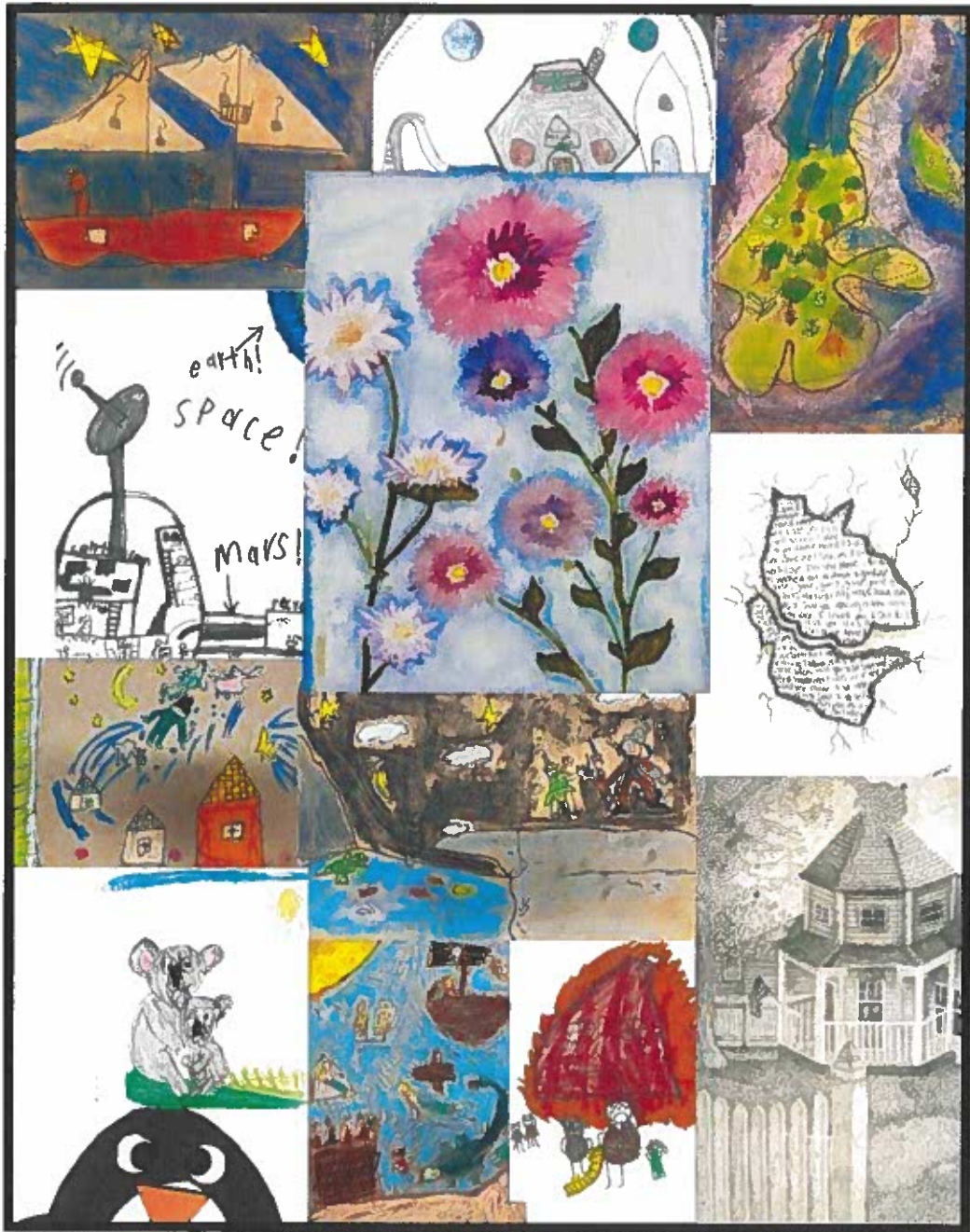


# Tri-County Literary Anthology

*A Mosaic of Student Work*



**Tri-County Educational Service Center**

**Vol. 1, 2023-24**

Within these pages you will find a variety of literary and visual art work, submitted by area schools on behalf of students across grades 1 – 12 in the tri-county area. The creativity, skill, and hard work of these published writers and artists is a testament to the excellent teaching and learning that takes place within our area schools.

All works published in this anthology were reviewed and submitted by each student's school. Tri-County ESC is proud to offer this publishing opportunity for its area schools.





# Grade 1

If I Had a Penguin

# If I Had a Pet Penguin

My penguin would eat  
Dominos pizza. My penguin  
likes to tan with me. His  
name is Jimmy. My mom thinks  
my penguin is cute. I Love  
my penguin.

Written by, Elania Douglas



**Elania Douglas**  
Norwayne Elementary School  
Grade 1

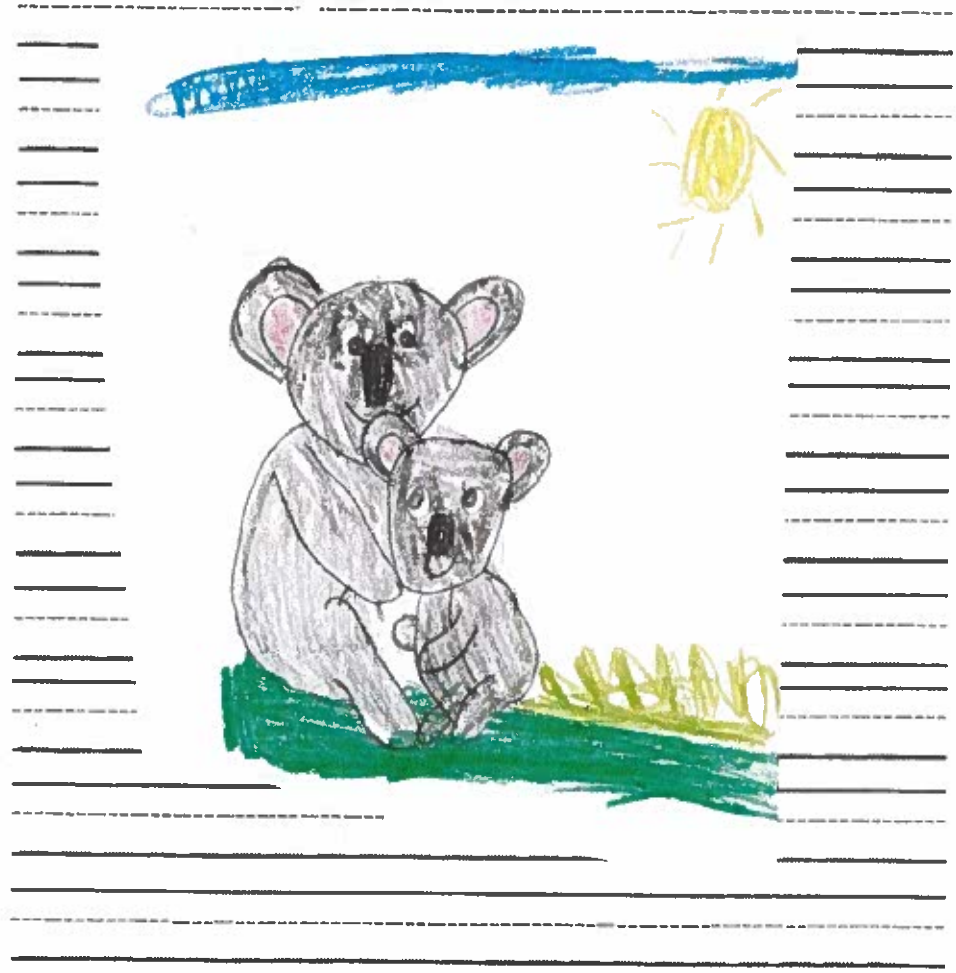
## All About Koalas

Name: Aina

### **ALL ABOUT** Koalas

I am going to teach you about koalas. Baby koalas are called joeys. When baby koalas are first born there the size of a jelly bean at birth. The joey stays in its mothers pouch for about 6 months.

Now you know about  
koalas.



**Alina Johnson**  
Apple Creek Elementary School  
Grade 1

# Grade 2



**Peter Pan**



**Hazel Arnold**

Kean Elementary School

Grade 2

## Peter Pan



**Lana Baab**  
Kean Elementary School  
Grade 2

**Wordless Book Title: Good Dog, Carl**

**Original author and illustrator: Alexandra Day**

**Creative story by: Makayla Breeden and Harper Ullman**

- “Look after the baby, Carl. I’ll be back shortly”
- The dog is watching out the window. The baby is climbing out of the crib.
- They are in the bathroom . The dog has a necklace and the baby has a donut.
- They go into the laundry room. The dog is coming down the stairs.
- The baby needs help . The dog comes to get the baby.
- Carl is starting the music. They are dancing.
- There is paper everywhere. The baby is in the fish tank and the dog saved him.
- They are in the fridge. They are getting food.
- The baby got messy. The dog took the baby for a bath.
- The dog dried the baby, put the baby in the crib, and threw away the paper.
- Carl gives the baby grapes.
- Carl is looking out the window. Carl is making the bed.
- The mom was back. The dog put him to bed and laid right next to the crib.
- The dog is laying down to sleep.

**Makayla Breeden & Harper Ullman**

Chippewa Elementary School

Grade 2

**Wordless Book Title: April Fools**

**Original author and illustrator: Fernando Krahn**

**Creative story by: Landon Cairns and Jaxson Osborne**

- Justin Jefferson and Patty McFatty are holding wood.
- Justin Jefferson and Patty McFatty are hanging up clothes and cutting wood.
- Justin Jefferson and Patty McFatty are painting an April fools monster.
- Justin Jefferson and Patty Mc Fatty are bringing the April fools monster through the gate.
- They set the monster down.
- They are bringing the monster to the dock.
- They are looking at the monster from above.
- They bring it into a tree .
- People are looking from below.
- They put the monster in the water.
- Most people are looking at the monster.
- Most people are pointing at the monster.
- It is getting popular.

**Landon Cairns & Jaxson Osborne**

Chippewa Elementary School

Grade 2

**Wordless Book Title: Bow Wow Bugs a Bug**

**Original author and illustrator: Mark Newgarden and Megan  
Montague Cash**

**Creative story by: Avery Cline and Cheyanne Gruver**

- Bow Wow is at home sleeping.
- Then Bow Wow wakes up at the horizon. He yawns. He goes to eat his breakfast.
- Next Bow Wow eats his food. He spots a bug. He squints at the bug and it lands on his bowl.
- Bow Wow goes outside.
- Bow Wow follows the bug.
- Bow wow sees a dog with bugs on it. The bugs fall off the dog and he follows one bug.
- Bow Wow bumps into a lady. The bug goes on the lady. Bow Wow scares the lady the bug falls off.
- Bow wow bumps into a dog. They greet each other.
- Bow Wow and Wow Bow play with each other.
- They are being silly together.
- Bow Wow followed the bug. Then he saw a bigger bug.
- Then he saw a bigger dog.
- Then he gets chased by the bigger dog.
- UH OH!
- Dog apocalypse!
- He ran as fast as he could.
- He turns the corner.
- He stops.
- Uh Oh!
- Blink.
- Uh oh!!!
- BUG APOCALYPSE!!!
- A bug is looking at Bow Wow.
- He is cornered!
- There is a crack in the fence and he goes through.

- He goes home.
- He eats his dinner.
- He goes to bed.
- He falls asleep.

**Avery Cline & Cheyanne Gruver**  
Chippewa Elementary School  
Grade 2



## Peter Pan



**Harper Dossi**  
Kean Elementary School  
Grade 2

**Wordless Book Title: Bubble Bubble**

**Original author and illustrator: Mercer Mayer**

**Creative story by: Quinn Gleason & Marley Langguth**

- Once a boy was walking down a road.
- A little boy saw bubbles coming over a fence.
- And then he wants to see where they're coming from.
- The boy saw an old man blowing bubbles and he was amazed.
- The boy wanted to blow bubbles so he asked the man if he could have one. The boy was happy and he walked away.
- The boy was making bubbles.
- The boy did not realize he made an animal; he was amazed by it.
- The boy started to make all sorts of animals.
- The little boy made a bubble snake.
- The snake was a mean snake.
- The mean snake was chasing the boy.
- The boy needed to make a bigger animal to fight the snake.
- The cat chased the snake away.
- The big giant cat was chasing the boy now!
- The boy made a bigger animal to chase the cat.
- The elephant smacked the cat away.
- The elephant came after the boy now.
- The boy made a tiny animal to scare the elephant away.
- The little boy popped all the bubbles.
- The boy dumped out all the bubbles and threw it in the trash and walked away.
- When the boy walked away a monster formed.
- THE END

**Quinn Gleason & Marley Langguth**

Chippewa Elementary School

Grade 2



**Wordless Book Title: Hiccup**

**Original author and illustrator: Mercer Mayer**

**Creative story by: Finn Thayer**

- Travis sees a pretty girl and her name is Taylor. Travis invites her on the boat.
- Hiccup! Hiccup Hiccup Hiccup Hiccup!
- Taylor got hiccups so Travis poured water on her to try to stop the hiccups but it didn't work.
- So they sailed out into the ocean.
- So they started eating.
- But then she hiccupped again.
- Travis tried to scare the hiccups out of Taylor but it didn't work.
- But when they least expected it she hiccupped again. So he tried to scare the hiccups out again.
- Travis slapped Taylor.
- But that still did not work!
- Travis pushed Taylor in the water.
- Then he helped her back up onto the boat.
- Then he found her umbrella.
- Then they were heading on their way back.
- Travis helped Taylor off of the boat.
- Then Travis hiccupped.
- Then Taylor hit him on the head.
- Then she scared him.

