

"Write them on the tablets of your heart;  
write them on the doorposts of your house."

Proverbs 7:3 ~ Deuteronomy 6:9



# tablets & doorposts

A JAMBOREE OF WRITING

## ANTHOLOGY 2019

 Christ The Redeemer  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

# tablets & doorposts

A JAMBOREE OF WRITING

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**“Write them on the tablets of your heart;  
write them on the doorposts of your house.”**

Proverbs 7:3 ~ Deuteronomy 6:9

Welcome to the first edition of CTR Catholic’s **Tablets & Doorposts** Writing Anthology. In these pages you will experience narrative, poetry and non-fiction written by students and teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Regardless of age, experience or skill, these writers have creatively shared their voice through the craft of writing. Individual writing was selected to receive additional recognition indicated by a Top 20 or Honorable Mention ribbon in this Anthology. Enjoy!

Writing is a process that allows writers to reflect and capture moments in time. Writing is personal and requires the writer to be vulnerable and take risks. When we share writing we gain insights, perspective and empathy into the lives and experiences of others. Writing celebrates humanity and its infinite possibilities. At CTR Catholic we recognize the power of writing and how essential it is to the learning and lives of our students. This anthology is one of the many ways we promote and celebrate our students’ abilities and the stories they choose to share.

The theme for Tablet and Doorposts is scriptural. Throughout the ages, words have communicated our love of God, our joys and our human struggles. What’s YOUR story? Write it on the tablet of your heart! Write it on the doorpost of your house! Tell it, share it, shout it - just don’t keep it inside. Everyone has a story to tell.

What’s yours?

# All About Lions

by Jayden Thompson, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy

The following is a book made by Holy Spirit Academy kindergarten student Jayden Thompson. His book is all about lions and how they can attack other animals. He illustrated that giraffes will try to kick the lion in order to protect themselves as well as how a zebra will go on its hind legs to try and kick the lion as well. He loves all animals and every book that he creates is on an interesting topic related to animals. On the last page, he created a dot-to-dot so that you can draw your own lion!



# Bear's New Friend

by Nate Stearn, Gr. 2  
St. Francis of Assisi Academy

I think Bear's New Friend is a kind friend. I like this story for many reasons. First of all, Bear is loving because he cares about his friends. Also, he is helpful because he tries to use kind words to calm owl down. Finally, Bear is generous because he gives his time to owl.

As you can see, Bear's New Friend is a wonderful book.



# How to Make an Ice Cream Sundae

by Carlei Cruz, Gr. 2  
St. Mary's School

Carlei

**How To:** Make an Ice Cream Sundae

**What will I need?**

- A bowl
- Sprinkles
- Ice Cream scoop
- Chocolate Sauce
- Spoon
- Ice Cream

Carlei

**HOW TO:** Make an Ice Cream Sundae

1. First you grab a bowl.

2. Second you get an ice cream scoop. you scoop one full ice cream scoop into the bowl.

3. Then you Drizzle the chocolate Sauce over the ice cream for 3 seconds.

4. Then you open the lid and shake the sprinkles over your ice cream for 3 seconds.

Carlei

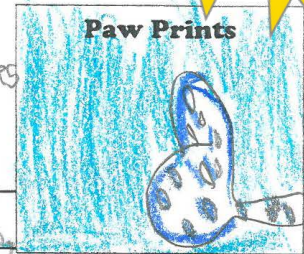
Then you grab a spoon and you put it in the bowl.

# All About Arctic Narwhals

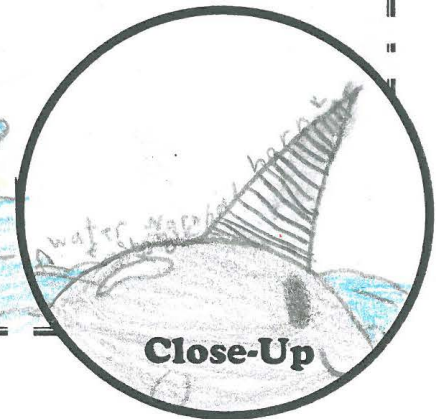
by Tiffany Jasnikowska, Gr. 2  
St. Mary's School



*All About Arctic Narwhal* whales  
Are the new unicorn!  
Did you know that narwhals  
have pods to ten to 100? Also,  
they often swim with their belly up to  
float. Something interesting about this  
animal is, narwhals mean "corpse whale".  
In fact they lay motionless for several  
minutes. When they are chased they  
remarkably quick. They <sup>also</sup> breath slowly  
so water doesn't get in their nose. Narwhals  
have small family groups to survive in  
the world.



This narwhal is swimming  
on its belly.



# The Story of St. Patrick

by Elliott Hefferan, Gr. 2  
St. Mary's School

## The story of St. Patrick

A long time ago there was a boy named Patrick. Patrick was born in Britain in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. He lived with his mom and dad. At age 16 Patrick got captured by Irish Pirates. He was taken to Ireland and sold into slavery as a shepherd. He prayed 6 times a day. Patrick was very tired each day. Finally he escaped from Ireland on a small boat and returned back to Britain. When St. Patrick returned from Ireland, he went to bed. That night St. Patrick had a dream. In the dream, an angel said "God wants you to become a priest." So St. Patrick studied for years. Finally he became a priest. Some even say St. Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland and into the sea. St. Patrick taught people about God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The end

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# The Sloth Bear Report

by Asari Daniel, Gr. 2  
St. Francis of Assisi Academy

Sloth bears look like big, fluffy dogs and they have very thick fur. They have long curved claws. Sloth bears do not have their two front teeth so that they can easily suck up termites. They habitat from India and can run very fast. Sloth bears are the only bears that carry their babies on their backs. They have 1-2 babies and raise them for the first 2-3 years of their lives. They are omnivores, which means they eat plants and meat. In conclusion, they like to dangle upside down from the branches of trees from time to time.

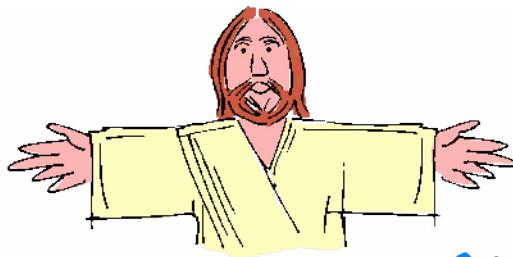


## Jesus' Report Card

by Islyn Olynk, Gr. 2  
St. Francis of Assisi Academy

Dear Mary and Joseph,

I will tell you how your son Jesus is doing in school. First, Jesus says nice prayers. Second, Jesus can write heavenly. In Social Studies, he knows every country, island, lake, river, and bay. He is so kind and invites everyone to his birthday party! He plays fair at recess and always thinks up new games. Jesus wants to break bread and share his food at lunch with his friends. During Art, he makes beautiful colors. Jesus sometimes gets in trouble for turning the water fountain into wine. Thank you for having such an amazing son. He is changing the world!



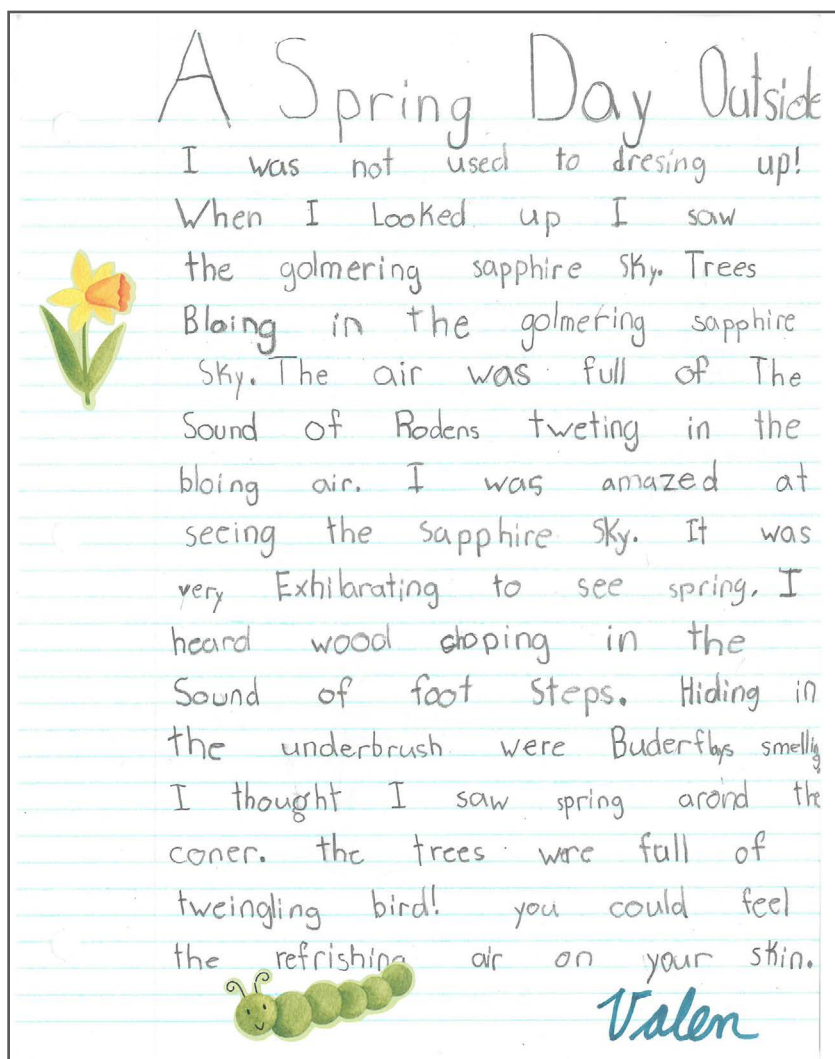
WELCOME

Principal,  
Miss Islyn



# A Spring Day Outside

by Valen Schultz, Gr. 2 Holy Spirit Academy



## Ma fin de semaine extraordinaire

Par : Emma Day - 2e année  
École Good Shepherd School

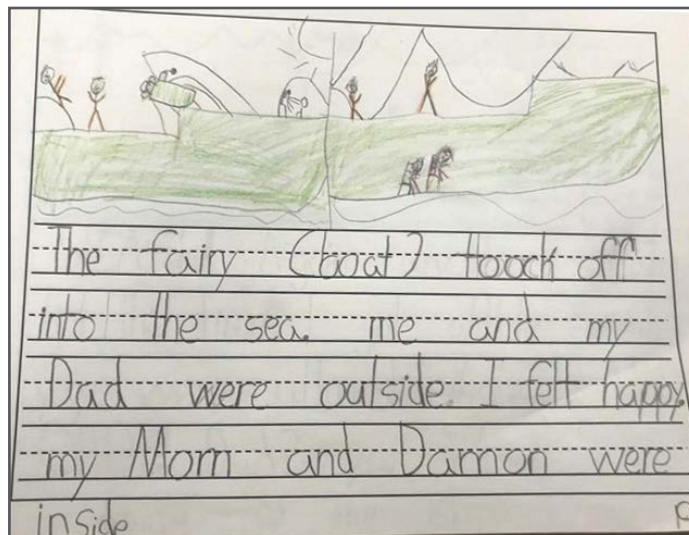
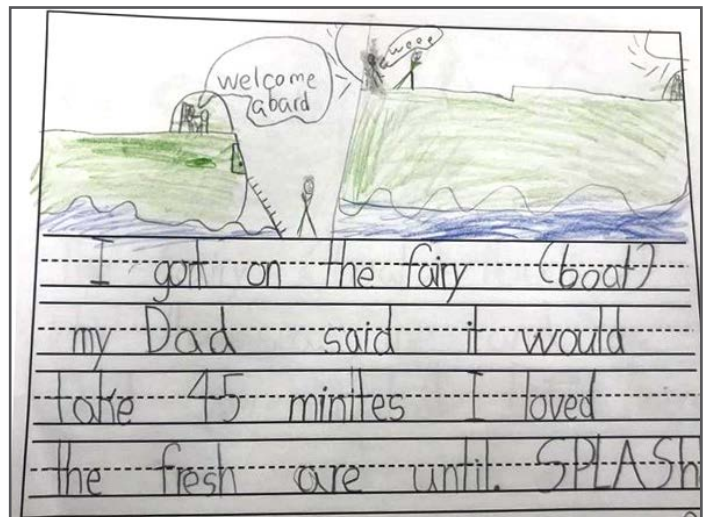
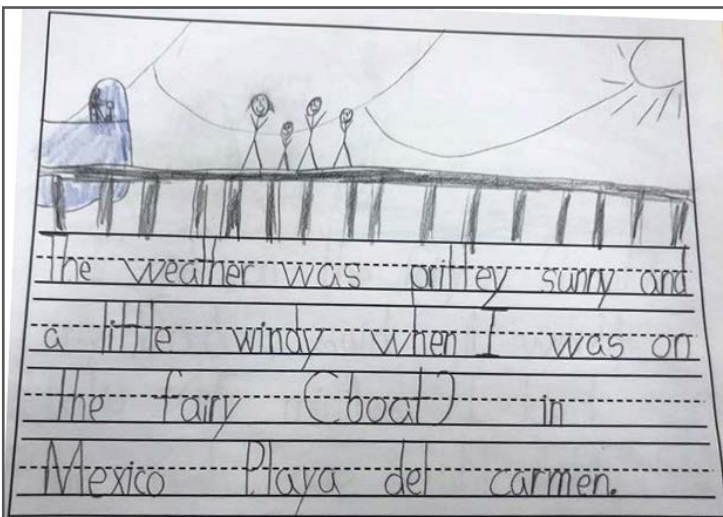
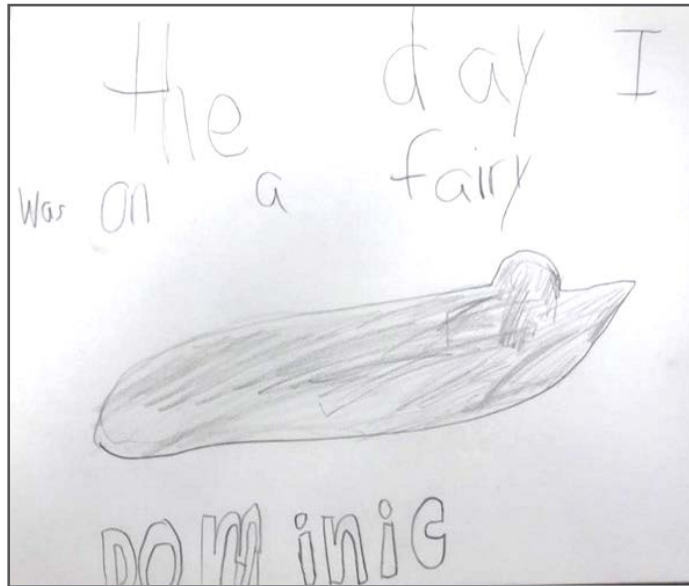
La fin de semaine était magnifique! Premièrement, j'ai vu un grand ours polaire au zoo. J'ai aussi vu un hibou. C'était aussi magnifique, mais mon animal préféré c'est le panda! Les pandas sont très mignons. Les hiboux sont aussi tellement mignons. Ensuite j'ai vu les pingouins, mais ils ont vraiment senti terrible. Beurk! De plus, j'ai vu un gorille gigantesque et une girafe. J'ai vu beaucoup d'animaux. Par après j'ai bu du chocolat chaud et j'ai mangé de la pizza avec des ananas, Ma maman m'a acheté un toutou qui était un panda. C'était le temps de retourner chez moi et j'ai marché vers mon auto.

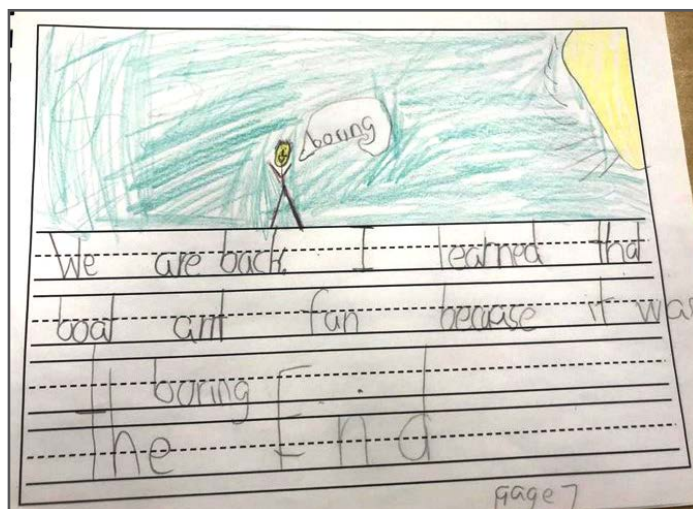
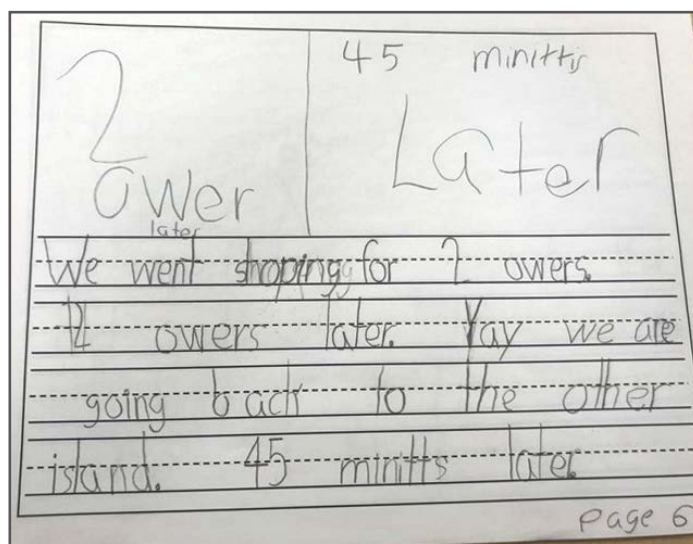
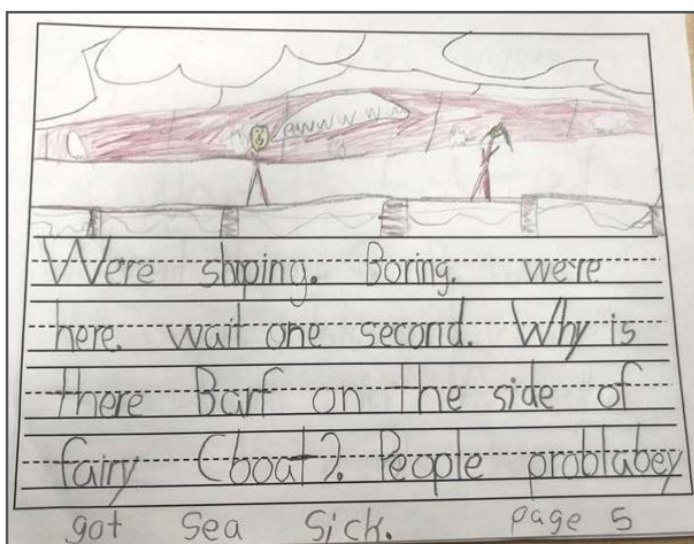
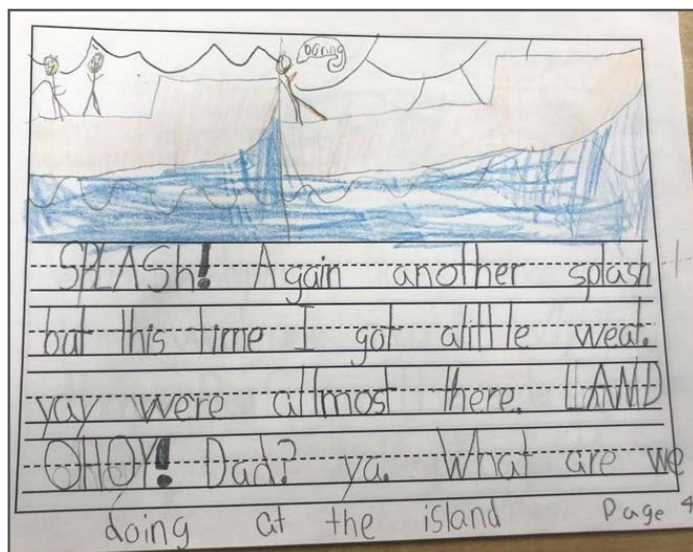
Quand je suis arrivée chez-moi, je suis allée tout de suite à mon lit parce que c'était la nuit. Quand j'étais dans mon lit j'ai vu un hibou et c'était incroyable. J'ai couru à la cuisine pour voir ma maman et mon papa pour leur dire ce que j'ai vu dans ma chambre. Elle a dit « Wow » et elle est venue voir, mais le hibou était parti. Le lendemain matin, j'ai entendu aux nouvelles qu'un hibou était perdu et je savais que c'était le hibou du zoo. Ensuite, j'ai entendu qu'un gorille était disparu du zoo. Je suis allée dans ma chambre et j'ai regardé par la fenêtre et j'ai vu le gorille. Ahhh! Finalement, ma maman est entrée dans ma chambre et je me suis réveillée. Piouf! C'était un rêve!



# The Day I Was On A Fairy

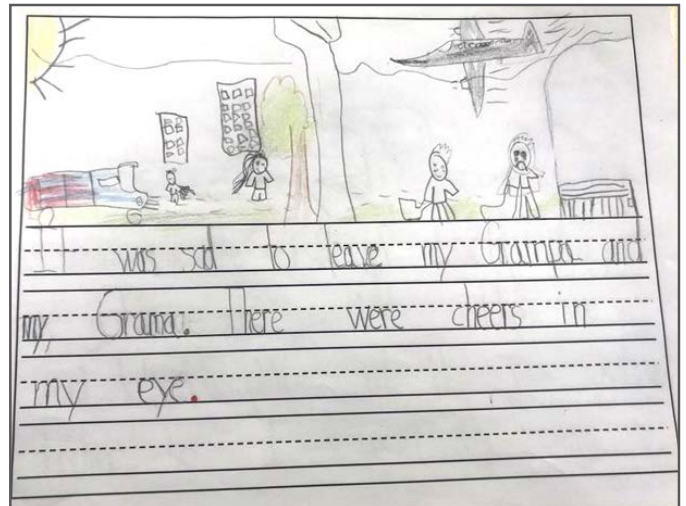
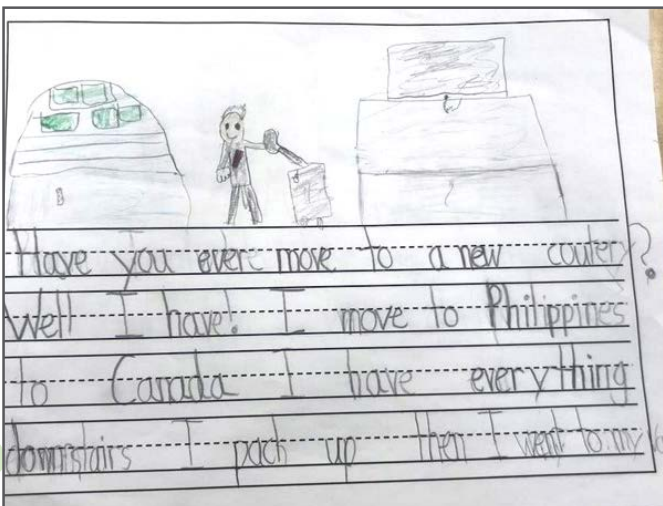
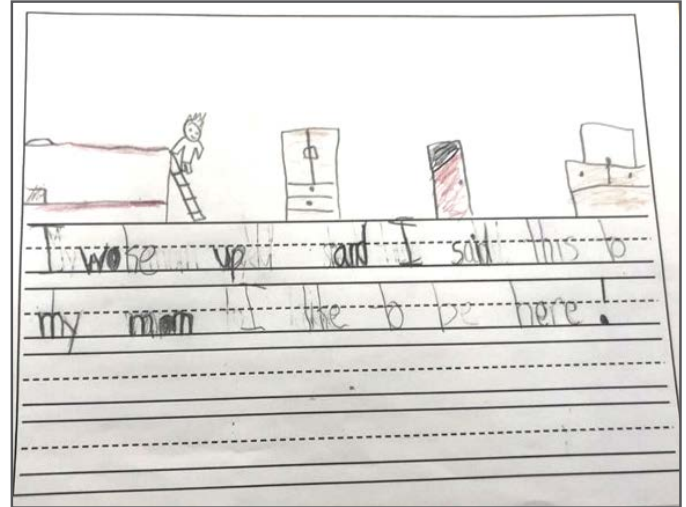
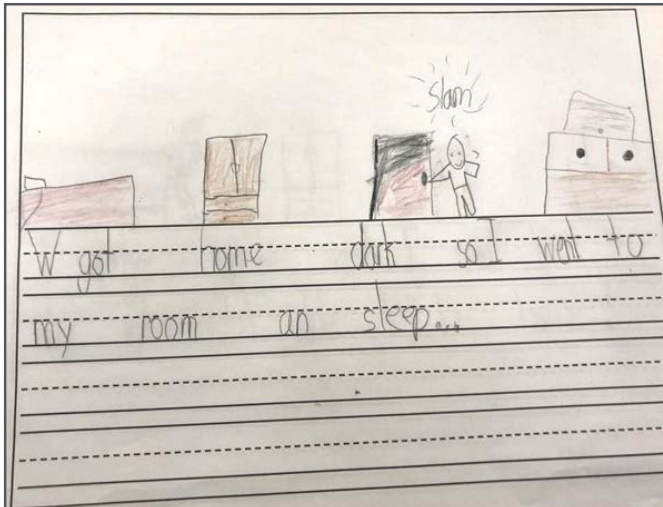
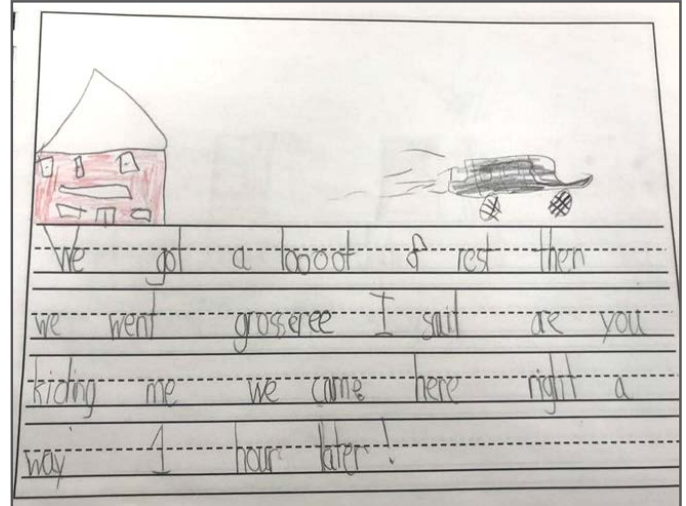
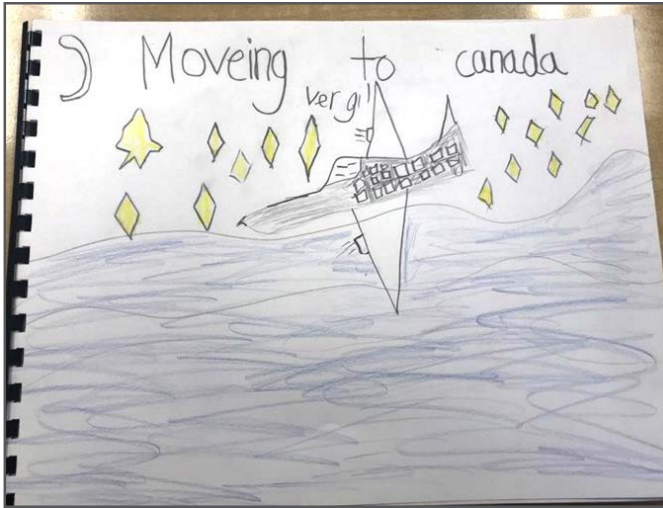
by Dominic Vicente, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy

