everyone. In his hands he grasps a great ax as the group's "muscle", his name is Ruthel. A short brown-haired man-child is next. Anyone outside of the group could easily mistake him for a kid, especially based on his height which is unknown because he deems that "appearances don't matter". A rough estimate would be 4'2. He goes by the name Milo. Circular glasses lay on his nose, enhancing his childlike look. Despite this, he's the brains of the group, always has a plan, and has a gadget for every outcome. Next to Milo is a slender woman with her arms crossed standing at 5'8, her name is DeDe. Latched to her back is a bow with a quiver of arrows. The best way to describe her is: breathtaking. Periwinkle-colored skin and in just the right lighting it shimmers. With one look she makes any man's ego fold and they end up groveling at her feet. Trust me it's been done many times before. The entire point is that this has all happened before.

Last week an offer fell on DeDe, she was practically handed the deed to a mansion on the east side of the city. These kinds of things never happened to the group for obvious reasons. The group's conquests usually consisted of "accidental" explosions, petty theft, and a few bank raids, so it's easy to deduce that they never got anything this life-changing out of it. Sure the mansion needed some work, but it was theirs. Ruthel carries the group's

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belongings, which wasn't much, they didn't have the gold for clutter. The first thing that overwhelmed the group's senses was a musty smell that accumulated over the years, along with a cold shiver dancing across any exposed skin.. The mansion was full of belongings, the only question was who left them. No one leaves in that much of a hurry over nothing. It was delicately furnished, encased in an illusory glass wall separating it from the mishmash reality of the overpopulated city. Everything had a place.

Nameless strolls inside, running their cadaverous fingers across the stone brick interior, tracing it until finding a loose brick. Without another thought they removed it curiously, it uncovered some kind of writing on the wood underneath. The brick drops to the ground. Nameless turns towards Milo and DeDe, "Guys, I think you'll want to see this". The group huddled around, Milo being the first to talk, "It seems to be a partial word that scratched onto the wood, possibly in another language hum". The entire group, especially Milo, wanted to know why it was hidden. All they needed now was to actually tear the wall down. Ruthel swings his battle ax repeatedly. Brick after brick shattered on the ground. They crumble within the first swings turning into gravel dusting the floor. The message is scraped onto it in truly horrendous handwriting, all they could really tell is that it was in an unfamiliar script. The uncovered wall was made of wood that foiled the rest of the interior. The wall is covered in nail marks and notes, some were even in common, "Don't go under the city" as well as, "This has all happened before." The group stands and stares at the wall all feeling different emotions at this moment. DeDe's face shows disinterest and confusion, standing with her arm on her hip. Milo opens a parchment notebook frantically scribbling, trying his hardest to understand and translate. Ruthel's ax is laying on his left shoulder with an emotionless demeanor painted on his face. Ruthel hasn't spoken since he left the army for reasons that are unknown, a small situation like this will not be the reason he breaks that habit.. Nameless crosses their arms before leaving the group to unpack. The others follow, leaving Milo behind to work.

A photo slipped into a pocket. Such a simple task completed by the featureless one. What a meaningless task. The target reaches in and her soft hands brush against the photo carelessly.

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Beet-colored blood peeks out on the once-perfect skin. Getting a hold of the photo she examines it, it's a damaged image of a group that's compellingly similar to the one she's in right now. She folds it up and puts it back without comment. Now here we are again, back to the wooden table in a damp cellar. The group doesn't know what lies in their future, or possibly the lack thereof. The parchment is yellowed and frayed with common writing. He decoded it, but that doesn't mean the situation makes any more sense than before. Inked on the paper it's, "Let the unutterable be conveyed unutterably". Quite a perplexing translation. They've never been this quiet before, usually, there are at least a few jokes thrown around or some light bickering, but alas no comedic relief is granted. So quiet that everyone could hear paper dropping out of a pocket. Before DeDe could pick it back up, Milo snatches it, unfolding it. If the group was paying attention to anything other than the accusations to follow, they would see Nameless' face mold into another's. The smirk is apparent as the featureless one becomes *someone*. The once boney and white hand becomes full of color as it reaches for a specific place on the dark cellar wall. With a push of a button, the loop continues in the city where everyone has a place. They just needed a bit of bending.

### **Nathalie Fellows**

Medina High

Grade 10

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### **What Is Truth?**

Truth is "That which is true or in accordance with fact or reality." Truth to me means to give someone the illusion that they are right even when it means bending what you think. Truth to me means to be given to someone and just to be People might say truth is something that people might struggle with telling truth when the actual fact is that they choose not to believe what you say, you kept going on about why it's the truth when in reality they are the ones lying to their self. People tell themselves not the truth but lies because they feel the need to keep this boundless sense that they are right

So . . .

What is Truth?

### **Briana Barnes**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

## Racing With the Wind

You could never know how it felt to run. Run free with the wind, galloping faster than you ever could. That's what I get to feel every day of my life. And it's amazing.

I was out running with my herd, free and wild. It felt so good to finally run in the summer breeze. I'm the stallion of the herd, so I get to take the herd anywhere I want. But I make sure to stay in the meadows, so when we want to take a break to graze, we can. I have always wanted to be a race horse, and I have always dreamed about it. But that means facing humans. And that's against the herd rules, and I am sadly not allowed to make them. One of the mares came up to my side, and I could tell she wanted to race. I called to my herd that they could take a break, and then I bolted.

We raced through the meadows, faster than ever. She was keeping up, but I wouldn't let her in first. I could feel my mane flying in the wind. I then used all my energy and bolted faster than I had ever gone. I never thought that could happen. *Woah* I thought. I looked back and she was slowing down. *Ha, I knew she couldn't beat me*, I thought again. I was still galloping as fast as my legs could take me, and I realized that I never wanted to stop. Dream, the mare I was racing, was now grazing in the meadow with the rest of the herd, and I decided that I would just keep running.

I went back to the herd and gathered them all up. We all walked back to the cave that we slept in at night. I was sweating so much, but I was glad. It meant that I worked hard. Maybe one day I could become a racehorse and meet humans. But that would be years from now, if it did happen. I was glad to be home now, watching as my herd lay down for the night. I was allowed to sleep, but I would rather watch over them to make sure they were safe. I lay down, still watching them, but ended up dozing off, dreaming about racing.

**Anna Serra**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 7

## Ricky the Apple Tree

There once was a little apple tree sapling. His name was Ricky. He grew up watching all of the animals get picked on by all of the stronger trees. He wanted to help out all of the animals that needed shelter. So, he decided that when he grew up that he would let all the animals live and nest inside of him.

As he grew up every time an animal got picked on he would comfort them and offer them shelter. Since he had no trunk and was still a tiny sapling they would thank him but couldn't accept a home so small. He started growing and had so many animals' homes in him.

Ricky the apple tree was now fully grown and he had a lot of holes in his trunk and a lot of nests in his branches. He wasn't upset about it though. Every time an animal needed help he would let them stay. He had moss, that the bunnies would lay in, to cover his exposed roots. All of the other trees made fun of him and called him weak because he couldn't stand his ground and refuse to let the animals in. They didn't understand how much Ricky cared and wanted to provide food and shelter for all the animals.

"There is going to be a bad storm tonight and tomorrow," said one tree to another. "We'll need to dig our roots deep."