**Finn Thayer**

Chippewa Elementary School

Grade 2

## Peter Pan



**Lina Walker**  
Kean Elementary School  
Grade 2

## Peter Pan



**Jessica Zhuang**  
Kean Elementary School  
Grade 2

# Grade 3

## **Giraffes**

Giraffes are really cool animals. Giraffes live in both the semi-arid savanna and woodlands in Africa. Giraffes primarily eat leaves and twigs from acacia, mimosa, and wild apricot trees. Giraffes have an average lifespan of about 25 years in their natural habitat. Giraffes weigh about 2,000 pounds and are usually 17 feet tall. Giraffes typically eat 66 pounds a day, but can survive on as little as 33 pounds a day. Giraffes are really interesting animals.

I would love to have a giraffe as a pet. If my mom asked me to get something on a high shelf, I could get on my giraffe's back and grab it. I would also love to ride my giraffe around the neighborhood. Also, if someone was playing basketball with me, I would climb on my giraffe's back and dunk on them. Having a pet giraffe would be awesome!

**Devin Dannemiller**

Chippewa Intermediate School

Grade 3

## **The Cheerleader**

Once upon a time there was a girl named Elizabeth that had always dreamed of being a cheerleader. She really wanted to cheer but she was not flexible enough. She couldn't do the splits, she couldn't do a backbend, she couldn't do anything. She got mad until she remembered she had a friend that was a cheerleader! She called her friend Zoe, and she agreed to help her practice for cheerleading.

The next day Zoe came over and helped Elizabeth practice for cheer, but the bad thing for Elizabeth was that it was very tiring for her. She knew cheerleading was her passion, so she kept going. Finally she got better and went to tryouts. She could finally do a split, a backbend and a lot more! She had a really nice team and her coach was so kind, too! She also had been practicing a backflip. So on her game day, her teammates lifted her up and BOOM! She landed her backflip! The next day she was really sore but she thought it was worth it. Now she loves cheer and she is going to do it next year!

**Alana Selbee**

Norwayne Elementary School

Grade 3

## **Porcupines**

A porcupine has many cool facts. The porcupine lives in mixed-forest habitats in Canada and in Northern Mexico. Porcupines eat twigs, leaves, roots, grass, and fruit. Porcupines can live for about eighteen years. Porcupines are eighteen to twenty-three inches and they weigh ten to twenty-eight pounds. Porcupines are covered in about 30,000 quills. Those are some cool facts about porcupines.

I think a porcupine would be a cool pet. One reason I think a porcupine would be a cool pet is because if my brother is annoying me, I can hold up my porcupine and scare him away. Another reason is if I'm drowning the porcupine can try to save me because they are very good swimmers. Another reason is if it has a baby then I can see the cuteness of it and raise it. Those are some reasons why I think a porcupine would be a good pet.

**Maggie Winans**

Chippewa Intermediate School

Grade 3

# Grade 4



## **Lime Green**

Lime green is new grass

Lime green smell like limes

Lime green tastes like sour apple

Lime green looks like a sports car

Lime green feels like squish ball

Lime green sounds like nature

Lime green is my favorite color

**Greyson Arias**

Melrose Elementary School

Grade 4

## **City Square Steakhouse is The Best Restaurant in Wooster**

Do you like to go out for dinner? If so, I have the place for you. It's called City Square Steakhouse. In my opinion City Square Steakhouse is the best restaurant in Wooster. My first reason is that their food is the best. My second reason is it's up scale. My third reason is they're local.

City Square Steakhouse is the best restaurant in Wooster because their food is the best. Their food is the best because they make it homemade. Homemade is better for you than the junk you would get from a fast food restaurant. It may be expensive but it's way more worth it. If I could pick anywhere to eat, it would be City Square Steakhouse.

City Square Steakhouse is the best restaurant in Wooster because it is upscale. They have a patio with beautiful lights hanging up. That would be a nice place to hang out with family. Also, if an adult was hanging out with friends they could sit at the bar! If you were going somewhere fancy after going out to eat, or if you prefer that environment, you can sit in the fancy room. It has nice white table cloth and fancy washable napkins.

City Square Steakhouse is the best restaurant in Wooster because they're local. I know they are local because I live in Wooster and their restaurant is 10 minutes away from my house! That's pretty close. Sometimes local places are hard to find. Where I live in Wooster it's the easiest place to find local places.

I think City Square Steakhouse is the best restaurant in Wooster. I think this because their food is the best, it's upscale, and they're local. Now do you believe that City Square Steakhouse is the best restaurant in Wooster?

**Malia Brooks**

Melrose Elementary School

Grade 4

## **My Mars Mansion**

Hi there! My name is Carson Donley and I have made a super space base. It's not really a mansion but it had three M's (my Mars mansion) and I think the name is really funny. Anyway, I based my design scientifically. I am a Cub Scout and every month I get a magazine from Cub Scout Magazine. I mostly just read the comics.

When NASA colonized Mars they had the houses be little ice cream cone shaped houses that have curved tops and are supposed to be okay with Mars's gravity.

I decided to add a recycler with cool robot arms that have super cool A.I. (artificial intelligence) that decides if it goes in the trash or if it gets recycled and put in the bin for reuse. If it is put in the trash it will get crushed into thousands of smithereens and given to Pluto the space dog! He is an alien that comes from Pluto that loves metal for food. He snuck onto the spaceship when the travel ship landed on Pluto a few months ago and now he's just our trash can. If I knew how to draw it I would have put food organizers on the drawing, so that the food doesn't get all mixed together. Who wants some cinnamon toast crunch in their mashed potatoes!

On top of my cone is a satellite that gets a signal from a space station in space that gets signals from Earth so the control room can work for Mrs. Captain Women (the captain). So that Mr. TV Man (the guy that watches TV and does nothing else) can watch space Phineas and space Ferb with Perry the space Platypus (because it's the first thing that comes to mind).

The bedrooms are like those double layer beds but double double. In my bedroom I have a space bookshelf with all the space Harry Potter books and the space Keeper of the Lost Cities books.

Then there is an air lock with spacesuits hidden between the recycler room and the kitchen where Mr. Chef Man (the chef) makes space spaghetti and yummy space elbow noodles. I like those noodles best with space mac and cheese, deeeelicious! I like

space food with a bit of space ketchup and maybe some space salt and pepper.

The ladders and stairs are there for climbing from floor to floor. I used them instead of elevators because I don't think it would be small enough to fit plus all it does is look cooler.

Living in My Mars Mansion is awesome!!!!!! Maybe one day I will be accepted into NASA to go to the planets!



**Carson Donely**  
CE Budd School  
Grade 4

**Baseball vs. Softball**  
**Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission**

Hit, pitch, and run! Have you ever played baseball or softball? These two sports have a lot of similarities and differences.

Let's talk similarities, of course there is still a team and still a uniform, but the most important thing to me is that they both have fun! Baseball and softball both have professional teams but to get to the professional team you have to put in a lot of effort. Catching is also the same, same gear and same purpose. They are both an athletic sport, there is a lot of running involved. More things are similar than you think, like equipment for example, the glove is the same, the helmets, and the bases. Wow, there are a lot of similarities!

That's all the similarities, what about the differences?

For one softballs are bigger, and baseballs are smaller. There are a lot of differences, like the pitch for an example, the softball pitch is underhand while the baseball pitch is overhand. Even though I said a lot of the equipment is the same? Yeah well, a lot of it is different too, like that bats, softball bats are metal and baseball bats are usually wooden. In softball the bases are 60 feet apart but in baseball the bases are 90 feet apart, that leads to baseball players being able to lead off before the ball leaves the pitchers hand, but softball players are not allowed to go until the ball leaves the pitchers hand. Another big difference is that softball only has seven-innings while baseball has nine-innings.

And that's game! Did you have fun learning about the differences and the similarities? Now you know more about the game!

**Elise Long** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
Wooster Township Elementary  
Grade 4

## **Hiding in Plain Sight**

Response to What are some of the purposes of the animals using camouflage?

Picture this: you are a red-eyed tree frog and you are hiding using your camouflage, but the predator does not fall for that and catches up to you and is about to eat you. However, you have the power of red eyes, and you scare that big bully away. Here are some of the uses of camouflage on some animals.

One of the many uses of camouflage for animals like the stonefish is to hide to catch their supper or, in other words, their prey. The stonefish is equipped with a rocky-like texture and some of the sea is rocky, so they hide in a rocky-like place and wait for supper. To prove this answer, in paragraph three, the author said this about the stonefish: "They snuggle into the rocky stretches and wait for prey." This proves that the stonefish excels at camouflage and hunting.

Another animal that uses the art of camouflage is the Arctic fox. The Arctic fox uses camouflage because it needs to hide from predators instead of hunting prey. They use camouflage because they live in a snowy environment, and they snuggle in the snow. In paragraph five, the author included these details in the text: "Many mammals have fur that is designed to help them remain unnoticed by predators. One of the mammals that excels at hiding in plain sight is the Arctic fox." This proves that the Arctic fox excels at hiding in plain sight.

Overall, that is why various animals use camouflage in their many different ways. If you have time, you can try to find animals that use camouflage!

**Layne Napier**

Norwayne Elementary School

Grade 4

## **Kids Need a Phone**

Do you think kids should have a phone? In my opinion I should have a phone. My first reason is I am a responsible kid. My second reason is it's a portable electronic device. My third reason is a safety issue .

My first reason is I'm a responsible kid. For example I do my chores, I clean my room and I do my homework. Sometimes I have to do extra chores. Like taking the garbage cans down to the curb. And taking care of my older sister's dog.

My second reason is it is a portable electronic device. For example, it is able to fit in my hand, I can have it in my pocket and I could run with it in my pocket. I have an iPad and it's hard to take in public because it's harder to carry.

My third reason that I should have a phone is it is a safety issue. For example if I got lost I could be found. If I get kidnapped I could call for help and if there is an emergency I couldn't call 911 for help. Do you think it's a safety issue? But you could get spam calls and that is bad too. Do you think it is a safety issue?

This is why I think kids need a phone. My reasons are: I am responsible, it's a portable electronic device, and it's a safety issue. Do you think kids need a phone?

**Samuel Sterner**

Melrose Elementary School

Grade 4

## **My Mars Space House**

My Mar's Space house is a hexagon shape. There is a big bubble around my land. I call it an air bubble. Right next to my house is a rocketship. The outside of my rocketship has a button I press to open my air bubble. After that, there will be no oxygen so then my house has an automatic air button that closes the air bubble and air that I can breathe in. I do have a little bit of gravity. The rocketship takes me to Earth and Neptune to get water. I go to Earth to visit my family and to get food. Sometimes my rocketship takes me to the moon to see my friends Mairi and Elora.

My home is a violet color with a green door and pink glass windows. Only the top window. I have a chimney that has carbon dioxide that comes out to give me and my bunny air. You can see through the top window but all the other windows you can't see through. I have a great view of Neptune, Earth and the Sun. Also, around my air bubble I have LED lights so my parents can look at the sky in the middle of the night and they will have lights everywhere around their house so I can see them and they can see me.

Inside of my house I have a staircase that leads right to my room upstairs and up there I have a guest room for when my friends come over from Neptune, the moon or even the sun. On the door of my house I have an orange and black box thing. The orange and black box has a secret password so then no random strangers can somehow get through my air bubble and sneak into my house and when I visit my parents I have my friends come over and take care of my bunny Milky way.