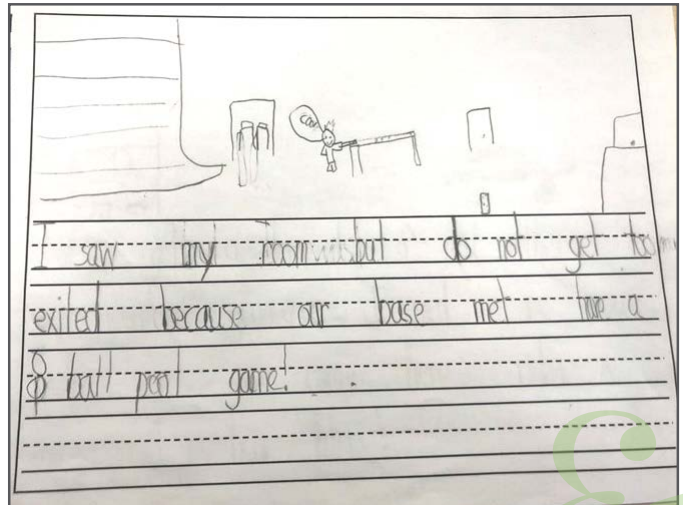
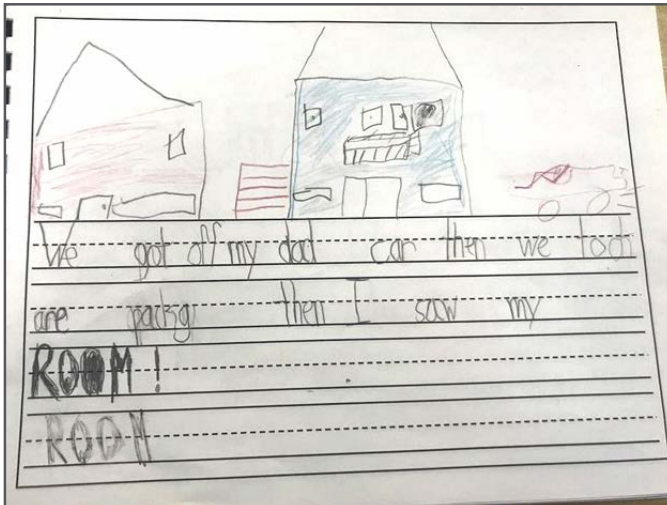
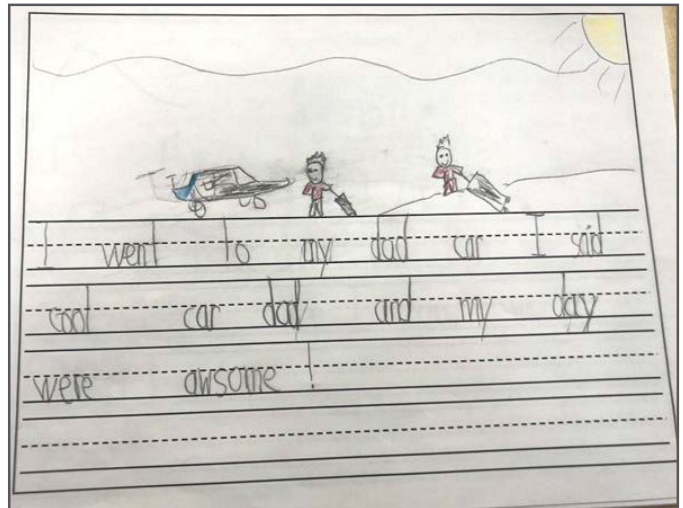
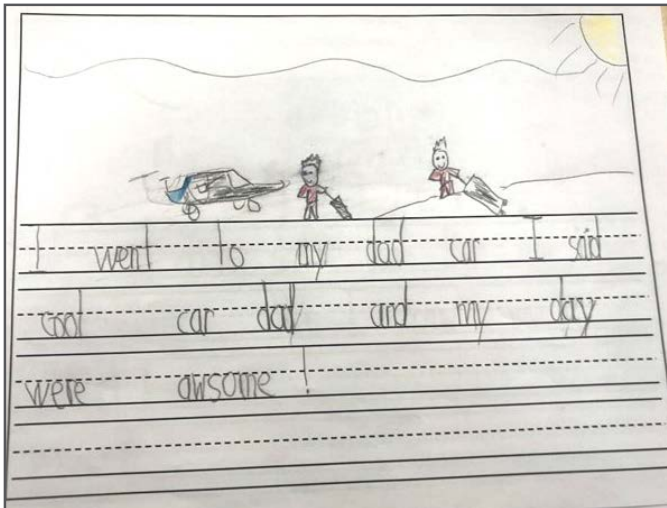
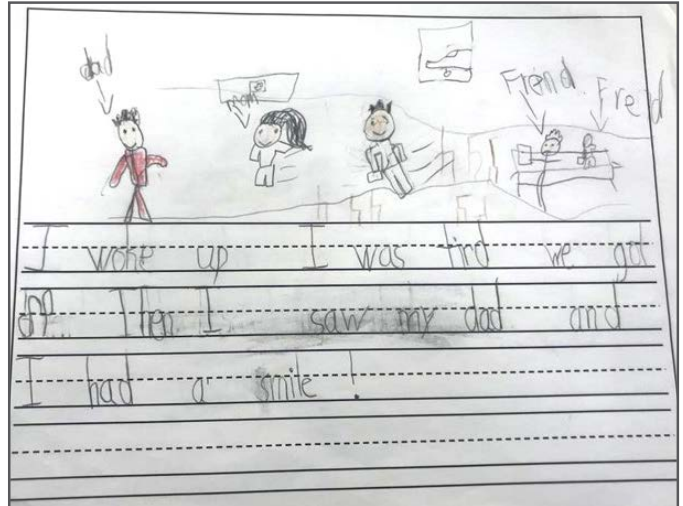
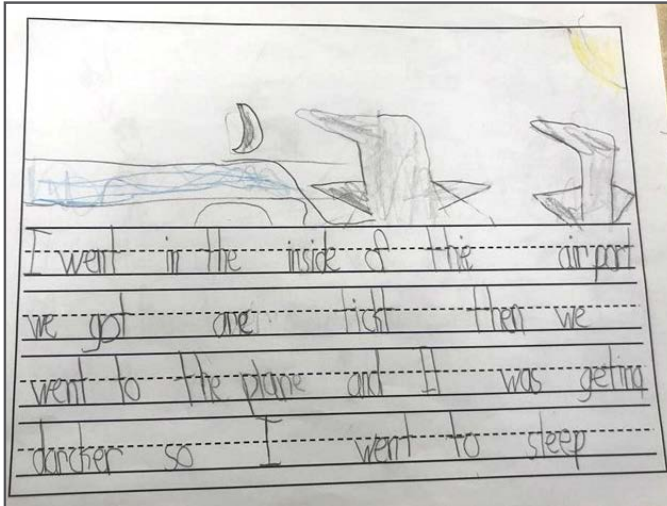




# Moving to Canada

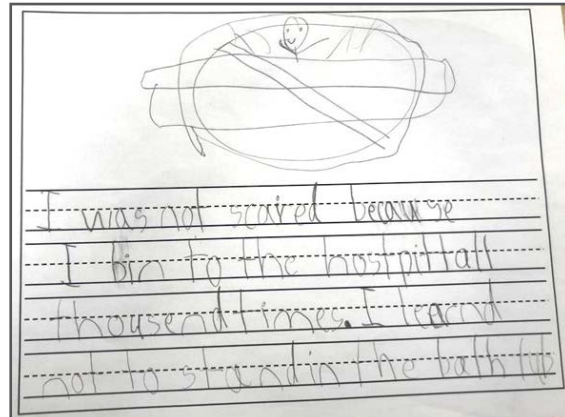
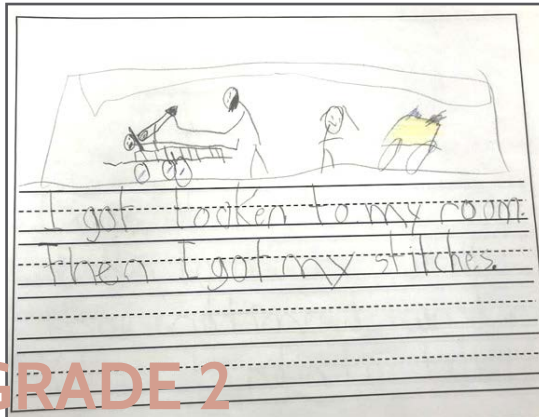
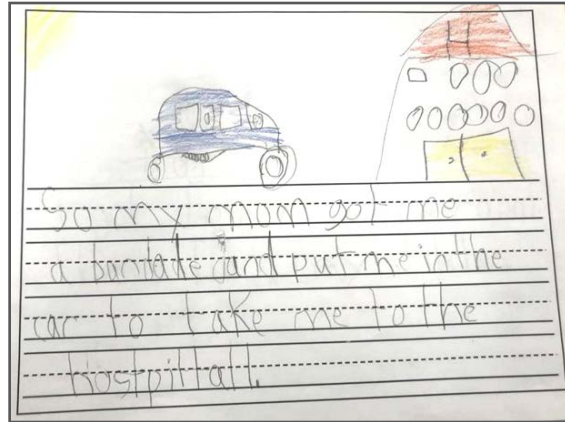
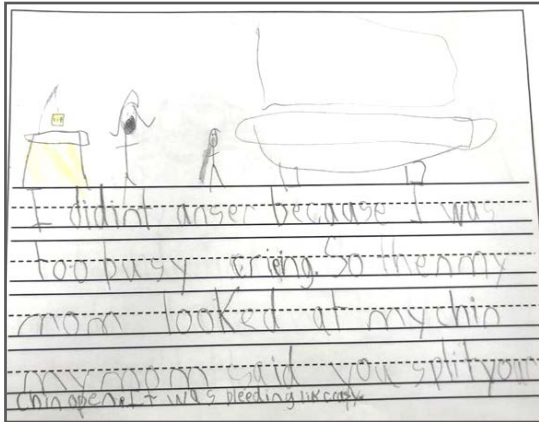
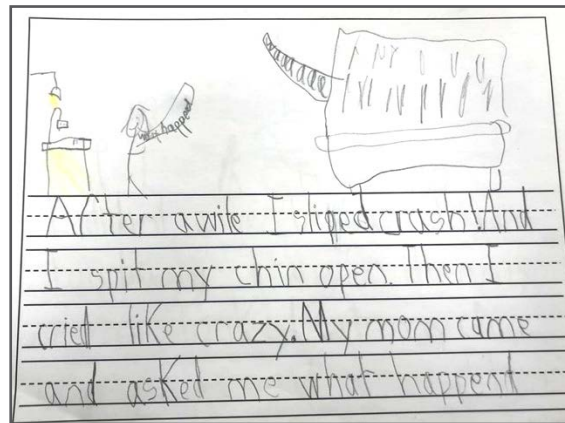
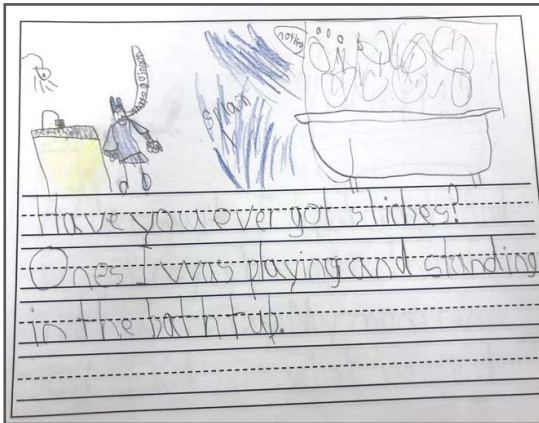
by Vergil Torilla, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy





# The Day I Got Stitches

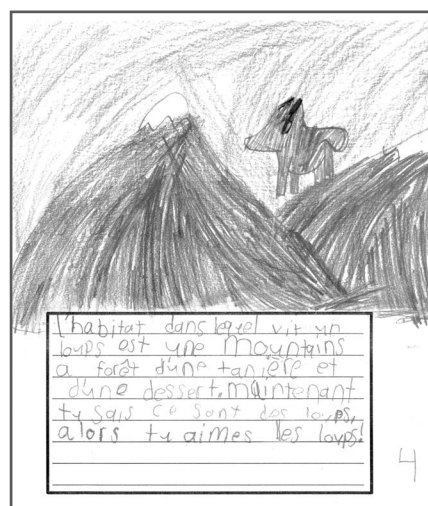
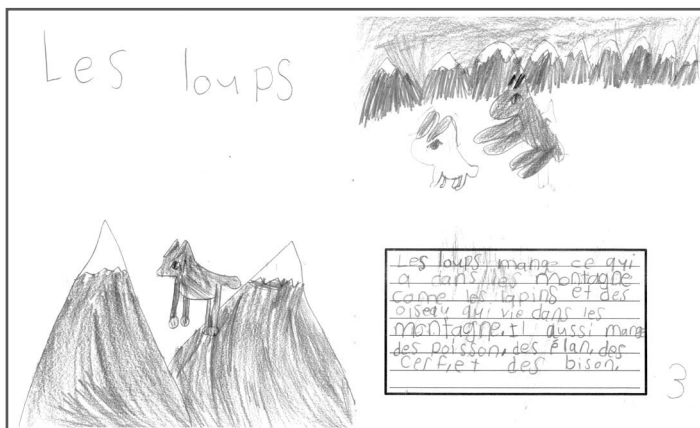
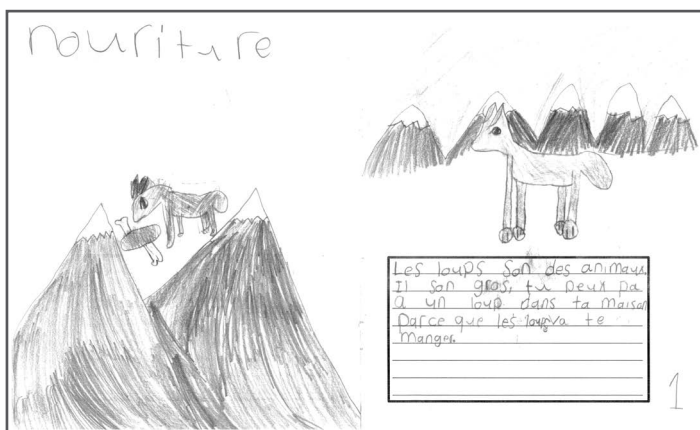
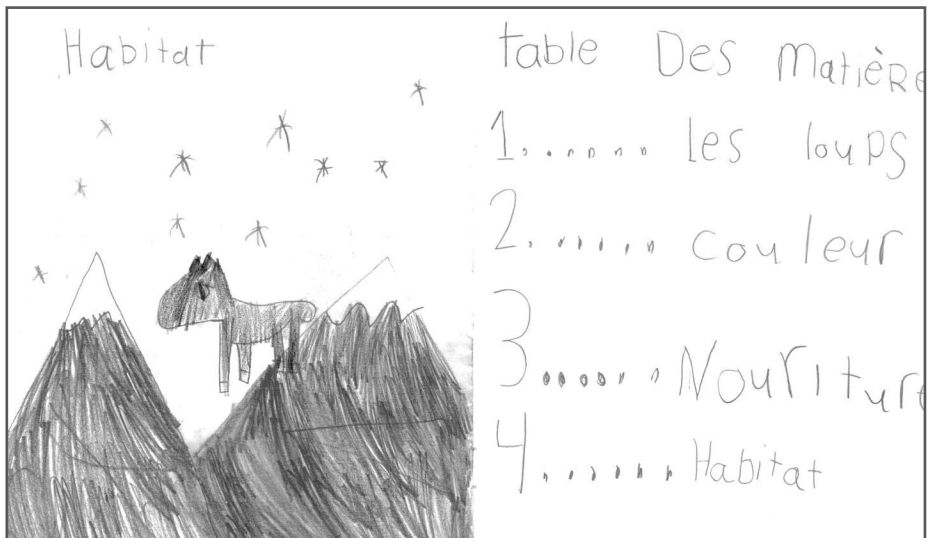
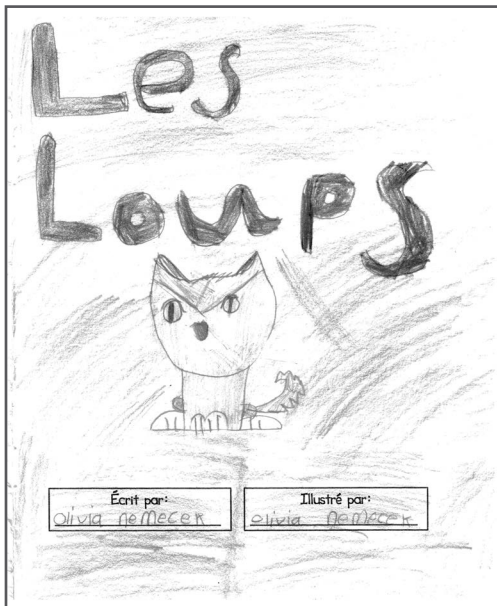
by Lucas Caldwell, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy



# Les Loups

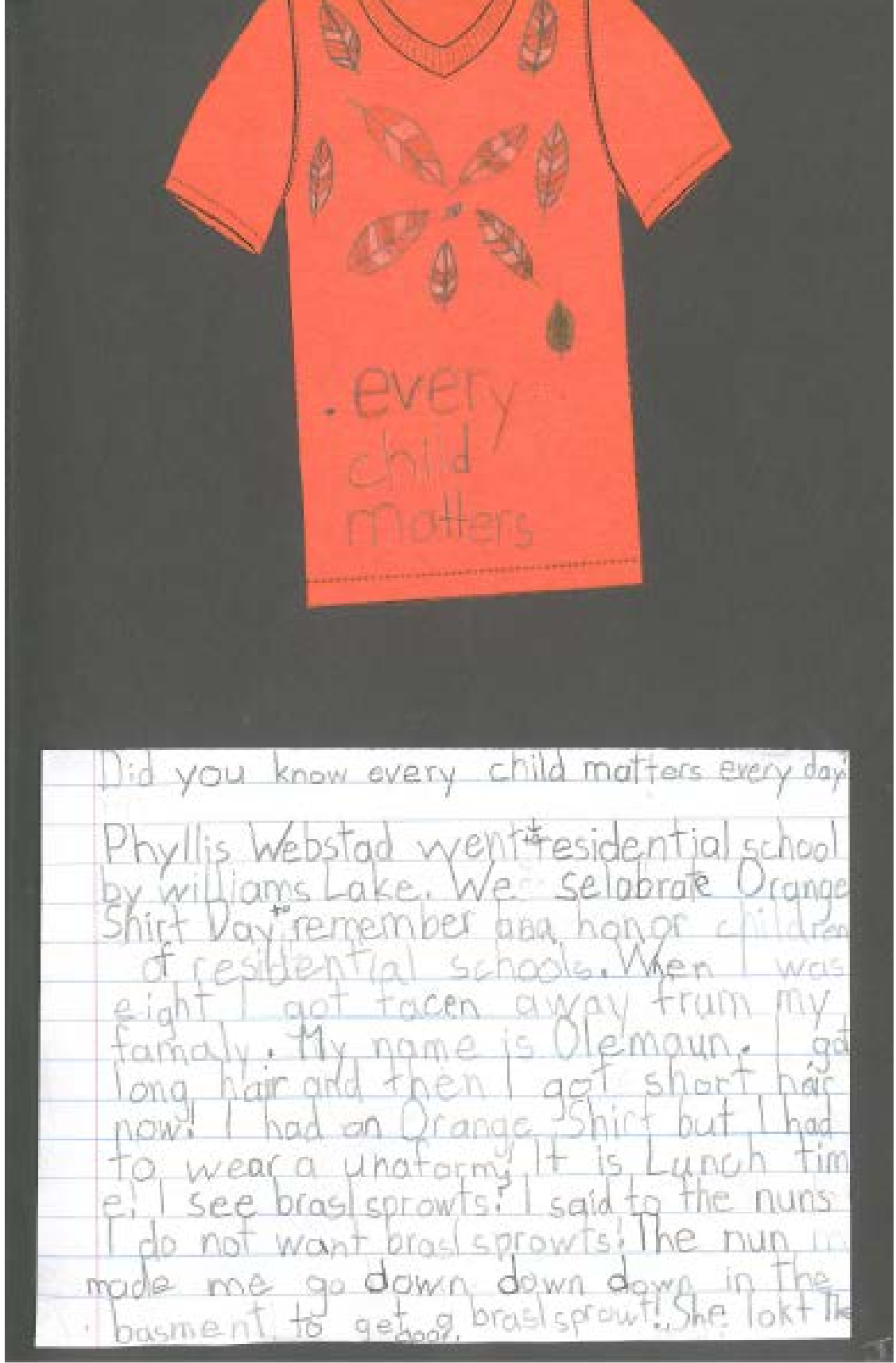
by Olivia Nemecek, Gr. 2  
École Good Shepherd School

DIVISION 1



# Every Child Matters

by Juliana Canario, Gr. 2  
St. Mary's School



# All About Snowy Owls

by Lily Vermeulen, Gr. 2  
St. Mary's School

DIVISION  
1

## All About Snowy Owls

### Paw Prints

They can eat arctic hares, small birds, fish, and even lemmings. They have feathers all over them to keep them warm. Snowy owls have such good vision that they can hunt in the day or night. Snowy owls **migrate** south to the ever-green forest. Thick pads keep feet warm. Snowy owls have silent wings to help them sneak behind its prey and when the snowy owl wants to grab it has sharp claws.

Snowy owls have silent wings to help sneak behind its prey.