"That tree isn't going to make it!" another tree said laughing pointing to Ricky.

"Yeah all the water will go straight through his holes and flood all the animals out!" said the first tree laughing.

"I don't know," Ricky finally said, "The wind will be pretty bad too, won't it?"

"Yes, yes it will," said the second tree.

"Well, all the wind will pass straight through me, not knocking me over!" said Ricky. "What will it do to you guys?"

"Oh, he does have a point," the first tree whispered to the second tree. "We'll be fine, I think that a weaker tree will go down first if you ask me!" the first tree said with a grin and started laughing.

All the trees that didn't have any holes were really scared that they would get knocked down so they tried to get all of the animals to make their homes inside of them.

"Please," said the first tree to a squirrel, "I don't want to get knocked over!"

"You have been mean to me and my family and now you want us to make our homes in your truck just because you don't

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want to get knocked over?” said the squirrel. “I think you’re just using us!”

“No, you don’t understand-” said the tree but the squirrel cut him off.

“No, I think *you* don’t understand!” said the squirrel “bye, bye now! I have to go home, the one you never gave me!”

The storm that night was very bad. All of the trees fell down except for Ricky. All of the wind went straight through all of the animals’ homes and all of the holes he had inside of him. All of the animals were safe and so were all of their families. After the storm, Ricky helped all of the animals gather food from his branches because the storm provided him with water for his apples.

**Charlotte Casey**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## The Tree That Wished on a Star

As the sunset fell into darkness speckled with glowing stars, the tree watched the rainforest fall into rest, screeching parrots and tigers falling into sleep. As the tree stood, watching the forest as it always had, it thought of a human.

Long ago, a human who glowed like the stars showering over them walked along the forest aimlessly, approaching the sturdy tree.

“What is it like being a tree?” the human asked, dragging her palms across the tree’s rough bark scattered with vibrant, soft moss.

The tree did not respond, only wondering, *what is it like being a human?* Then, the human began climbing up the tall tree, reaching for a branch far away from her. Despite the struggle, she pulled herself onto the branch, sitting there. She rested her head against the tree, her legs dangling above the wispy grass below. Her gleaming eyes watched the sun fall beneath the forest in grand hues of gold and purple as a breeze rustled the tree’s leaves.

Soon, the spirited sky hushed into a dark night littered with stars. One star fell across the sky brightly.

As it fell, the human whispered, “I wish. . .” The tree could not hear the last part, despite the rare urge to.

*Why had the human wished on a star?* The tree thought.

The human smiled, “So this is what it is like being a tree? Trees watch the sky all day?”

The tree had not replied.

“Do you listen to me, tree? I think you do. Just like the star listened to my wish,” the human said.

*Yes, I am listening.* The tree loathed to speak, but it could not.

“Do you have any wishes, tree?” the human mumbled.

*No,* it thought. *Though I would like it if the tigers would not scratch at my bark.*

The human stayed silent, then spoke, “How interesting is it that we believe in wishes. Is it not the same as hope?”

*I suppose so,* the tree thought.

“Do you think my wish will come true, tree?”

The tree had not replied.

“I hope you make a wish one day,” the human whispered.

The tree and the human continued watching the sky, a hush befallen over the world. The human traced the lines on the tree

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with her finger, in a trance from the sight.

"I will come back, tree," the human said, climbing off the tree. The human walked away from the tree as the forest began to shine in the early morning light.

The tree decided to wait. The next day, the human did not come. Nor the next. Still, the tree waited.

Many other humans came by the tree afterwards in the tree's time, speaking of their problems, but only one stood out. The human who wished on a star.

As the tree watched the night now, it thought of the human. *Will she come back?* A blazing star fell across the sky.

*Should I make a wish?* The tree had never wished on a star. Today, the tree decided, was the day it would. *I wish to see the human who wished on a star again.*

The tree watched the star fall away, waiting for its wish to happen. The tree observed the sky until the sun came up, creating an orange cast. The tree continued to look at the sky until it turned to night. The stars glowed brighter than usual, noise fading into the light breeze.

Afar, a human who glowed like the stars came, holding onto a cane as she walked towards the tree. *The human who wished on a star.* The human looked different from all the time that passed since they last met, and the tree could not help but wonder if the human was still the same as she was before.

The human sat against the tree's trunk, "I've come back, tree."

The tree watched the human. *You have come back.*

"Did you make a wish? I hope you did," the human said.

*I did,* the tree thought. *It came true.*

"Have you seen beautiful sunsets? Oh, it has been so long."

Yes, the tree thought.

The human rested her head against the tree, "My wish came true."

*What was it?* The tree wondered.

"My wish of coming back to this forest when I became old came true. This is a unique forest, and I can feel it."

The human and tree sat together quietly, listening to the rustling of leaves.

"Wishes are interesting; anyone can wish. Or hope, for that matter. Perhaps you have wished, tree. The tree that wished on . . . oh, a star? The tree that wished on a star?"

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*Yes, I've wished on a star.*

The human chuckled to herself, "The tree that wished on a star."

The tree viewed the starry sky. Moments of quiet passed by. "I've fulfilled all of my wishes. It is time for me to go," the human sighed, getting up from the grass. "Goodbye, tree."

As the tree watched the human walk away, the tree thought of wishes. Its wish came true; the human came back. But the tree found that it was not just an ordinary tree.

It was the tree that wished on a star.

## **Avneet Singh**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

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### **Camp Crystal**

Jenna, a senior in high school, was with some of her friends after school. They were all at an ice cream shop doing their homework. There were two boys and three girls including Jenna. One of the boys, Jack, had an idea that it would be fun if they went to a campground over the weekend called Camp Crystal. The camp was known for being the most fun camp in their city, but it is also known to have some odd things around there. They all talked about it for a while and decided it would be fun, so then later they all asked their parents and they all said that it would be fine. It was Tuesday when they decided to go, but they had to wait until Friday night to go.

The week passed very fast and soon it was Friday morning. Jenna ran downstairs with her four bags. Jenna's mom said, "You're only staying for two days, why do you need that many bags?" Jenna said that she had to bring extra clothes just in case of anything. Jack was seventeen years old, so he was able to drive them. Jack honked his horn and yelled, "Jenna hurry up!" Jenna said goodbye to her parents and left.

As Jenna got in the car Bella had her headphones in with her eyes closed. "We're going to pick up Issac now," said Jack. Jenna put her bags in the back and sat down with her legs on the seat. It was hard to tell if Bella was actually asleep because she would make a noise every once in a while. It was seven thirty in the morning, but Jenna had been up since five from excitement.

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Jenna went to sleep, and woke up an hour and a half later. “We are about halfway there,” said Molly. The only people awake were Molly, Jack, and Jenna, there was rock music playing in the background very quietly. Molly was playing some sort of game on her phone and Jenna was making bracelets, Jack was driving of course. They got there around ten thirty in the morning and it was storming.