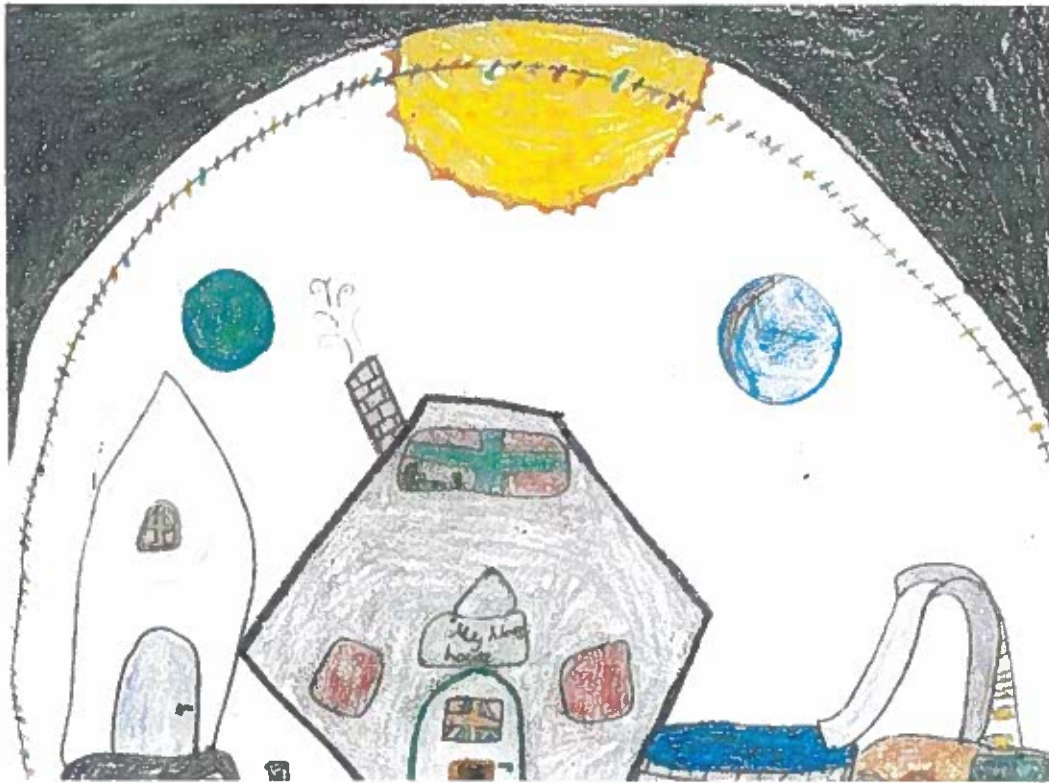
In my backyard I have a little hill I made for my bunny. I made it out of mar rock and I used crushed brick. Also, over her little hill there is a slide learning into a freezing pool because it gets pretty hot up here. The slide railings are magenta. The password to my house is Capybaras\_Rule099, SHHHHH don't tell anyone I told



you! Anyways, above my house door I have a green sign that says 'MY MARS HOME'. Also, right when you come into my house it's not only a staircase, there's also a shoe rack and I have 10 pairs of shoes. I have high tops. I have way too many to name. I have a little bit of capybara craziness.

Inside my house, my bed has a capybara pillow and two regular pillows that are white. My sheet is all light brown with a big capybara family and for my covers...Ohh... I forgot...my mattress is plain white. I did not bring my dogs. I thought they would be too much to handle in space.

My house is the best house in the whole entire universe! I hope I can tell my friends on Earth about My Mar's House.



**Wren Wenell**  
CE Budd School  
Grade 4

# Grade 5

## **Dreaming Elephants**

Hi, my name is Ivy and I love elephants. They are like my world. Let's go back to when I was three. I liked to draw so I would also draw elephants. I wasn't good at drawing them, but I didn't care. I have wanted an elephant as a pet my whole life but never got one. Now I am 15 and I work at a zoo with the elephants. I have been working there for 1 year. I started when I was 14 years old. I know that is young, but I don't care. It was the closest thing to an elephant I thought. A few years later now I am 20 and I own my own zoo which means I own the animals and I have elephants, so I own the elephants too.

Guess what! My zoo got shut down so I worked my butt off at the zoo I used to work at until I had enough money to get my zoo back. I'm 30 years old and I have the biggest zoo in the United States! Some of the money I earn I donate to animal shelters or people who need some help with money. I love elephants but I never thought I would have my own zoo, especially the biggest one in the United States. I wasn't the only one who made this happen. My family and friends helped a lot with this so all I can say is thank you for everything. This zoo started as the tiniest hair salon, but it all came together and the money is being split between me, family and friends and animal shelters. Thank you everyone for all your help to make this happen. This wouldn't happen without you guys.

**Harper Albright**

Edgewood Middle School

Grade 5

## Never Give Up

Today may have some ups and downs.  
Today I might fall,  
But I will not stay down on the ground.  
I will get up and show them who I am.  
But even if I stand alone if I have to,  
I will speak up for others and myself.  
I will not be afraid if something stands between me and a goal.  
I will stand there and be the outsider.  
I will be myself.  
I will be there waiting for others even if they don't come.  
I will speak up and say, "What would you do?"  
You have the choice.  
What do you want to do with your life?  
Will you stand there,  
Or will you stand beside me?  
I may be an outsider,  
But if you were me would you want to be there alone?  
Or with others that are outsiders?  
I am standing here alone.  
Well, others just stand there not knowing what to do with their  
lives.  
Would you stand there if everyone wasn't?

**Amber Felix**  
CE Budd School  
Grade 5

## Mars

### Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission

5,4,3,2,1 Initiate landing sequence, "we've done it. "The planet Mars is very interesting. Its appearance is red, but that's because of the minerals in the soil and dust. Mars is the 4th inner planet, and the 4th closest to the sun. Its name comes from the Greek god of war Ares, because the planet looks like blood. The journey in mars continues....

Mars atmosphere is indeed interesting, let me tell you a little bit about it. Mars has two moons, Phobos and Deimos; they are believed to be captured asteroids. Mars surface area is about 55.74 million mi(2) wide. Mars doesn't really have any clouds, but clouds on mars are just really rare. Mars is a place humans can maybe live on someday, but we need to study it more.

Mars has had multiple probes and rovers sent there and very interesting places on Mars. On November 14th 1971 a unmanned spacecraft called the mariner flew to mars in a giant dust storm. When the storm subsided pictures revealed a giant volcano named Olympus Mons. Mars has two rovers named the curiosity and the perseverance studying mars now. Mars is still having discoveries today and scientists are still studying it.

"We are packing up our base and returning home, but let us tell you a little more. The symbol of mars is this, cool right. Did you know that Olympus Mons is the size of New Mexico. The rover's curiosity found the early Mars supported life which means there might be life out there. "We have completed our mission and we are on our way home".

**Brahm Johnson** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
Shreve Elementary School  
Grade 5

## Flower Garden



**Avery Mannasmith**  
Norwayne Elementary School  
Grade 5

## The Day After Christmas

The day After Christmas  
SANTA CLAUS STARTS  
CHECKING THE LIST IN  
HIS FAVORITE CHAIR HE  
DRINKS HIS HOT COCOA AND  
EATS HIS COOKIES ALL OF A  
SUDDEN HIS CHAIR  
BREAKS! THE MICE ATE  
HIS CHAIR SANTA TOLD  
THE MICE THEY WERE  
ON THE NAUGHTY LIST.  
THE MICE MOM TOLD  
THEM THEY WERE  
GROUNDED! THE ELVES  
MADE HIM A NEW  
CHAIR. THE MICE LIT  
THEIR COAL ON FIRE  
AND BURN DOWN THE  
NORTH POLE.



**Bella Shull**  
CE Budd School  
Grade 5

## **The Strong One**

When you get in a fight,  
Walk away.  
You'll be the strong one.

When someone's in trouble,  
Help them.  
You'll be the strong one.

When you want to give up,  
DON'T.  
You'll be the strong one.

When life gets you down,  
Be the strong one.

**Jaylynn Watkins**  
CE Budd School  
Grade 5



## **The Sock Rock**

One day I found a rock. I decided to put it in my sock. I decided to call it Sock Rock. The Sock Rock hurt a lot, so I bought my foot a cot.

Then I decided to cook some soup in a pot. It tasted too orange. So I went outside and got a mushroom's sporange. Sock Rock loved the soup, and he loved that it tasted like fruit.

After that we drove around in my coupe. As we were driving, my sworn enemy saw my face. He then started a chase. But all was fine because Sock Rock loves to race. It was an easy win, and we drove away with a grin.

We then went to Berlin to get a cheesy Käsespätzle, but it made us all queasy, and it was super greasy. So we only ate half.

After that, we decided to go and buy a newborn calf. Then we did the math, and learned that we didn't have enough. So we had to be tough. We told the owner and he said, "That's rough."

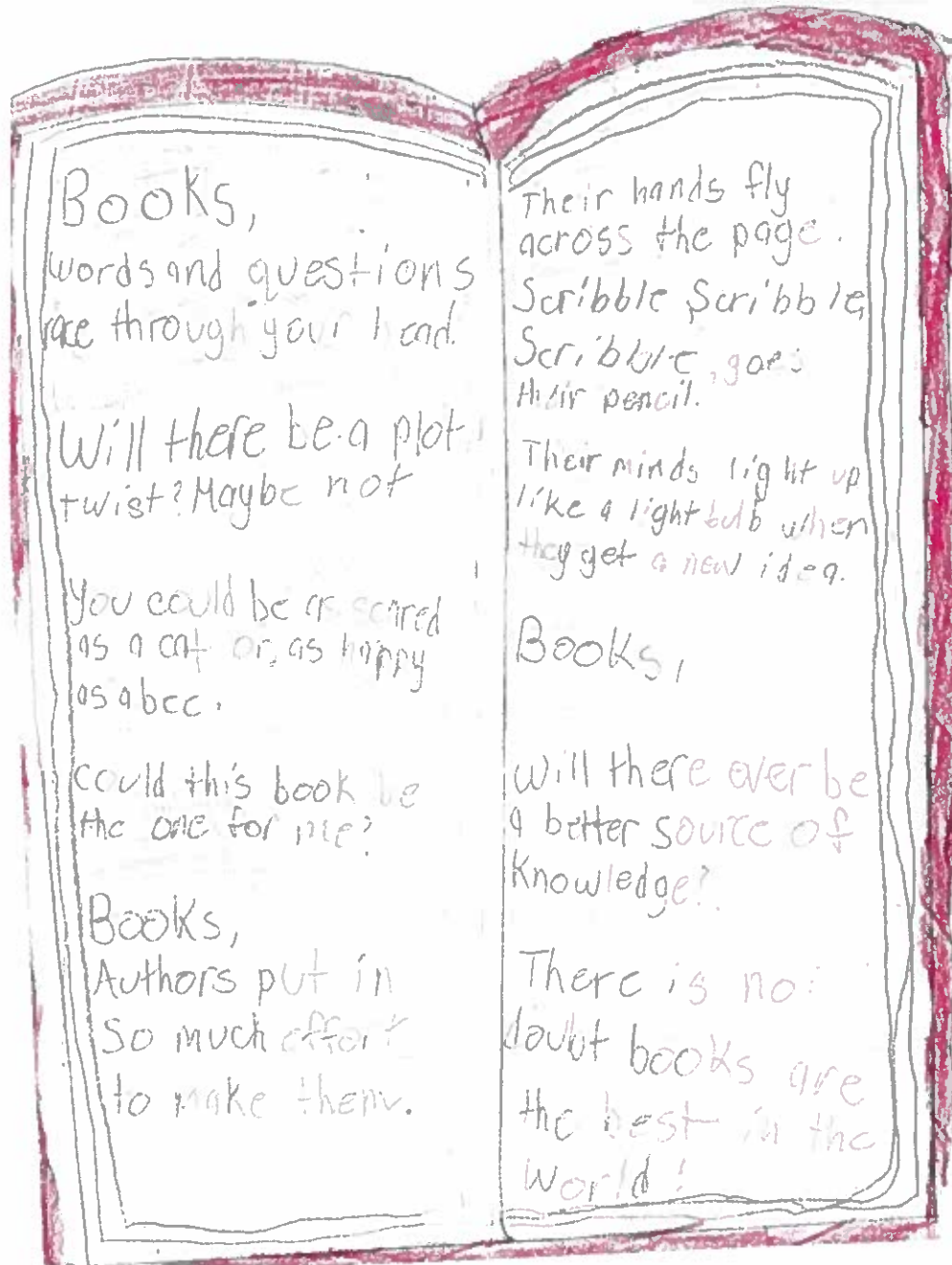
As the day ended, we saw the stars. Out by the dock we sat on some bars, listening to the dying noise of the cars. All was calm. We had suffered no harm, and that was the end of our crazy day.

**Hadley Wharton**

Norwayne Elementary School

Grade 5

## Books



**Guinevere Young**

Apple Creek Elementary School

Grade 5



# Grade 6

## **The Girl Who Made a Difference**

Once upon a time there was a girl named Olivia and she knew almost everybody besides the new girl. She realized the new girl was getting made fun of for the color of her skin. When Olivia went and introduced herself to the new girl she said "Hi I'm Olivia what's your name?" The girl replied Harper "If you are here to make fun of me please just please leave." Olivia spoke very calmly "Who is making fun of you? I promise I can do something about it." When Olivia heard the name her heart broke, it was her best friend Henry. Olivia went off to find Henry and blew up at him "Why on the name of this Earth would you make fun of somebody for the color of their skin?" she screamed. "It was just a little joke plus she is just an outcast." Olivia was so mad she told him to never come near her again. She went back to Harper and suggested the idea of making posters all around town so that people can support everyone no matter what their race is. They did that and every person in town was giving money to the local charities and much more. When they went to school the next day Henry stood there and spoke very lightly "Umm I am sorry for what I put you through." "It's ok, just know not to judge someone before you realize the impact it can make on them." Olivia said "let's all be friends." With that they all became friends and lived happily ever after.