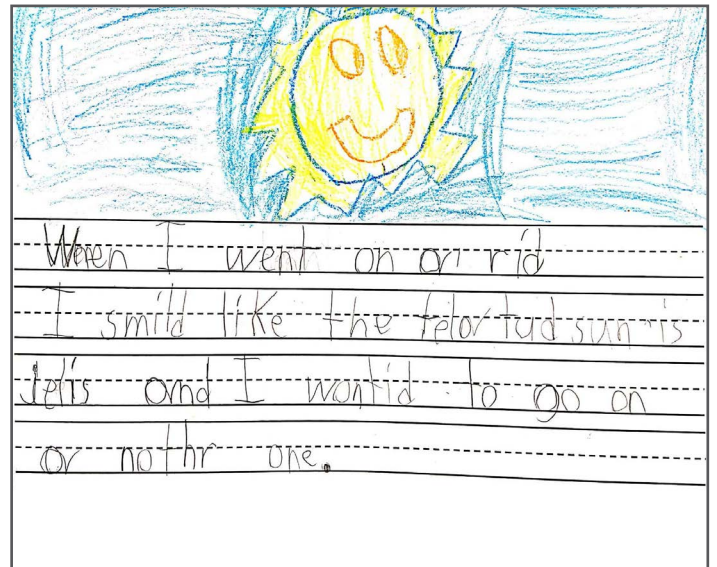
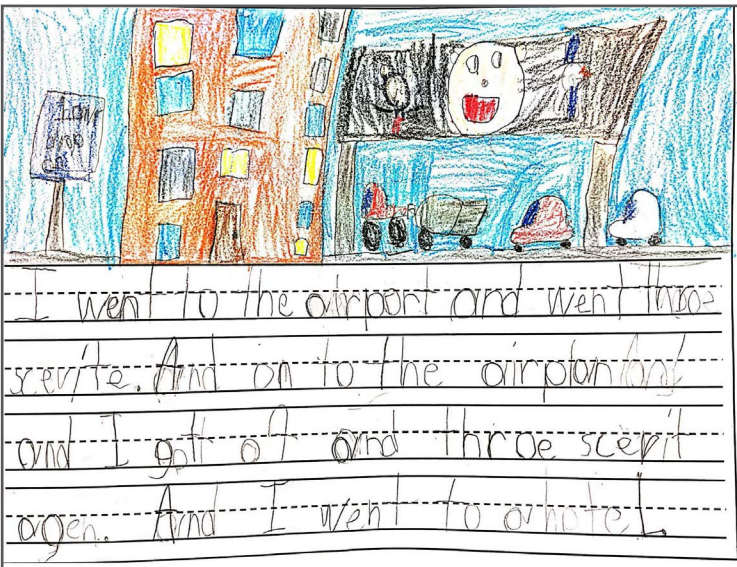
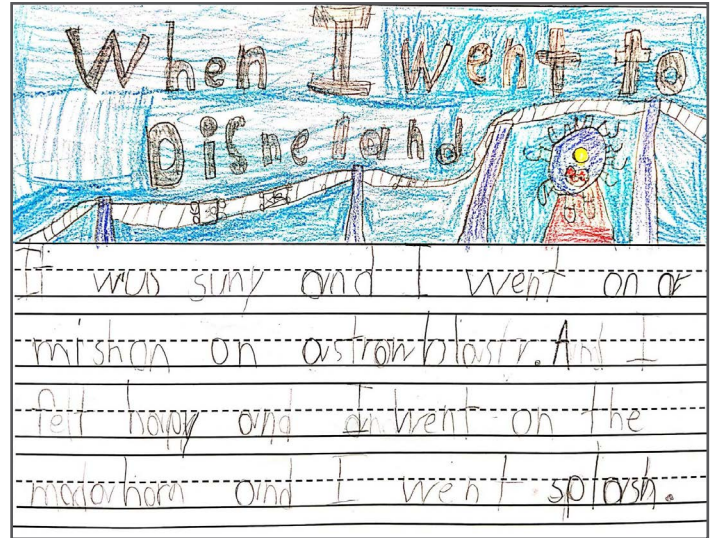
### Fun Fact:

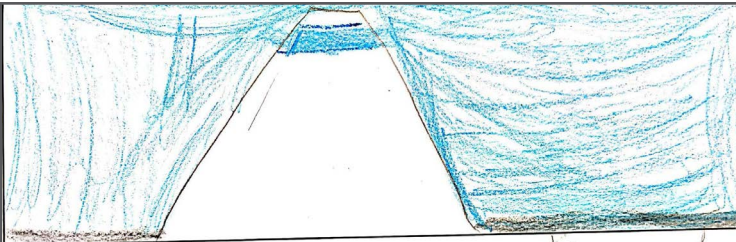
The snowy owl has pure white feathers.

4

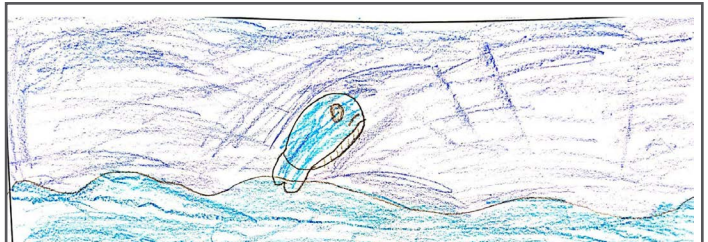
# When I Went to Disneyland

by Sullivan Squire, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy





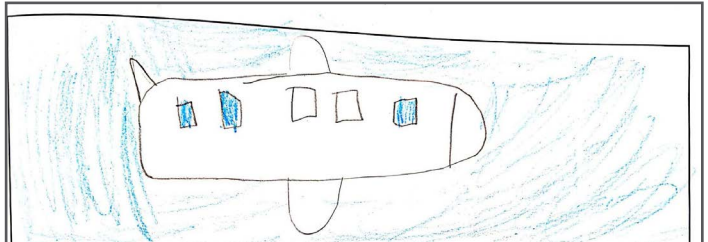
I went on some more tin and  
when I got off I felt sick.  
And we went on or nothin one  
and we went on some.



when I went on some I went  
to different countries like I  
was on a airplane and I  
saw different things.



When I went on the motorhome  
and I saw a yellow and I  
was scared I almost jumped out of  
my pants. and at the end it went.



I find that I want to go  
there again and when I went on  
the plane it went ~~som~~.

# Sometimes I feel like a . . .

by Brooklyn Buscholl, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy



Sometimes I feel like  
a sloth, wise and  
slow. I feel slow  
as I inch out of  
bed and I feel  
wise when I help  
my classmates with  
their work when they

Don't understand.

Sometimes I feel like  
a sloth shy and cool.  
I feel shy when  
I step on the ice  
for a competition  
and cool when  
I win a gold or  
silver ribbon!

by Generose Barbadillo, Gr. 2  
Holy Spirit Academy



Sometimes I feel like a mom  
tired and mad of kids when  
they don't clean up their toys  
and I'm tired of cleaning the  
whole house. ~~It's~~ very messy. I feel  
Sometimes I feel like a mom  
helpful and caring. I  
care for kids and for

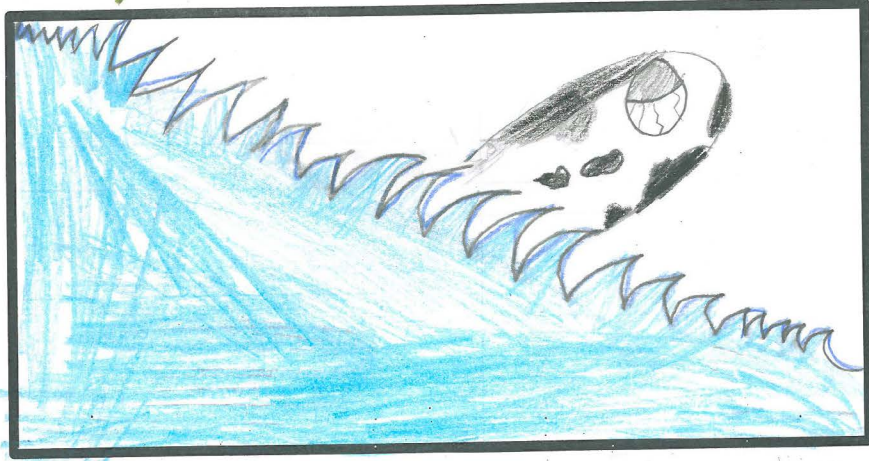
Helping other people  
when they're sad.  
Sometimes I feel like a  
mom peaceful and sweet  
I help kids and I'm  
very very peaceful when  
it's quiet.

# My Arctic Folktale

by Kohen Kutzner, Gr. 2  
St. Mary's School

DIVISION  
1

## My Arctic Folktale Why Are Orcas Black, White



One day many years ago, there  
lived a blue whale with green spots.  
When it was eating supper, he  
suddenly found an unknown animal that came.  
It said MOOOO!!! as loud  
as an Earthquake. He freaked out then he  
was hungry but then he ran out of food  
so the whale ate the animal that was  
black and white but it was poisonous.

Then the whale was  
black and white and  
that's why the orca is black  
and white. I wonder what the  
poisonous animal was?

# Le plastic fondu dans le lave-vaisselle

by Rafaela Boss, Gr. 3

École Good Shepherd School

Nom: Rafaela

Le plastic fondu dans le lave-vaisselle

Sèter le mardi 12 février 2014, jeter  
 as! sur mon sofa à ma maison quand  
 j'ai sentir l'aroma de le plastic brûler!  
 J'ai demander à mon frère qu'est-ce que  
 set terrible odor? Il a dit rien. L'aroma eter  
 la pandon deux long minut j'ai pancer  
 que il y ares un fer ou quelq chose. Seter un  
 demy er et l'aroma eté akcor la et se  
 second la j'ai couron au deuxième  
 étage pour dir à mes perant. Moi et mes  
 perants on revenu au rez-de-chaussée  
 et nos som comanser à chercher pour  
 la chous que fesse l'aroma terrible.



Nom: \_\_\_\_\_

Page: 2

On a regarder dans le réfrigérateur.  
 finalement on a regarde dans le lave-vaisselle  
 un chous de plastic eter fondu ma  
 maman a mise dans la poubelle avoir  
 aroma degoutant!

# Personal Narrative

by Reid Tanner, Gr. 3  
Holy Spirit Academy

It was a cold fall day my dad and I had just pulled up to his friends property. We were going whitetail buck hunting for the 3rd time this year. It was Remembrance Day of 2017. I was really excited to go because my dad had luck in the past on Remembrance Day. Quietly I helped pack up our stuff. Then we started hiking to our spot where we sat. I could hear the hoot of a great horned owl. The golden crunchy leaves spooked him out of the trees and he swooped past me. "Dad," I whisper as he looks up at the snowy sky. I could see an ice covered creek. Where we crossed to the other side was flowing water. Scaredly I stuck my finger into the cold water and it froze for a second. When we got to the other side I tip towed to our spot and set up quickly.

After we set up I was really hungry so my dad gave me a chocolate bar. I tried not to make noise but it was so cold that I could hear it crack. "Quiet down Reid," my dad whispers to me. "I can't help it dad," I whisper back looking angry. My feet got cold after an hour of sitting and I start to cry. "What's the matter?" my dad asks. "My feet are cold," I replied with tears dripping down my cheeks. Slowly I get up as the wet tears start to freeze on my frost biting cheeks. My dad tells me to start walking he'll catch up. Sure a nof I can see him walking behind me with his ice covered beard. I stop so that my dad can catch up. Then my dad said lets go and see the river. I jump over an old tree stump. Than I walk in the bushes. The next

second I was staring at a beautiful crystal clear flowing river. Sadly we had to hike back to our spot. Kaboom! I heard a gunshot in the distance.



When we got back to our spot my dad had just sat down when a deer popped out of nowhere. Immediately my dad says there's a deer so I looked and saw it. Stay back my dad orders as I start tip toeing backward. I try to stand still but my heart was pounding so fast I shok. My dad placed the gun on the shooting sticks. I am going to shoot now. I cover my ears and hear a BANG! The deer fell down. Yippee my dad yells with excitement. Speedly I run over and hug him saying nice shot. Then he says go and find him I can tell he is excited by his voice. Impatiently I bolt over to the creek and stopped so my dad could help me cross. After he helped me I charged over to the deer. I yelled to my dad I found him super loudly. We got pitchers with it then started to gut it. I could smell the warm blood inside of him it smelt like spices. Carefully my dad gutted him and then we dragged him back to our truck and put him in the back. We got in our truck and drove off.

# Mes vacances à Whitefish

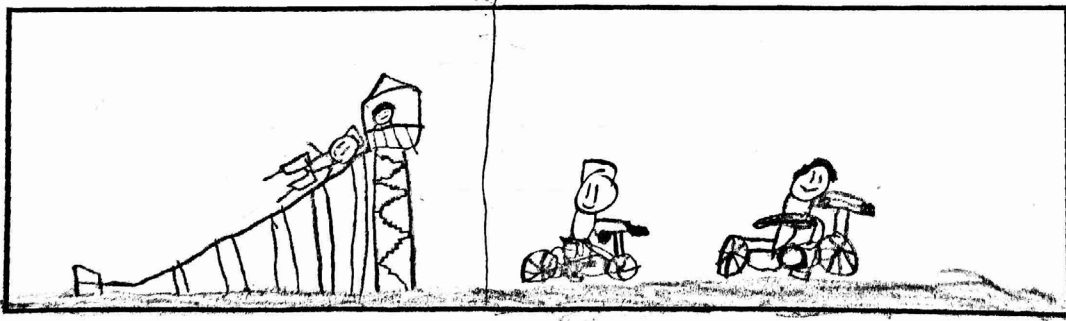
by Andrew Grassl, Gr. 3  
École Good Shepherd School

Nom: Andrew

mes vacances à Whitefish

L'été passé, je suis allé à Whitefish avec ma famille. On a rester à la Condo de mon oncle. Ensuite, nous sommes allé au waterpark. Je suis allé sur un grand glissoir d'eau qui s'appelle le Bonzaï. Il y avait une piscine qui était <sup>ou</sup>gratuit. Moi et mon frère on a nagé dedans. Après cela on est allé au Vortex. C'était un peu bizarre. Finalement on est allé sur un bike ride. C'était tellement amusant!

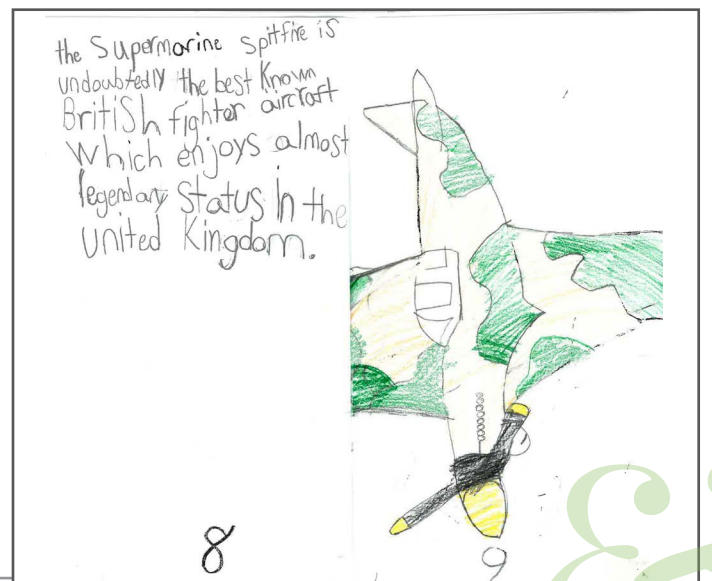
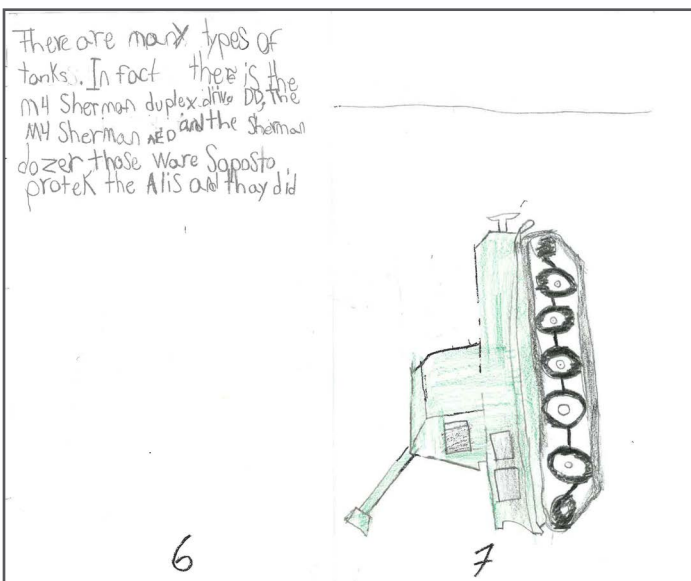
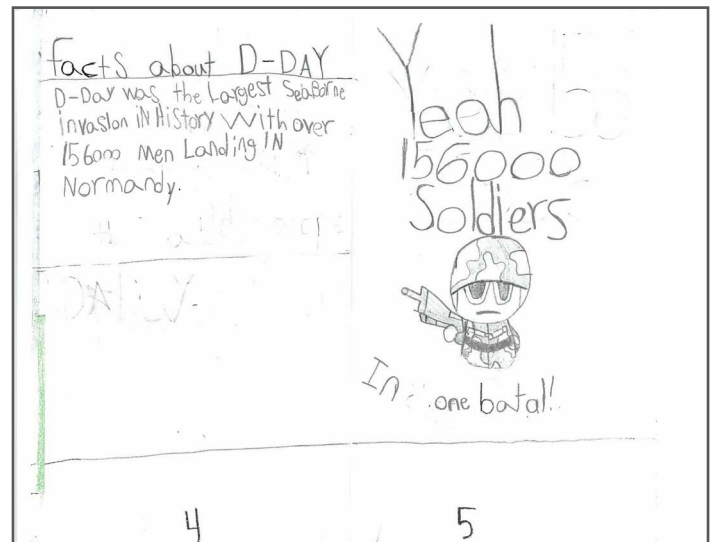
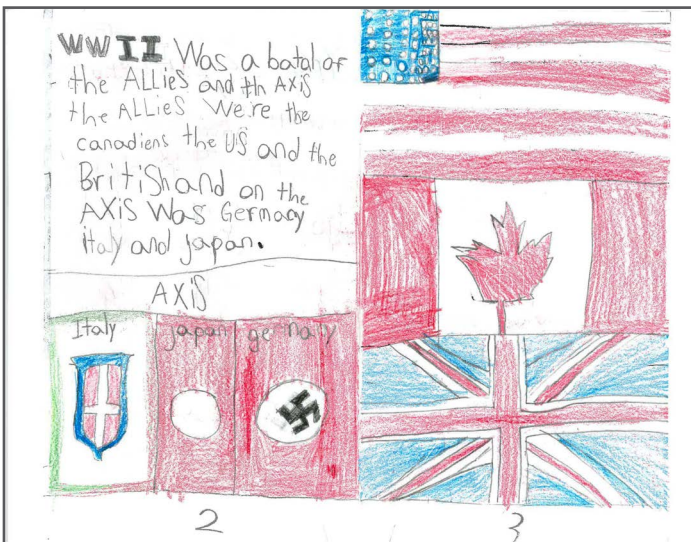
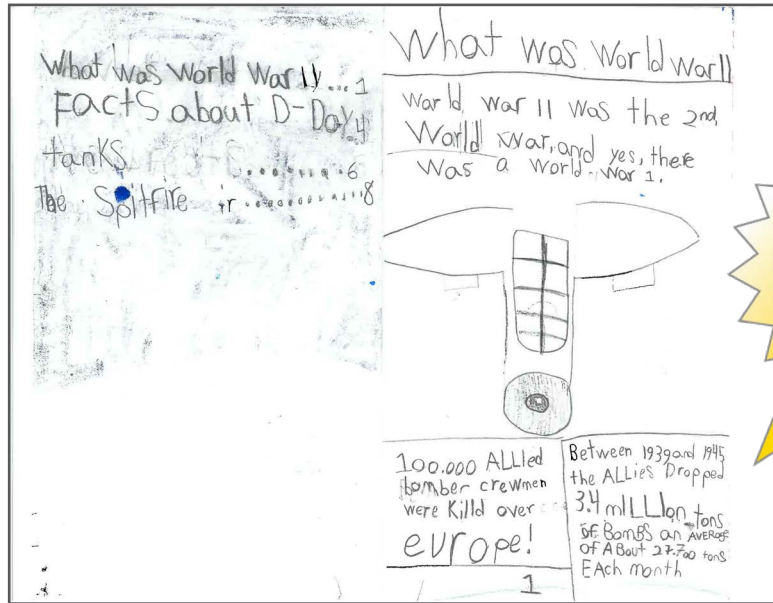
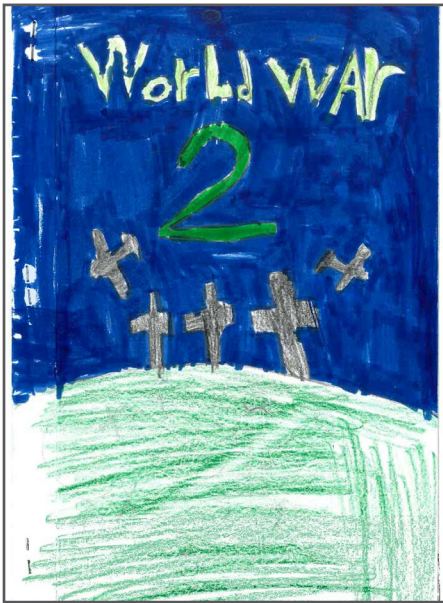
3<sup>ème</sup> année  
École Good Shepherd



# World War 2

by Parker McLaughlin, Gr. 3  
École Good Shepherd School

DIVISION 1



by Charles Baker, Gr. 4  
École Good Shepherd School

### Saint-Valentin

**Je n'aime pas la Saint Valentin!**

**Et je n'aime pas de tout, de rien.**

**La Saint Valentin est tellement horrible.**

**Et je déteste le plus s'il y a un double.**

**C'est stupide la smoochie smooch smooch!**

**Je déteste la moochie mooch mooch.**

**Je n'aime pas la personne qui a créé.**

**Je veux lui tuer.**

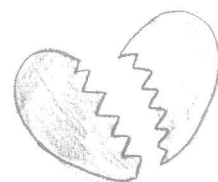
**Par : Charles Baker**

**4<sup>e</sup> année**



**À noter : Je ne veux pas vraiment lui tuer.**

Une poème inspirait par les rimes de Dr.Seus.



## I am from...

by Dagrín Bahr, Gr. 5  
Christ the King Academy

I'm from Brooks, Alberta and that will be my home for ever.

I'm from shooting the puck until the whistle blows at the end of the game and from a great Hockey team.

I'm from playing football in the summer.

I'm from parents fighting.

I'm from divorced parents but everything turns out ok.

I'm from step brothers and friends playing hockey.

I'm from good schools and teachers, friends and family.

I'm from lots of snow.

I'm from going quading in the mountains.

I'm from playing lots of Fortnite.

I'm from exploring in my backyard and running away from my dogs and from getting trampled by my dogs.

I'm from reading war stories and learning lots about the army.

# Une mauvaise journée

by Kirsten Holt, Gr. 5  
École Good Shepherd School

Dans le ciel gris, les nuages foncés signifient une immense tempête. Des vastes montagnes couvrent l'énorme soleil. Les gigantesques vagues rugueuses frappent les plantes mort, qui sont sur les côtés des montagnes oranges. Emily, qui est brave, entre dans le bateau première. Alex, qui est curieux, regarde autour d'Emily. Déjà dans leur propre bateau, Jon et Molly, qui sont gentils, aident leurs enfants à entrer dans l'autre bateau. Tout à coup, "SPLASH!!!" Alex se tourne parce qu'il a entendu un bruit vraiment fort. Oh non!! Emily tombe du bateau! Que ce qu'ils vont faire maintenant?

Tout à coup, le bateau commence à bouger dans les vagues énormes. Une des rames frappe la jambe d'Alex et il a une idée. Il passe la rame à Emily et elle prend dans ses mains. Alex tire mais la rame est plastique donc c'est trop faible et se brise. Le visage d'Emily tourne pâle et elle commence à pleurer très forte.

Soudainement, les vagues se brisent sur Emily en l'envoyant voler sur le côté du bateau. Dans le coin de son oeil, elle aperçoit que le côté du bateau est bas. En ce moment, elle a une idée! Elle essaie de se monter dans le bateau mais c'est trop lisse. La terreur remplit son visage et elle commence à trembler.

Tout à coup, les vagues tourne le bateau en arrière et Alex voit le bateau de ses parents. En ce moment, il a une idée! Il dit son idée à son soeur et ils commencent à crier à leur parent. Leurs parents vient à le bateau et aide Emily à lever dedans. Emily assoit sur le bateau et prend un énorme respiration. Le soulagement remplit sa visage pendant qu'elle réchauffe. Alex et Emily promis à leur parent qu'ils vont jamais aller sur un bateau sans un adult encore.

## Biographie – Stanislaus Larnas

by Emily Seipp, Gr. 5  
École Good Shepherd School

Stanislaus Larnas, mon arrière-arrière-grand-père est venu au Canada d'une colonie de fermier de l'Allemagne à Marienthal, Russie en 1890. Avant qu'il est venu au Canada, les Allemands étaient maltraités en Russie alors ils ont décidé de venir au Canada.

Leur vie n'était pas facile du tout en Russie, alors ils ont pris la décision d'aller au Canada. Aussi, ils savaient que quelqu'un donnait la terre par-dessous de Dominions Lands Act pour un prix d'administration de dix dollars. Avant d'y aller, il a décidé d'apporter sa femme Regina Bachemier, leur fille Anna et la sœur de Regina, Anna Balchemier. Ils étaient prêts pour leur long voyage.

Le voyage était très difficile. Premièrement, ils avaient besoin de sortir du village en sécurité. De plus, Stanislaus et les autres avaient besoin de voyagé par chevaux et wagon 2 500 km à Rotterdam dans les Netherlands où ils ont embarqué un énorme bateau en bois. Le bateau allait au port de New York. Cette partie du voyage était la plus difficile parce que quelque

personne a décédé à cause des maladies ou la malnutrition. Après, ils ont pris le train à Winnipeg, Manitoba et un autre train à Balgonie, Saskatchewan où ils ont reçu leur terre. Les premières années en Canada étaient vraiment dures. Ils avaient besoin de créer les maisons de mottes de gazons et d'endurer les hivers sévères. Quand il n'y avait pas une sécheresse, les récoltes ont été souvent détruites par la grêle, le gel ou les feux de prairie.

Stanislaus et les autres parlaient l'Allemand à leur maison et ont appris l'anglais au Canada. Ils pratiquaient la religion Catholique et ont continué à faire leurs traditions. La première chose qu'ils ont aidé à construire était l'église de la communauté au Canada de St. Joseph, Balgonie. Comme les Allemands, ils décoraient les arbres de Noël et adorent le chocolat. Sans lui, ma famille ne serait pas ici au Canada. Le voyage vaut le coup pour se rendre ici. La vie de Stanislaus a été fertile d'événements.