“Of course it's raining,” says Bella. They got all of their stuff out of the car quickly and ran inside. It was a little hut, two bedrooms, one bathroom, a pretty good sized living room, and a pond in the back. They put their stuff in the bedrooms and bathroom and settled in fast. They looked around the hut for things to do and found two board games. They decided to play a card game with the cards they found. Soon it was time for them to eat lunch so they ate the food they brought. They explored the hut even though it was small and tried to pass the time. It became night and it was still storming, they ate dinner then turned a scary movie on. Molly and Isaac were asleep on the couch, Jack was already in bed, and Bella and Jenna were wide awake watching the movie.

About an hour into the movie the power went off, but the place wasn't that nice so the two girls figured it was just because of the storm. Molly and Isaac were still asleep on the couch, so the girls woke them up and they all went to their rooms. Jenna was about to fall asleep when she heard something pounding on the door outside. She was really nervous so she woke the other girls up and they told her to ignore it and go back to bed. She tried to ignore it but whatever it was kept hitting the door. Jenna fell asleep about thirty minutes later, around twelve forty five.

Bella woke up around three and went to get water from the kitchen. The door to get outside was right by the counter, and when Bella was about to go back to bed she started to hear someone whispering, but she couldn't tell where it was coming from. She was half asleep still and didn't fully realize what was going on. She opened the door to go outside and the wind was blowing really hard, it was still sprinkling, but not like how it was pouring earlier. She went outside with her slippers and robe on, and she shut the door.

Soon it was around seven in the morning and Jenna woke up. She sat up and went to the bathroom to brush her teeth and get ready for the day. She heard Molly sit up because of how creaky the bed was. Molly walked to the bathroom and said,

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“Where is Bella?” Jenna was confused because when they went to bed last night Bella was there. The two girls looked all around the house and couldn’t find her, so they woke the boys up. They said that they haven’t seen her and have been sleeping. They all started to get worried and looked around the hut again frantically. They started searching outside as well and couldn’t find her anywhere, so they called the police.

The police didn’t pick up when they called but they remembered that the power went out. They started knocking on some of the other huts’ doors, but no one was answering. “I know there were many other people here because I saw them last night,” said Isaac. They went back to their hut and decided to try and find clues on where she could’ve gone. Time passed and it was one forty five in the afternoon. Jack remembered when he was little he had to go to the main hut when camping because he got hurt and saw cameras from other cabins on a computer. The four of them walked over to the main hut and found a computer, but they were scared it wouldn’t work because of the storm. They turned it on and it worked.

They looked for hut number thirteen and found it. They looked for the footage from last night, but realized the cameras only captured inside the house. They watched it and they saw Bella go outside but since she shut the door, they couldn’t see what happened. They looked all around the camp in two groups to be safe. Soon it was six thirty and it was getting dark. They went back to the hut and got into their car. They drove to a police station and told them what happened. The four of them and five police officers went back to the camp to look for Bella. They looked for hours and it was around eleven.

The police told them to go back to their homes because it wasn’t safe at the camp. The officers told them that they would call their houses if they found anything. The four of them went to the police station again the next day and found out that the five police that went to the camp never came back. More police went during the day with extra people but never found out anything about it.

**Grace Tarant**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

### **McDonald's Robbery**

They drag me into a room  
Sterile and white  
No decor, just gloom  
It fills me with fright

They sit down at a table  
Them on their side, me on mine  
I'm worried and unstable  
As they discuss my life of crime

I don't want to be here  
My mouth starts to get dry  
But my infractions are clear:  
I stole some French fries

The employees glare,  
Hoping I'll crack  
Instead I return their stare,  
And ask for a Big Mac

Frustrated, they go,  
To talk to their boss  
Time passes slow,  
Exciting as moss

At last they return,  
And hand me my jacket  
They never did learn  
I took two ketchup packets

**Carter Parsons**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## Menace to Ruthless

I love the woods. That's just me. The woods, the beautiful wild woods, that's my quiet place. It's my "home" when it comes to understanding my surroundings. It has always been a spot that I feel safe in. All except for that one time. My thoughts were sublime as I walked to my cabin. The forest was oh so serene, quiet, peaceful. With the fall flowers blooming, the orange and blood red leaves, the hummingbirds flying around, making that soft humming sound that they always make, and the sun setting, life in the forest could not have been better. It was getting dark, and I knew that I had to get inside soon, before Menace came out.

Menace is a creature that the natives tell tales of. He is the one, they say, that keeps the animals and seasons in check. Nobody who has seen him has lived to tell the tale. Only one of its victims had time to scrawl out on a wall, with his blood, that there was a creature out there, and he is a menace. That's where the natives got the name. Anyways, as I went inside, I heard a twig snap behind me. I whipped around but I only saw the sun fading from view and the darkness closing in. As I shut the door, I felt a prick on my leg, but when I looked down to see what pricked me, I saw nothing. No blood, no hole in my pants where anything could have pricked me, and besides, my pants were too thick for anything to get through them. I decided that it was just my imagination. I was so wrong about that. I should have realized that the prick was a warning.

Later that night, as I sat by the fire, dozing off while rocking in my rocking chair, I heard a banging on the front door of my cabin. I slowly got up, wondering who or what could make the cabin shake so much. As I peeked out the window by my rocking chair, timid as I am, I saw Menace standing there, staring at me with all eight of its eyes. He emitted an aura of fear, and when I looked at him, my mind just froze with fear. There was nothing I could do except think about how I needed to get away. Immediately when I saw him, I knew my destiny was manifested. The creature shattered the wood on the door with one more heave of its body. I knew what I had to do. As the creature thundered into the cabin, I ran! I ran for my life, knowing what would happen to me if I did not! As the creature caught up to me and tore me apart, I came up with a new name for it. Ruthless. So, you're probably wondering how I am writing this right now. Well, that's just me.

**Carter Adriance**  
Brunswick Middle  
Grade 8

## The Firemen

All the firemen were in a deep sleep,  
Within the firehouse there was not a peep.  
Then they all woke to the sound of a bell,  
It seemed as loud as a young boy's yell.

The firemen all hop out of bed in one big jump,  
Shaking the floor and making a loud thump.  
They travel down the circular hole,  
Hanging on tight to the old shiny pole.

The firemen start the fire truck,  
In order to beat this fire, they will need some luck.  
They drive the truck by an old well,  
Something in the air had an awful smell.

The firemen arrived at the burning fire,  
The smoke was rising higher and higher.  
Then they saw a massive flame,  
The cook was the only one to blame.

The firemen had to act fast,  
They did not know how long this building would last.  
It was hard to see within all the smoke,  
The strength of this fire was no joke.

Then the firemen saw the chief,  
He was here to settle this beef.  
He grabbed a hose which was a safe bet,  
The water sprayed out as fast as a jet.

The firemen coated the fire with some foam,  
They sprayed it all over the existing home.  
It was a long and tiresome fight,  
But in the end they knew what they did was right.

**Eli Shore**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

## Gifts

Oh, say can you see  
The pure enormity  
Of the tragedy  
That killed 3,000 of the free?  
The 9/11 attack  
Had an immense impact  
On the world that is ours  
So big that I am  
Compelled to make a list  
Of the things I consider gifts

Number one is my kin  
Then the house I live in  
Next the soldiers unknown  
And the possessions I own

The dreadful fourth of an hour  
Between the hits on the towers  
Where people looked right and left  
Seeing only the jaws of death

Nine-eleven is a  
Quite memorable day  
And no one will forget  
The fate those 3,000 met

You've reached this poem's end  
Remember nine-eleven  
We've all learned, more or less,  
That we are all truly blessed.