**Abigail Ashcraft**

Chippewa Intermediate School

Grade 6

### Short Story: Tony's Night With the Adairs

As I looked out at the houses my mom and I passed while driving, I fiddled with my Ohio State baseball cap. I was very nervous, because tonight I was going to babysit for the first time. Sure I had babysat my siblings before, but this was different. I was going to watch my mom's friend's kids.

"You didn't have to drive me, mom. I could've just walked." I said, burning with embarrassment.

"Oh, it's no big deal," My mom says in a voice as sweet as honey. "Don't worry about me."

"I wasn't." I muttered under my breath. Mom was always acting like she was so busy all the time, but really all she did was take care of me and my brother and sister.

"Here we are." My mom declared. "The Adair's house." We pulled up to a big black house with a navy door and navy shutters.

I opened the door to get out, then realized my mom was getting out, too.

"I'm good, you don't have to come in," I said, silently begging her not to come in.

"Oh, my baby boy!" I narrowly dodged a hug, and started walking towards the house. "Don't worry, even though it's going to be hard." She called after me.

I laughed at this. "It's going to be easy-peasy. Look at you. You take care of me, and it's easy." Looking back, now I realize how wrong I was.

I ducked into the house before my mom could scold me, and was instantly greeted by loud voices.

"Tony!" A voice boomed. It was Mr. Adair. He wore a plaid shirt, and khaki pants. "Thanks for coming, and right on the dot, too!"

"Oh, we're so sorry to spoil your plans," Mrs. Adair

exclaimed. She was pretty and young, with brown eyes, and thin blonde hair. "Will you miss out on anything?" She fretted. I plastered a fake smile on my face. "Don't worry," I insisted. "This was my plan!"

Mr. and Mrs. Adair laughed. "Come introduce yourself, boys." Mr. Adair called. Three little kids sprinted into the room.

"I won." The oldest one declared in a squeaky, high pitched voice.

"This is Thomas, Tom for short, Reese, and Jeff Jr.," Mrs. Adair explained, pointing to each one as she spoke. Tom was the oldest, probably six, Jeff Jr. a baby, and Reese in between them.

"Well, you best be off," I proclaimed. "Don't want to be late now, do you?"

"There's a list of numbers on the counter, and their dinner is in the fridge." Then the couple walked out the door, and was gone.

I had time to look around the house now, and it was beautiful. The walls were a light gray, the sofa a cream white.

"Who are you?" Reese questioned in an outraged voice.

"I'll be your babysitter tonight." I said happily. "My name is Tony."

Tom scoffed. "We've had loads of babysitters, and none of them have come back for a second job."

Reese ran into the kitchen, right into a cabinet. The china bowl that had been on top of it wobbled, and fell over.

I barely managed to grab it before it could shatter on the floor. Jeff Jr. began to scream at the top of his lungs. Tom kicked the couch, and Reese had begun trying to climb the walls, getting sneaker marks on them. It seemed like everywhere I looked, the kids were getting into trouble.

"How about dinner?" I cried to get the kid's attention. It worked. Jeff stopped screaming and Reese fell to the floor. I sprinted to the fridge to see what was in it.

"DINO NUGGIES!" Reese shrieked. I grasped the box and

read the instructions.

Preheat the oven to 400, then cook for 15 minutes.  
Oh great. I thought to myself. An oven.

"I don't know how to do this." I muttered. I had never worked an oven before.

I looked it up on my phone. I pressed all the correct buttons, and then set the timer for 15 minutes.

When the timer went off, Jeff screeched, "Dinosaurs!"

"I want ketchup and honey." Tom stated.

I thanked Mrs. Adair for leaving a list of where all the condiments were, and grabbed out what Tom wanted.

Once Jeff Jr. eats dinner, burp him and put him in his crib to sleep. I read from a note Mrs. Adair left. I noticed that he had started looking drowsy.

I hoisted him up from his chair and started to pat him on the back. I must have patted him too hard, because he started to bawl his eyes out

"Shhhhh!" I tried to calm him down, but it wasn't working. Then I remembered something. Babies had binkies for this reason. I frantically searched, but after five minutes, I was empty handed.

"Where's Jeff's binky?" I had to shout to be able to be heard over the eternal screaming. Tom and Reese got up quickly and put their dishes in the sink.

"We're off to bed." Tom called as Reese snickered. I frantically checked all the lists. Mrs. Adair had left a note that it was on the counter. Wait. Just. One. Minute. What had Tom been holding in his hand when he crept away.

"Where is it?" I hollered. Big mistake. Along with his bawling, Jeff Jr. began screeching. I sighed in defeat. Maybe I could try to rock him to sleep. Finally, after a half hour rocking, and my arms beginning to feel like bricks, Jeff Jr. began to nod off.

As I waited for the Adair couple to return, I captured a few moments in front of the TV. When they returned, I got



twenty bucks for the night of torture.

My mom swung by to pick me up, and now I was grateful for driving home. At least Tom hadn't run outside. If he had, it would've scared me half to death. Wait. Uh oh. I was turning into my mom. But maybe it wasn't that bad after all. I knew my mom actually kind of did have a schedule. A schedule of taking care of me and my siblings. These were my last thoughts before I began to fall asleep, grateful for my mom.

**Adelyn Conrad**

Apple Creek Elementary School

Grade 6

## **My Most Precious Possession**

We all have gifts or objects that are important to us. Well, I have something special like that. His name is Ash, and he's my cat. And if you're thinking something like, "That's not a possession, that's a creature!" Well, you're wrong. Ash is too stupid to be considered a living creature. He falls off of shelves, tries to escape his eternal prison, etc.

Here's the story of how we got him. My mom works at a vet. About a year ago, a lady brought in a gray kitten to be euthanized. He was only 8 weeks old. His leg was broken because of the lady's granddaughter, but she couldn't afford surgery. Before the cat was injected with the deadly juice, my mom suggested that instead of murder, the workers should pitch in to pay for the cat's surgery. They agreed, and scheduled a date for the surgery. She gave my mom's boss the cat, and she left. Then he went home with her.

Until two weeks later.

At that point, my mom had told me about the kitten who cheated death, and I thought the picture was cute. However, two weeks after that incident, my parents came home with a crate. Inside was a little gray kitten. My mom explained that her boss' husband was allergic to cats. My mom was explaining how she was going to keep him in her room, but I grabbed the crate out of her hands, and yelled that he was MINE. I took him upstairs to my room, and gave him some food.

To this day, he's been my best friend. The moral of this story is cats are better than dogs, my mom is a good person, and toddlers can't be trusted around animals.

**Maxon Cornett**

Mapleton Middle School

Grade 6

## **Dr. Barton**

### **December 8th, 2010**

My name is Rina Thea Barton or more formally known as Dr Barton. I went to Smith College back in 1998 and got my Medical and Masters degree in 2010. I'm indeed not married and single. Finally I'm here at Mckinney Hospital working 7 pm till 3 am.

### **December 18, 2010**

I was working with my partner Dr. Hogan. I was doing my normal job when I saw a patient going down the hallway on a carrier. I ran down to help. "We need the medicine for Pneumococcal" The surgeon said. "Ok, I'm going to get it now." "Hurry," the doctor said. When I got to the medical room I looked for the 'P' cabinet to check for the medicine. After looking for a minute I found it. I looked for the bottle and right on the label it said 'Pneum' . I thought that was the right one until I gave it to the patient.

### **December 19, 2010**

After giving the medicine to the patient he started coughing violently, and passed out. The next day I learned that the doctors concluded that he got very ill.

### **November 6, 2016**

I'm now the Head of the medicine department and still live with the regret of that stranger I didn't even know. I live with the regret that if I would have focused harder and maybe taken time to carefully look at the packaging I could have saved this young man from having to deal with the pain of his sickness.

### **May 10, 2019**

I have retired from my job. I had to take time by myself to get over this thought. It's like his ghost haunts my brain saying, it was you, it was your fault you're the one who made me ill.

## **Aden Helms**

Chippewa Intermediate School

Grade 6

## **The Twilight**

As the sun sets down on Czheckovsky, the unimaginable happens. During the twilight, the predator that hunts during the day, becomes the prey. The citizens of Czheckovsky have to go into their homes and fasten all of their windows and doors closed. There is a creature known as the Spartech that has hunted these people since ancient times. When they hear the Spartech's call, they all hurry into their homes. One boy snuck out at night and saw the Spartech. The boy, named Sierge, came face-to face with the Spartech. The Spartech can only see movement, so Sierge backed away slowly. The Spartech saw Sierge and chased after him. Sierge ran but it was no use. The Spartech caught up to him, and right when the demon lunged at him, he woke up from the nightmare. He looked out the window and stared face-to face with the Spartech. His parents heard a scream and went to investigate. They did not see Sierge. They sent out a search party, but found no trace of him. All of the sudden their search dogs went crazy. The parents were looking around and saw a glimpse of the Spartech entering a cave. They followed the Spartech, and saw a bunch of eggs on the wall. They then realized that the Spartech had taken their son into a bedding area. They saw a Spartech with the same birthmark as their son's. They soon realized that their son was turned into a Spartech, and he was never seen again.

**Wyatt Mancuso**

Chippewa Intermediate School

Grade 6

## **Copper the Chihuahua**

One time I was 8 or so and I had a Chihuahua named Copper. He was slightly chubby, but adorable. Copper didn't like many people, but he liked me. Soon, I decided he was my favorite dog. We were inseparable, nothing could come between us.

We liked to do many things together. One day when I was 10 we were sitting on the couch and he was on the ground while I was eating. I fed him some strawberries and Cheetos. He laid there happily.

The next weekend I went to the house and happily asked "Where's Copper?" My dad froze and softly said "He passed away." I looked at him like he was joking, as he stayed frozen. In horror, I went upstairs and went in my room and I found his hamburger treats on my shelf. I looked at the mini purple bird blanket and remembered all the things we did together. I was devastated.

The house was extra quiet that weekend. For months it felt weird not to have him. But then that Christmas the last present was a blanket with all of our memories on it. He was a wonderful dog that I loved the most. We were very close and no other dog compares to him.

**Emri Neighbors**

Mapleton Middle School

Grade 6

## **The Secret Castle**

I was walking down a cobblestone path, it wasn't any stone path, it was enchanted, covered in ivy, with woods surrounding it. It led to a beautiful castle. I walked up 13 flights of stairs. They lead to a beautiful patio, with gorgeous pink roses, with a beautiful view of golden plains. I walked through the arched doors, as soon as I walked in I was in awe. There were two main curved staircases with glass railings lined with gold. I headed up the stairs and into the main bedroom, which had a beautiful laced canopy on top of the bed, with a soft bedspread. As soon as I walked in I was amazed. I went down the stairs and went into the dining room for supper, and there was food all the way down the long table. I went to sit on the only chair there. I poured myself some pink lemonade, and had some of the most delicious turkey and stuffing in my life. After the main course I went upstairs to sleep. I awoke and I was in a whole different place. I awoke in a mystical forest in a bed with ivy growing around the thin pillars that once held the laced canopy. I knew I had to try to get some food, so I found a buddha with some raspberries on it. I decided to walk another 4 miles down a dirt path. It led me to a sunny meadow, and in the back I saw that castle crumbling. I went right in front of the castle and walked back through that old cobblestone path and Awoke in my bed realizing it was all a dream, and decided to start walking down the cobblestone path in the back of my house.

**Leila Nemchev**

Chippewa Intermediate School

Grade 6

## The Mystery Man Part II (Excerpt)

### Chapter 4

#### Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission

“Hey Mike, I have a quick question,” said Thomas, a little afraid.

“Yeah sure, what is it?” Asked Mike, angry at Thomas for wanting to leave him. “I helped you at the orphanage and made you my only friend so that you can leave me!” Mike was getting a little louder but was not yelling.

“I just thought you could come with me. Macy said she’d like to go. She said she’d try to get a house car and we can bring Barry.”

Barry was the German Shepherd that was on the porch when they first got there. Better known as the little police dog on the porch.

“Sooooo,” said Thomas trying to get Mike to agree.

“Fine, I will go, but you have to do the chicken dance around the room,” said Mike with a grin on his face.

“Fine, Fine,” said Thomas rolling his eyes. Then Thomas started to dance around the room.

“Hahahahahahaha!” Laughed Mike as Thomas started to stop. “When do we leave?” Mike asked after he was done laughing.

“I’m not sure, but soon,” replied Thomas.

“Where would we go first?” Asked Mike, still trying to know everything that was going on.

“I want to go back to Ohio,” answered Thomas, thinking about his parents who died.

Mike, reading his face, started to change the subject.

“Well, we could go outside?”

“Sure,” said Thomas excitedly.

So they went outside and Macy started to look for a house car. Everything was coming together. Everything was good....or was it?