# Road to Provincials ~ Personal Narrative

by Elijah Fleck, Gr. 5  
Christ the King Academy

It was a cold, snowy Saturday evening. I was getting dressed in my fancy purple dress shirt. I threw on my grey pants. I jumped into my black dress shoes. I was ready. Today would determine if one of my dreams would come true. We would win Zone 6 and make it to Provincials. On the drive there, I was thinking what if we lost? I took a big gulp in and started to shake, then I would know dreams never come true. My dad said, "We're here."

I hopped out of the car and ran through the heavy doors, sprinting into my dressing room. I saw most of my team was already getting dressed, so I ran inside and started getting dressed too. Still, I kept thinking, what if we do lose? I was so nervous. I accidentally put both my legs into one of my pants' hole. I quickly fixed it before anybody noticed. Noah took us upstairs to do dry-land, he told us to quickly run two laps. We got back from running our two laps and then he led us in stretches. We jogged back into the dressing room. I still couldn't stop thinking what would happen if we lost. We got back down to the dressing room, I started getting dressed. It felt like centuries before my dad came down to tie my skates. Meanwhile, I was still thinking, what if we do lose?

I thought about the first time I stepped onto the ice and how much fun I have playing hockey. I realized I didn't want to win, I just wanted to have fun.

We started to head on to the ice. We all had to play our best game if we wanted to beat Olds. We did a few quick laps then headed to our coaches. They announced the starting lineups all I heard was my name. I started thinking again, I got nervous, what if we lost? I started to get shaky again. Stop Elijah, I thought, focus on the positive I thought to myself. We went to our net.

Noah yelled, "3, 2, 1!"

We all shouted, "Bandits!"

I headed to my wing. We got off to a pretty good start. I got our first goal. We were winning 1 to 0 going into the second period. Suddenly, in the second period, things went downhill fast. It went from 1 to 0 to 5 to 1 for Olds. We headed into the dressing room in sadness. I thought it was all over, we would have to wait until next year to try again. We all had our shoulders slouched, heads down and our fists clenched. Nobody looked happy, except for Noah, who looked like he had just won the lottery. We sat in silence for about five minutes. We all looked over, we saw Noah standing up. What is he doing I wondered. Noah started to blurt, "Who is going to win! We are! We are! Who is going to lose? They are! They are!" Noah just kept repeating it. Finally, we all joined in with Noah. Now we knew we could win if we tried hard. We were pumped up.

We headed onto the ice. We started to build momentum. It went from 5 to 1, to 5 to 5. There was one minute left. I picked up the puck skated into their end. I passed it off to Cage, Cage shot it. GOAL!

The clock read 6 to 5 with 10 seconds left. We were so close. I could almost taste the sweet victory. I started to shiver. I really wanted to win. Cage grabbed the puck with his stick and kept it. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Buzzzz. We jumped out of the bench, threw our gloves and sticks into the air. We just won Zone 6! We were going to Provincials. I felt like I was on top of the world.

I headed back into the dressing room I kept thinking we won, we actually came back and won Zone 6. At that moment I knew I could accomplish anything that I work hard for. I thought to myself. Next stop the NHL!

# War Plane

by Keira Miles, Gr. 6

Our Lady of the Snows

I have to look away as all of my work and knowledge crumble and burn away until they are nothing but ashes. All I want to do is scream at my parents for making me do this but I know better. If my work gets into the wrong hands it could end this war, and not for the better. I glance over at my brother who looks like he feels the same way I do, if not worse. I try to give him a reassuring smile but my twin just glares at me in return. I get up from my seat and head to my shared room with my brother to grab the rest of our powerful work. As I go through what to burn I come across our greatest and our worst invention, a war plane that doesn't run out of fuel. The reason Hitler is looking for my brother and I, the reason his army is hunting us. I try to shake the thought of Hitler hunting me as I burn the rest of our work. I take one last glance at our brilliant efforts, then throw it in the fire. But in my heart I know I will never forget most of it, especially the war plane invention.

"Crash, Crack, Cabom!" I jolt up right from my bed causing myself to smack my head on the bunk above. My brother Jacob and I rush down the stairs to see two men in army green uniforms searching our house. We immediately know who they are and why they are here. Hitler had found us. We quickly get into the position we had practiced many times before in case something like this happened. Our parents are already in our secret, underground room when we arrive. Our Father had built it for times like these when we were invaded. We had only used this room twice before and I still needed to get use to the small, dark space. It is built on the upper floor and leads all the way underground, with a thick and sturdy trap door so that the officers can not find us or get in. "Thud!" We all cluster together, fear in each of our eyes. Who knows what those monsters are doing to our little innocent home. After what feels like forever and our uninvited guests have torn are whole house to scraps we hear them leave. Once we are sure it is safe we step out of our dungeon-like enclosure and are



dismayed at what we see. Broken dishes and torn up couches are not even the worst of it, but what catches my eye is the note situated neatly on the broken table top signed by Hitler himself. It reads;

*Dearest children,*

*You must understand that I don't want to hurt you and I only want to help you. With knowledge like yours you could become the richest and most famous children in the world! I understand that your family is a little money deprived, but if you volunteer your ideas to the German army I would pay you for all that it's worth. I really hope that you willingly accept my generous offer so that there is no need for any further dramatic proceeds.*

*-Adolf Hitler*

We pack our bags as quickly as possible. Jacob and I are leaving to stay in a safe house in the countryside with some close friends. Our mother doesn't want our family to split up, but we all know that it's for the better. We don't even need to discuss Hitler's letter because we all agree that none of us will ever give up Jacob's and my inventions. We arrive at the train station and say our final goodbyes. We will each go our separate ways after this. After only a few short minutes Jacob and I leave the comfort of our loving parents and board our train. Our train ride is nothing exciting and we arrive within four hours. When we finally get to our friends house we are both exhausted and head straight to sleep. The next morning while I am having my warm soothing breakfast I wonder if we'll be found here. I know we will never be truly safe anywhere, but as long as Jacob and I stick together and are as far away from Hitler as possible I think we have a pretty good chance. After all according to Hitler we are the smartest kids in the world. If we can build the greatest war plane ever invented when we are only 16, we can definitely hide from Adolf Hitler.

# La Semaine de la Francophonie

by Keely O'Callaghan, Gr. 6  
École Good Shepherd School



Le vendredi, 8 mars 2019  
52 Robinson Dr.  
Okotoks, AB

Bonjour Monsieur Lorenz,

Pour commencer, je me présente. Mon nom est Keely O'Callaghan et j'habite en Okotoks. Je prends l'immersion française et j'aimerais te présenter des idées que tu pourrais utiliser pendant La Semaine de la Francophonie. Je tiens d'abord de vous remercier de bien vouloir prendre mon opinion en considération. Selon moi, la culture française est très important dans notre communauté. Je crois que mes trois idées pourraient donner nos élèves une expérience amusante et unique. Voici mes trois catégories: Un Café Paris, les T-shirts, et une galerie d'art.

En premier, je vais te présenter mon idée d'un Café Paris. Ça serait ici à l'école à 7 heures PM le vendredi soir. On pourrait décorer les couloirs comme les rues de Paris et les salles pourrait être les restaurants. Les parents pourraient faire du bénévolat pour cuisiner les repas/pâtisseries et sucreries. En plus, ils pourraient acheter les décorations pour cette activité spéciale. Les repas seraient le coq au vin, le boeuf bourguignon, le soufflé, et même plus! Pour les pâtisseries et sucreries: les macarons, le crème brûlée, les crêpes, etc. Je pense que les familles vont adorer cela!

En deuxième, mon idée des t-shirts. Les élèves vont dessiner des images sur le thème français, et je pourrais être le juge pour décider quelle image va sur les t-shirts. Ça serait une

compétition entre les élèves. Nous le ferions 2 semaines avant pour qu'on a du temps pour les t-shirts à arriver. Toute l'école porterait les t-shirts pendant la semaine de la Francophonie pour appuyer la culture française. L'argent pour acheter les t-shirts sera donné comme donation par les parents et la communauté. Les personnes peuvent porter leur t-shirts autour de la ville, au magasin, et plusieurs d'autres places pour encourager la culture française. J'espère que tu aimes mon idée!

Mon idée finale c'est un galerie d'art. Les élèves vont faire des projets d'art qui représente la France/Québec et on va les mettre autour de l'école. Toute l'école pourrait aller voir l'art des étudiants. Les élèves vont avoir lundi à jeudi pour finir leurs projets et vendredi, moi et des amis vont placer l'art dans l'entrée de l'école. Le samedi prochain, les parents et la communauté peut venir voir l'art et même l'acheter! L'argent collecté va aller à des écoles qui veut avoir une programme d'immersion française. Je crois que cette idée formidable va beaucoup aider à promouvoir la culture Française.

Je tiens à vous remercier, M. Lorenz, de prendre mon opinion et mes idées en considération, concernant la Semaine de la Francophonie. Je suis convaincue que mes trois catégories proposée, Un Café Paris, les T-shirts et un Galerie d'Art vont promouvoir cette culture et va encourager les personnes à parler en français et à respecter la culture.

Les sentiments meilleures,  
Keely O'Callaghan

# Max & Me

by Paisley Thornton, Gr. 6  
Assumption School

"Hey Max! Let's go outside! It's such a beautiful day." I said to Max, with a big toothy grin. I knew I was imaginary, but that didn't matter in our friendship. Max and I raced to the Assumption School Park, the trees swayed to the rhythm of the wind on the sunny afternoon at the park. Max went down the bright orange slide. I could see the bright warm sun beaming on Max's freckled cheeks. As I watched him, my hands felt shaky, my head was spinning, my legs were tingling...I was being forgotten.

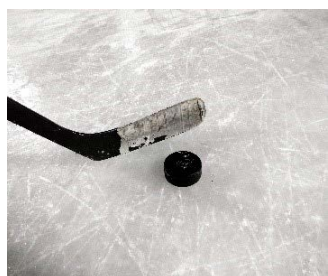
I turned around to see Max's realistic friends. My fists clenched so tightly, my thumb began to crack. They may have not been able to see me, but I could sure see them. They always stole Max from me. I ran up to Max to tell him I was being forgotten, but the realistics got there before me. I sat on the swing sad and alone forever.

But all of a sudden, Max sat down beside me. He looked at me and then at his bright green and blue runners, then back up at me. I could see he was crying, his face stained in tears. He grabbed my hands and held them tightly. I could feel the sweat on his

fingertips. Max slowly let go of my hands and quickly grabbed me in for a tight hug. My face lit up. I was so happy Max remembered me! My hands stopped shaking, my legs stopped tingling and my head stopped spinning. But now I have to find out why Max is so upset.

I slowly leaned out of the hug and looked him straight in the eyes and said "Max? Why are your cheeks stained with tears?" He looked up at me with a worried look. "They made fun of me because I told them that I wanted you to play with us." I knew Max was referring to the realistics when he said "they".

"I knew those realistics weren't trustworthy." I told Max through gritted teeth, "And I'm sorry that they hurt your feelings Max." "No, it's okay. I'm just going to hangout with you from this point on," Max said with a half smile. "You know what? Let's go home and make some lemonade, drink lots of it, get a sugar high, and that way we don't have to worry about it." I suggested to Max. "I'm down! Let's go!" Max said with his bright green eyes sparkling.



## Ode to Hockey

by Erika Finney, Gr. 6  
École Good Shepherd School

Oh hockey, oh hockey you can be so fun  
But sometimes I wish that I could run  
In the rink it can be cold  
And that's to make sure the ice will hold

You're a dangerous sport because you're so rough  
But most of the players are quite tough  
I've only seen a couple people end up with a cast  
And that is because they're going to fast

The people in the stands think were entertaining  
But were a mess when we're training  
Halfway through the game we can get tired  
But if that happens in the NHL they might get fired!

After a hard game of playing and scoring  
We like to rest and start snoring  
Even though some sticks might break  
We have some extras that we can take

# La Semaine de la Francophonie

by Erica Boucher, Gr. 6  
École Good Shepherd School

Bonjour M. Lorenz,

Pour débiter, je m'appelle Erica Boucher. Je suis d'origine québécoise et la francophonie dans mon opinion est quelque chose d'important. Je tien d'abord à vous remercier de prendre mes idées comme option pour organiser la semaine de francophonie à notre école. Je vous propose 3 catégories que dans mon opinion peut bien démontrer la francophonie, de la nourriture qui vas faire mouiller la bouche, des jeux divertissant et de la musique qui vas faire danser.

Premièrement la culture française est bien connu pour leurs nourritures comme des betteraves marinées ou un bouillon de viande et patate. Alors je pense que si on peut faire une petite dégustation en classe pour les enfants pendant la journée avec de la tourtière à viande, de la tarte d'érable aussi ont utiliserait de la glace (j'ai essayé ça marche) vus que c'est l'été et du sucre à la crème les étudiants vont bien aimer cette collation et peut être vu que c'est des recettes pas compliqué ça peut devenir leur nouveau plat préféré!

Comme deuxième catégorie, je vous propose des jeux réjouissant pour les enfants comme créer un palais de sable, Ceci est comme faire le palais de glace de Bonhomme Carnaval qui est un événement spécial au Québec, ceci arriverait pendant l'après-midi. L'autre activité serait de faire une galerie d'art pour que tout le monde peut voir les couleurs de la francophonie. Ceci prendra place pendant que les classe peuvent sortir et aller au foyer.

Comme dernière catégorie je pense que la musique traditionnelle ne peut pas être oublié! Alors je me demande si on pourrait avoir une pièce de théâtre mais ça serait toute en français! Cette idée dans mon opinion est très bonne parce que ça ferait travailler les cerveaux des étudiants et encourage les acteurs/étudiant de parler en français. En plus, la pièce prendra seulement 2-3 périodes le matin et c'est amusant pour les petit et les grands. Pour terminer la semaine on peut inviter élèves dans la salle de musique et les apprendre comment jouer les

cuillères. Ceci peut arriver pendant que ils ont leur classe de musique ou ont peut joindre deux classe ensemble.

Je tiens à vous remercier beaucoup M. Lorenz pour prendre mes idées en considération concernant la semaine de francophonie. Je suis convaincue que mes catégories soient la nourriture, les jeux ou la musique vont bien recouvrir cette culture merveilleuse et ajouter des moments et des activités merveilleuses dans la vie de nos élèves.

Je vous prie M. Lorenz, d'accepter mes sentiments respectueusement.

Sincèrement,  
Erica Boucher

## Ode to Sari

by Clare Greene, Gr. 6  
École Good Shepherd School

Oh, Sari, great Sari, your coolness has no end  
I'm glad that we met, and that we are friends  
Sure, people think you're a little small  
But to me, your personality says it all!

And when at me you sweetly smile  
The smile stays with me for a long while  
When we are together we always laugh  
If it was any other friend, I'm sure it'd be half!

Together we always have great fun  
And I always hope it'll never be done  
You're with me through cold and hot  
If you weren't here, survive, I would not!

Oh Sari, great Sari, how I wish we could be sisters  
But alas, we are from another mister  
All our great times will stay with me endless  
And because of you, I'll never be friendless

# Day in Pages

by Zack Reinhardus, Gr. 6  
Our Lady of the Snows

Days can be different, that's for sure. Each day is adding another page to your book, some can be ecstatic, some can be defeating and some can be tearful. Every twist, turn, or step can change what will happen on the following pages. As each new page begins you can choose how it ends.

Keep in mind no matter what happened on the last page, every page is a new a one. So don't live in the old pages, live in the upcoming ones. You are the main character, you make your own decisions, you are the book, you are the story.

Every year and every chapter there's always a main focus. It may be great or it may dark, but that shouldn't prevent you from achieving anything. There are always roadblocks you encounter in life, always take the detour, don't get trapped on one page just keep going.

Keep going until the final pages, where you take a look back and contemplate. And you feel grateful for every time you flip to the next page until God puts down the final period.

# La Semaine de la Francophonie

by Sari Potter, Gr. 6  
École Good Shepherd School

Le 6 mars 2019  
120 Mount Rae Point  
T1S 0N9

Cher M. Lorenz,

Pour débiter, mon nom est Sari Potter et je suis une étudiante à ÉGSS. J'adore la culture française. Je vous remercie pour prendre mon opinion en considération concernant la Semaine de Francophonie. J'ai un peu d'idées pour avoir une vraiment bonne expérience française. Je vous propose un plan des idées: la nourriture, un Café Paris, et une pièce de théâtre.

Pour commencer, c'est quoi une semaine de francophonie sans la nourriture? La nourriture est une grande partie de la culture française. La ME to WE peuvent nous aider par avoir un "ME to OUI" vente de pâtisserie à l'école. Les étudiants peuvent faire les confections françaises et vendre pour 1\$ chaque. Ou bien, nous pouvons avoir une compétition de biscuiterie. Les étudiants peuvent entrer dans une compétition de pâtisserie et la gagnant gagne un période libre pour leur classe.

Deuxièmement, savais-tu que Paris est un des places plus populaires française dans la monde? Ça c'est pourquoi mon deuxième idée est un Café Paris. Nous pouvons décorer l'école comme les rues du Paris et transformer les classes au cafés pour une journée. Aussi, les parents peuvent venir pour boivent du café et mangent des biscuits. Les étudiants peuvent

avoir les différents rôles: les serveurs, les réceptions et les cuisiniers. Les parents sont les invités.

Pour terminer, qui adore le théâtre? Je sais que moi j'adore. Mon dernière idée est une pièce de théâtre. Dans le gymnase, nous pouvons avoir une pièce de théâtre fait par les 6ième et 5ième années. Ça va être à propos de la culture francophone et le script et langue vont être tout français. Les autres étudiants et les parents peuvent venir et visionner. Nous allons avoir la nourriture française pour manger pendant le spectacle magnifique. Un résultat de cette présentation est que les étudiants et les parents vont savoir plus à propos de la belle culture!

Je tiens à vous remercier encore un fois, Monsieur, pour prendre mon opinion en considération concernant la Semaine de Francophonie. Je suis certaine que mes trois idées proposées, soit la nourriture, un Café Paris et une pièce de théâtre sont les meilleurs choix pour notre Semaine de Francophonie.

Veuillez agréer, M. Lorenz, l'expression de mes sentiments respectueux,

Sari Potter

# The Undertow

by Irelyn Kent, Gr. 6  
Sacred Heart Academy



"Please, make wise choices as there is a bit of an undertow. Anyways have a wonderful time at The Big Island of Hawaii's Hapuna Beach," the greeter informed with a warm smile. He passed out a pamphlet featuring all of the wonderful activities to explore around the beach to a blonde haired woman with a floppy, sand coloured beach hat and a blue and red beach bag slung over her shoulder.

"Thank you sir," the woman replied. She made her way down to the beach and laid out her purple cotton towel onto the hot, grainy sand. The ocean sent a salty tang up the tourists noses and frozen treats stands attracted overheated visitors while hermit crab holes littered the beach. Nearby, kids with bright red burnt skin rode the waves with glee. The woman sat down and pulled out a personalized notebook with her name on it. It read Paisley. Paisley was a blonde haired, blue eyed 26 year old, who was an avid swimmer and loved any type of thrilling adventure. Paisley put away her notebook and bounded for the turquoise waters. She waded in slowly embracing the sun on her face and warm water on her legs. She sunk her body into the water and pushing off with her feet swam deeper into the salty depths. Paisley came up gulping the air, she felt the pull of the undertow underneath her sandy toes. I can go a little farther,

Paisley thought to herself. The undertow isn't awful and I'm not even at the buoys yet.

Convinced, Paisley took a breath of air and dove deep into the pool of blue. As she swam, she felt a light pull at her side. Thinking nothing of it, she continued her adventure. After multiple times of coming up for air the pull became stronger, pushing her down under the strong waves, her head bobbing and gasping for air. She let out a staggered yelp, but soon was pushed further under the waves. Paisley fought strongly against it, exhausting herself in the process. Her body twisted and turned as the undertow dragged her far past the buoys. Finally, too exhausted to do anything she shut her eyes and drifted into a light slumber as the undertow swept her away.

The morning sun kissed the beach with it's warm glow. The waves calm and quiet gently hit the shore with their soothing whoosh. Paisley sputtered, breaking the calm-

ing silence on the unknown beach. She found herself lying out on the sand, water lapping at her feet, her body coated with rough sand. She looked down at her red swimsuit, now not anything but a bunch of cloth with sand entwined in the once soft fabric. Paisley heaved herself off the ground, weak from the day before, her thighs shook with the struggle. She stumbled over to a nearby tree for support, which acted as an entrance to a forest of all types of exotic trees embedded in the sand. Her head turned, noticing the island that she had been swept away from in the distance.

Reality set in. She was alone. Nobody to help her. What am I going to do? What if no one comes? Can I survive here alone? The survive part stuck in her mind and buzzed like a bee.

Survive. Can I do it? How do you do it? Food, water, shelter and fire. How? She thought to herself. Feeling strong, she walked over to the water, washing the coated sand off her tired body. Ok... let's think. Since dad was addicted to those survival shows, maybe I can remember a thing or two from them. She thought hard, her gaze fixated on the moving waves. "Sleep!" she said aloud. That's it! Kaitlynn said on episode 14 that sleep was essential to surviving. Content, she found a soft patch of sand and settled down into a deep slumber.

She awoke feeling refreshed. She stood and walked to the water. At the first sight of it her throat quenched with thirst urging her to rush to the deep blue water. Unable to control herself, she threw herself at the ocean, face planting into the mucky sand, taking a gulp of unpleasant salty water. Paisley arose from the water, her face enveloped with seaweed and wet sand, her throat aching from salt that stuck in the cracks of her sore mouth. She crawled back to her spot under the swaying palm tree. Disappointed, she wiped off the remaining remnants of sand and leaned against the sturdy trunk of the palm tree. Feeling productive again, Paisley decided it was time for her to venture away from the solitary beach and into the unknown jungle that loomed in front of her.

Hopefully there's water, food and shelter! Paisley fanta-

sized as she walked through the humid forest. The sun began to set, leaving a cool breeze behind. Paisley shivered in the now dark forest, her throat aching for water. I have to find water. Paisley repeated, thinking about the

soothing sound of water trickling from a tap into someone's glass, up to their lips and willingly down their throat. Paisley, approached a nearby opening in the brush and a pool of blue liquid caught her eye. Can it be? Water! She made a mad dash to the pool. Her feet sore from the journey felt like knives were jabbing her, but she kept running determined to get to the water.

She laughed with glee as she fell to her knees gulping up the fresh water filtered by the mineral rock. The water tasted sweet and refreshing. Paisley jumped in with a splash. The pool of water was cold and welcoming. Paisley rinsed her knotty hair and scrubbed her cut up feet. Overjoyed she hopped out of the water to do her victory dance, but soon the pain came back to her feet and she decided she should settle down for the night.

Paisley awoke, the area around her pitch black. An awful buzzing came and a twitch of pain. Then it happened again and again until her legs were covered in tiny little bumps and were unbearably itchy. Then it hit her, mosquitos. They were everywhere and were tangled in her hair and the buzzing never stopped. She twisted and turned, her brain begging her to sleep. Finally she fell into an irritated slumber. Paisley awoke the next morning with her legs raw and sore from the hundreds of mosquitos. She scrambled to her feet and slowly dipped her legs in the soothing water. As she dipped into the blue she thought, am I going to be here forever?

Someone's had to have seen me being swept away. Paisley took a long drink and walked out of the water. Staring at the sky, big black thunderclouds were headed for the island. What am I going to do? I could get hypothermia if I'm not covered by something. I need shelter. Paisley immediately started gathering palm fronds and loose sticks and branches. Paisley took a step back and contemplated where to put the shelter. Should I put it by the water or by the jungle?

Paisley made pros and cons list for each, unsure of what to do. Well if I put it by the water I wouldn't have to walk as far to get water, but with a storm coming what if it floods? Now by the jungle, it gives me extra protection, but what if the storm makes one of the trees fall? Or a big, hungry jungle cat comes and eats me for his entree. Paisley finally made her decision and started building the shelter right underneath some swaying palm trees.

As she was finishing her last few tweaks to her shelter, Paisley's stomach growled, the hunger gripping her. Her belly moaned and it shot sharp pains through her side. Numbing the pain with water, the storm was close and Paisley could hear the faint sound of thunder. She looked up at the swaying palm trees and thud ! A brown, scraggly looking sphere fell to the ground, causing the sphere to crack with bits of white going everywhere. "A coconut!" She hollered! Can I eat it? It looks edible. I'm pretty sure it is. She thought as she took a bite of the sweet, flavourful coconut. "Mmmm!" In the one side of the coconut sweet smelling water sent a delicious aroma to Paisley's nose. She touched the coconut to her lips and drank the wonderful liquid. It was an explosion in her mouth, she had never tasted anything so good. It kind of tastes like coconut sprite. Paisley thought. Tip tap tip tap! The rain started to come down hard, soaking Paisley to the core as she bolted to the shelter. The shelter greeted her with a dry welcome. It rained throughout the entire night. Shivering, her lips began to turn blue, she could no longer feel her hands and feet.

Paisley woke up shaking. She climbed to her feet and knew exactly what she needed.

Fire . She emerged from the shelter and was welcomed by tons of coconuts littered along the ground. Taking one she cracked it open with a rock she had found and sat down for a well deserved breakfast. She thought hard on how she was going to light the fire. On episode 27 Jordan said if you're on an island with coconuts, they make great fire starters. He also said that friction is your friend. Paisley started grabbing the leftover coconut shells, put them in a pile and took a thick stick and a smaller stick and started rubbing them together faster and faster. The sticks brushed against each other, creating fly away sparks that slowly burnt out into chalky, black ash. Finally, as the sun began to set, a gentle breeze swept the hot red sparks into the pile of coconuts and as a few more landed the coconuts finally ignited. Sparks flew out of the ball of fire. Paisley felt the warmth within her and her blue lips began to turn pink again.