**Desmond Morgan**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 8

## The Soldier

You are 10 years old and you have an older brother Lucas who is 15. Lucas is wanting to join the military and serve his country. A few years later Lucas graduates high school and signs up for the military. When he is accepted he has to head to the camp in a few days. You spend as much time as you can with him. The days seem like they are flying by and you have one day left. You and your parents spend the day with him and go out for dinner. When you get back you have to go to bed. But when you do you hear Lucas talking with your parents so you sneak downstairs and hear him say that he has to go to a base that is far away and he won't be back for four years your parents say their goodbyes and head to bed the next morning Lucas is gone and you didn't get to say goodbye. Two years past and you are trying your best in school and getting good grades. Two more years pass and your parents tell you Lucas is coming home after you get home from school. After the bell rings you sprint home, but when you get there you see your parents crying. When you ask what is wrong they tell you that they got a letter from the army saying that Lucas died while fighting in the war. When you hear this you hug your parents and cry with them a few days later and you are having a funeral for Lucas. When it is over you are really down but want to join the army for Lucas. You graduate high school and join the military. When you get drafted you tell your parents that you got in and they are happy. But when you tell them you leave tomorrow they are less excited. You spend as much time as you can with them but it is cut short and you have to leave sooner than you thought. When you get to the base you are put through the training course and then given a platoon to stay with. A few months pass and you get the news that your parents died with an attack from the enemy. You hear this and it makes you really upset but you continue your service. Two years pass and when you are heading home the base is under attack and a grenade is thrown at you. You can't react in time and it explodes and kills you. But you wake up in a bright place and your parents and brother greet you and you are reunited with your family and stay together never letting each other go again.

**Samuel Cole**

Wadsworth Middle

Grade 8

Our country is different than others  
 Because of one word  
 That word is freedom  
 Freedom is the reason our country fought the British  
 Freedom is the reason our country had a civil war  
 And Freedom is the reason that our soldiers are willing to die  
 If it means others can go through their daily lives  
 Without a care  
 In the world  
 If it means our country can stand against the waves of evil  
 For one  
 More  
 Moment

**Isaac Robinson**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 8

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### Why Do We Celebrate Veterans Day?

On this holiday we honor who  
 Sacrificed for the red, white, and blue

We thank all of those who saved and served  
 Who left their homes knowing they might not return

We might not think this is a big deal  
 But to all who serve they know that it's real

When you think deep about their place  
 That the might not come home and the troubles they face

Some came back home, some did not  
 But they all served and they fought

For our nation and our rights  
 So they fought many fights

For us to have what we do  
 We should respect all of who

Served for freedom and who  
 Fought for me and you

I know that I respect everyone who  
 Fought for us and you should too

**Kylie Ocepek**  
 Wadsworth Middle  
 Grade 7

## Humanity Vs Aliens!

### Chapter 1: Lost Forever

Hey, I am Drew and I am a part of this horrible time known as the war between aliens and humans. Let me begin, so I was 20 years old when the war started, ironically I was asleep when it started. Aliens came to earth under the cover of darkness and started invading and in doing so they blew up my house and I almost blew up with it. Miraculously some men found my still whole body and brought me to a lab. They tried bringing me back but it was no use, they soon thought of one last thing to do. To preserve my body till they find a way to bring me back from the dead. I then wake up in a strange laboratory and try to yell but it was muffled. I realized at that moment, I was in a stasis tank with water in it. I bang on the glass hoping someone would come to help me. I then realized, "Why am I not dying?" I thought. Then thank the lord as someone came by and opened the tank, releasing me. I started coughing and felt as though I could not breathe. A guy named Anthony helped me up and explained to me why I was there. After they had found my body they pronounced me dead, but then Anthony suggested to preserve my body till they could find a way to bring me back. So they put my body in the stasis tank I was in and froze the water in the stasis tank to preserve me. Did I not tell you I'm still 20 years old? Yep that's right I haven't aged since I "died". Around 50 years had passed since they had preserved me, they soon found a solution in the aliens that made them immortal and unable to age. So they ordered the men from different parts of the military to kill an alien and bring it back to the lab for analysis. Low and behold, they got the solution only after one man brought in an alien to analyze. That man was Anthony. After that they put the solution in the water after they melted it and found out that it worked, but I would still not be conscious till 2072. So they waited for any sign of life from me and that now brings us to today. After he explained everything I had just taken it all in all at once. "Did my parents survive? Did anyone but me make it?" I asked Anthony as thousands of questions were running through my brain still worried about my family. He sighed and said, "No, to be honest you were one of the 5 people who aren't in the military who made it. I'm very sorry for your loss." At that moment in time my whole life just crashed to the ground as I started to sob. Anthony hugged me and tried to calm me down, but I couldn't stop what I was feeling then and there. My family is

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gone and I can't get them back. I soon calmed down and said, "I am gonna get every last one of those freaks and kill them all!" Anthony tried to calm me down again but soon realized it wouldn't work. I then vowed to avenge my parents and I will do anything to do just that.

## Chapter 2: The Training

I awake in a bed almost forgetting how I had got in that bed. I tried to stand, but I couldn't stand up straight. Anthony woke up and gave me a wheelchair so I could get physical therapy. When I got there I met a very nice woman who helped me get up to the poles to try to get my legs moving once more, as I hadn't walked in 50 years. Her name is Sylvia, she had bright blonde hair, it was almost white and eyes that glistened in the sunlight. She just started to help me with my legs and by then I could stand for a few seconds before falling. Soon by the end of the day, I could stand for at least 5-10 minutes. Anthony helped me back to the bed and I soon went to sleep. As a couple weeks went by, I was finally able to walk and stand normally! I was so happy I finally could stand and walk around without help. After I went to my room I thought, "Now I can finally make those freaks pay for what they had done to me and my family." I thought about that when I was drifting off into slumber. When I woke up I kind of forgot where I was for a bit, but soon remembered. How I used to be broken, but repaired myself both mentally and physically. Anthony got me up for breakfast and I was starving, so I agreed to. After breakfast, Anthony took me to a military base where I saw tons of military officers holding assault rifles and other types of rifles. They stood there as if they were statues. I came in and they gave me a pistol. "Shoot the target." They said I obeyed them and shot at the target and missed it. They got kind of annoyed but then said, "Try again." and I did so. I just barely hit the target. They got a little less annoyed but still said "try again". I hit the target straight on and I was happy. They then gave me an assault rifle and did what they said, I was surprised at what I was able to hit the first time. By the end of the day I was able to hit every target down with one clip of a pistol. I was shocked and they then said, "Good job, go eat lunch!" I did so and then went back to my room. Later on the power went out so I couldn't pass time by watching TV, all I could do was read books and do nothing else really. I hated it, I used to pass time by browsing the internet and doing other things, but I couldn't now because of

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those freaks known as aliens. It was utter hell and I was on the verge of dying of boredom when Anthony came in.

"Time to go," he said.

"Go where?" I asked.

"To see your family."

"WHAT?!" I yelled.

"MY FAMILY IS ALIVE?!"

"No, just come out of your room." I timidly agreed. He took me to a room filled with gravestones.