**Brylie Severs** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
Fredericksburg Elementary  
Grade 6

**Unmatched (Excerpt)**  
**Chapter 2**  
**Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission**

“ELLIE!” “ELLIE!” I hollered hoping to get a response. I sat down resting my back on a small tree. “Ellie” I started crying, the fear that the beast got her was not impossible which is why I was crying. “Growl” a low growl came from the bushes, then a paw came out then the beast. Its spots and pattern were unnoticeable but the blood was the most noticeable. I got up terrified. I didn’t know what to do so I ran up the tree, the beast had no trouble getting up there though it climbed and clawed my leg “AH!” I kicked it in the face and it fell down. I was high in the tree but the blood loss made me dizzy. I knew for sure I was dead. I lost my grip and started to fall. My back hit a branch and then I was out cold. Ellie Ellie all I thought about was her then finally the sun beamed in my eyes. “dumb sun” I said getting up it was the middle of the day I assumed. South America is humid, that’s why I loved it, but I don’t know if I do anymore.

**Julian Uhler** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
Holmesville Elementary School  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Runaway - Excerpt (Chapter 3)**  
**Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission**

The horse, a calm one, stood and watched his owner fall to the ground, life itself leaving his eyes.

Lucy saw her chance, and quickly realized the house was too far away to hear the scream. She ran over to the horse and grabbed the bridle. "Sarah! Get on!" Sara, though eight and a half months pregnant, swung up on the dappled horse's back.

Lucy in front, with Sarah, arms around Lucy, streaked, nothing but a blur, into the misty woods. The other slaves were hoping the twins would get away. The horses' hooves thundered underneath them. They leap over creeks, and bound over logs until they came to a barn, "We'll sleep here tonight." Lucy said.

"Lucy! The baby is coming!" They heard a bark in the distance. "So are the dogs." Lucy said in a low whisper. "Quick! In the barn!" "What if we go to the house?" Sarah asked. "What if they aren't a station?!" Lucy hissed. "Okay, since they don't know we're here, we can hide in the barn." Sarah said, she was quite calm for someone about to have her first child.

They quickly walked up to the barn, there was a rope tied in a tight knot. They could not get the rope untied, they were also running out of time. "Wait!" said Sarah. "Charley told me that if there is a lamp sitting outside the door it means they welcome runaway slaves!" "Look, on the back door step, there is a kerosene lamp!" They said nothing more, they just ran as quickly as they could, but Sarah practically hobbled. "Hurry!" They knocked on the door. A young woman opened the door, just then a dog howled, not far away.

"Hurry, come inside." The woman had a sweet, kind voice. "Go in the closet in the hall, the ceiling pushes up. Then, you need to crawl up there." " But, Sarah is gonna have her baby!" "Oh . . . then I don't know what to do."

**Sophia Yoder** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
Mt. Eaton Elementary  
Grade 6

# Grade 7

### **A Rainy Day**

Sweet skies and fluffy clouds,

Our Father made the morning,

Golden sun rising proud,

Our Father made the morning,

The clouds then come in,

Our Father made the noon,

Thunder swears and lightning sins,

Our Father made the noon.

The puddles, however, will always dry,

Our Father made the evening,

The butterflies will once more fly,

Our Father made the evening.

**Lily Baker**

Norwayne Middle School

Grade 7

## **Happiness Argumentative Essay**

### **Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission**

According to PositivePsychology.com, “Happiness is linked to lower heart rate and blood pressure, as well as healthier heart rate variability.” Experiences tend to put people in a better mood. People with a salary of around \$75,000 are more happy than someone with less. Nature can have a great impact on mood, increasing happiness. People are able to increase their happiness by buying experiences, by having a yearly salary of \$75,000, and by spending time in the great outdoors.

First, people are able to increase their happiness by buying experiences like vacations. In the text, “You Can Buy Happiness, If It's An Experience,” it states “You may be better off spending time and money on the latter. A growing body of research has shown that experiences tend to make people happier than material possessions” (Singh 2). This evidence shows that people are able to increase their happiness because studies show that people who buy experiences tend to be happier. Along with this, people have more joy spending on experiences than goods. To sum up all that has been stated so far, happiness can be bought, if people buy experiences, not products.

Also, people who have a yearly salary of \$75,000 tend to be more happy. In the article “Study: ‘High Incomes Don’t Bring You Happiness’” it says “Beyond \$75,000, money is important for life evaluation but does nothing for happiness, enjoyment, sadness, or stress” (Kenny 4). This text explains that people are generally happier with some money, but not too much. Also, it can be overwhelming if one has too much money, so this can cause people to be less happy. All in all, people with salaries of 75,00 dollars a year tend to have better moods more often.

Finally, spending time in nature can increase happiness significantly. In the text, “How Nature Can Make You Kinder, Happier, and More Creative,” it read “Results showed that those

who walked in nature experienced less anxiety, rumination (focused attention on negative aspects of oneself), and negative affect, as well as more positive emotions..." (Suttie 13). This piece of text explains that people in nature tend to have a better mood than people who spend all of their time indoors. This can be a good thing, because this means that anyone that has access to the outside world, which should be everyone, can have a way to boost their mood. To wrap things up, being in and around nature can help someone's mood in a multitude of ways.

Some may say that buying items is what makes people happy. They may say that when they buy things they become happy. However, the article states that "And even anticipating an experience like a concert, a ski trip or what better be a really great brunch makes us happier than purchasing the latest gadgets, according to a study published Tuesday in Psychological Science" (Singh 3). This proves that material possessions do not tend to make people more happy than experiences. Sometimes there is nothing like a good experience to have one's good, happy emotions become more relevant.

All in all, People are able to increase their mood by buying experiences, by having a yearly salary of about \$75,000, and by spending time outside in nature. Experiences cause people to become happier than if they would buy material possessions. Having a yearly salary of \$75,000 can boost a human's emotional well being significantly. Being outdoors, in the world, can raise people's emotional state. People should learn about ways they can increase their happiness because it can help them have a more positive outlook on life. If people learn ways to boost their mood, they might have lessened periods of sadness, or anger.

**Makenzie Holcomb** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
John R. Lea Middle School  
Grade 7

## **Nature**

### Nature

An acquaintance to the people  
Living along the sidelines of everyone else's stories  
Waiting for their turn  
For their story

The trees wave  
As the clouds cry  
Waiting for the people to notice  
Waiting for their turn to shine

The winds wisp and howl  
Begging for a chance  
Wanting to be seen  
But they are transparent

The oceans sway and twinkle  
Fighting the shoreline to let it on land  
Crashing her thoughts and feelings onto it  
Just wanting to answer the unanswered  
To let the people know the unknown  
As the home of nothing but

**Natashia Nawrocki**  
Norwayne Middle School  
Grade 7

## Odd

### Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission

It's odd to see my old Childhood house look so different. All of the bricks have ripped off in some spots, and the beautiful white paint is chipping. Our yard used to go on for miles and miles. Before all the damage came to be, you could look out the window and spot the sea. The beautiful sea would go beyond and never stop. Oh how odd it is to see the house sit on almost nothing but a bit of grass and sea. The house used to sit under the beautiful blue skies. But I can tell the sun hasn't been out in quite awhile. The house is practically underneath the timid sea. With my eyes, I look around, only to find out that all of our previous neighbors' houses are gone. Except for ours. Our house is the only one standing. I start to wonder that in the past, maybe people saw the poor house and wanted to make it look decent. However, who would want this piece of junk anyways? I wish to go throughout the house, for just one last peak. I soon realize that there is no way for me to get across the sea to my old childhood home. Beside our house used to be a long driveway made of stone. Now all I see is water and grass. Near the front door is where my mother would always set out her flowers in her little pots. Now all I see is dirt and rubble. Oh how I wish I could go back before all the awful things happened to my home. My eyes then dart to the roof. There's a bunch of Pelicans sitting around our roof. I start to giggle at the thought of it, but I always wondered why my dad chose this house. He always admired birds, especially pelicans. Maybe, just maybe one day I can fix this house. I go towards my car and take one last glance. I lightly whisper, "Goodbye Odd house." And with that, I drive away.

**Mirienne Totten** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner  
Orrville Middle School  
Grade 7

## Where I'm From

I am from Ohio  
I'm from a big house  
I am from a family who loves cooking Amish soup  
The sweet, condensed milk smell of it  
Goes throughout the house  
I'm from a family of Amish  
I am from an Amish church, where we sing different  
Songs than other people.  
I'm from people who wear long dresses  
I am from people who love to swing  
I'm from people who love sandboxes,  
Where sandcastles are made and holes are dug  
I am from people who don't use phones  
Like those who lived in the 1800s.  
I'm from people who love nature, where we go hiking  
I am from a farm, where horses and ponies live  
I'm from people who speak a different language, where people  
Say it's a difficult language  
I'm from a family whose favorite cookie is no bake cookies  
I am from people who love to make meaningful memories,  
Like getting ice cream with your favorite aunt

**Linda Wengerd**

John R. Lea Middle School

Grade 7





# Grade 8

## Low Taper Fade

It all started with a video, a funny one of a famous person who had a low taper fade. I sat down with my friend Alyssa, we talked about the video while she played with her hair that she just got blond highlights in.

"I'm going to get a low taper fade," said Alyssa.

"Sure you will," I said sarcastically.

"No, really I will get it," Alyssa said very confidently. The next day rolls around. she tap on my shoulder

"Piper, look," I turned my head and on her phone was a low taper fade. "This is what I'm going to get "

In my mind, I assumed that she was joking.

Alyssa said, very seriously, "I will get one, I promise," which made me believe her. I said I would get one if she also did

Then she texted me that evening:

I did it

What did you do?

I got a low taper fade

No you didn't

Yeah I did, here's a photo

I was stunned that there was actually a photo of Alyssa with a low taper fade. She must have been crazy:

You really got one!

Yeah it looks really good

I always keep my word, so I went into my bathroom and got an electric razor, buzzing like crazy. It scared me. I didn't want to cut my hair, but I kept telling myself, at least I won't be the only one with a bad haircut. I watched my hair fall off my shoulders. My grown out bangs fell into my sink.

The next day, I saw Alyssa with her long brown hair and blond highlights. She didn't get one;, it was photoshopped. She started laughing;, I would laugh at my hair too. It was pretty ugly. Maybe I shouldn't have gotten a low taper fade.

**Parker Campbell**

Wooster High School

Grade 8

**Untitled**  
**Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission**

The last thing I remember is.....nothing. Darkness everywhere, except for the occasional flitting specks of white light. That was then, though. Right now, all I cared about was the pain. Ohh, how my legs hurt. And my head. And chest. Basically everything on my body throbbed and stung like I was getting punched repeatedly and getting attacked by bees at the same time. I didn't know where I was, either. I tried to open my eyes, but I just didn't have that kind of strength. Trying to move my limbs was out of the question. All I wanted was this pain to go away.....

I opened my eyes into tiny slits. That was all I could manage thanks to the blinding white light shining directly into my sensitive blue eyes. Yeah, having blue eyes stinks. I then felt a heavy hand press down on my right shoulder, firm but gentle. I wanted to move my head to see who it was, but my neck was in a brace. At least, that was what it felt like.

"I'm glad to see that you're awake," said the person that was holding down my shoulder.

From the voice and the hand only, I could tell that this was a middle-aged man who was probably really serious, but kind. I still wondered where I was and I think I looked a little anxious, because he then talked in a more soothing voice.

"You are in Yellow Valley Hospital. I'm sorry to say, but you were in a severe car accident. You were hit by a semi truck and your car rolled three times before landing in a ditch. It's a miracle you're even alive."

I tried to believe it; I really did. I just couldn't, though. Remembering was impossible. Whenever I tried reaching back through my mind, it was black. Nothing. Desperately wanting answers, I tried to ask him something about my past. But I was interrupted by a lady walking into the room. I could tell because I

had my eyes mostly all the way open now and I caught a whiff of perfume coming off her scrubs.

“I’m going to ask you a few questions, sweetie. Just answer as best as you can,” she said in a singsong voice, coming up to my bed.

“Sure,” I managed to croak out.

Even though I only said one word, it took a massive amount of effort. She gave a tiny nod in response; her face looked sad, and it seemed like she was trying her best not to let it show.

“Do you know your name, honey?”

I stared straight ahead, not breaking eye-contact with the sky blue wall. It hit me, then. The truth hit me harder than that semi that the guy said collided with me; I don’t know who I am, or who I was.

**Kenasyn Garrison\*** Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner

Triway Middle School

Grade 8

## Chips

One day, when I was 9 years old, me and my family went grocery shopping. I picked out my favorite bag of chips and saved them for when I got home. I was going to eat them, but I was really tired, so I thought they could just wait until I was done napping. Well, I was wrong! After my long nap, I went downstairs for a snack, and that's when I was craving my chips. I opened up the cabinet to see that they were missing.

"MOM WHERE ARE MY CHIPS!!!"

I got no response back. I was so mad, and I got an instant thought in my head. No one in this house besides me likes those chips! But then, I remembered how much my brother loves them.

"BRADENNNNN!!!" I banged on his door as hard as I could until he answered; he opened it up and said

"What do you want?"