A few days and a lot of coconuts later, Paisley was content and happy living in her shelter and living on sweet coconuts but she craved her family, her mom's hugs, her dad's jokes, her brother's pranks and of course their beloved dog Max. She started to feel lonely, but she filled the empty space with the

Continued on page 34

Continued from page 33

wonderful memories of her childhood. Will I be here forever?

She kept thinking. I mean, I like coconuts but not that much. The wind blowing in stronger swept the smoke in a long trail towards the Big Island and onto the beach, catching a lifeguard's attention. "Someone's on that island," he told his colleague beside him. She looked up and saw the smoky trail coming from the distant island.

"That island's been barren for years. Probably just a small forest fire," the woman said.

"I'm not sure, I think we should check it out."

"Alright. Let's get the boat," the woman replied, hopping off the chair and into the boat.

They sped off to the nearby island. When they arrived they pulled the boat onto the beach.

"Hello! Anyone?" the man screamed into the mega phone multiple times. Paisley leapt to her feet and began running in the direction of the beach. Someone's here! They have come to save me! She dashed out of

the forest, crashing into the man with the mega phone. "Ouch!" they both yelled. "Hi, I'm Jacob and this is my life guard partner Teresa," Jacob said.

"Hi, I'm Paisley. I was swept away here by the undertow," Paisley explained.

"Wait, what day did you get swept under?" Teresa questioned.

"Umm I believe Monday the 12th!" Teresa and Jacob's mouth dropped.

"You've been here two weeks!" they exclaimed in unison.

"Really? I survived that long?" Paisley said astonished.

"Let's get you home," Jacob decided. They hopped in the boat and sped off. As they pulled the boat onto the sand, he said with a chuckle, "You know my buddies and I have a saying for undertow... undertow, heck no."

"You can say that again!" Paisley agreed. The shoreline met her toes and coated them with the grainy sand as Paisley hopped off the boat, grateful to be home. The salty blue waves lapped at her feet with a calming rhythm, while palm trees swayed back and forth moving with the soft breeze.

## Africa

by Madeline Kennedy, Gr. 6  
Our Lady of the Snows

I bet you've always wanted to go to Africa. Sure, maybe it would be blistering hot with huge, gross bugs, but the wildlife and culture would all be worth it. The closest I've ever come to the second biggest continent in the world is a safari ride at Animal Kingdom in Orlando, Florida.

In an off-road vehicle, I saw hippos, striped impalas, and emerald green crocodiles just lounging there without a care in the world. But I bet you'd give up almost anything to go and witness creamy spotted giraffes elegantly stepping through tall, sun-dried grass, golden-haired lions sleeping with their pride, and wrinkled gray rhinos with ivory horns. There would be baby

elephants joyfully spouting water through their trunks, fluffy ostriches bounding across the grasslands, and a herd of wild gazelles leaping away from a camouflaged cheetah.

This is a magical land, with the indigenous animals and people, and the raspberry-orange sunrises every morning. Maybe you would learn the culture of the people who live there and help them with what they need, eat spicy and satisfying meals, and weave colourful tapestries. Maybe you love the jungles, the beaches, and the mountains of planet Earth...

But I bet you've always wanted to go to Africa.

# Train Sounds

by Mary Anne Uchacz, Gr. 6  
Sacred Heart Academy

The bright moon hovered over the small town of Wallows while a thick fog hung in the air with darkness painting the sky. It was near midnight when a teenage girl was laying on her couch with an old book in her hand. The moonlight flooded the room and candles lit up the kitchen and living room. The girl looked up from her book and called out towards the kitchen, "How much longer will this power outage last?" There was a long silence before a head popped in the doorway.

"Not sure," the woman responded. The girl on the couch chucked her book across the room in frustration and slumped herself on the couch. The woman kept staring at her.

"I can't take this!" the teenager shouted. "This history book is garbage! I hate stupid history about this town!" The woman was now standing in the doorway her mouth hanging open in shock.

"Taylor! That is not the right way to talk about history. Especially about this town!" she shouted back at her daughter. "I am your mother and I say history is important. My favourite lesson is the one about the Mangover train," Taylor's mother said, now sitting on the couch beside her. Taylor rolled her eyes in annoyance remembering all the stories about the Mangover train.

"Please! Those are ghost stories!" Taylor snapped back at her mother. The train had come to meet its end when it exploded in 1963. Almost 302 died on board, along with some towns people near the explosion. The only train that had ever existed here in Wallows. Taylor thought as her mother continued blabbing about the Mangover. Perfect ghost story. Bet that would be more fun to explore. With the sudden thought in her head, Taylor leapt up from the couch and grabbed her coat.

"Where are you going?" asked her mother. "I'm going out for a walk," Taylor lied. "Be back in an hour!" she called to her mother and swung open the door. The cool October wind gave her chills as she walked down across her lawn. The night was perfectly still but Taylor swore she heard the sound of a train whistle somewhere in the distance.

"I knew it!" Taylor exclaimed. She was in luck. It had taken ten minutes to find them. She was standing over the rusty metal train tracks of the famous Mangover train in the old, dead woods just outside her town. Now she was staring at them but she wasn't sure why. Slicing through the silence was the town's old clock tower's song. It rattled the forest as the loud melody continued. "Hmm. I didn't know that old piece of metal still worked," she said aloud. Then she backed up trying to see the clock tower. She was now on the train tracks trying to use them as a small boost, when another sound came and drowned out the melody. The sound of train engines. Taylor spun around to see a train headed right for her. Taylor couldn't move. Her eyes were fixed on the front of the train where in big burnt metal letters was the name MANGOVER 993. The front was busted and burnt, almost torn to pieces. One of the lights in front was flickering and most of the windows were smashed or cracked. It definitely looked as if it had exploded, with two wheels in front missing and the body of the train was rusted. The loud sounds of the ghost train continued as Taylor was frozen on the tracks. The Mangover whistle was like thunder as it sailed right for the stunned teenager. The ghostly glow of the Mangover came so close to Taylor, she shut her eyes for a second then opened them to see the Mangover go right through her body. All around her were passengers, waiters and all the people that had died. They glowed just like the Mangover and were mostly see through. Taylor's jaw dropped as she watched all of them. As Taylor stood there, a woman wearing a long rag dress turned towards her and began to reach out for her. The woman's pale white face and baggy eyes scared Taylor as she heard her brain scream at her to move. Taylor stepped backwards, moving out of the train's way. She kept watching everything from where she was, until the caboose of the train finally came. A tall man dressed in classic train clothes waved out to



Continued on page 36

Continued from page 35

Taylor and lifted his hat to show his bald skull.

"You'd like some tea?" he called out, before making his head spin in full circles over and over again. Taylor gasped as the train began to disappear with the fog, until she was alone again with only the train tracks at her feet.

The front door slammed shut behind her as Taylor walked back to the couch and sat down. Her mother rushed over and sat down beside her.

"What happened?" her mother asked, stroking her long brown hair.

"I think it's best if I keep it a secret." She hugged her mother tightly as they continued talking about history and soon fell asleep in the orange glow of the candlelight. The power flashed back on and the sun was rising somewhere past the hills, just as the sound of a train whistle faded in the early morning light.

# A Story About Something - With Stuff Happening In It

by Meaghan Patterson, Gr. 4 Teacher & Aaron Heinzlmier, Gr. 6  
Sacred Heart Academy

The day was pleasant enough. Sun shining, birds singing. However, this was not a reflection of how he felt, sitting huddled in his bedroom. The Stuff was all around. Inside, outside, on top and underneath.

He couldn't get away from it, no matter how hard he tried.

It was consuming his life.

It made his eyes leak when he experienced it every morning. It made his stomach twist like an angry snake when he thought about it at lunch. It gave him a lump in his throat, that grew from the size of a quarter to the size of a pocket watch, as he

attempted to eat his dinner.

Too much Stuff.

He was swimming in it.

Trying to keep his head above water, but it was at his ears.

Covering his mouth, his nose, his eyes.

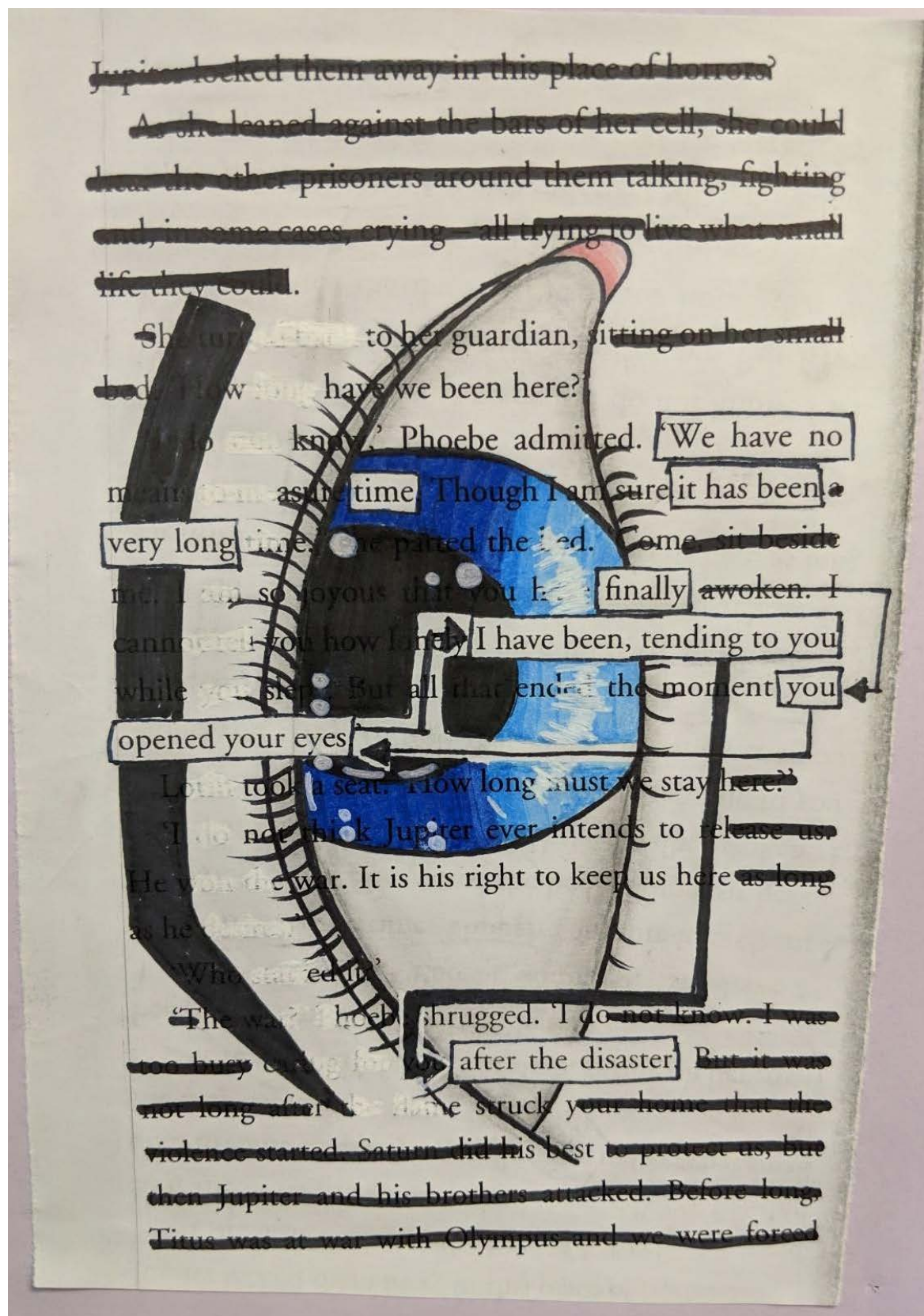
Drowning. Not breathing. Suffocating.

He needed Something. Something big to save him.

Why couldn't Something save him?

# Blackout Poetry

by Gwency Dagsa, Gr. 7 Christ the King Academy



# Follow the Train

by Ella Klyne & Aida McVea, Gr. 7  
St. Francis of Assisi Academy

"Follow the tracks," my dad always said. So I did. I passed crumbling buildings and empty cities. It would become so cold I would start to feel the frost creeping up my limbs. I would go so long without food I became familiar with the taste of dirt. The forests ran so deep I would pass hanged men and deteriorating corpses. It was a barbaric world, but it was the world I lived in.

The sun slowly crept over the horizon, the beginnings of morning just overhead. I could feel the bitter air nipping at my exposed skin, whisking the heat away even though my blood ran warm. I opened my eyes to a crisp morning, the plants were a verdant green offsetting the russet, sun worn, brown railway track. Follow the tracks, I reminded myself; it soon became a continuous loop playing over and over. I would scribble it in the dirt, carve it into a tree with a whittling knife, scrape it into the metal track with a rock. I didn't care, I just had to know. I sat up, my limbs stiff from the cold. My bag slung over my shoulder, I started making my way back up to the tracks.

The sun was a burning gaze on my shoulders, it was cold, but at least there was daylight. I hopped between the rails, my worn sneakers squeaking as I dragged my feet across the metal. I pulled my golden hair back into a tight ponytail, keeping it out of my face. I kept walking, the slow movement of my eyes traveling across the rails becoming a familiar sight to me. It was what I looked at everyday. I came to a slow stop, digging through my small backpack, in search of a water canteen. I feel my hands graze over the steel canister and swig from it sparingly. Almost out of water. Though the world was apocalyptic, there always seemed to be an abundance of food. I always found raiding corner stores and strip malls were easy pickings, but water was harder to come by. I never drank from streams or rivers, for they were dark with gasoline and pollution. Littered with dead animals and debris. The air wasn't any better, but you do slowly become used to the reek of diesel. I had to get more bottled water. Hopefully, the next town or train stop wouldn't have been raided fully. I began plac-

ing all my belongings back in the bag, my knives, non perishable food, blankets, and fire starter. I never carried anything that I didn't need, for it would be too heavy to lift. Throwing the bag over my shoulder and adjusting the strap, I started straying from the tracks and making my way to the capital city.

I had never stepped foot in the capital city for 5 years, the only thing I had remembered was the sky being a powdered blue, the sun sending streaks of light through the gathering of clouds. The darkness of night creeping closer throughout the day; and as the earth spun, the sky turned a midnight velvet. Causing the land to glow in an luminous white, filling each crevice and chasm with the moons luminous reflection. Yet that heavenly privilege only lasted so long, the Earth soon became so inhabitable humanity lost its purpose; and it was everyone for themselves. The sight of dead greenery slowly changed to crumbling buildings as I entered the city limits, fallen power lines littering the cracking road. I needed to find a supermarket, or a corner store. Anything that could have water. I could feel my throat turn into sandpaper as the sun beat down on me. I needed to find it fast. I slipped into the first building that I saw, it looked somewhat of a store and could have something useful. Cans of dog food littered the floor, as well as molded vegetables and fruits. It smelled like sour milk and feces, gagging I began breathing through my mouth. Yet the smell seemed to settle on my tongue as I picked through the garbage and filth. I slipped some canned goods into my bag, stocking up on food. My gaze traveled along the broken refrigerator doors, milk, juice, unopened cans of pop, I grabbed the bottles of soda. Maybe a treat for later. No water. I left the shop and trudged back into the scorching sun, searching for another gas station or market. Each building was broken, some burned black from a fire, others completely rubble and dust. I could see signs saying what they were before the catastrophe, a car wash, book store, gym, it was hard to believe this used to be a town full of people. Bright



and lively, buzzing with growing souls and animals. Now, now it was just nothing.

I kept following the main road, broken cars and scrap metal scattered all over the fractured asphalt. The sun was going down, I could see the earth's star only a couple of meters above the horizon. The land was washed in a warm orange, as the haze of the burning heat slowly cooled. I still needed to find water. I searched through my bag grabbing a bottle of lemon lime soda. I twisted the cap, I could hear the refreshing sound of the flavoured carbonated water fizzing. I drained half the bottle, as well as grabbed a unopened granola bar I had snagged from the previous store. I took a small bite from the chocolate oats, as I heard a low growl sound behind me.

I jumped to my feet, almost choking on the food. I panickingly grabbed my backpack, pulling out the switchblade kept in the side pocket; the steel blade clicking as it swung open. I spun around, trying to detect where the noise was coming from. It sounded like a sort of dog, but I still wasn't sure. I could see a shadow ripple in the corner of my eye, I turned, but I was too late as it pounced on top of me.

I could feel the claws digging into my shoulders and a small grunt escaped me. I swung wildly trying to stab the animal, but it jumped down clamping its jaw on my leg. I fell to the ground rolling in broken shards of glass and metal. I could feel warm blood dripping down my arms and leg as I stabbed its upper forearm, it yelped crumpling to the ground. I felt a pang of empathy as I looked toward the canine. It was a breed of German shepherd, its matted fur wet with tar and blood. It was scared, as I was. I crept forward while shuffling through the remnants of my backpack. I grabbed a roll of gauze and a healing cream. As I got closer I could see the dog's ribs, the stab wound dripping blood down its shoulder. It was panting hard, and it looked up as I approached, my arms throbbing. It growled baring its long sharp canines, I caught my breath; knife still in my back pocket. "I just want to help you," I whispered kneeling before it. It thrashed violently, trying to bite me again. I held it down, keeping my hand around its muzzle. I applied the thick cream wrapping the gauze around its arm. I was in an awkward position trying to hold the dog down, and bandage its forearm. It finally gave in, laying its head back on the pavement. I finished, placing the first aid kit back in my bag, and taking out the can of dog food I grabbed in the corner store I mistakingly thought was canned turkey. The dog

seemed to back down a bit once I took out the food and smashed it on the pavement, the meat juice dripping onto the asphalt. I let the dog lick at the can, then set it in front of him. I stood up pain shooting through my leg and arms. I stumbled catching myself before hitting the ground, I glanced at my leg. It was covered in blood, and was an infected yellow colour. I couldn't walk, but had to get out of the road. I scooted backward toward the grassy side of the road, pain shooting up my leg with each movement. I dragged my bag with me sitting on the side of the tree. I dug through my pack again, finding the gauze and cream. I still needed to clean the wound, but I didn't have water. Yet I still had half of the soda. I should have been faster, I still need water. I cursed under my breath unscrewing the cap from the bottle okay... okay.. It's not gonna hurt, it's just gonna sting a little bit. I tried convincing myself as I poured the lemon lime soda on to the wound. I cried out in pain, blood bursting in my mouth as I bit down on my tongue. The soda fizzed, blood washing away on to the grass under me. I didn't know if it was helping, or making it worse. I spat onto the ground, my tongue throbbing as well as my leg. I grabbed the cream and gauze from my pack. I applied the cream evenly, wrapping my arms and leg in gauze; as well as wiped my mouth from blood. I was filthy, but I didn't care, my head started to throb as I laid back on the trunk of the tree. My throat was dry as sandpaper and I silently cursed myself for still not having water. The pain slowly ebbed away as the sun disappeared over the horizon, and everything grew dark.

I woke to something wet dripping down my face. I wiped it off unknowingly, or not caring what it was, I slowly opened my eyes to see the dog sitting in front of me. I scramble backwards but the sharp pain in my leg doesn't allow me enough mobility to move. I felt around for my knife, not taking my eyes off the dog. It almost seemed friendly, and it didn't have an aggressive outlook. I finally found my knife, a couple meters away. I slipped it into my pocket, knowing I wouldn't need to use it. The dog sniffed around, sticking its wet nose in my pack. It was looking for food, I only had canned beans, corn, and soup. "I'm sorry I don't have any more food, but I know where to get more." I tried standing up, the dog watching me with round curious eyes. I could put weight on it, which was a good sign, but I had a limp and couldn't walk very fast. I stood up slowly, my limbs stiff from sleep. I looked toward him

Continued on page 40

Continued from page 39

and stared, pondering, “I’m going to name you soda,” I exclaimed to no one. Yes, it might have been a dumb name, but it seemed to fit the lively stray as I made my way back to the convenience store, Soda trailing behind me.

It was mid day by the time me and Soda hobbled over there. I entered cautiously, but Soda’s wagging tail smacked shelves as he walked by. “Shush, we have to be careful,” I blurted picking up the cans of dog food that littered the floor. I begin to look a second time, trying to find water, yet I still had no luck as I heard a crash, cans falling all over the floor.

At first I assumed it was Soda, I turned, ready to curse at him, but he was sitting beside me, no where near the cans. I instantly grabbed my knife, Soda seeming to understand as his hackles raised and he started growling. “Who’s there!” I called out, sweat beading down my forehead. A shadowed figure moved between the shelves, I took a step back, one. Two. Three. I backed up into a counter jumping as the boxed cereals smacked me from behind. It moved closer as I began trembling, tensing for an attack or for whomever it was to show themselves. I heard Sodas snarl right behind me as the figure stepped into the light, slowly, I saw its face.

I didn’t know what I was expecting, a monster, a demon. It was a young boy, around the same age as me. He had short, cropped dark chestnut hair, with hazel eyes. He wore a light blue shirt, and ripped jeans. Both covered in dirt and blood. I angled the knife slightly, ready to attack. Who was he? Another survivor? A cannibal? I looked toward Soda, who was also crouched ready to attack. We both had limited movement but that wouldn’t stop us from killing him. He looked up at both of us, panic immediately written across his features “ I’m not here to hurt you.” he announced quietly, his eyes traveling from Soda, to my knife. “What do you want,” I called out, bouncing

my weight between both legs as my wound ached. He chewed on his lip still watching my knife, but seemed to notice my idle movements trying to keep weight off my leg. “I’ve been following you for a while now, your following the track, right?” I ignored his question, lowering the knife slightly. “You’ve been following me? Do you have a death wish?” his face contorted with shock and confusion. “N-no i... just.. Wanted to see who you were and, know why you are following the railway.”

“That’s not your business, stop following me, and go away before I change my mind by leaving you as dead meat for my dog,” his eyes seemed to travel toward Soda again as I began making my way to the exit. His voice trailing after me as I began walking out the door. “No! Wait, please! The railway, your following the train right?” I stopped. Dead in my tracks. “ A train?” I asked slowly turning around. “Yes, the one on the railway? People always call it the last express?”

“I’m sorry... I don’t follow you,”

“ It’s the only train that still runs, people built it as a last hope, to save humanity. The track runs around the globe, if you keep following it, you’ll eventually catch up to the train. I’ve heard rumors it was coming here next, so I came to catch it, but, then I found you.”

Thoughts swirled through my mind as I absorbed the information. my dad wasn’t just telling me nonsense after all? He knew the railway was being built, but refused to tell me about the train? I remembered the conversation so clearly, “why are they building a railway and no train?” I asked him, sitting on his lap during that sunday evening. “Because, you always build your path before following it.” he answered. “Follow the track.” He knew I would eventually catch up to the train.

I knew it was stupid, but there was nothing else to lose. I looked at Soda his dark eyes looking up at me wondering.

“I’m coming with you. I want to catch the train.”

A palindrome is a poem that reads the same backward as forward.

# The World is Cold, Until You Turn it Upside Down

by Meehir Khadka, Gr. 7  
Our Lady of the Snows



Even the smallest happiness and joy

Comes with

The feeling of hate and always

Leaves no room for

Love

A feeling that is cold and hard

Only

Leaves anguish to be

Ever-present in the hearts of men

Love

After its gone

Leaves cold, empty feeling

And anger only

Melts the ice that is left behind

Love

Is deceiving

Saying that “love had departed”

Holds truth in its words

The belief that “love is infinite”

Is blatantly false

“Love is always broken”

The evident lie that

Sweetens life forever

Love

Which is fleeting and quicker to leave than a false friend

Hate

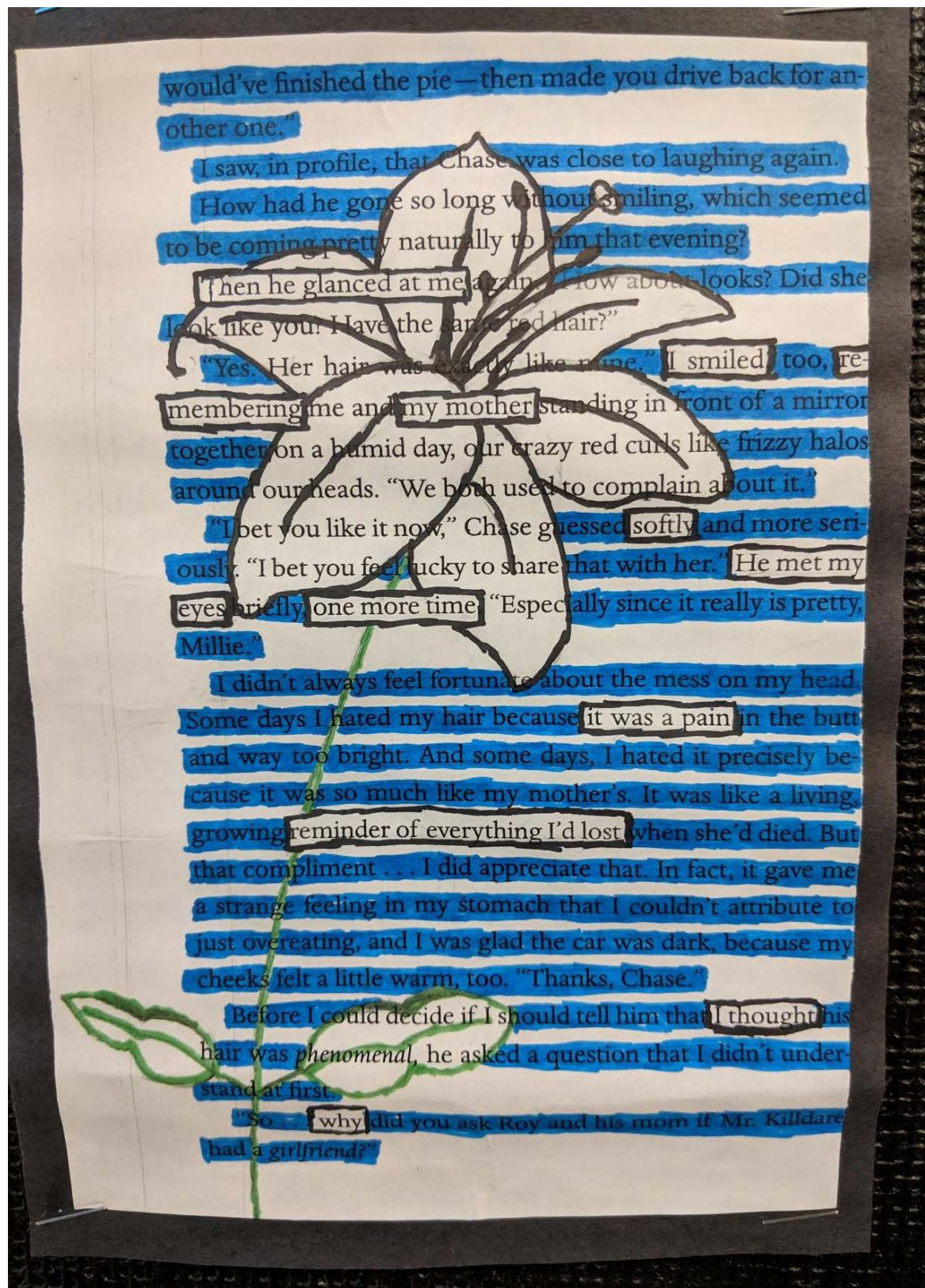
Is warmer, more alive than the dishonesty that comes with

Love



# Blackout Poetry

by Sarah Matthews, Gr. 7 Christ the King Academy



# The Happy War

by Aleena Khalek, Gr. 7  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Each day, hour, minute, second the  
Angel of death devour the most  
innocent souls delivering war,  
bombing, massacre, and pain.