"What is this?" I asked.

"Your family." He said, sounding very sorrowful.

"Oh I thought you said my family was alive. Guess I was wrong." I was embarrassed of myself to say the least and was very miserable. I went to see my mom and dad. There were pictures of them and they looked so happy and carefree. Unlike me, I was stuck in an underground facility filled with military personnel and scientists. As soon as I thought that, I remembered. Anthony said that I was 1 out of the 5 people to survive

"So where were the other 4..?" I asked him

"Where are the others?" He seemed confused and asked

"Who?" I started explaining about what he said and said.

"Oh I'm sorry I forgot, let me introduce you to them." He took me to a room filled with 4 other people. There were two girls and boys. The first girl was named Amanda Kent, she was a funny type of person and she was nice to be around. To be honest she was the type of girl to make people crack a smile even in the darkest of times. The other girl was named Kate Ridley. She was also nice and funny, who would be serious at times not as much at times. The first boy was named Matt Deery. He was a cool and chill dude who could also make people crack a smile. The last dude was named Brandon Mendal. He was also a cool type of dude who was a person who was serious when he had to be. They told me they were all teachers at a school in a state called Ohio. They had already been trained to use weapons for this apocalypse we call a war, that's the reason why they survived the invasion. For now we are getting ready to train more and get ready to fight and defeat those freaks.

**Nathan Cole**

Brunswick Middle

Grade 8

## The Mechanical Dr. Straw Berry

It was another day for me, Joey Hardhert. I woke up with the same bored face I've always had. Then my mom came to my room and said "Joey? Do you know what today is?"

"Another school day . . ." Said myself in annoyance. I tried everything not to go to school. I begged my parents, I faked a cold, I even tried to distract my parents with their favorite show "Wild and Cool Inventions". Of course, the show attracted me too so my parents found out that I was sitting next to them. My parents got very mad at me, they grounded me.

After a long day at school, I finally got home. Then my parents burst the worst thing I ever heard, I was grounded for a month. I've never been grounded that long before. In fact, I barely get in trouble anyway. Then I went up to my room full of anger and irate.

"Why did I do that!?" I yelled in anger. Then my mom whispered to me not to wake her baby.

After a few hours I got quite bored from reading books and playing my piano. That's when I found out about the craziest thing in my life. Since I was bored, I decided to eavesdrop on my parents. I heard that they were watching the show "Wild and Cool Inventions". The episode they were watching was a new episode that just came out, and they didn't even let me watch it!. Well, I was grounded so it made sense after thinking about it. Then I heard the most amazing thing on TV since they announced the "Smarter Phones" .

"Today's a big day for Autumn School!. A new and amazing invention will change the minds of student's opinions forever! Introducing Dr. Straw Berry. Dr. Berry will be our new teacher in our school, replacing Mrs. Gale. She has over 9000 different functions and activities while she's active, and she's a good replacement for that one mean teacher. She will be in service tomorrow!"

I was amazed when I heard about it! School was finally going to be fun again! I couldn't even get enough sleep because of the excitement! Well actually, I got tired after 12AM but I was still excited. When I woke up I rushed down the stairs to eat

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breakfast. Today, my mom was making pancakes, and they were delicious. I brushed my teeth and packed my book bag up.

“Joey, you’re so happy for school! It’s like you changed?” my mom exclaimed. Before she could start her next sentence, I rushed out of the door. On the bus, my friends were talking about Dr. Berry. They felt happier than ever except for one student in the back.

“If the school is being taken over by AI, things might go haywire!” she said. I obviously didn’t care about what she said. But let’s just say I should have cared about her. As I entered the school, I ran through the hallway into Mrs. Gale’s room. Then I saw Dr. Straw Berry. He was a goofy looking man with lightbulbs for his eyes.

“Hello my students” The teacher said in a wacky voice. “I’m here to make school fun and enjoyable for students,” he said as his eyes turned green. “Now, what should we do first? Play games, sing songs, or go on a field trip?” he questioned.

I didn’t know what to say. I was so excited. I even yelled “I LOVE IT!” in front of the class. Then the teacher made us do the most fun thing ever! He allowed us to do anything we want! It was an amazing day and the next 3 weeks were like that too. After three weeks, the robot’s behavior became really strange.

The Robot started to say “Error! Circuits out of place!” and immediately turn off for one minute. Every time he woke up, he started to get even weirder. Today, when we were on a sleepover at the aquarium, he turned off again. When he woke up, his eyes slowly started to turn red. After a minute he started to pick up a nearby table and threw it at me! Luckily, I wasn’t harmed.

The robot started to throw his arms around destroying everything nearby including the fish tanks. I tried to run to the emergency switch, but the robot broke it! I screamed “HELP! EVIL ROBOT ON THE LOOSE!” at the top of my lungs, but nobody came. That’s when I realized he kidnapped me! The robot knocks down

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one of the students revealing exposed wires and circuits. All the students were robots.

I ran as fast as I could from him. Surprisingly, he was way faster than me. I saw the dolphin stadium in the distance, that's when I had an idea. I decided to run towards the stadium, avoiding the objects the robot threw at me.

I finally got to the stadium, although I was quite exhausted. I tried to push the robot into the water, but he was too heavy. Then I remembered the time when the robot ate mustard in an accident. It really messed up his circuits. I found the hotdog stand at the other side of the stadium. I ran to the stand and he was gone. Once I thought I was safe, the robot dropped a shark at me from above. The shark attacked me viciously as I threw it into the water.

The stand broke and the hotdogs rolled everywhere. I was feeling so injured, but I threw a hotdog while the robot's mouth was open. He started to spin rapidly with his eyes frantically changing colors. Then, with all of my might, I finally pushed him into the water. Smoke emerged from the malfunctioning robot. I heard a small sound coming from the robot. It was a fuse going off!

Then I did the bravest thing I ever did! I jumped into the water trying to stop the explosion. I opened up the extremely hot robot. I saw the fuse going off inside of him trying to extinguish it. I checked my pockets and found scissors, but the fuse was just about to explode. I grabbed the scissors against the robot. I ignored the extremely hot temperature and cut the fuse just in time.

Then I noticed something. There was a small sheet of paper on the robot. It read "PLEASE DO NOT READ!". Although a warning was on the paper, I decided to continue reading it. The paper read "Protocol kidnap success, I finally made it! A robot that does everything I wanted it to do. Dr. Straw Berry is a huge success!" I looked at the signature, and it shocked me. It read "Mrs. Gale".

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I decided to get out of the water and call the police on a nearby telephone booth, then I quickly walked home in joy. I told mom that the robot was evil and I called the police on Mrs. Gale. She didn't believe me until she saw the news that Mrs. Gale was arrested. She was so surprised I did it! She was so proud that I got ungrounded. The next day, I felt so excited for school when I woke up. I was excited for the new teacher at school. She was the best teacher I ever had. I'm glad that I'm safe now and life is going better than expected! I feel so accomplished after the day I saved the school.

The End.

**Blake Porinchok**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7

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## **The Zombie Abomination**

"Hey guys, look it's Trentien, is he ok? He looks fine . . ." GROWL, "Was that Trentien," says Brody, "I think so," I replied, sounding surprised.