"My chips!" I said.

"I didn't take your nasty chips," he said, but as I looked behind him, my chips were just laying there half empty like a pile of rocks. I ran through his doorway, and he moved as fast as lightning. He was running away from me and BOOM!

I pushed him so hard out of anger; it was pretty surprising for a 9 year old. At this point, I was boiling with anger until I had realized he was sitting on the floor about to burst out with tears.

I ran downstairs, telling my parents he fell so he got the help he needed. They gave me a concerned face thinking I was up to something, but we all rushed upstairs to see his toe crooked and bent sideways. What have I done! My parents are going to kill me! My brother was crying so much from the pain, so he wasn't able to blame me for anything.

We got to the hospital, and they had told us he wouldn't be able to play football for a while since his toe was pretty messed up. When he heard this, his face was as red as a tomato. I could tell he was getting ready to tell my parents what I had done.

Right when I was about to whisper to him to keep his mouth shut, he says, "Look what you did Addy, this is all your fault. You just had to make a huge deal out of some stupid chips!"

I knew I was done for. My parents both looked at me with confusion and anger written all over their faces.

"What, I didn't do anything! I swear I would never lie to you guys." I could see they were doubting my answer. While we were on our way back home, mom checked the camera footage and there it was, my brother taking my chips! ...And me breaking his toe.

**Addyson Haumesser**

Wooster High School

Grade 8



**New Life**  
**Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Submission**

\*flashback\*

The rain had been plunging down onto the cab as I frantically stared out the window. The caddie turned down the street I know all too well. My heart hoped that it wasn't true. The cab pulled over to the side of the street, barreled out of the car, quickly moving across the avenue to his house. I ran up the front steps, hearing the music blaring through the door. I dug through my purse until I found my spare key. Opening the door, I was met by a swarm of humans. I shoved myself through the crowd to try and get to the stairs.

Little by little everyone noticed me and stopped, frantic looks on their faces, an unmistakable look of "you're not supposed to be here" and "why is she here". I guess I shouldn't be, but I had to see if it was true or not. Trudging up the stairs and turning down the familiar hallway, I stopped as I passed the hall mirror. I stared at my reflection, my hair had been wet and dripped onto the carpet, my clothes were wet to the bone, hugging me. Continuing my walk to his room, I could hear the sounds. I pushed the door open only to see the truth.

I walked out of the front door ignoring the calls from multiple people. Climbing into the taxi, my head hung low. I pulled out my phone, opened my gallery looking back at the bittersweet memories, erasing them from my memory. Blocking him, from my memory.

I sauntered into my house to be greeted by Mickey. I climbed the steps, pushing past my dad's boxes of junk. Walking into my room, I carefully lied down letting sleep win me over. When I woke the next morning I had this urge, I haven't had this urge since I was 14. I walked over to my closet and grabbed a bag and threw it on my bed. Pulling open my drawers and snatching a pile of clothes and stuffed them into the bag. As I jogged down the

stairs I made eye contact with my mom. She had a sorrowful look on her face, but nodded, she knew what I was going to do.

Walking down to the bus stop, dodging puddles. I waited for the bus, people trying to start small talk. Finally, the bus pulled up and I piled in with everyone else. Leaning on the head of my seat staring out the window, I played music and closed my eyes. Not sure of where I was headed.

\*end of flashback\*

**Nevaeh Mast** \*Young Authors Conference Excellence Award Winner

West Holmes Middle School

Grade 8

## **Tales of Booty (Tales of Treasure)**

This pirate and his friend just started their pirate life. They were greeted by none other than Ironman.

Ironman said. "There is only one thing to find that is really worth anything more than life and that is the grand treasure. So go out and live the life of a pirate."

The two pirates set off on their journey into this new world. The two pirates decided to look at the premade map to see where they would like to go. The two decided to go to an island called Port Merrick. When they got to Port Merrick they sold all of their loot. The two pirates got to the port.

The first pirate says "This place is so beautiful"

"Agreed! This is the most beautiful place I have ever seen." said the second pirate.

"Sorry I forgot to tell ya our names. I'm Skeleton Bob, and my friend is Ghost Jim." said Skeleton Bob.

"And as you can see we are peaceful fellas. We hate fighting." I said.

"Ship starport 23 degrees," said Ghost Jim.

Boom! Cannon balls - Bang!- flying everywhere.

"I'm going to bucket and repair you return fire onto the enemy." Said Ghost Jim.

"They sank," I said.

I looked into the water and saw a lot of loot coming from the ship. We harpooned all of the loot. Then we noticed that the ship had the grand treasure and it can sell for 10 million gold pieces so we went to sell it imminently; when we found that the grand treasure was fake because we only got 1 gold piece for it.

**Nathaniel Via**

Wooster High School

Grade 8

# Grade 9

## Tears

I sat there thinking. It was April but the snow was blowing every which way with the wind. I looked at the cold hard stone. Corban Benedict April 6, 2018, his birthday. The turn of events, it was meant to be in August. I never even got to meet him alive, my only brother. I thought back to the day that I met him.

The hospital was cold, freezing. I snuggled closer to my nana. My little sister leaned on me. I looked across the room where my other sister was staring out the window. I knew what everyone was thinking, it wasn't supposed to happen this way.

A door suddenly opened, startling me. It was Papa along with the rest of my sisters. I was wormed out of my spot as everyone wanted a hug from Nana. My oldest sister, Addy, had tears streaming down her face. I knew I should be crying too, but I couldn't. My face was set as stone. Addy tried to give me a hug but I couldn't move.

The door opened again, but this time it was my dad. I had never seen him this way. His head down on his shoulders, back hunched over. He walked like a different person, a broken person. He asked if anyone wanted to go back to see Mom and little brother. All the littles volunteered wanting to see Mom. I don't know how Dad decided, but he picked up my sister Evei and held Abby's hand, then walked over to the door. As he let go of Addy's hand to open the door, he turned as if changing his mind and started motioning for me to come. I slowly slid off my chair and walked toward Dad. He opened the door and then held my hand and gave it a squeeze. I squeezed back as he led us through the maze-like hallways.

As we reached Mom's room I had a sense of deja vu. It was like visiting after one of my sisters birth but I knew that it would be different. I walked in the room after Evei and Addy. I immediately noticed Mom but I also noticed that her eyes were red and in her hand were tissues. In fact the entire side table was covered in tissues. I walked over to Mom and gave her a brief hug. Beside

Mom's bed was a small baby bed. Addy peeked into it but I was afraid to look. I didn't want to see my brother's lifeless body. But curiosity got the better of me. Inside the baby bed there was a tiny red face, surrounded by blue crochet. As my dad showed Evei, I noticed that the baby was barely as long as my dad's hand.

I heard someone ask if I wanted to hold him but I slowly shook my head. I started to feel claustrophobic; all I wanted to do was get out of that room. My vision slowly got darker from fear and emotion. The walls felt as if they were caving in. I walked slowly to the door and waited for my sisters so that I could go back to the waiting room.

A hand startled me out of my thoughts. I was back at the gravesite. I looked up to see that it was my sister, Lydia. She started to rub my back but I didn't need consoling. It was the end of the funeral but once again I couldn't move, couldn't speak, couldn't cry. Everyone else had tears in their eyes. Everyone else was able to grieve but I couldn't, I was just numb.

I headed back to the car when I noticed another grave. It looked relatively new compared to the graves around it. It was well kept with a withering flower next to it. I felt drawn to it. I walked over to read the name and date. There was only one date, just like on my brother's grave, it was around two years earlier, but it was the last name that interested me. It was the last name of a young family friend from our church.

Then I felt something cold on my cheeks. A tear frozen to my cheek. I started to scold myself for not being able to cry for my brother, but I could cry over someone else's child. I then realized it was for everyone that lost a child, a brother, a sister, or experienced a miscarriage.

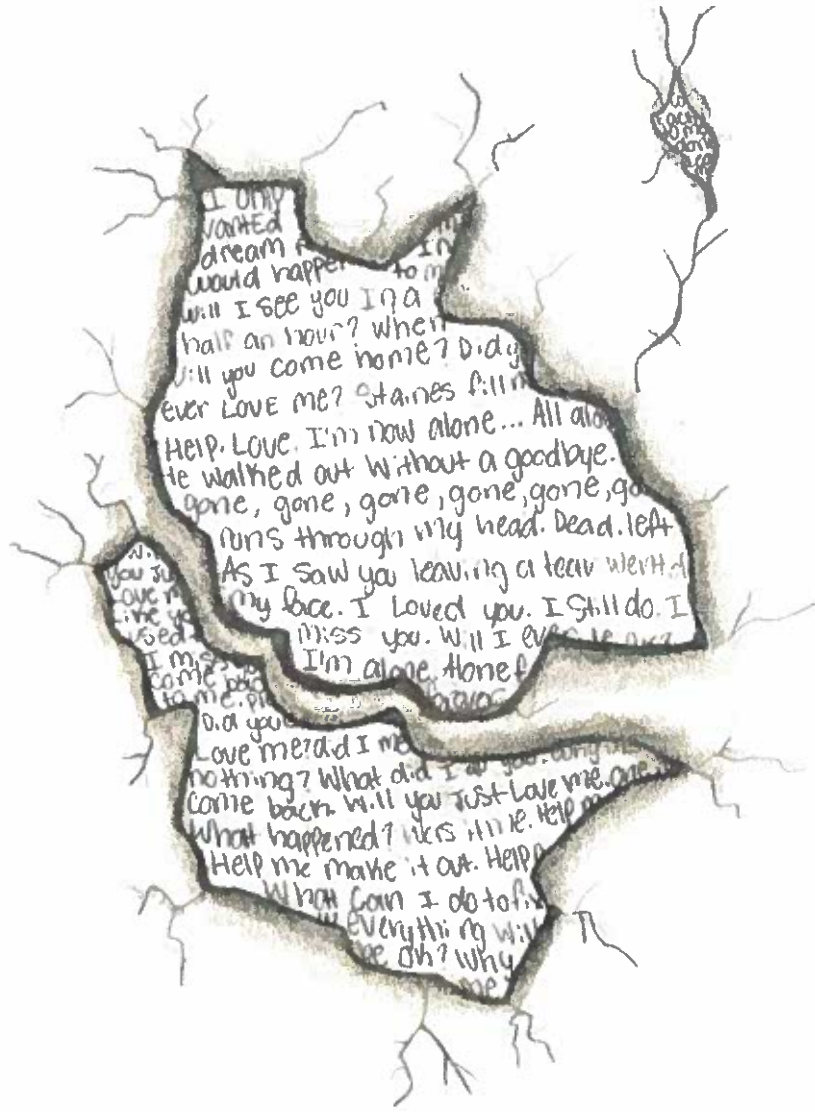
I walked over to my brother's grave and read everything again. I slowly noticed the tears falling off my face onto my black dress. Tears for my brother.

**Elena Hassenzahl**

Norwayne High School

Grade 9

Untitled Artwork



Tarren Norman  
Norwayne High School  
Grade 9

## Social Anxiety

I have social anxiety,  
So I need to recharge my social battery.  
Alone in my room is when I feel the best,  
As I lay my head down to rest.  
But then I see the calendar  
With the big red circle.  
Large crowds put me on edge,  
I don't mean to offend when I don't want to go out.  
"People don't actually like you," whispers the voice in my head.  
There is never peace, only dread.

I have social anxiety;  
My mind is my worst enemy.  
My heart longs for interaction with the people I hold dear,  
But my mind sees through their friendly appeal.  
Because they will only judge me.  
Everything I do is wrong.  
Everything I do is judged.  
I glance back at the calendar,  
A dreadful feeling pooling in my stomach.  
I can only trust my mind, or is that misjudged?

I have social anxiety,  
And I am forever weighed down.  
I look out a window to the people outside.  
Outside they all live freely  
With no worries or fears of what lies in the crowd.  
However, I feel like I'm always being tested.  
I feel like I'm always being rejected.  
Only ten days till the big day,  
But no one wants to hear what I have to say.



I have social anxiety,  
And when forced to speak,  
My brain begins to freak.  
When I need words the most,  
They seem to drift from my reach.  
My legs shake as I stand in front of them.  
Their stares burn into my soul.  
My mind is reeling.  
All my confidence is peeling.  
I hate public speaking.

**Jaedyn Tosatto**  
Norwayne High School  
Grade 9

# Grade 10

**Pencil Sketch**



**Gabby Conrow**  
Norwayne High School  
Grade 10

## Tracing Night

The town stood silent, no lights, not a soul in sight. Buildings lay in ruin dotted around the landscape, undisturbed for years. The soft sound of boots hitting the cracked and dry ground shatters the quiet of the night. The intruder to the town stands. She surveys the area, the tiny lenses in her eyes pick apart the town. Her com buzzes once, twice. She quickly clicks the tiny button imbedded behind her ear.

“Everest, you see anything?” a voice booms in her ear.