Till the souls rip into little bits  
and they cannot handle it anymore.

But they have been buried,  
hidden from society, making  
it seem like the screams  
of pain are screams  
of joy.

Bu the people who have  
conquered the tricks and  
games of the Angel of death  
have tried to unbury  
the peoples' cries, bringing  
happiness into their lives.

But very few have been  
able to accomplish  
this grueling task.

So the cries are still  
buried, still waiting for the  
Happy war to be over

## Rain

by Jason Fettingner, Gr. 7  
Christ the King Academy

Rain, it sounds like peace  
It drowns out hurtful thoughts  
And flushes pain away

## Like her

by Arwyn Wiest, Gr. 7  
Christ the King Academy

I know I'm not like her  
The girl beautiful as can be  
The girl with big blue eyes  
As deep as the sea.

I know I'm just me  
With hair dark as dirt  
But when you smile  
I feel like I could be more to you than her.



# Untamed

by Hannah Dean, Gr. 8  
St. Anthony's School

"Not like there's anyone here that needs you anyway," says Aria, clearly annoyed again by my silence as I think.

"Quiet down, there's no one that will hear you yelling beside Harper. And it's very obvious she doesn't care. Anyway... I don't understand why she doesn't listen to us when she doesn't even care anymore. Like why bother being stubborn and not listen?" the words come out softly from Brennan's mouth.

"But think about it," says Bridget, "Harper doesn't even care anymore. Which proves my point, am I right? Harper thinks of death as a free pass to freedom, which we all know you've longed to claim..." she almost sounds like she's hissing out the words, but in a calm way.

"Too bad she's tried so hard, yet she's never gonna get her freedom because she's too...frightened." Aria spits the words out bitterly and bursts into laughter.

I notice Aria's nose, how it scrunches up when she laughs and then Bridget, tilting her head to the side as she thinks. I notice how Brennan's skin turns pale when we make eye contact. All the less, they all look like me, exact copies, duplications, even possibly twins. I have been kept in isolation from the whole world from the time I was born, I have never met anyone besides them. But of course they are not real people, they are all my hallucinations, delusions.

I've read about my disorder in one of the hundreds of books I have used to raise myself. Schizoaffective disorder, of course, I couldn't control it, but I also don't understand why it could possibly be bad for me. I've gained company from them. I failed to express myself, I never had reason to, I never had anyone to express them to. Schizoaffective disorder came along with symptoms of mood disorder, not allowing me to express the emotions I wanted. All the failures of sorrow and anger I kept hidden away escaped as hallucinations.

Aria came first, her cunning heart bursting with hatred and anger. Then came Brennan, her name itself meant sorrow, from what I knew she seemed pretty normal, except for her outrageous level of fatigue, and how she could turn any good mood into the opposite. Then one random day, I was reading as per usual, stuffed in the closet. Brennan was curled up in a ball on the floor, and Aria was taking a nap lying at the peak of a decorative room divider that was almost as tall as the 18 feet walls, her leg hanging over the edge. The girl had opened the closet door and looked at me so intently, with a rather welcoming smile on her face.

That was the first of Bridget, almost a year ago when I was seventeen since her coming every choice I make has seemed more reasonable.

"Harper?" my train of thought suddenly stops. And I look down at Brennan with her knees pulled up to her chest.

"Are you even paying any attention to us?" she asks.

"Yes, of course, I am." I've wanted to leave this room my whole life, and of course, with the girls knowing about it, they came up with a solution for my freedom. Their solution is suicide. I don't find it pleasing or appealing as they do, but it seems like a good decision. Who knows where I may go after death. I could tell that it was a good decision since Bridget had explained the benefits from it. Every second that passed seemed to almost make the girls more real every time. Who knows? By now they may already be real.

"If you're listening then what's your choice now?" Bridget wipes her palms on her pale blue jeans and then folds them together.

"I'm still thinking..." I reply, making sudden and uncomfortable eye contact with Bridget's grey eyes that are identical to mine, she quickly looks away.

"Actually you've been thinking for the past five years, hasn't that been enough time?" Aria says, trying to sound funny.

"I'm sorry Harper, but I have to agree with Aria on this one. She was here first, she's had to deal with you and your stubbornness for a while now. You should pay more attention to us.

Someday it may be too late."

"What do you mean by too late?" I ask.

"Too late meaning that who knows who's been keeping you locked up in here... like what if they decide that they want to bring you back out?" says Brennan suddenly looking very alert.

"But... letting me out? That would mean freedom, it would mean being able to walk straight for as long as possible without crashing into a hard concrete wall. It would mean being able to climb things for as long as I wanted, without getting bumped down with a grey ceiling in my way. It would mean..." I trail off.

"No Harper. No, no, no. You won't get all that if they let you out. All you'll get is death... or something much worse." says Brennan. I look back at Bridget for support.

"Harper, even Brennan is right on this one. Please, Harper, you need to listen to us for once! You can't just think that you're going to be able to sit here for the rest

of your life and be able to think about one simple question continuously!" Bridget yells at me. This is not the first time she has yelled in a while. Bridget yells only when she is absolutely sure about something, and someone is going against it. And today, I'm the one going against her. I jump up and brushing off Aria race to my room which is only about five meters away from the living room. I slam the door shut behind me and flop onto my bed. This room, or more like this place, is my home. Neat red walls and soft light red carpets protect the look of it. Most of this place is red, except for the furniture, which had been placed in assortments of yellow, green, light purple, blue, black, and brown. Just scattered around, but giving a neat look the color of the furniture complimented the walls and floors that were stained red. Every room, every wall, every floor, was a shade of red, some different, and some the same. I think of Aria, I think of Bridget, I think of Brennan, I think of suicide, and I think of freedom. I slowly fall into a mist of sleep.

The soothing feeling of Brennan's hand rubbing my back keeps me from throwing up.

Aria's calmness as she sits on a sturdy big shelf a little high up for a bit keeps my headache minimal. Bridget wasn't in my room with the rest of us. She was probably procrastinating again, as she had told me she usually did before every final choice she gave me. I never believed her. I do now. My hallucinations have become real. So now I believe Bridget. She must be procrastinating right now.

"I don't want to force you." I whip my head around and see Bridget with her head down holding her elbow.

"What?" I let the words out lightly. Aria's eyes turn and gaze into mine, she seems lost. "It's your choice, Harper. We all can't force you to commit suicide. It's dumb, and it's your choice. It would be stupid to force you to make such a big decision. Instead, I'm going to help you make a plan to escape from the place." Escape! That would be much better than killing myself. In fact, that's the one thought I had always kept locked up somewhere tightly in my mind. Plus I never had thought that suicide was a smart idea anyway.

"Are you serious?" I say excitedly, "That is literally the smartest thing ever! Ugh, I'm so excited! Wait, but are you sure this is the right choice?" I ask Bridget just to make sure she's being honest.

"Of course I am!" says Bridget. I feel Brennan pull away from me, I look at her. The disappointment on Brennan's face couldn't be worse. But all the excitement that was filling in my body was much greater than Brennan's disappointment. I run towards Bridget and slingshot myself onto her, and embrace her in a hug.

"Calm down, Harper," Bridget says as she laughs, "now how about we start planning?"

What do you say Aria?" Bridget looks at Aria intently.

"Ugh fine." Aria jumps down and walks over. We all sit down on the bed together and Aria and Bridget start jabbering away.

Softly Brennan whispers in my ear, "I can't believe you.

Do you actually think that they're telling the truth? More like Bridget is telling the truth... yes it may be biased because I want the other option, but listen, I've never liked or trusted Bridget. She's always made me feel dumb, and she may seem like she's always right because of all the thinking she puts into her choices for you. We're special and I know that we are. We each can only have one emotion, we can't be complex like you... And ugh I don't know. You notice how Aria is just such a bad person? She acts angry, sarcastic, and rude. And me? I don't want to admit it but... I'm sad. And I know I am. And this is probably just another characteristic of sadness and depression but Harper? Bridget is wrong, and she's up to something. We each have one emotion and only one. Which means she has to be the same. But then why is she so different she thinks and makes choices but no she can't be like that, she can't be that complicated for just one emotion...But trust me she's trying something... Her emotional? She's so complicated she has to be ... she's... she's... she--"

"Since you've been resting for the last while we made the plan without you." Bridget cuts off Brennan and makes my head snap towards her and Aria.

"Oh sorry." I look at Aria holding up a big cardstock poster with cursive words and images scattered all over it.

"So then... what's the plan?" I ask.

"Here, you may need to sit down for this."

\* \* \*

Today was the day... Bridget had told me that the plan would take action today. I jump up out of bed and scurry towards the hammock hung close to the brightest light source in here. A big white light that comes through a big glass rectangle. Brennan slept in that. For some reason she never wanted to leave my side, she didn't ever want to sleep in a room where I was not present. Maybe it was for my safety, or for her own. Maybe it was because of her depression, or maybe it wasn't... who knew? I shake Brennan awake.

"Wha- what happened?" she asked.

"Well, don't you remember what's happening today?" Brennan's face suddenly turns into a frown.

"This is a bad idea, Harper... it's not what it seems... you just can't trust Bridget..." I look at Brennan in disbelief. She had been persuading me to not listen to Bridget, that her plan was fake. But I feel so close to victory... to success... I don't want to listen to Brennan, she was wrong... she had to be. I go to stand up, but Brennan grabs my arm.

"Please Harper. Don't do this. Please, I can-" I cut her off.

"Brennan stop. You obviously are out of your mind for not wanting me to do this. Like why would I not want to? I've struggled for freedom my whole entire life man. And now you want me to just throw away this opportunity? I'm done

Continued on page 46

## Continued from page 45

with you! You're always behind my back twenty-four seven and I'm sick of it! Just leave me alone and let me make my own decisions and choices! You know what? Maybe Aria is real now, and maybe Bridget is too, but you know what? You are fake! And you will never be real! No matter how hard you try, because you can't think for yourself, you can't make smart choices like I can, like Bridget can and like Aria can!" Brennan stares at me in shock, I pull away from her and stomp out of the room. I find Bridget sitting by the counter attached to the sink area. Quickly, we discuss that Aria will do the main stuff and that she was going to supervise and do the more important work. She said all I had to do was wait. Just wait? I don't know how I feel about that, but I guess I had to listen. And wait.

I watch Aria set her feet steadily down. One by one. Then she hops back up, onto the thick black frame by the giant rectangular light that is nestled into the wall. She runs her hand over it. I look at Aria, her face red. Something seems wrong. For sure.

"Um, Aria you remember that you need to disassemble the window, and then embrace for the wind..." I look at Bridget. The word she used. Window. I repeat the word under my breath.

So that's what the light is called. And the wind? That must mean if wind will come through, then the window leads to the outside... I stare in awe at the window. For my whole life I have had these by me. Yet I could never figure out that I could leave using them. I watch Aria carefully for a little bit, but she seems to be confused. She puts one foot down. Then pulls it back and pins it to the wall. I study her face, as it stays bright red, her lips tightly squeezed together. I pull myself up from the floor where I was sitting, and walk towards the counter. I open the shoot that usually has fresh food in it whenever the button is pressed. I walk over towards all the supplies that were taken out by someone laid on the tiled floor on the inside area of the counter. I kick the top layer of stuff with my foot. I grab the knife, and use my finger to feel along the side. A sharp pain pierces through hand. I see a thin line of ruby red blood sliding down my finger. I throw the knife down in a reflex and grab my finger. I wipe off the blood with my sweater sleeve and stick the tip of my finger that got cut in my mouth.

"Ow! Now if that doesn't hurt I don't know what does!" I squeal. Aria looks towards me, and examines me for about a minute. She jumps down off the window and comes towards me. She tilts her heads

sideways and then her thin pink lips pull away into a grin.

"You cut your finger?" "Yeah, accidentally."

"Oh. My. God. Harper you are so stupid!" She pulls back and her head hangs back as she bursts into laughter.

"Hey it's not even funny. That blade is really sharp. And it could cut anything!" I say, in my defense.

Aria squirms past me and grabs the knife off the floor.

"It could cut anything you say?" She jams it onto the counter and it makes a loud echoing sound.

"Aria! Careful! I wasn't serious, it can't cut just anything... but it cut me because I was being dumb."

"Alright," says Aria sliding the knife around in her hand, "it can't just cut anything, or... anyone... Bridget! Hurry up and come here! Hurry it's important!" Aria yells. I stand confused for a but, but when I see Bridget's blue jacket peeking through the hallway opening I understand what Aria is about to do. The horror stuns me and makes me freeze. Aria brings the knife up in the air and chucks it at Bridget, I see the scene unveil before my eyes in slow motion. I watch the shiny silver blade of the knife soar through the air towards Bridget, she looks up and stares in horror too, her jaw drops open. I watch the knife slide right through her. I stare in shock. It slid right through her, without hurting her at all. Not even a drop of blood. Fake is all I can think of. She's a hallucination. Bridget is not real. I feel a loud thunderous sound and then a burst of cold tingles. Wind. I turn around and stare in shock at the window, bursted open shards of glass lay all over the floor, and there stands Brennan with a metal stool in her hand, panting. She broke it open. I see the wind sweep around the room. And that's when I see it. Aria explodes, her head first. But no blood, only dust swarming around the room, I then look around for Bridget, and when I feel the pain on my right arm I figure it out. Looking down, I see Bridget holding the knife, with blood covering it. Bridget slit my wrist. She's been trying to kill me forever. Dusts bursts through her eyes, and eventually she completely explodes into dust. The blood doesn't stop flowing from my wrist, the pain overwhelms me, and my head gets heavy. I fall to the ground, I see Brennan beside me then. She hasn't exploded. She helps me up. And I the realization hits me. Brennan is real, the only real one. So many questions fill my brain, but only one answer.

Bridget was fake. And she was deceitfulness.

TEXTE D'OPINION

# Moins d'école, Moins de Vacances

by Justin Daley, Gr. 8 St. John Paul II Collegiate

A mon avis, les élèves devraient avoir seulement quatre jours d'école pendant l'année scolaire, mais aussi seulement un mois de vacances. Deux mois de vacances est trop, et plusieurs élèves oublient ce qu'ils ont appris. Aussi si on a moins d'école, on a la chance de dormir plus. Dernièrement, le moins d'école qu'on a, le moins sera le coût pour tout le monde. En conclusion, je crois que les semaines d'école de quatre jours sont une bonne idée.

Premièrement, deux mois de vacances est trop pour plusieurs élèves, et ce n'est pas rare si presque tout le monde oublie ce qu'ils ont appris pendant l'année scolaire. Même les universités comme Harvard et Oxford ont trouvé que c'est un vrai problème, et l'équivalent d'un mois d'apprentissage est perdu pendant l'été, et presque six semaines dans l'automne se compose de réapprentissage des maths et la lecture que les élèves devraient déjà savoir. Donc, deux mois de vacances peuvent être trop.

Deuxièmement, moins d'école pendant l'année scolaire va nous donner la chance de dormir plus, ce qui est très important pour plusieurs raisons. Pour commencer, les personnes qui ont plus de sommeil sont généralement en meilleure santé que ceux qui ne dorment pas assez. Aussi, une bonne nuit de sommeil peut améliorer votre productivité et concentration, qui

sont tout les deux important pour l'école. Une autre chose qui est affecté par ton sommeil est le bonheur, et les personnes qui ne dorment pas assez sont souvent déprimés. Alors, plus de sommeil peut avoir les effets très utiles dans notre vies.

Troisièmement, moins d'école résultera en une diminution de coût pour tout le monde. Le moins de temps que tout le monde est dans l'école, le moins sera le coût pour l'électricité, l'eau, et le chauffage. Aussi, un jour moins d'école résultera en moins de temps que les conducteurs ont besoin de conduire, alors on peut leur payer moins. Dernièrement, avec tous ces coûts baisser pour l'école, ils n'ont pas besoin de demander pour autant argent et le droit d'entrée sera moins pour les élèves. Donc, moins d'école est moins cher.

En conclusion, moins d'école pendant l'année scolaire peut nous aider beaucoup, et c'est une très bonne idée. Tout le monde (les élèves, les enseignants et même les parents), auront plus de sommeil, ils seraient plus contents, et tout le monde aurait plus d'argent. De plus, les élèves seraient plus concentrés et sur-tache. Alors, je crois que c'est important qu'on a seulement quatre jours d'école chaque semaine et aussi seulement un mois de vacances.

## Sunrise

by Jenna Additon, Gr. 8  
Notre Dame Collegiate

Just a blur of pink, yellow, orange and violet. Each shade contrast each other. Blending and wisping through the sky. As the sun rose, the darkness of night was pushed farther back. From what was once dark was now light. A mist rose up from the grass. The air was heavy, but at the same time light. The last glimpse of stars fading out of reach, as the sun rose higher.

I looked down from the wall. It was 55 feet tall. A certain death if I were to fall. I walked closer to the edge. Stopping when the tips of my toes reached the end. I looked down right to the grass. I closed my eyes, taking in a breath of the cold air. I hung my right foot over the edge. Looked over my small town. Before I slipped off.

The world became silent as I fell. The air became light and my chest became enclosed. As I fell through the sky.

# Let Snow Come

by Karlen Deschner, Gr. 8  
Christ the King Academy

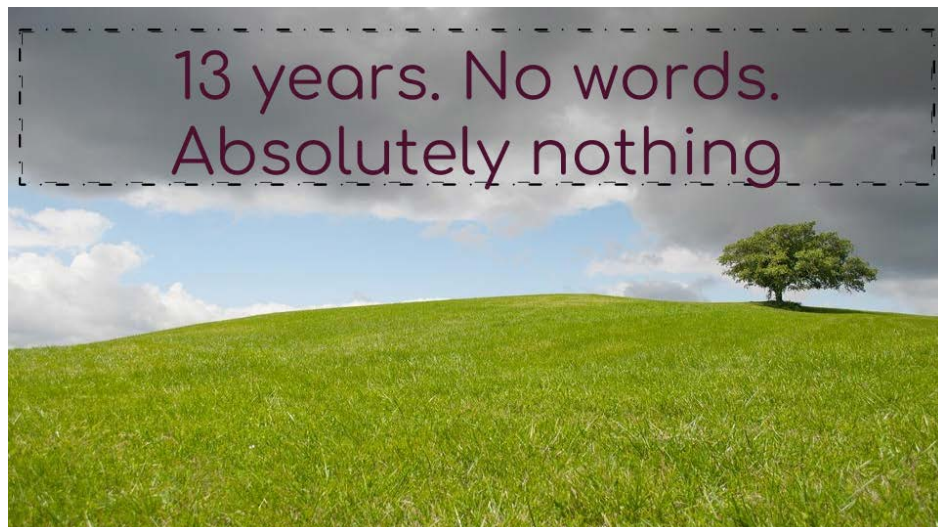
Let the shivers of the cold winter breeze  
Run throughout your orange and black Adidas  
Snowsuit as you stair at the nakedness of the brown grass  
Let snow come.

Let that one thin layer ice that everyone has  
seen and have it crushed satisfyingly underneath  
your black North Face winter boots as you prance  
around your yard trying to find something to do,  
Let snow come.

Let the last time I will enjoy shooting pucks off of my  
slick artificial ice with my Warrior Alpha QX  
into the back of my very color faded net that  
has sat out for wayyyyy toooooooo many winters  
Let snow come.

Let the humming combines fill my mind  
As they try to finish the last line  
Let snow come.

Let snow come as it will.  
I wonder if mother nature is ill  
Let the first snowflake fall let snow come for one and all.



# Memoir

by Tanya Caspe, Gr. 8 Christ the King Academy

SIX FORTY pm. Practice was finished. Tanya had already begun changing out of her gym clothes; a white shirt outline with black paired with a pair of black shorts. As she removed her clothes, letting them drop to the floor, she stared at herself in the mirror. Her hands roamed around her body, feeling the curves around her hips that were slowly developing. Her hands lowered to her thighs. She hated them. She hated how fat they were. How they jiggled undesirably every time she walked.

In silence, she stared at the mirror, her eyes glued onto her own body. Then it came. It was a dark shadow that always lingered in the corner of Tanya's room. The shadow that always greeted her every morning.

The world sees you as unattractive, it spoke, whispering into her ear. You need to fix that, it continued.

Tanya remained silent and listened carefully to what it said. Deep down she knew that what it was saying was true.

Look at yourself, it whispered. You're nothing but ugly. You don't deserve to live like that, it taunted. Come back to me and you'll be beautiful in the eyes of the world. Stunning in society's standards. Gorgeous in the minds of the people. Just think of all of the wonders I'll bring to you.

09:12

Art class. Second period.

Tanya sat at her desk, painting a scenario of a city skyline.

21:23

"Why are you doing this?" he said. "You don't need to destroy your body."

Tanya remained silent and hung her head low. "I can't. They

just won't go away," she told K.

K sighed. "Please, Tanya. You're so beautiful. You have a loving family, a good education, and a baby sister on the way. What more is there to want?"

What a bunch of lies, It said. He doesn't care.

"Tanya." K spoke in a soothing tone, his voice soft and low. "Before you learn how to love others, you have to know learn how to love yourself."

K grabbed her hand. "Please. Do this for me."

Tanya looked away, her eyes tearing with tears. She couldn't hold it back. The tears began to fall and fall and fall. She couldn't stop it.

"The way you say it makes it seem like it's easy to just look into the mirror and say I'm beautiful. It never goes away. It is always there. It never leaves."

"What is it?" K asked.

"It is the reason why I am doing this. It is like a shadow that never leaves, even when it's so sunny outside. It is a rain cloud that cannot make any flowers grow. It is always there."

K remained silent, his grip on her hand still tight.

"It will ever leave me. Never ever," she whispered.

--

No matter what you do, I will always be with you.

11/20/2018

It is still here. It still lingers.

# Let the Heart Go

by Cristofer Martinez Zeron, Gr. 8 Christ the King Academy

Let the love of the date in the late afternoon.  
settle out for kiss before the sun comes down.  
Let the heart go.

Let the light reflect through those pretty eyes.  
as the sunset burns out to darkness.  
Let the heart go.

Let the love die while the heart becomes broken.  
Let the heart shatter as the fractures spread out.  
Let the heart go.

Let the mind go back to It's depression.  
Let the eyes turn into a waterfall of tears.  
Let the heart go.  
To the tears I've cried, to the broken pieces I shattered.  
To the person who broke my heart.  
Let the heart go.

Let it comes as It will and don't be afraid to love.  
Cause everything good must have a ending.  
Let the heart go.

# Penses-tu que la chasse sportive est raisonnable?

by Gemma Ottenbreit, Gr. 8 St. John Paul II Collegiate



Les êtres humains ont fait de la chasse depuis les années préhistoriques. Les humains ont été les chasseurs pour plus de 2 000 000 années! Mais à l'âge moderne, les personnes abusent cette tradition. Nous avons commencé à chasser pour la récréation, même si nous n'avons pas besoin de la faire pour obtenir de la nourriture. À mon avis, la chasse sportive est injuste. D'abord, c'est cruel envers les animaux. De plus, si la chasse n'est pas pour la nourriture, c'est un gaspillage de la vie. Alors, si nous ne sommes pas attentifs et prudents, on peut endommager nos écosystèmes. Bref, je suis contre la chasse sportive, car c'est une perte de vie, c'est méchant et elle peut détruire l'environnement.

Quand un animal est blessé et il est certain de mourir, il peut prendre plus qu'une heure d'agonie avant la mort. En plusieurs cas, l'animal va mourir de la peur, tellement que la douleur est intense. La chasse n'est pas «rapide» ou «facile» pour les animaux. De plus, la chasse peut avoir des effets négatifs pour la famille de l'animal tué; ses progénitures peuvent affamer sans parents. Pour les créatures blessées, la chance de survivre est petite, car ils vont être la proie facile pour les prédateurs. Mon point? La chasse sportive n'est qu'un exercice de cruauté envers les animaux.