Five days before the apocalypse. Trentien, Jon, Brody, Colton, Livy, Jess, Ella, and Sydney were preparing to go on a vacation to the beach. On the drive to the beach they all realized that there was a random person standing out in the middle of the field, he looked to be eating a deer. They did not even try to stop because he looked dangerous. They kept on driving and arrived at the beach the next day. At the beach they met someone named Matthew and he said, panting, "DID YOU KNOW THERE WILL BE A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE IN 4 DAYS." Everyone in the car started getting worked up about it.

Four days until the zombie apocalypse. Now that everyone knows zombies are coming, we all go to my grandparent's house and get supplies. When we arrived my grandpa had put an electric fence around the entire farm including the fields. He was hard at work when we got there so we took his big army truck and me, Sydney, Livy, Jess, Matthew, and Brody went back out looking for more of our friends. We went to the neighboring farms to see if they wanted to come and join our farm to help, on our

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way we ran into Zombies, (KEEP THIS IN MIND WE HAVE TWO TRUCKS FULL OF GUNS AND AMOW).

"What do we do?" said Sydney. "We fight," I said. I handed everyone in my truck a weapon and I said, "Is everyone ready," everyone said, "Yes" with a worried look on their faces, I said, "It is going to be ok." We got out and started shooting and I said "aim for the head," and after a little while they were all dead. We heard a thud and someone said help. Livy turned and looked at me and said "what was that," I replied "I don't know." We went to see what it was and there was someone in a tree and about to get eaten by a zombie. Luckily we saved him and his name was Robbert.

Only 3 days till the big day and we have already lost one person Matthew. Six hours before he got killed. Colton was being smart and thinking he was tough, but he was wrong. He went outside the gate to try and convince us that there was nothing there he was also wrong. He was attacked by a Zombie and Matthew went out to try and save him. Matthew was eaten but Colton was saved by use and still lives today. We did a check up on Colton and he was fine. I treated him for anything that could hurt him.

The farmers that surround us come to help and stay until it is safe to go out. We loved all the help from them and all the security measures. My grandfather was making a fun trip to my house to get my pets and some of my things and I went with him. We got to my house and saw that my brothers and my parents were ok and they were all glad to see that I was ok. We loaded all the things into the cars and the trucks and went back to the farm. When we got back everyone was happy because they thought I was gone.

One day until the apocalypse and Syd and Livy say "we thought you died". I replied with i will never die. I'm trained for this kind of thing.

DAY OF THE APOCALYPSE everyone was terrified and I said, "It's going to be ok" remember what we trained for. We grabbed a truck with all the guns and the truck with all the ammunition and went to the front gate to defend the farm. Me, Sydney, Jess, Livy, and Brody got ready. Tom asked everyone I replied that he is on a supply run. He took his motorcycle and he was gone for days. We started shooting and saw Tom. "Hey guys, look it's Tom, is he ok? He looks fine . . ." GROWL, "Was

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that Tom” says Brody, “I think so” I replied sounding surprised. I picked up the 9mm and said “he has to go”. Tom fell with a thud. Jon was shot too. Everyone asked, “Are you ok?” I was shot by Brody.

I said “get down everyone ducked. I used all my strength to pull the trigger and Brody fell to the ground with a thud . . .

### **Jonathan Schramm**

Black River Middle

Grade 8

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Deep in the mountainous snow, upon the farthest peaks and greatest height, where even the bravest of soul’s resolve fails and the brightest lights dim, there lay a baby. Alone save for a thin blanket wrapped around it, and so blue in the face that it no longer dared cry. The end was near for it, though such concepts as death it could not comprehend. Still, doom came all the same.

That is until a figure appeared from the blizzard, wrapped in heavy robes and warm coats, he picked up the baby, bringing it close to him, preserving it.

Later, the man taught the baby to walk and talk, showed him the grass and the earth and named to him the stars. It was as if the child was his own son.

As the boy grew, so too did the man, his brown hair turning white while the wisps of a beard appeared on his chin. Yet as his age rose, also did his fear, his fear and his anxiety.

The boy, now in his early teens, could not comprehend the reason for the old man’s worry. All his life the man had been like a father, a rock, and it pained him to see his guardian seeming more helpless than himself. As the days passed the old man grew more nervous, becoming absentminded and sporadic. Still though, he attended to his child.

Finally, one day the old man said to the boy, “Let me show you something.” and took him into the forest behind their cottage.

The boy had never been allowed to venture into the trees, told instead to remain inside during the man’s daily visits to the hollow. He had no problem with this at the time, but could now see just how much he had been missing.

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Lights danced across the forest floor, illuminating the dark cavernous path with the power of the sun, moving about like glowing tendrils, glittering and shining through the woods. The boy gasped.

Then the old man turned to him and said, "It is time my son, that I show you what it is I have been doing all these years. It is time you learn of magic."

And so he taught the boy once more, showing him how to command the very elements themselves, manipulating and changing the natural order of things to match your designs. He saw much wonder, but also much darkness.

It was not soon after their instructions began that the old man's anxiety seemed to peak and he had the two move out of their cottage, becoming instead nomads, bound to the road and traveling to a place the boy did not know.

There was a darkness, the man told him, one that had existed in the world long before either of them did, and would persist long after they did. But they would stop it.

The boy failed to understand much of this, but trusted his master as always, and followed along the path.

Years passed, and soon the boy forgot the faces of everyone besides himself and his master. They had been alone in the mountains for what felt like an eternity, yet still he had no fear. In fact he soon mastered the ways of magic, far exceeding his teacher to the point where he had nothing left to learn.

It was on this day that the old man finally stopped their trek, alone in the snow, on the top of the mountain. Before them lay a dark stain on the ground, a shadow darker than no other. Immediately the boy knew this was the darkness they sought. He heard a sniff, and turned to see his master, quiet and somber.

"Long ago," the old man began, "We called together a congregation and discussed the matter of this shadow. We realized, you see, that its power and reach were far greater than our own, and that unchecked, it would destroy everything. And so, for the sake of ourselves and the world, a pact was made. We would all contribute a fragment of our power to contain the beast, and then, once enough time had passed to sufficiently weaken it, we would choose one to return with the task of destroying it once and for all."

The boy blinked.

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“You see, I was the one picked to finish the task, and, during my many years of research, I came to realize that this mission would destroy me as well.

“There is only one price, one payment required to destroy this demon.” He looked at himself in shame. “And I knew I could never pay it.

“So imagine my feelings when one day I found you, alone in the cold. I realized, you see, that I no longer had to make the sacrifice.”

The boy’s heart sank as he stared into his master’s eyes, the eyes he had trusted for years, implicitly and without doubt.

“So I raised you to pay the price instead. To do what I cannot.”

The boy backed away, suddenly afraid. He thought back at all his lessons, all his teachings and tried to fight, tried to flee, but realized he could not, he was trapped.