“No, Jupiter, nothing. Not in plain sight anyways, I’m gonna keep looking, Send in the others, too; cover more ground that way.” The girl, Everest, speaks into the com.

There is no more talking from the other end of the com, and shortly two more pairs of boots hit the ground. Everest turns to look at the newcomers, a boy with shaggy brown hair and a girl with a teal pixie cut – she simply jerks her hand in a general direction and they’re off.

The three make little noise as they search. Occasionally one will answer something to Jupiter over the coms. Other than that, they try their best not to further disturb the peaceful town. Everest moves the quickest, overturning rubble with one device or another.

It’s another two hours before the trio stops, although not by choice. Blasts and mechanical whirring break assault their ears. Without more than a quick glance at one another the three break into a sprint, ducking themselves in between building. As they run back to their ship, Everest slows to grab something off the ground.

Neither of her other team members questions the movement, nor do they slow. Reaching a predesignated spot the teal-haired girl types something into the band covering most of her arm, and the three are beamed up to their ship.

“JUPITER,” yells Everest, “GET US OUT OF HERE. *NOW.*”

“Already on it,” replies a voice from the intercom in the ship. “Entering hyperdrive now. Maybe hang on to something!”

As he finishes speaking the ship jerks forward, throwing itself at the speed of light to anywhere but the old war town. Having sensed the danger more or less passed, the teal haired girl sighs in relief.

“So,” A voice breaks through the room. “Find anything useful Everest, any clues?” he spits her name like its poison in his mouth.

Everest turns to look at the man quickly entering the room. Unlike the trio who sport a mix of dirty old-world clothing and repaired space suites, the man wears a pristine black and white suit. His clothing scream *Hey-Look-I'm-Super-Rich* to anyone in normal space, but to the crew it just screams *Hey-Please-Punch-Me*.

To be fair, Everest does not punch the man. Instead she takes a deep breath and answers him.

“Yeah, we did find something.” She pulled the tiny object out of her pocket, and continues before the man can speak, “*This* is a holo. They were used just after the war pushed most humans off the old world. The idea is simple, record your message and then send it to the person you want to receive it, many were encrypted so only certain people could open them. Like so, Mars, would you?”

The emphasizes her point, Everest hands the holo to the brown haired boy, Mars, who tries to open it. But nothing happens. The man's face contorts into a sick smile.

"So you've failed?" he asks. "No one can open it, and therefore, you've failed. You know the deal, Everest. You fail, and I turn you and your little band of criminals into the council."

"Not so fast," Everest starts again. "I said only certain people could open it; Mars just happens to be someone who cant." Everest grabs the holo back from Mars, presses what must be a hidden button, and the tiny object projects another person onto bridge.

*"Log date 12-15-3075. Night Shepard, commander of the reliable-"* Everest cuts off the holo with her hand.

"It appears that I have yet to fail as we are still hot on the trail of Night."

**Nevaeh Skelly**  
Norwayne High School  
Grade 10



# Grade 11



## **Prologue**

The sirens begin, mixing with the light sounds of pattering onto the large empty windows. Though on any other day, this would be peaceful. A time to relax and let your worries melt away. A time to rest on the couch with an open book traveling into a world of fiction. If only this were just fiction. Oh to slip away into one of the cliché stories of the prince and princess, knights and kings.

Her blood still lies on the couch. Slowly dripping down the cushions and pooling onto the floor. Her baby lies still in my arms completely oblivious to the world.

“Winne,” I whispered down to her. Her small face picks up looking towards me. Her face brightens as I fake a smile. I slide down into my seat letting my eyes fixate to the blank white ceiling.

**Cheyann Constance**

Wayne County Schools Career Center

Grade 11

## Double Identity

I glanced up from the paperwork that was sprawled across my desk. My eyes blurred and I had to blink a few times. Gosh, what time is it? I had to have been sitting here for hours. The room was covered in a blanket of darkness and the only light was from the glow of my lamp that rested on my desk before me.

I rubbed my eyes and placed my head in my hands. This case was taking so much out of me, one minute we thought we found a breakthrough and the next we realized we'd been led down a different path. One that led to a dead end, again. I sighed and raised my head from my hands. I glanced quickly at the time. Almost 12, I'd been sitting here for hours. The place was practically empty other than the softest sound of a cleaner doing his or her job on the floor below me.

I stood up, my knees cracking with age as I did so. I grabbed the paperwork for the case and delicately placed it in its folder. The last thing I saw before I shut the flap was the teen's face, her name and age, as well as mine since I'm the head of her case. Sydney Glossner was her name or is, she's only 16, just turned 16 a few days before she'd gone missing. Only 16, a child. She's been missing for five months, I've worked every day trying to find and bring her back to her family. The clock was ticking, I only had a few days before they were legally going to shut the case down. Since she hadn't been found and no leads had sprung up in the past month, the case wasn't going anywhere.

I wish I wasn't going to have to be the one to break it down to the family that the search for the only daughter was about to end. I didn't want to see their heartbreak that all the promises I made on finding Sydney were never kept. But, I had to do it. It doesn't mean I had to like doing it though.

With the case file in hand, I walked down the steps of the building, waving goodbye to the cleaner who I had seen earlier, and

stepped out into the dark. I wrapped my coat tightly around me as I walked to my car.

After I reached my car, that was the point where my memory gave up on remembering things. The next day I had no remembrance of getting into the car, driving, returning home, or even getting ready and into bed. I figure it must be because of age or since every night these past months have been all the same. Either way though, my doctor I see every once in a while wants me to get treated, so I obliged and set up a date to try and retrieve my memories.

The next morning was the same as usual, getting up and ready for another day of my mundane job. The only difference was when I checked my calendar, which is usually all the same, I saw the appointment that my doctor had me make today after work. It wasn't going to work, but I needed to try. For my sake, as well as my doctor's too. I still for some reason really resented wanting to go. I shrugged the feeling off and got ready to leave for another day of work.

My buddies at the station greeted me as usual, they asked me if I wanted to go out for a drink later on with them that night, but I told them I had other plans. They told me maybe another time and I agreed. Tonight, I was going to try to get my memories back.

The day passed almost as fast as the speed of light. I grabbed my jacket that was around my chair and pulled my arms through my sleeves.

While doing so, Jake, a buddy of mine at work, came up and asked me, "You sure you don't want to come? You always seem to have plans when we ask, I mean you've been busy ever since that Sydney Glossner case was given to you to take care of. Could one night of drinks out with the guys be such a bad thing?"

I felt bad, but tonight I really did have plans though. The other times I just wasn't feeling up to going, he was right about it starting when the case was given to me. I guess I just have been so wrapped up in it that I haven't had time to hang out with my work buddies.

“No, it’s not. I promise that next week I’ll go out for drinks with you guys. I have an appointment tonight and I am actually running a little late for it.” I wasn’t actually late, I just had no other excuse to get away from Jake. He would just keep pestering me about the appointment and about coming to the bar we used to all hang out at afterward.

Jake must have noticed my need to get away and he just nodded his head and silently walked away. I watched him catch up with the others and walk out of the building.

A huge lungful of breath came pouring out of my mouth and I grabbed the case file, sliding it into my bag.

I wonder how long it takes to become a hypnotist. I questioned this silently while waiting for the doc to enter the room. I’d been waiting for at least 10 minutes, so she had to be ready to meet me soon. I could almost hear the clock ticking away as the minutes passed. I was growing fidgety by the second, I felt like I wanted to crawl out of my skin. For some reason, this whole idea of hypnosis was really getting to me.

Finally, the hypnotist came into the room.

“Hi, I’m Doctor Woolege, and you’re Layne Leeway correct?”

“Yes, I’m here because I keep forgetting everything that happens after work. It’s a mild thing and it really doesn’t seem important, but my doctor wants me to get it checked out.”

“OK, I get why your doctor wants you to get checked out. It might seem little to you, but your doctor is getting you checked before anything major happens and you begin forgetting larger amounts of memories and moments. Let’s get started. I’ll just have you lie back on the sofa here and I want you to close your eyes.”

I do as she tells me and Doctor Woolege goes on, “I want you to breathe in and breathe out, keep doing this and you’re soon going to feel a calm sense come over you.”

For some reason, I actually could feel it.

“I’m going to count down to three and you're going to be in your car heading home. You're going to tell me everything that happens. From the ride home up to when you go to sleep.”

“1”

“2”

“3”

“I’m in the car, I have the music playing lightly. My home isn’t far from work, around 5 or so minutes. I’m already pulling in now. I’m getting out, I grab my bag with the case file I am working on from the backseat. I have Sydney Glossner’s case – you know her, she’s been all over the news ever since she went missing. I’m taking my key out and I open the door. I set my bag on the floor and I didn't even take my shoes off. I’m heading to the basement. I never use the basement, it’s locked. I’m pulling out another key and unlocking the door to the basement.”

“What’s down there, Layne?”

She should have said who was down there.

“What’s down there, Layne?” the doctor says again.

I don’t want to say who it is.

“Layne, what’s down-”

I wake from the trace with a jolt and I look in horror at Doctor Woolege. No wonder I haven’t been able to remember my nights anymore. I’ve blocked out the horror of what I’ve done. It feels like time has stopped as the realization of who is in my basement, and has been for the past few months comes with great speed to my mind.

What have I done?

**Swayva Hagen**

Norwayne High School

Grade 11

## A lesson on Losing

I thought I had the competition under control. I thought that I was going to be the winner. That turned out to be the complete opposite. Because once I got my results, I found out that I was the biggest loser.

The competition started on Saturday. It was a chilly morning, but once I arrived on the school bus I took my seat and was happy when the driver started reaching for the heat. I was nervous for the spelling bee, but I was more confident in myself. The National Spelling Bee was a competition that my family had succeeded in for such a long time. My mother has won the competition, even my grandmother. It was up to me to keep the legacy going.

There were a total of six other contestants from my school. They were talking about how nervous they were before I barged in and started talking about how confident I was. I thought my confidence would rub off on them, too.

"I'm really nervous; I just hope I don't mess up any simple words that everyone knows how to spell."

"Yeah, me too. I bet that the judges will give me the hardest word in the book. I probably won't even make it to the second round."

"Oh come on guys," I started to say. "Have more confidence! I know for sure that I'm not going to lose. I'm the best one here! I didn't even need to look over any practice words because I know I'm so good."

"Oh be quiet, Charlotte. Nobody asked." Brandy immediately said after I was finished, with a little bit of an angry attitude. I didn't know why, it's not my fault I was so confident.

"Okay, okay. I just wanted you guys to know. My family has been in this competition and has always won. I just know I'm going to do great. It's in my blood."

Nobody talked to me after that. I overheard them continue to say how they were going to get the hardest and most

complicated words, but I just looked out the window this early January morning, knowing that I was the best.

Once we arrived at the competition, everyone was piling out of the bus. There was a long line to get into the building. I looked at my watch, and the competition was going to start in less than 15 minutes. I was scared that my classmates and I wouldn't make it. If I didn't make it to the stage in time, then I wouldn't be able to compete. So I made sure that I was the first in line with my school.

"Hey, Charlotte! Why are you being so cocky? Why did you have to shove all of us out of the way?" One of my classmates argued.

"Because, Annie, I need to get to that stage so I know I will be in the competition. You all aren't going to win anyway, and I will, so I might as well be the first to get inside."

"But you didn't even look over any of the words!" Michael broke in.

"So? I'm the smartest one here, I don't need to study. I've been doing spelling bees since middle school." I argued back.

Once the conversation was over, it was time for us to get inside and up onto the stage. There were at least 100 people there. Everyone wanted to be in this spelling bee. There were groups of ten going on the stage at once, and while I was putting on my number, struggling not going to lie, someone came up to me asking if I needed help. I quickly shouted, "No!" and went up the stairs onto the stage.

The stage lights were bright yellow, and there were ten chairs in a row. There was another person from my school there, Brandy, who I just had to sit next to.

Once I sat down I whispered to her, "I'm not sure why my number isn't number one, since we know I'm going to win."

"Don't get ahead of yourself. You could get kicked out of the first round and how embarrassing would that be?"

I shrugged my shoulders and eagerly waited for my turn. One more person and it would be my time to shine. Time to prove

to everyone, not that I need to prove that I'm the smartest here, that I will win this competition. Before one of the judges could say the second half of my first name, I stood up and walked to the microphone.

"Charlotte, your word is, 'fuchsia.'" He said reading off his list for the first round.

"Fuchsia? Easy. F-U-S-H-I-A." I knew I was right."

"Incorrect. The correc-"

Before the man could even finish his sentence I completely lost track of everything. I could feel the stage collapsing, and me falling with it. No. I kept thinking to myself. I couldn't have messed up. Not in the first round. No! I started to feel dizzy.

I had to be helped off the stage, and my mom took me angrily to the car and started to drive us home.

"You should have looked over your practice words, Charlotte! I can't believe you."

"I know mom, I should have studied."