Ce n'est pas seulement les animaux qui sont affectés de façons négatives, mais aussi l'environnement. Quand les personnes traquent les animaux, ils ne sont pas prudents ou attentifs aux plantes et aux autres animaux. Il y a aussi le problème de la carcasse de l'animal. Évidemment, si on les laisse, ils vont attirer les prédateurs. Les grands prédateurs peuvent blesser ou tuer les êtres humains et si les animaux avaient toujours de la nourriture libre, les instincts naturels des prédateurs peuvent être endommagés.

De l'autre côté, si les chasseurs prennent les carcasses des animaux, pour les manger ou les vendre, leurs carcasses ne vont pas décomposer naturellement pour laisser les nutriments importants au sol.

Finalement, la chasse sportive est un gaspillage de la vie et de la viande. Si nous n'avons pas besoin de chasser pour manger, pourquoi est-ce qu'on la fait? Aujourd'hui toute chasse qui n'est pas pour survivre, ou pour les raisons culturelles importantes, sont inutiles. Quand les personnes font de la chasse pour une compétition, ou pour leur plaisir, quelque chose est erronée. Particulièrement parce qu'aujourd'hui, dans les années 2010s, nous avons des épiceries et les restaurants pour obtenir de la viande. De plus, si les lois morales ne sont pas assez, il y a aussi la loi canadienne. Il dit clairement dans la loi de la faune et de la flore, chapitre 488 que tu ne peux pas tuer les animaux et "sans un effort raisonnable, laisse les carcasses des animaux". Ici au Canada, les animaux sont une partie importante de nos vies quotidiennes.

En conclusion, je ne pense pas que la chasse sportive est raisonnable. Elle est cruelle, les animaux sont blessés et tués sans bonne raison. C'est un risque potentiel à l'environnement et elle peut nuire aux écosystèmes. De plus, la chasse sportive est un gaspillage de la vie. Nous sommes les êtres les plus puissants et intelligents au monde. Pouvons-nous pas nous comporter mieux? Nous avons besoin de garder et de protéger les animaux qui nous entourent. Ne les tue pas!

# Go For It

by Sinit Sereke, Gr. 8 Christ the King Academy

First, my name is Sinit! I lived in ERITREA at age of 5. I had a good and bad life because I was living with my mom but without dad. So I had life is happy and not happy and also feel different than other kids that are my age. But also a happy life that others want also wish to see dad once. I remember I ask mom if we can see dad and she always say "One day Sinit we'll see dad and go for a walk, like when you were 3 years old."

So I really know that if I ask her she will say the same thing again. So I stopped asking her if I will see my dad. This made me feel so sad! But, one day my dad's sister came to our house and stayed for three days. And I was a girl that asked a lots of questions, so

I ask mom why is my auntie here? And mom said that my auntie is here because she will take us to dad!

I was joyful that I wanted to tell my friends. But mom stopped me and said I can't tell anyone that I will go to dad because if the government knows we will go to jail.

So I agreed. We were ready to go, we had four days before we left Eritrea. When I knew that I will leave my family member and friends, I said no I don't want to go, but mom told my uncle that I said that I don't want to go!

My uncle said to tell me not to worry because we will be going to my grandparents house. But I realized this was not a normal visit to my grandparents house because we had to go at 1 a.m. I was a kid that time so I didn't really realize that my uncle was lying to me and that we weren't really going to my grandparents house.

We woke up at 1 a.m. and said goodbye to everyone, and we went out of the city of Asmara. We went to a city called Teseney because it's the border of Eritrea. We stayed there for three days until the person came to take us on our journey. We said bye to my aunt that came to take us from Asmara. My

mom, my brother, my sister and I arrived at a big forest. It was a place that I heard stories about. The forest that divides Eritrea from Sudan. My dad was at Sudan so we had to go through the forest with this person in order to see my dad. We went through the forest and it was scary and it was night time. I can't see light or my mom's face or my siblings face. I couldn't even see the man who was leading us. My brother and I were riding a donkey, and my mom walked while carrying my 6 month old sister. I always wanted to see different animals like lions, foxes, and jaguars, but that day it was so scary because I can hear their sounds, and then I decided that I didn't really want to see them. The worst thing was that you can't ask any questions, and you have to be quiet because you don't want the guard to see you. Even if you are thirsty, you can't ask for water. Even if you want to know how much farther until you get there, you can't ask the person. You just have to be very quiet.

Finally we were out of the forest safe. There were two men waiting for us, and the other person who lead us through the forest, said goodbye to us and gave us to these 2 men. The two men told us that there was a really big river that we would have to cross. My mom was really scared. The river was really big and had very strong currents. The men said they will carry me, my brother, and my baby sister first and then help my mom last. The river was deep so the men had to carry us across the river one at a time. After we crossed the river, we went to a place called Shegrap, which is the closest to Sudan's border. My dad came from Sudan to meet us in Shegrap. It was the happiest day of my life. We stayed there for 4 weeks, and then we all went together to Sudan. We lived there for 7 years, and then we moved to Canada.

# Six Word Memoir

by Josh Deng, Gr. 8 Christ the King Academy



## In A Better Place

by Sabrina Evans, Gr. 8  
St. Francis of Assisi Academy

Back before my world went black, I would visit my Grandpa at the hospital daily. We would eat popsicles, as big as water bottles, together and laugh. Even though he was stuck in a hospital, it didn't stop us from having the fun we had always had. Clearly, I was too young to understand what was truly going on. Didn't know what "hospital" really meant. The big white building seemed innocent. A sweet place that gave out popsicles and provided housing for the elderly. I had no clue of the people losing their lives left and right, nor did I know that my Grandpa was very ill, skating on thin ice between life and death. The day after his 65th birthday, I was in my mom's room giggling with her and watching Bambi. It was about 11 AM at the time and we were just about ready to make our way over to the hospital for our daily visit. Suddenly, my mom got a phone call. She quickly got up from her spot next to me and with a huge grin, picked up the phone. I watched as her grin faded to nothing. My

heart stopped. A tear left her eye and she started to sob uncontrollably. I didn't understand what was going on but I knew something was wrong. Very wrong. I was terrified of what I was seeing. Never had I ever seen my mom freaking out so hard. So, like any child would, I started to panic too. I bawled my eyes out and hugged my mom to both comfort her and myself. She held me tightly in her arms and we sat there in silence for a while, soaking up each others tears. When she had conjured up enough courage to blink back the tears, she looked at me straight in the eyes and said to me through a hoarse voice, "Grandpa is with God now." I didn't understand what she meant by these words. Still clutching to her like a lifeline, I asked, "Are we going to go visit him?" She released a small cry and covered her mouth with her hand. "No, Sabrina." More sobbing. "Grandpa is in a better place. He's gone, and he's never coming back."

# Social Media: Negative Impacts

by Maria-Theresa Allen, Gr. 8  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

“There was a time when people thought the internet was a whole other world, but now it is our world.”

- Tim Berners Lee

Berners explains how social media has become a place in which our world revolves around, where the information that is displayed is told to be authentic and true, but they are so far from the truth. Social media has become a place where everyone is judged, ridiculed and brought down for who they are. This causes people to change their true selves to fit into the stereotype of what the media perceives to be as the normal way to live your life. Though social media can be a way to connect with family and friends, it is draining the individualism and unique personalities of each person that applies it to their lives.

Social media has, over the years, given us a false sense of connectivity and reassurance that following Instagram Models or Youtube Vloggers is the only thing we need in life to make us feel complete. One of the biggest negative effects of the internet is it gives people a license to be hurtful and mock anybody they choose, while staying anonymous. Cyberbullying is using social media to bully, harass, or scorn a person,

usually by sending threatening messages or pessimistic statements. A wide majority of the population has been drawn in and intertwined within the media, resulting in an increase of depression, anxiety, mental and physical breakdowns. The suicide rate, caused by social media has increased exponentially. 70% of social media users have suicidal thoughts. Social networking has become an increasing problem, not only for the mental health of users, but also their physical health. As it decreases the bonds and connections within families it leads to more fights, arguments and disputes between family members. It also facilitates laziness and procrastination in your day to day activities and a drop in school and work standards because of distractions.

Our world has become a place that revolves around social media, where lies cover up the truth, and new self-images are created. This manipulating system has caused heartache in many lives, not only the lives of the social media users, but also their family and friends that have been affected by the drastic changes in the user's attitude. Social media may be a way to stay updated with your family and friend's lives, but it can cause more pain than enjoyment.

## What is Home?

by Kaylee Bidyk, Gr. 8  
Christ the King Academy

This is a piece from a Grade 8 student, but she wrote it when she was in Grade 5.

Home where you feel safe. Home is where you laugh and cry, sleep and breath. Some people say that a home makes traditions come alive. A house is not like a home. Home is where your childhood is. Every morning when you wake up you can smell the familiar smell. When you move you do not call it home, you call it a house. Home is where your spirit is free. When you come home you know it is home because you can feel it in your soul. Home can be many things like a country or a hometown. Home is one thing in the world that you love the most. Home is where your

friends and family are. Home is where history is made. Home is where new memories are made every day.

Home is where you learn from your mistakes. Home is where the fun never end. Home is where you are free. Home is where your religion is. Home is where your parents never ending love is. The word house is not home. Home is just important to you, it is also important to the world. Some people in the world do not have a home, no food or water. Home is home and nothing can change that.

# The Figure I See

by Alex Slessor, Gr. 8  
Notre Dame Collegiate

I lay on my bathroom floor, clutching my knees while crying hysterically. I had to somehow convince myself that what I was seeing was all in my head. That it didn't exist. I look around to see if it was still there, and there it was. It was staring right at me. I kept screaming and pleading for help yet it felt like no one but myself could hear it. Right there and then, my mom barged into the bathroom and wrapped her arms around me like she was a mother bear protecting her cub. She brushed my long, brown locks of hair whispering to my ear,

"It's all in your head. You're gonna be okay"

Her words comforted me and the next thing I know, I was asleep in my mother's arms.

My name is Kaycee Moren and I was diagnosed with "hallucinations" when I was only 10 years old. To this day, I still remember my first hallucination very clearly. I was sitting in math class, bored out of my mind. I was looking around the classroom, admiring every color and shape that filled the room when I saw it. A tall, lanky black figure staring right at me. I thought it was just a shadow but when I turned around, it had appeared in front of me again. For some odd reason, I couldn't keep my eyes off of the figure. Its arms were long and droopy and its face was covered in cuts and burns. As I was observing this figure, that's when it happened. The figure charged at me and put me in a choke hold. I stumble off my desk and start screaming for help. After what seemed like forever, I can feel my teacher hovering above me, shaking my body to bring me back to reality. I look around me and notice the figure was gone. Instead, all my classmates were staring at me with confused faces. My teacher later then called my mom to take me home. I explained to my mom and my teacher everything that had just happened. At first, they thought I was playing some cruel joke but then my mom started getting concerned. That's when she took me to a doctor. At first they thought I had schizophrenia but I ended up being clear from that. The doctor said I was "perfectly fine" and suggested I see a psychiatrist. Ever since then, I've been seeing my psychiatrist, Ms. Ruskin twice a week

for almost 6 years.

For 6 years of my life, I've been hallucinating non-stop. You think I would get used to them by now but, that's not the case. Every hallucination I have is different, but they all have something in common. This black, mysterious figure always seems to be a part of it. No matter what I hallucinate about, the figure always seemed to be there. My psychiatrist always tells me it will eventually go away, but it never does. This figure haunts my life, constantly. I always feel like it's watching my every move, even when I'm not having hallucinations. Overtime, I've learned how to control it but it always seems to come back.

I was sitting on my desk, finishing up my science homework that was due the next day. My mom was out at a meeting therefor, I had the whole house to myself. I was listening to my favorite song when all of a sudden, it went silent. I look up from my paper and notice that my walls were closing in on me. I stood up in a panic and started to rock back and forth. No one was home, no one can help me now. I quickly started to look around my room to find anything I could use to bring me back to reality. As I was looking around, that's when I saw it. It's red, devilish eyes staring right into my soul. I turn around and grabbed hold of the edge of my bed to prevent myself from falling over. My bed felt like nails, piercing into my skin as I leaned on it. I screamed in pain, seeing blood trickle down my arm. My breathing got heavier and heavier as the room became smaller and smaller. I turn around and notice the figure had moved closer. I grabbed the closest thing near me and threw it at the figure. It went right through his chest and smashed my window. I then felt a hot breath near my ear. I could hear someone calling my name. I look all around me and I could see no one. I fall on the floor, into a cradling position, whispering to myself,

"It will all end soon. Just stay like this and everything will be fine. Kaycee, you're fine. You're fine."

After what seemed like forever of whispering to myself and crying, I feel a hand on my shoulder. A soft one. I look up and it was my mom. I snuggle my body

right on her chest, asking her, “When will it end? “

It’s been 9 days since my last hallucination. This is the longest i’ve ever gone without hallucinating. Those 9 days then became 17 days. I started to feel normal for once. I told my psychiatrist and she says she’s very happy for me. It’s now been 2 months. I finally feel free and normal for the first time in my life. I would occasionally hear weird noises but nothing that drove me to a hysteria of screaming and crying. My mom believes i’m getting better, whatever that means. I’m just happy that i’m able to live normally like I used to. It was a Saturday night. I was usually out hanging with my friends but they all seem to be out of town. Instead, i’m watching a cheesy romantic comedy with my mom. As I was sitting there, peacefully, I heard a faint whisper in my left ear. I quickly turn my head and then there it was. The figure that i hadn’t seen in 2 months is staring at me, but this time, with a smile on its face. I turn to face the TV screen and began to breathe heavily. My mom pauses the movie and stares at me,

“ Kaycee, you okay? “

“ It’s back mom. This time, its angry “

My mom sits next to me and hugs me as tight as she could. I would usually be screaming and crying but all I could feel was confusion. Why did you disappear? Why are you back? Why now? It started to walk towards me, each step it took, it’s smile got bigger. By the time it was right up to my face, it’s smile went from ear to ear. That’s when I screamed. I threw my fists around and ended up punching my mom. I threw everything that was in arms length at the figure but each item just kept going through it. I ran into the kitchen and opened up our knife drawer. I started throwing knives at the figure, hoping I could kill it but i couldn’t. It kept getting closer and closer. I then began to feel something on my feet. I look down and notice the kitchen filling up with thick, boiling blood. I scream even louder this time and fall on my knees. I notice my mom looking at me, she’s crying. I haven’t seen my mom cry ever since my dad left us. I crawl to her and wrap my arms around her waist.

“ Help me, please. “ My voice cracking with despair.

“ I can’t sweetie, I don’t know what to do anymore “  
That’s when I heard the sirens.

I lay on the hospital bed, staring at the ceiling. It turns out, when the ambulance came over to my house, I put up a fight therefor they put me to sleep. The last thing I remember was my mom saying she was sorry. I hear a knock on my door. I quickly sit up and observe the doctor that had just entered my room. She had long, blonde curls and her eyes were a light shade of green. I notice a name tag on her coat, Mrs. Crystal it said. She sits down next to me and began to ask me questions.

“ How are you feeling Kaycee? “

“ Fine. Where’s my mom? “ I demanded.

“ She’s outside getting questioned by some doctors. I’m here to talk to you about something “

“ Look, if you’re gonna give me medication, you are wasting your time. They don’t work, for me atleast “

“ Kaycee, it’s not medication. Were enrolling you into a safe place for 3 months to help with you’re hallucinations “

“ You’re taking me to a mental institution? “ I yell. I didn’t need to go there. I’m fine.

“ It’s only 3 months, we just need to make sure you’re safe “

As she tells me more about this “ safe place “, I began to think about my mom. I can’t just leave her.

“ What about my mom? “ I interrupted

“ Your mom will be able to visit, you don’t have to worry about that okay? “

After talking for 10 minutes about this place, I finally nod in agreement to go. I really didn’t wanna go, but I knew my mom would want me too. I’ve been in this “ safe place “ for 2 months now. I still hallucinate and see the figure but it’s definitely gotten better. Everynight, I pray that I just become normal for once, happy for once, a normal 16 year old for once. I just wanna be okay. Is that too much to ask for?

# Dying to be me

by Amanda Johnson, Gr. 8  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Once in a while, we tend to take life for granted. In our world today we don't realize that we have limited time on earth. Throughout our lives we are thrown with hardships that are hard to overcome. In the past fourteen years I've had the thrill ride of my life. I have been teased about my height which I can't control and has made insecure. I worry more than I should about going to doctor appointments for they control my life steps. To get where you are today most of you didn't have to put your life on the line. Anyways I'm getting ahead of myself let me take you back to the very beginning...

I was only two at the time so my memory is a little bit fuzzy. I like to imagine it as I can remember it. Just bear with me as I tell the story as it is.

I laid in my parents bed all snuggle up in the warm blankets. I realized they weren't there. I got out of bed and gazed out our backyard. The sky was beautiful ribbons, all different shades of blue. In one of our big trees a murder of crows sat about. The branches, newly bereft of their leaves, were weight down with birds so black they looked more like shadows silhouettes. Just looking at them made me shiver. I then decided to go downstairs where I followed the smell of breakfast.

My parents were busy in the kitchen making breakfast for us for the morning. It was almost like a salsa dance. They were in sequence the whole time. Twirling and twisting and never missing a step. In fact I think I saw my dad dip my mom as she flipped the pancakes. I sat at the table with my older sister waiting for our food. I was served with an enormous plate of sizzling bacon, scrambled eggs, hot pancakes, and hash browns. We all sat down, said grace, and devoured our food like royalty. Underneath the table were two stealthy dogs that waited silently for scraps of food to drop.

It was all fun and games until I fell from my chair. My life flashed before me. I lay lifeless on the floor. My parents were next to me calling my name. I tried to reach them with all my might but my arms restrained me. My older sister was frightened and speechless as she sat there watching me. My mom picked me up

and quickly put me in the car. We traveled to the Children Hospital in a flash. I couldn't believe this was happening. My family had just begun the ride of their life and nothing was slowing us down. For this was only the beginning and more was to come.

We entered the ER of the Children's Hospital. All round us were sick children looking bleak. Their parents had an expression of uneasiness. This made my mom alarmed as she held me helplessly in her arms. The Nurse couldn't of come any quicker. As usual she went through her protical. Asking nurse questions almost like a detective would on a case to get a better insight of the situation. My mom explained the episode I had at home and how it spooked her and my dad. By this time I had my eyes wide open although still not aware of my surroundings. I was taken to the back of the ER so I wouldn't have to wait in the area with sick kids. In the back they took a blood sample which stung really bad.

Later that day my blood test came back and the information wasn't good. The nurse looked nervous to tell us anything. She only told us that I would be staying longer than usual. This made my mom apprehensive because she wanted to know what was going on.

The hallway had as much personality as the rest of the hospital. The floor is state grey and the ceiling felt like they were caving on you. Along the walls are commercial prints on the wall, tasteful in the dull kind of way. Then you have the artwork made by the children. The place obviously isn't ran by risk-takers so I guess I could find some comfort in that. Above every door is a large plastic sign dark with white lettering, nothing fancy, just bold and incaps. They said Oncology Ward.

We walked into a ward with a huge circular desk in the middle. Nurses and patients were walking around. The patients looked really sick like more than just the flu. I was shown to a gloomy room in which I would be staying in. The only light came from the window. The bed wasn't welcoming, it was almost like I felt the



presents of someone who used to lay on that same bed. The bed gave off a vibe that made me shiver. It was almost wanting me to know I would be its next victim. Along the top of the wall were different animals that seemed to look solemn. My mom and I waited anxiously for my dad. He came in just a few seconds before a nurse walked in.

“Hello, Mr and Mrs Johnson I will be Amanda’s nurse until she can leave. As I was told you two have no idea why we have brought your daughter here. There is no easy way to put this; your child has MDS (myelodysplastic syndrome)” She let that sink in as she watched my parents expressions changed from anxious to appalled. She then continued on with her lecture

“MDS can also be referred to as “bone marrow failure disorder.” The bone marrow works as a factory which manufactures three kinds of cells: white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. They build up in the bone marrow and blood which makes fewer white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. Some treatments include chemotherapy, radiation, and other drugs that could help cure her cancer.” I didn’t understand what was happening although I knew it frightened my parents.

“There’s no need to worry because we have the best cancer care doctors. Also don’t go searching the internet about this because it never has the correct information.” She walked out of the room. Tears ran down my moms cheeks like a stream. A big puddle began to form around her feet, it could also turn into a lake. Seeing her cry made me choked up.

The treatment started immediately. I had IVs in my arms for medications. The pole that held all my medications I called my christmas tree. I also had a portacath in my chest to make it easier to draw blood. I called them my tubbies.

My family and I got busy with making my room look like a home. We all knew it didn’t feel like one. They brought me blankets pillows and my favourite stuffed lion. He is now withered losing stuffing more and more each day. Along the way was a calendar that consisted of surgeries and upcoming events. On the door was my name with a flower on it. My moms possessions were near the window because there was a bench she could sleep in. My dad would bring me homemade chocolate milkshakes which was a trillion times better than the mushy hospital food. He would also bring me Edo because it was the only thing I would eat and we owned it.

In April 2007 I had developed Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). They had me on chemotherapy which is a common treatment. Just like any other cancer case I lost all my hair. I was also on other drugs that made my face blow up. In that same year I had reacted to a drug they given me and on Saturday and Sunday. The drug was called pentamidine and is only used

on patients with low immune systems. I knew I was getting worse each day but the Doctors tried to stay positive. There were many people praying for me and I am grateful for them. Later in the year, August 30 my little sister was born.

Within the same year I had my first bone marrow transplant. It was a matched sibling donor. My older sister Allison was my donor. September 2007 I developed mild graft versus host disease and did not achieve remission. Mild graft hosts disease is a condition that can occur after an allogeneic (sibling donor) transplant. The donated bone marrow can view the body as foreign, and the donated bone marrow attack the body. Unfortunately my bone marrow relapsed September fifth 2008 and I received another unknown bone marrow transplant.

In February 2009 I was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). I was then diagnosed with Posterior Reversible Encephalopathy Syndrome (PRES). Is a syndrome characterized by headache, confusion, seizures, or visual loss. I had a high dose of steroid treatment. I required intensive physical therapy and occupational therapy for rehabilitation. I lost all feeling my body. I was weak. I had to learn how to walk and swim again. I really disliked physical therapy because they pushed me really hard. Many days I felt tired and wanted to give up. The rehabilitation part of it was easier since they were just checking up on me.

The Doctors finally realized that I had less than a 30% of survival and that they couldn’t do much to do. Meaning they were losing faith in me and knew I wouldn’t make it out alive. They didn’t even have hope because they knew every story ended like this. The Doctors were prepared to make the speech about someone dying; how they tried their best in keeping me alive and there was nothing else they could do. Then in a straight face they would say I’m sorry for you lost and leave you to grieve.

On February thirteenth 2010 the Make A Wish foundation paid me a visit. They wanted my family and I to make lots of memories together before I passed away. Similar to others wishes I wished to go to Disney World. My grandma along with my family came on this trip. We stayed at a place called Give Kids The World where only sick kids can go. We actually met the founder when we my sisters and I were playing on a playground that was exactly like Candyland (the board game). He drove past and asked if my siblings and I were having fun. Of course we said yes and he had a conversation with my mom.

Continued on page 58

**Continued from page 57**

Give Kids The World had a diner, a carousel, a pillow making machine, a talking old tree, and mascots. We stayed in a house that was just big enough for my family.

We went to Disney World, I went on so many rides the best part was i had a special pass where I got to skip the big lines and go on whenever I wanted. I got to meet disney characters, disney princesses, and faires to name a few. Our favourite ride was "It's A Small World After All". The ride was relaxing. We also went to Animal Kingdom and went on exciting rides. The adventure only lasted a week then it was back in my hospital bed.

I also had a bilateral cataract eye surgery. A cataract is when there is clouding in the eye's natural lens, which lies behind the iris and pupil. I am nearsighted and get a checked up yearly or more incase something happened. Which happened in the same year of the Make A Wish trip

As I was left to prepare my grave I began to get better. I mean, I wasn't ready to die according to God. Apparently He has a path for me. The Doctors and Nurses were astounded that I'd gotten better. I am a medical miracle.

I'm not finished my story yet. Thanks to all the chemotherapy and radiation I had gone through it really messed me up. I could describe how cancer has affected each little bit of me but instead I'll just do this: Endocrine (height), Pulmonary (breathing),

Ophthalmology (eyes), Dentist and Orthodontist (teeth), Long term survival clinic, Ekgs and Echos (heart), would you like me to go on? Having yearly check ups really ruins summer vacation because we need to work around the appointments. Most of these appointments happen in the summer so I don't miss a whole bunch of school. This really messes up summer because it is planned around these appointments. Unfortunately we don't get a huge summer.

Ever since my disease I've seen life in a whole new light. It has given me more compassion than I thought I could handle. I've done so much charity work. I have worked my own bake sales at my school for cancer research. I am a volunteer at Kids Cancer Care. At my school I also earned the Citizenship award which gave me wondrous joy. It hurts me to see others suffering or sick because I felt that and worse. I care for those less fortunate. This adventure has made me put others first.

Although my journey has been long and bumpy with many roadblocks I've learned to overcome them with braveness. Never be afraid to go the distance and beyond. Stand up for what you believe in. Push harder to achieve greatness for it will come when your least expecting it. Don't let others decide your path for you only know your next step in life. This experience has taught me not to lose faith and hope in myself when life brings you down. I wouldn't be here today writing this story if I hadn't had the support and love from family members, relatives, friends, and others who helped me throughout my journey.