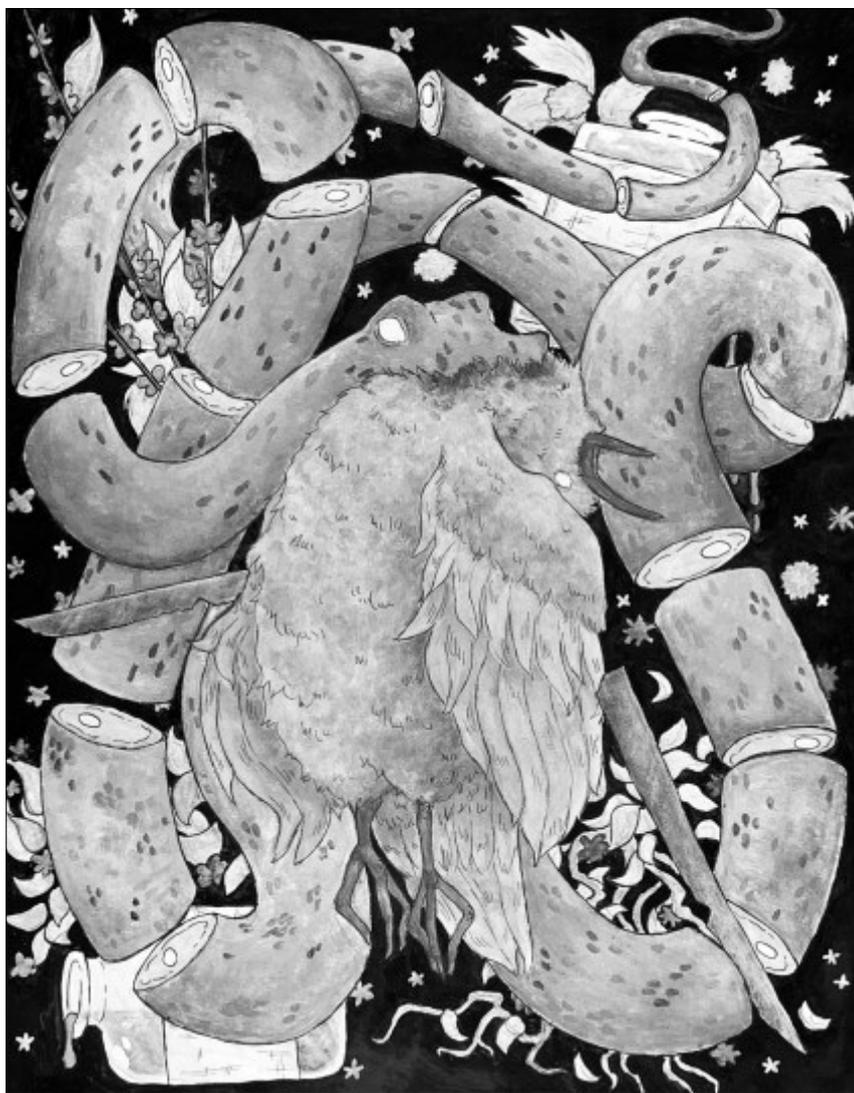
“Now is the end.” The old man whispered. “This is what you were made for. I’m sorry.”

And he shoved the boy into the shadow without hesitation, in the process teaching his student one final lesson. Betrayal.

**Lucas Kennedy**

Medina High

Grade 11



**Sidney Frazier**

Medina High

Grade 11

## Dead Gods

Thick fog blanketed the deepest part of the valley. The air was cool, but the breeze was thick and lazy. It clung to the skin of four travelers as they trudged through the cold, muddy soil of this wretched place.

One of the travelers, Agati, a man with crimson red skin and long hair tied back behind his head, squinted up into the mist. If the sky could be seen from here, he could not see it.

“Remind me again why we decided this was the place that would harbor all the answers to our problems? Could we not have gone to the big fancy palace instead of the latrine of all the realms?” He planted his foot in the mud, making a loud squelch.

“I thought I told you not to talk,” said Aura, the tallest traveler. She had a very pale complexion, though tinted slightly blue. Her short hair was stark white and almost hung over her eyes. “If there are any answers we can gather without being killed, they’d be here.”

Agati huffed, pulling his feet out of the mud and continuing.

“We couldn’t have gone to the palace anyways,” said the third traveler, Malon, whose tall brown hat was shrouded in the mist. “It’s a warzone. We would have had to fight our way into it, through it, and out of it.”

The mention of the ongoing conflict made them return to silence. As much as they wanted to joke and complain about it, none of them could forget what they had witnessed. None of them knew what lay on the horizon, or if they would live to see it. None of them knew what they would find here, just that there was a task at hand, and it was their job to see it fulfilled. The war was ongoing, and only four souls had the smallest inkling of how to end it, or even cared to. But how could a few mortals bring down the pantheon that reigned over their own fragile lives?

The travelers trudged on.

Their silence was broken only by the distant sound of running water. At first it sounded like a stream, but as the travelers grew closer, something seemed amiss. As they approached, the mud ran thinner, even more saturated than before. Though, now, it had begun to turn red.

“What in the name of-” Agati muttered. When he pulled his boot out of the muck to take another step, it was stained. All of their boots were stained red. Soon the mud turned to liquid, and the red ran over their feet.

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“Is this . . .” the fourth traveler, Ori, spoke. She was the shortest out of the four, horns curled out of her head and framed the sides of her face.

“Yes,” Aura confirmed. By now, they had all inhaled the sharp metallic smell that rose from the unnatural stream. It was all too familiar. It ran in their own veins, and had once run through the veins of so many they had seen fall. The travelers were reminded of why they were here, of why they now waded through a river of blood.

The sound they had heard before was now more clear. It didn’t sound quite like water. It was thicker and slower; something trickling into the river below it.

A shadow began to materialize in the mist. At first very faint, like a ghost, but soon the travelers craned their necks to stare up at the looming shape before them. The fog, ever so slowly, began to part, revealing what was hidden.

First, they saw a sword. It was massive, like it was designed to be wielded by a giant, only larger. Scenes and patterns were intricately carved up the center, though blood and dirt was caked into it, making whatever was depicted on it seem dismal. It seemed at one point it might have been a powerful weapon; beautiful and gleaming, but now it was nothing more than a relic.

Beside the sword was a leg. One that had been bent onto its knee. The other leg was planted to their left, also bent, though upright. The source of the sound, the source of the bloody river, poured down in between them. Each of the travelers’ gazes were drawn up, following the flowing blood. Above them, at what seemed to be this creature’s chest, was a severed head. It dangled from its long gray and white hair, which was gripped by a gloved hand. Cloudy blue eyes were rolled back into its skull, and its skin was pale and ghostly. The blood flowed from the bottom of the neck and into the river. Similarly, blood trickled out of its neck, where the head had once been. It ran down its chest and soaked the dark green garments it wore.

It was certainly an unsettling sight, though somehow it seemed as if it belonged here, at the bottom of the valley, creating a river to flow through it.

“What was this place called again?” Malon averted their eyes from the fountain before them, turning to the rest of the party.

Aura blinked a few times, trying to recall.

“I believe it is called the-”

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**“The Forgotten Realm.”**

All four travelers jumped at the deep, hoarse voice that rolled out of the severed head. Aura’s hand flew to her side, gripping her sword. The rest of them did the same, preparing a spell or reaching for a weapon, though they hesitated. The giant’s pale blue eyes rolled, as if it had not used them in a long time, and they needed to be adjusted. Eventually its gaze came to rest on them. Its eyes seemed to be filled with ages worth of experience and wisdom; they were deeper than the valley itself.