**Veda Kelly**

Norwayne High School

Grade 11



## Web of Safety

I have only ever found solace in knowing that a roof shelters my head; in knowing that I am not in danger of falling beneath the waves of rain that strike so viciously onto the ground outside. I have only ever felt safety. I have only ever felt warm and full and content. I cannot remember the last time I was not dry, bundled up by the lit fireplace, full of drowsiness.

I have not been peaceful lately. I have grown recently, I have become taller. I've started to pay attention to the world around me, too. I stare out the window of my bedroom and watch the world pass me by.

My neighbor seems to garden a lot. She digs into the dirt with her bare hands, wipes sweat from her brow with dirty sleeves. I watch in awe. Every day, I race to my room after breakfast time and my mother has left for work, locking the door behind her. I learn more and more every day. She has a dog with long golden fur who lays next to her while she waters and waters and waters her plants. He glows sometimes, but only ever when the sun is out. I think he's the most beautiful dog I've ever seen. Although, I suppose that's not fair. I've only seen one. She likes to wrap her arms around him and kiss him on the nose. I've always thought that was too gross for even me, though.

I do not find comfort in the crackling of the wood burning before me, nor have I found happiness in the blanket that lay on my shoulders. I do not have the life I long for. I am not who I want to be.

I want to open the window. I want to open the door. I want to fling them all wide and embrace the wind in my arms. I want the trees to bow for me, their golden-green leaves straining from my hands as I reach and reach-

"What are you looking at?"

I snap back to reality. My mother stares at me, then back to the darkened window, searching for the target of my mindless gaze. Nothing lays there but gray clouds.

"Nothing, mum. Sorry."

Silence.

"Do you ever think about going outside in the cold? Just for the fun of it?" That was me. That was my voice asking those words. What had I done?

"What? Don't ever think like that. Don't you know that you'll get sick? You could die! You could get run over, you coul-"

"Mum. I want to go outside."

Her gaze turns cold. She's always been like this, I should have known, I should have guessed this would-

"Go upstairs. To your room. I will not deal with this."

"I've gone outside once in my entire life, mum! I can't just stay here forever! I'm tired of homeschooling. I want to be happy and live a life that I want. And that means I have to go outside. Don't you want me to be happy?"

"I want you to be safe!"

"Other people can go outside-"

"And you are not like other people!"

Somewhere in the background, the clouds roll and thunder rakes through the sky. First, it's a mist. A drizzle comes next. My mother and I stare in silence as the water cleanses the world around us with it's pure innocence.

"You are not to go outside. Do you understand? The world is a terrible, terrible place. I am trying to protect you. You know this, yes?"

"Yes."

I drop the blanket from my shoulders and leave my mother sitting by the fire. The stairs pass and I am in my room, the door shut.

The window open.

Rain flows along my pale skin and I breathe, breathe, breathe.

**Brianna Lengyel**

Norwayne High School

Grade 11

## The Journey Home

Out of all of the sounds in the stadium, the only one I'm focused on is the screaming of the crowd as I step to the plate, my left hand gripping the bottom of the bat, my right the top. This is it. These are no longer the baseball games I played at school. This is the Major League, my chance to prove that this isn't just some stupid dream a six-year-old version of me used to have. This is my chance to prove that a girl shouldn't just "stick to cheerleading and volleyball," that they can do whatever they want... just like the guys.

My attention no longer on the screams of the crowd, I focus on the pitcher standing across from me. I keep my bat ready, my gloves helping my grip. I've been waiting so long for this. I breathe rapidly, sweat traveling in rivers down my face, half in nervousness, half because of the humid eighty-five degree day. Come on Layla. Prove that this journey was worthwhile. The pitcher releases the ball, and my bat connects. I sprint to first base before the baseman tags me.

"Base hit for the Phillies," the announcer booms over the loudspeaker. Why couldn't they say my name? I just made that happen! I get ready for the next play. The crowd claps in anticipation, looking for my next move. Whatever I do, I can't get out. I need to inspire girls to believe that they too, can be professional baseball players. I have to make it all the way around these bases to home. I've made it this far. I can't give up now.

I wipe the sweat from my eyes and quickly get into running position, hoping I can get a head start on the next hit. I take a few steps off the bag, inching my way toward second base. The pitcher suddenly pivots from the batter and throws to first. I dive, narrowly missing being tagged out. Whew, that was close. I focus on the pitcher again, trying to predict his next move. Come on. Come on. CRACK! The ball whizzes by me as I sail to second. Okay... halfway there.

I try to plan my next strategy, but the buzz of the crowd and the fuzz in my overstimulated brain is making things difficult. A

single raindrop plops on my nose before sliding to the ground. I look skyward and feel another drop on my cheek, causing goosebumps to prickle up my back. The cooling effect clears my mind enough to think. If I can make it home, not only will I have made my dream come true, but I will score the winning run, sending the Phillies to the World Series. The game's tied with 2 outs in the bottom of the 9th. If I don't do this, I'll let my team and even worse, my fans, down. No pressure. It's only your best and maybe only chance at changing the game of baseball for girls everywhere.

I sigh, getting myself in running position again. I close my eyes and dart toward third on a steal attempt, afraid to see the outcome of the risk I just took. But everyone's screaming. Excitedly. I pop my eyes open and see the umpire with his arms straight out on either side of him. SAFE! Only 90 feet away from home.

I am ready. I've never felt more prepared. I will carry this team and the fans who believe in me to the World Series, and I won't stop there. My journey has just begun.

The pitcher gets into position. I take a step off third toward home, making a quick glance at the fans. Every last one of them is on their feet. It's in that one distracted second that I hear another loud CRACK. Wait. What just happened? Did the batter hit the ball? Should I run? I look around, frozen and confused, and am about to start running toward home when the entire sky flashes with light, followed by another loud BOOM! The batter stands at home, bat down, looking skyward. I look up just in time to see sheets of rain barreling their way toward me.

"Rain delay!" yells the umpire. Both teams run toward their clubhouses.

I stand motionless, the only person left on the field, letting the rain soak through my uniform.

I guess I'll have to wait just a little while longer.

**Isabella Marty**

Norwayne High School

Grade 11

## Chrome XZ Ship Y

It was supposed to happen. We knew it would for thousands of years now. We have been planning for centuries for when this day would come: The End of the World. The sky is dim. It has been getting dimmer and dimmer for weeks now. Evacuation has just begun. People in every place around the world have begun boarding the ships. The ships are our only hope now. The sleek chrome ships with the power to slide through blackholes and enter new dimensions are now our only hope. Not everyone will make it but many will. My family will board the 'Chrome XZ Ship Y' tomorrow, along with hundreds of other lucky families. The ground begins to shake suddenly, and I grip onto the dark gray sofa in our living room. The shaking stops abruptly and I stand up.

"Mommy?" I turn and see Ivan, my son, leaning on the matching dark gray loveseat. He must have stumbled into the living room when the shaking occurred. I walk to him and brush his dark wavy hair from his blue eyes. He gives me a half smile, the kind of smile you give to someone when something is wrong but you want to be positive.

"Are we going to be okay?" he asks.

"Of course, Ivan. We are going on the ship to our new home tomorrow, remember?" I say.

"Yeah," he says skeptically. Even though Ivan is only seven, he's good about sensing when something is wrong. Most seven year olds would just smile and nod, but Ivan will try to help and comfort you in a bad situation. I believe that he's good with sensing these situations because of his disability.

"We're back!" Levere, my husband, calls as he enters the house. Ivan runs to him and Levere pulls him onto his shoulders.

"What did you get?" Ivan asks.

"Food for tonight," Levere says, setting two bags on the counter. All the electricity throughout the world shut down two weeks ago so we have had to scavenge and kill for food. Levere sets

Ivan on the stool by the island and pulls out carrots, potatoes, several heads of lettuce, and a squash from the bags. My dad and mom, along with the rest of my extended family and Levere's sister's family, bring in more bags and one large dead pig.

The meal was a big one. Our last dinner on Earth. Everyone is in bed, most likely not asleep. Everyone is nervous but doesn't want to show it. It is 4 A.M. I can't sleep so I get up and begin breakfast. Murine, my sister, is awake too. We both silently begin breakfast.

9 A.M. The house is busy now. We are leaving in one hour. I am nervous. I am excited. I am thankful. I shovel bags and totes and suitcases into the four cars we have.

10:30 A.M. We are all in the cars. We left our house for the final time. The sky is dimmer today. The sun is dying quickly.

"There!" my father shouts and we all turn to see 'Chrome XZ Ship Y' in all its chrome glory. I turn to Levere and kiss him.

"We are here, Natalie. We are here." he says and I kiss him again. I turn to Ivan and wrap my arms around his armless torso. He leans his head on my shoulders

"We made it." he says as I begin to cry.

**Corinne McCall**

Norwayne High School

Grade 11



# Grade 12



## Not Quite Songbirds

A murmuration-  
A soft song,  
A dazzling performance,  
A cabochon.

A parliament-  
An observation,  
Listening.  
In the dead of night  
A hunt begins.

A conspiracy-  
A group,  
Scheming,  
Drafting a stratagem.  
Adopting a voice-  
The diamond In the rough.

A murder-  
As a tool used,  
The silver stone.  
An insurrection.  
A grudge held strong.  
A silent ambush,  
Then an awful cry

A descent-  
A drumming,  
For a silent night.  
Because of a divergence,  
A feast  
upon a child.  
An unforeseen

Falling star.

A wake-  
The smell of death,  
Covered  
by water.  
Carnivores,  
Silent  
At the entombment.  
A death,  
The wilting of a treasured garden.

**Kathryn Armstrong**  
Norwayne High School  
Grade 12

## Drugged by Adrenaline

The slap of meat against meat filled the area. My knuckles' muffled screams of pain covered by adrenaline. Everyday of my life was this, a primal destruction of life. Fight after fight, day after day. The sad thing was, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it more than anything else, it was my drug and I was addicted to its rush.

The fight continued, a brutal exchange of punches, kicks, and slams. Ruby sap dripping from our cracked lips and cuts, however we didn't care. It was fun, all the way up until that voice spoke, "Hawkins, you win." He was a hefty guy who acted as referee in these fights. I looked up to him because he was strong. I wanted to be stronger.

"I think my lip got busted again," I responded, dragging my tongue across my teeth and getting that fresh metallic taste. My own blood never scared me, I enjoyed its taste honestly. Moving over to a bench, I sat down and looked around the calm, peaceful park. Trees swaying in the wind and birds chirping happily. This world was not mine, it didn't have the rush I wanted. However, I still enjoyed the peaceful nature of it. The sense of freedom and safety. Staring off, I hadn't noticed the hefty boy approach me.

"Hawkins, we got a newbie. Since you're warmed up...You take him on." That pause told me he wasn't sure if one of us could take the other. It annoyed me.

"Alright," I paused for a moment, "Hey, Ron. Who is it?" I asked expecting some athletic idiot who thought they can fight. They come by a lot.

"Alright. Bring them over," my response was off as I stood up and waited. Eventually, Ron brought the kid over. He was small, maybe 5'3. Why did he want to fight? I assumed he got bullied. To make sure, I asked, "You ready?"

"Yeah. I am," his voice was shaky. It made me hesitate, but I threw the punch. It collided disgustingly with his cheek. Tears filled his baby blue eyes and I stared. I wasn't getting a rush, I just felt

guilt. The thing is, I didn't stop. I kept fighting the poor boy. When he hit me, it did nothing. Was this really who I truly was? Someone who beat people like him? A painful wash of guilt hit over me. I had always fought people equal to me. I never considered I was feeling this.

At the end, I watched as the kid ran home. Tears filling his eyes and all I felt was a heart wrenching guilt. I was the bad guy. The person that made this world wrong was me. Coming to this realization, I hated myself in every sense of the word **HATE**. I didn't see anything good about the way I was now. Something had to change, I couldn't stay this person, and that kid's scared; teary eyes sat in my mind and reminded me I was a monster. A monster that enjoyed that at one point. So, I stopped.

Days went by, I stopped going to the park. I stopped seeing Ron. I stopped fighting completely. A thick shackle of guilt sat on my soul. It ate away at me like a pack of starving hyenas. All until that "me" was dead. Replacing him with a calm, better, and nicer version. I had become a good person by killing the old me. A thick wall stopped me from ever going back to how I was.

The boy, who I never learned the name of, had vanished from my life. The only thing I wish is to see him. I want to apologize to him. I want it so bad that tears burn my eyes like a vengeful flame at the thought of the fact that I will never be able to apologize. That fact blocked me from ever becoming a better person completely, but at the very least, I was still better. I was a better person now. A large part of me wants to thank that boy for showing me.

**Aydin Marcum**  
Norwayne High School  
Grade 12

A special thank you to all of our contributing schools!

Apple Creek Elementary School  
CE Budd School  
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Chippewa Intermediate School  
Edgewood Middle School  
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Holmesville Elementary School  
John R. Lea Middle School  
Kean Elementary School  
Mapleton Middle School  
Melrose Elementary School  
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Norwayne Elementary School  
Norwayne High School  
Norwayne Middle School  
Orrville Middle School  
Shreve Elementary School  
Triway Middle School  
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