**“Please forgive my . . . informal appearance. Unfortunately, there is not much I can do to alter it at the moment.”**

The travelers remained silent. The winds howled faintly, and the blood continuously dripped into the river. Still it flowed over their boots, though here, at the source, it came up to their shins.

The giant regarded them for a moment; only its eyes moved. The rest of its body was as still as stone.

**“I have not seen a living creature here in quite some time. Where do you hail from, travelers?”**

The party glanced at each other, only relaxing slightly when Aura released her sword and addressed the headless giant. “We are from the mortal realm, and we have come here seeking answers.”

**“Oh? What are mortals doing in such a dreary place as this? What answers do you hope to find here, deep in the misty valley?”**

Agati coughed into his hand, muttering, “That’s what I want to know.” If the giant heard him, it did not acknowledge him.

Aura shot him a glare before speaking again. “The rest of the realms are at war. There are few places we can travel without crossing paths with divine armies, and most are not friendly towards mortals.”

The giant’s pale, wrinkled face contorted in surprise. **“War between the realms? Why, war hasn’t broken out in several millennia. I thought we had finally achieved peace. How disappointing.”**

Aura rose her eyebrows at ‘we’. “There was a war before this one?”

**“Oh, yes, of course. The divine powers have always quarreled amongst each other. Every now and then we have enough of it and war breaks out. Though eventually, it grows**

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**tiring and everything returns to normal. Nothing is ever truly achieved during those times.”**

“So you have fought in the past.”

The giant's face twisted in a painful smile. **“Yes. I led my army across these very hills.”**

“It must not have turned out very well, did it?” Ori asked innocently. Aura shot her a look. The giant simply chuckled. It was rough and almost cough-like.

**“No, it did not. It seemed my army was no match for our enemy, and neither was I. For here I was defeated, and now, here, I kneel for eternity.”**

It closed its eyes for a moment, only opening when Aura asked another question. “So you are a god then?”

The god smiled again. **“I used to be.”**

She furrowed her brow. “How does a god become anything else?”

**“I suppose you could still call me one. Though, in my current state, I lack all that makes a god divine.”**

“And what might that be?”

The god lifted its gaze. The red river ran, disappearing into the fog. Still, it knew that somewhere beyond the mist, the valley vanished into the horizon.

**“I have been forgotten, and a god is nothing without the memory of it. We are tied to the mortal realm; we are patrons of earthly traits. When the mortal realm forgets us, what power do we hold?”**

Its gaze shifted down to its sword, dirty and bloodied.

**“There are many like me. Forgotten, slain . . . ”** It looked at the river once more. **“ . . . dead.”**

The gurgling of the bloody stream filled the air as the god's voice faded into the mist. The travelers stared intently at the god, various expressions of awe, sympathy, and intrigue painted their faces.

“Who are you?” Ori asked.

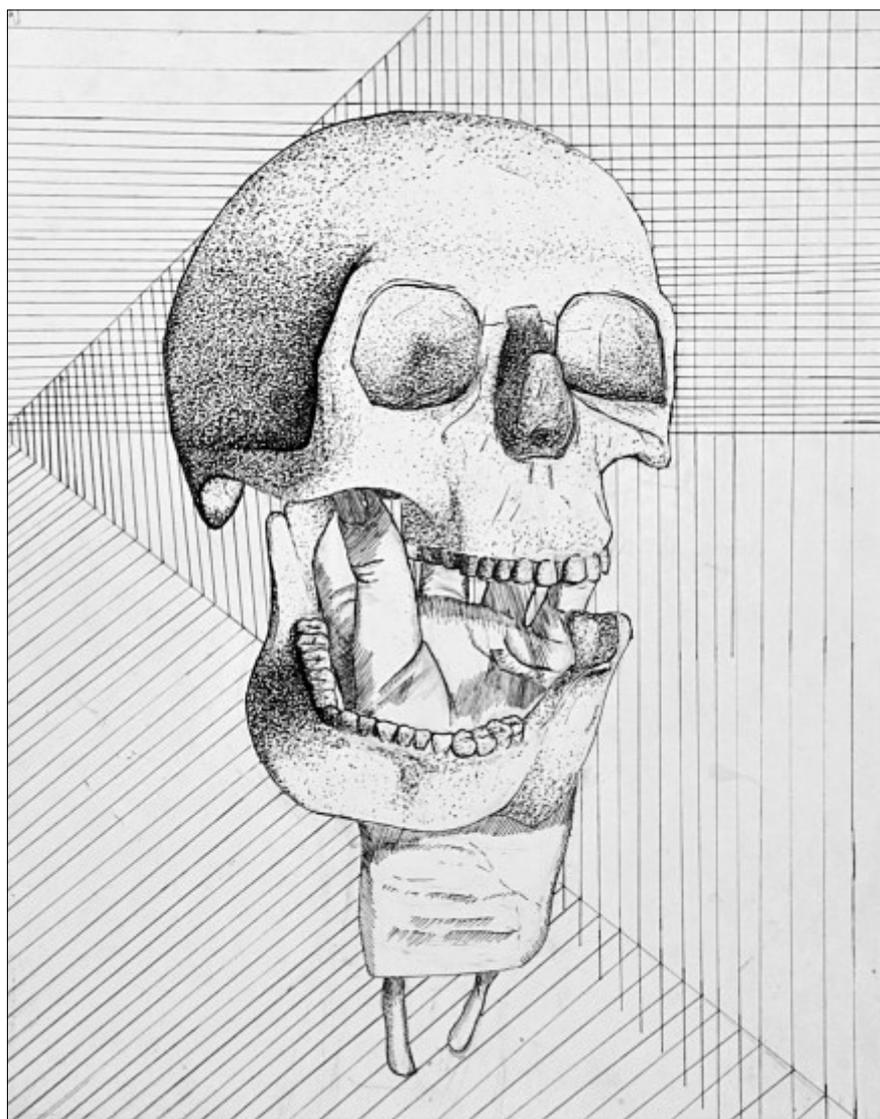
The god looked down at her with deep, gentle eyes.

**“I am Honor, and it seems all the realms have forgotten me.”**

**Sidney Frazier**

Medina High

Grade 11



**Nolan Falkosky**  
Medina High  
Grade 11

## King of Nothing

On top of a spire  
I do conspire  
To capture a king  
Steal his ring  
And back to my home I retire

And then the next day  
I must run away  
Run over plain  
I don't complain  
I run from the fay

I take up a steed  
So him I must feed  
For they take up chase  
They think I disgraced  
The king that I don't need

And so that fair king  
Now with no ring  
Was not king at all  
He had no thrall  
And praises to him none shall sing

**Amos West**  
Wadsworth Middle  
Grade 7



**Gracie Hollo**  
Medina High  
Grade 11







## 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.

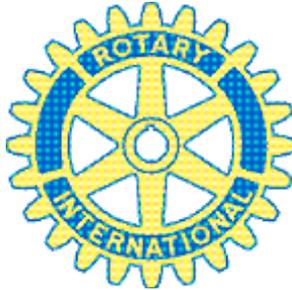
The Father of our Country, George Washington, wrote, “To encourage literature and the arts is a duty which every good citizen owes to his country.” This 35<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Inkspot* proves that the art of writing is alive and well in the schools of Medina County.

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