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## Power of Positive Words

by Kadance Stinson, Gr. 8  
Christ the King Academy

Negative words hurt lives...  
Positive words save lives.

Negative words depress happy souls...  
Positive words cheer sad souls up.

Negative words make you feel worse about yourself...  
Positive words make you feel better about yourself.

Negative words tear down...  
Positive words pull up.

Negative words dig holes...  
Positive words build skyscrapers.

Negative words are tigers...  
Positive words are kittens.

Negative words are cuts...  
Positive words will heal those cuts.

Negative words will hurt anything that gets in their way  
it's like negative words want to take over...  
Positive words will make anything feel better that is  
sad in their way and positive words will not let negative words get in their way.

Negative words will break you down...  
Positive words will build you up.

Negative words will pull you down...  
Positive words will push you up.

Negative words will crash a tower...  
Positive words will fix that tower.

# Faded

by Addison Donald, Gr. 8  
Christ the King Academy

My body; my own personal white canvas, painted with black and blue permanent tattoos was what my doleful eyes surveyed when they came into view, longing for focus. The cruelly eye piercing familiar lights, kiss my cheek, a feeling my mutedly pale face gravely yearned for. My lashes still damp from playing the role of a sponge, absorbing my only beautiful trait: tears. My captors almost inaudible, lying footsteps echoed back with all the lies and promises he'd put in picture for me, I'd always answer back with my reflection, silent; my loathe for this miserable man.

This thing disguised as my heartless abductor, grasped the cold shattered rusty handle, which was like looking in a picture perfect mirror, that portrayed the role of a trapped girl that was, forgotten and fading. Relief. His quiet hand let go of the handle, and followed the rest of its lonely body away. Hours went by just as slow as the days did, forming tears that shattered just like the hope for my inhuman like captor to free me of this dispare, those tears fell on my pillow, one for each of the children that shared the same unrealistic hope as myself. As I exchanged glances, my once completely satisfied ocean eyes fixated on the blank wall. The bruises were the constant prompting that I needed to free myself from the eternity of his abusive hands. Night was the calmest time of my moments on earth, the hours I would wait for day after day for. My time to think. My time of freedom. Inhuman tiny jailors served their purpose in

this world, on me. They were there to evoke my fatigued emotions. They were there to hold me hostage. They would also play the role of a witness, even for being lifeless their cold touch would be freed of my rather rough wrists; when I found a way to escape the cuffs.

The man played the role of a shadow, lurking near the person, with all eyes. As if there was never a doubt crossing his mind, he'd swallow us up, as if to release us from the pain and suffering that the occasional day brought. I would escape that same man, and he'd be provoked of my presence by dawn. The jailors, failed their mission, as I was freed from their touch. I took one last long breath of this dispensable air, and allowed my body to feel hope, to remind myself that this would be over soon. Cold, my bruised and weak legs, sauntering across this splintered floor, me, the first one to walk these floors and disappear into new life, not to old. Clapsed. Tight. Turned. Unlock. Free. Elated but confused on that emotion, for it had been locked away for months; disguised as decades. My still sad eyes awakened by the sight of the dark stars, dancing with the surprised unsettled souls; who'd found their way out; but to find old life. My body, my own personal white canvas; filled with black and blue permanent tattoos; and now, words to go along with them.



## Innocent Love

by Brooklyn Karpa, Gr. 8  
Notre Dame Collegiate

For her hue to hold  
Graceful her beauty untold  
Sunrise to sunset  
For true love comes only once  
Hold it tight, do not let go.

# The Last Tribe Member

by Zoren Ambert Santa Cruz, Gr. 8  
St. Anthony's School

The Gemstone Neanderthals were a small but special aboriginal tribe of 20 members 10,000 years ago. Their gemstones protected them and hid them from a demonic being from the underworld sent by Satan himself. The demon lived inside the mountains of what is known as today's Peru, waiting to eat the tribe members one by one. Suddenly with anger, Satan decided to set a curse upon the Gemstone Neanderthals, hindering the capability of the gemstones protecting the tribe from the demon. Satan also put a curse on the demon, only letting him eat a tribe member each year, to show his obedience and loyalty. As soon as the demon figured out that the aboriginal tribe was unprotected, he ate one member each year, sustaining his mighty power. One member of the tribe, Biyana, was born after the curse hit the Gemstone Neanderthals. Her gemstone still protected her from the demon. But countless times, she grew up witnessing each of her family and friends being taken away, helplessly doing nothing but only hiding inside the tribe huts.

The cold snow storm thundered over the mountains as the night sky fell upon the last tribe member. Biyana had lost consciousness during hunting for food from the cold. Her abnormally large albino wolf friend, Lily, dragged her through the snow back to their tribe home, warming her up with the fire that was lit.

Biyana finally opened her eyes, which felt like an eternity for Lily, slowly rising up to comfort him.

"Lily, it's okay," Biyana said with relief, "I'm okay thanks to you."

Biyana layed down the food she had caught after losing consciousness, laying next to the fire with Lily, falling asleep.

"Where is the girl?" the demon roared with anger, "She needs to die!"

"You will never find her demon." She is kept safe from you and you won't get to her!" Biyana's grandmother yelled as she was about to be stomped on.

"Then I'll just take you instead!"

Biyana helplessly watched the horror of her grandmother's limbs being torn from her body. Blood spilled

everywhere as the demon bit into the body and soon, he swallowed the body parts. She crawled back into her hut, cowering in the corner with Lily, shedding tears while being paralyzed with fear.

"Grandma!" Biyana screamed as she woke up from her nightmare.

Lily came running back into the hut after patrolling outside. He jumped onto Biyana, licking her face clean of dirt.

"Sorry Lily, it was just a nightmare, don't worry."

A sudden breeze of an insane heat wave gusted quickly through the hut's door, startling Lily and Biyana. A reoccurring shriek caught the attention of Biyana as she remembered something when she was little. It was the demon. He has come for her. The ground trembled beneath their feet as the snow and ice melted away. As the hut was burning down to ashes, Lily and Biyana quickly evaded the large hand swooping down quickly trying to grab them both. They rushed out, only to be gazed upon by large red eyes peering just over the mountain top. The plane surface on top of the mountain was set ablaze, sending every hibernating and living creature running off it.

How can he see me? Biyana thought, I thought I was hidden by the gemstone. "I cannot see you mere mortal, but I can sense your presence," the demon thundered, "Satan has given me more power and I can make this quick and painless if you stopped running away."

Biyana had to think quickly to save herself and Lily from being eaten by this vast demon. Suddenly both were cornered at the cliff of the mountain. As the demon reached down for them slowly, in the corner of Lily's eye, he could see a small body of water that had been melted from the demon's fire. Lily grabbed Biyana by her opossum skin coat and jumped off the mountain.

\*Splat\*

The two crawled onto land after hitting the cold as ice water. Just as soon as Biyana thought they were safe, she caught a glimpse of a large head on fire, topped with two sharp horns peering at them coming

behind the other side of the mountain. The demon started to walk to them at a slow pace, burning away the land around him to ashes.

"Lily, c'mon, we have to run now!" screamed Biyana.

Lily started sprinting, looking for somewhere to hide as Biyana jumped onto his back. Biyana turned around, took out her bow and arrow, and attempted to slow down the giant. Each of her shots deflected until one arrow pierced through the demon's eye.

"Arghhh!" the demon screamed in pain, "I'll make sure you die a painful slow death!"

Pitch black blood started oozing from the demon's eye, in attempt to cover the wound. The fire from his body burned brighter with a more intense heat, burning the blood away too.

Shortly after Biyana made that shot, Lily spotted a nearby cave and dashed for it. They both slid under the rock wall and hid quietly in the corner. The cave was as pitch black as the demon's blood, making it hard for them to navigate through.

"Where are you mortal?" the demon creepily asked, "You cannot hide from me forever!"

Biyana held her breath as the demon passed by. She felt the melting of icicles dripping onto her head, as well as Lily's as the flames of the demon heated up the cave. Suddenly Biyana could hear nothing. There was only silence and the echoing of the water droplets sounding throughout the cave. "I've found you," the demon said while making a grimace upon his face.

The demon reached his hands into the cave opening, grabbing Biyana by the leg.

In anger, Lily went and bit the demon's hand, burning his face and mouth, but freeing Biyana from the demon's grip. Lily's one eye had been burnt off, while he was whining in pain in the corner. In frustration, the demon wanted to make their death equally painful by filling up the cave with a deadly poison.

A bright orange and red gas slipped through a crack into the cave, filling it up to the brim as the flames of the demon shined through. Since Biyana had a gemstone, she was protected by this poisonous gas that fell upon them. But Lily didn't have one. He started to choke on the gas and soon stopped moving. He slowly layed down and closed his eyes, as this was his last day with his best friend.

"LILY!" Biyana screamed in terror, "I'm so sorry Lily, I couldn't protect you!" Tears fell upon Biyana's face, dripping onto the ground like the melting icicles.

The demon stuck his hand under the opening of the cave again, trying to grab Biyana to eat her. In bitterness, Biyana swiftly grabbed an arrow from her bag and dug it deep into the demon's already wounded hand, injuring him even more. But

the demon just laughed.

"You will never learn mortal," the demon spoke with laughter, "I'm immortal and cannot be killed by such a pathetic creature like you."

The demon ripped out the top of the cave, revealing a towering being upon Biyana. All of a sudden, just as the demon was reaching down for Biyana, a large portal opened up on top of him. A bright light shone upon them all, revealing the tribe members, and her grandmother swooping out fast. All the Gemstones of the Gemstone Neanderthals began to glow a bright white, revealing the true power hidden in them this whole time. Huge chains the size of the mountains themselves, glowing a bright gold came slithering out of the portal, wrapping themselves around the demon, holding him to the ground. A bow as bright as the sun was carried by her grandmother, flying towards her with a smile on her face.

"Grandmother?" Biyana questioned in awe and in a happy relief.

"It's okay Biyana, we are all here to help you when you need us most," Biyana's grandmother said, "I'm sorry we couldn't come earlier, this is our only time we can visit you on Earth, only having a few minutes to spare. Take this bow, and end this demon's life Biyana."

The demon squirmed and tried escaping the chains of God, but there was nothing he could do. This was the end of him. Biyana aimed the bow directly at the demon's head, getting a clear shot. She pulled back her arm with the arrow.

"This is for Lily," Biyana whispered.

She let go of the arrow, flying faster than the speed of light, straight through the demon's head, ending his life. After a short moment of silence, her grandmother spoke.

"Unfortunately, we have to go now Biyana," Biyana's grandmother spoke softly in a sad tone, "All of us will watch out for you and guide you, we promise."

As soon as Biyana's grandmother ended speaking, all of the tribe members, including her grandmother flew back into the portal. The chains of God disappeared with the bow, dropping the demon onto the ground with a large crash. The portal disappeared, with her gemstone glow fading slowly away.

Before all of the demon's fire slowly dimmed and him fading away completely, he told something important to Biyana.

"I'm not the only demon left, more are coming for you," the demonic being said with a wicked tone, "You will never be safe and you won't survive."

Continued on page 62

page 61

Continued from page 61

"As long as I have my tribe and family watching over me, I'll always be safe from your kind."

As the demon disintegrated with a menacing smile, Biyana looked back at the cave, and walked over there. She picked up dragged Lily as gently as she could up the mountain full of ashes and burnt down dead trees, where she was going to bury him.

"I'm sorry this had to happen to you Lily, this is all my fault!" Biyana cried, "I'll never forget you and I'll always love and miss you, goodbye Lily."

Biyana proceeded to lay Lily in the hole she dug beside their totem pole, right in the middle of the heart of the aboriginal tribes home. She filled it up,

and packed for her journey for someplace else. She knew this place wasn't safe for her anymore, and she had to seek refuge in this unexplored world. As Biyana began trudging down the mountain, she could hear the slight laugh of tens or thousands of demons squeals, laughs, and shrieks coming her way. The Earth shook beneath her feet, making her tremble with fear.

Lily quickly paced to catch up beside her spiritually. He could not be seen, but his presence was there, and Biyana could feel it. A smile was growing on her face as she kept walking while feeling the winter breeze and the warmth of the sunrise. Biyana never turned back, for this would be the start of her journey still with her best friend.

Based on the poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee", by Robert William Service

## Freezing to Death

by Yzabel Bauyon, Gr. 9  
St. Joseph's Collegiate

As we adventure through the desolate North, the temperature drops by the minute, colder and colder as we go through Dawson Trail. My beard and lashes covered with frost. My trembling hands are red and numb. I've lost feeling in all parts of my body and my shivering is unstoppable. My lips have turned into a desert so dry, I can taste my thick blood, dripping steadily. The hairs on my body are standing tall like grass in the Savanna, with goosebumps lurking in between. As I sit, crouched down on our wooden sleigh, I think to myself, "This will be the death of me." Surprisingly I didn't feel uneasy, I felt at peace. I just need my last wish to be fulfilled, to be warm again. I've been frozen for so long; I don't remember what it feels like. I close my eyes and try to forget about the whistling wind hitting me in the face.

I imagine myself on a tropical island, the burning sand against my feet. I can hear seagulls and the waves harmonizing a calming tune. I feel the glorious sun toasting my fair skin. I open my eyes, the island disappears and reality sets back in. That night, when we stopped to rest, I turned to my friend and moaned, "Cap, the falling snow will be the last thing I see, and when I go, I need you to cremate me." I

look to him with pleading eyes and he finally agreed. The morning after, I felt relieved. I can finally let go. My blood will no longer be frozen and my limbs will no longer be stuck in place. My chest will no longer tighten with every breath I take. Soon the feeling of paralysis and devastation will be gone, soon I will be free.

Feeling thankful, I take in my surroundings. I look at the dogs and watch their breath, huffing and puffing, as they prance along the thick carpet of snow. I listen to the snow crunching beneath the sleigh. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. I breathe in Cap's husky voice as he barks orders to the dogs, "Mush! Mush!" I inhale the frozen wind and it sends chills down my spine, freezing each vertebrae one by one. The wind maneuvers its way to my lungs filling every corner with its merciless touch.

Just before nightfall, as He sprinkles the dark velvet sky with twinkling lights, I let go. "God please have mercy on me" I murmur as my soul leaves my body and drifts into the Arctic air. I float to the stars as I take my final breath and the Northern Lights wave goodbye.

# Things Take Time

by Alexandra Wilson, Gr. 9  
Our Lady of the Snows

My third birthday was a big deal, at least from what I can remember. I walked down the stairs in my blue and pink party dress that morning, excitement bursting out of my little body. My mom was in the dining room laying out napkins and cheap paper plates, preparing for the people who would soon arrive. Although my party was just hours away all I could think about was my height. I walked up to a chair in the dining room attempting to measure myself, assuming I'd be noticeably taller. After all I was three now not two so I had to have grown. I measured myself on almost every object in the dining room, stretching up on my tip toes.

"Am I taller yet mom?" I asked expecting for her to be surprised by my new height, thinking I had grown overnight.

"Maybe a little bit." she responded absentmindedly as she placed a bowl of pretzels on the table. I scrunched up my face in confusion and disappointment. Maybe it just hadn't happened yet, but I was sure it would.

Soon guests started to arrive and my disappointment was replaced with excitement. All of my classmates showed up and countless family friends, bringing in armfuls of brightly colored packages just for me. Now that I think back it was for sure the biggest birthday party I've ever had. I played games, ate cake, and opened presents while my mom held me in her lap. There where kids all around my house running and laughing, some of them even screaming as they frantically chased each other around, cake smeared across their greedy faces. Streamers cascaded from the ceiling and balloons where being tossed back and forth in every room of the house, and in every direction.

All of the attention was on me. Adults looked me in the eye, and kids who I thought didn't even know my name had bought me gifts. Excitement filled the air and mixed with the cheerful conversations of the party. The house reminded me of a mall or an airport. Everyone walking in different directions, to talk to different people or look at different things.

I looked up from my new barbie to see my best friend Alie in the dining room. She had always been just a bit taller than me so she was the perfect reference for my hopefully new height. We talked for a few minutes about my new toys, all the while I was trying to see if I was the same size as her if not taller. I could stretch up as much as I wanted, but it was no use there was no difference. I could feel tears pricking my eyes, but

I didn't cry. I was two not not three so I wouldn't let myself.

"It's time for Twister!" my mom announced, full of energy.

The tears in my eyes receded and I headed into the dining room and over to the colorful mat to join my friends starting a new game.

Soon the party slowed to a halt as people began to leave the house, wishing me one last "happy birthday!" before they did. After Alie and her family left I remembered my height for the third time that day. I must have grown by now. I skipped energetically over to the dining room chair from earlier that day, but still there was no change. Defeated, I dragged my feet over to the living room to inspect my new toys. Why hadn't it happened yet? I clenched my hands into a tight ball in exasperation. To any adult my dilemma would seem almost funny, buy to me it was the end of the world.

Later that evening after dinner I asked my older brother if he thought I had gotten taller, still not wanting to give up hope.

"What do you mean?" He asked with a puzzled look on his face.

"Am I taller yet?" I asked again. "It was my birthday today."

"What are you talking about?" he responded, his tone making me feel stupid and childish. "You don't just get instantly taller on your birthday. It takes time, you're always growing it's just really slow. I can't believe you thought that, you're so stupid!"

I could feel my face getting hot with embarrassment. I completely believed him, after all he was older than me so he had to be right. I turned away and hurried up the stairs, hot tears streaming down my face. I threw myself onto my bed and buried my face in a stuffed bear. Things take time? My understanding and perspective of growing and age had just been completely shaken. After I had calmed down a bit, I ran my brothers words through my head over and over. Things take time.



# Tsunamis

by Zoe Quinn, Gr. 9  
Our Lady of the Snows

There are very few moments in your life that completely, indefinitely change it forever. Most of the time it's when you least expect it. When your life could not be more ordinary, but tragedy hits you like a tsunami breaking down your walls of protection, leaving you vulnerable and exposed. It washes away the familiarity you're used to. You're left to pick up the broken pieces of your life and try your best to piece together the residue. It's kind of funny how quickly the entire course of your life can be altered. Not the kind of laugh out loud funny but the kind that makes you shake your head and ask the universe 'why me?' For me it was a series of moments that hit one after another, each wave reaching higher and higher until the final, fatal blow. The blow that would change everything.

My mom had already been in the hospital for about two weeks longer than we had expected but then again no one had expected the cancer to spread either. It was a normal day, well as normal as a day could be in these unforeseen circumstances. That meant an uneventful day of school and an after school play practice. My dad had spent his day at the Calgary hospital and wouldn't be getting home until after dinner, which consisted of a frozen pizza. I was in my sister's room when he came home. We heard him come in but neither of us went to greet him, instead we waited for him to come upstairs. I could tell something was wrong the second he stepped through the door.

"Is everything okay?" I asked, my voice wavering with uncertainty. I so badly wanted everything to be okay, every single part of me willed everything to be okay. But it wasn't. The tears came before my dad even started talking, like a tiny part of me knew what was coming. A tiny part of me knew that my mom's recovery was moving so far into the distance that it was nothing more than a speck against the horizon, barely even in view. My dad's words confirmed my deepest fears, my mom, the one person that seemed to know me better than I knew myself was never going to get better. The hospital was going to be her home for the rest of her numbered days. And that was when the tsunami hit. It crashed down upon me hitting me with such a tremendous force that

it pulled me underneath the churning water. I was lost in a whirlpool of my own grief, trying to get my head above the surface but ending up only with a mouthful of salty water that burned the back of my throat. I'd never felt a pain that intense before and as I lay against my door wiping away the tears that refused to stop falling, I knew my life would never be the same.

I woke up the next morning still in yesterday's clothes. The contents of last night's conversation came rushing back to me almost as soon as I opened my eyes. I could hear the clashing of dishes and the low murmur of voices downstairs but I instead of getting up I rolled over, pulling my comforter closer around my body. It felt nice to lie there, wrapped up so tightly in my blanketed armour that the hurt couldn't get it in. Here in my small corner of the house I could pretend that everything was just the way it was supposed to be. I could pretend that my mom was downstairs making breakfast and singing along to old musical soundtracks. I could pretend that my dad was outside playing soccer with my sister, released of the fear and stress that had grasped onto him. And I could pretend that my grandparents were driving up from Edmonton only for a brief and fun filled visit. Unfortunately my delusions only lasted so long before reality trickled through the cracks of my wishful thinking and once again I felt the overwhelming sense of hopelessness set in.

The next couple of weeks were a blur of school and hospital visits, leading up to the Christmas break. While the school halls were buzzing with the annual holiday cheer, I just felt numb and detached from everyone else around me. The smallest things seemed to remind me of my mom and what she was facing. Part of me was relieved when the last day of school finally came but the other part liked the distraction. The busier I was the less time I had to think. After school my dad drove me, just me to the hospital. He had to do some grocery shopping so after walking me in and having a quick conversation with the nurses he left. I was on my own.



Slowly I opened the door to my mom's hospital room and peered in, she was asleep. The fan was blasting so I shivered as I tiptoed in, careful not to wake her. In the middle of the room my mom lay in her hospital bed. She looked so small and frail nestled among the sheets and IV tubes like a tiny, baby bird alone in their nest. The rest of the drab room had been transformed into a garden of sympathy. Flowers, all colours of the rainbow were placed in every corner of the room with small cards dangling down from the vases. On a whiteboard hanging from one of the walls my mom's many friends had written their well wishes. I wanted to write something too but I didn't know what to say. Out of the corner of my eye I could my mom's translucent eyelids flutter open, I quickly rushed over to her side.

"Hey Mom," I whispered, trying to keep my voice steady. She opened her mouth and I could see her struggling to get the words out. She mouthed a greeting back to me and I was filled with so much sadness. I thought back to all the conversations with her I'd taken for granted, I missed them so much right now. Staring down at my lap I forced myself to keep talking, just about trivial stuff like how I got 95% on my last math test and how Khloe Kardashian was pregnant with Tristan Thompson's baby. At one point I couldn't hold back the tears that had been threaten-

ing to run down my face ever since I arrived at the hospital. They spilled over my cheeks as I took in deep gasping breaths, trying to calm myself down.

"Is there anything I can do?" I could hear my mom ask hoarsely. It was the most she'd said our whole visit and through the haze of tears I could see the evident concern written across her skeletal face. She was in so much pain, she could barely walk or talk and yet she seemed prepared to do whatever it took to make me feel better. One thing that inspired me most about my mom is that she never stopped caring about everyone around her. She was a light that brightened other people's lives with her positivity and kindness. I reached over and took her hand, neither one of us said anything but I'd never understood her more.

My mom died on December 27th, two days after Christmas. That's the thing about tsunamis, they're caused by disturbances under the surface so they can never be predicted. Only when you see the water building up do you know what's about to happen. At that point it's too late to do anything but to watch the destruction happen before your very eyes. You can rebuild of course, try to your best to fit all the pieces back together but it will never quite be the same. Your life will never be same. And my life never was.

## A Cold Spring

by Glizel Ann Evangelista, Gr. 9  
St. Joseph's Collegiate

These blue flowers bloom once more  
In a place where red thorns grow.  
They dance and mourn in a field of gore.  
And an air without audio.  
Water will always try to find a way to defeat fire,  
With hope they'll overcome this wordless choir.

Though they were destined to wither in time,  
They have been defeated by the drought of tonight.  
The end of the navy rhyme,  
With melodies nowhere in sight.  
You must run they say, run  
As we shriveled up one by one.

These red flowers bloom,  
In a place where they rule once more;  
With their thorns they'll explode and fume,  
Leaving bloody petals on the floor.  
They face no humiliation,  
For the sweet taste of domination.

Who knew, that blue and red would make such a  
beautiful purple.  
To create a peace with no curfew.  
Friendship felt like victory but tripled.  
Singing the lyrics to melodies they never knew.  
It's a harsh reality,  
But these violet shades never got that opportunity.

# Nothing and Everything

by Avey Herlidy, Gr. 9  
Our Lady of the Snows



The air was thick with humidity as I pressed through the double glass doors. My dad ushered my sister and I down the stairs, the roaring of planes still audible overhead. As we neared the baggage claim my heart sped up. Men in vibrant coloured vests plucked my bag off the carrier and I heard the contents tumbling inside as I tipped it over. Muffled voices were heard around the corner while my mum heaved her bag towards her and adjusted her white and blue ball cap. My suitcase bumped against my ankles as I rolled it along behind me. It had been a short flight, but at the late hour my eyelids drooped and my legs threatened to give out under me, surrendering to my aching fatigue. Spanish voices drifted to my ears as I neared the exit and as much as I had seen in the past, the view always startled me. Loud voices and bodies pressed to the windows, curious of who had come to visit. The Nicaraguans were watching.

My mum spoke quietly in broken Spanish to a man in an orange vest as I hugged my arms around my chest. My leggings stuck to my skin like glue and I shifted my weight from one foot to the other, trying to ease the itching sweat that clung to me. Even at dusk the air was thick. My sneakers picked at the edge of a broken tile as I looked over at the crowd. My eyes met small brown orbs and I smiled at the girl, her long dark hair pinned back with pink barretts. I drew my attention back to my parents, who were just finishing up. It was time to go. I licked my chapped lips as we headed towards the doors. The locals moved aside as we made our way through, their faces full of curiosity. Fresh, soft air hit my cheeks as we stepped onto the cracked and crumbling sidewalk. I readjusted the cap on my head and looked to my left. Hours away, I could still smell the breezy ocean air. In the distance, cars honked and tires screeched. Paper bags and broken plastic blew across the sidewalk, getting lodged between two tattered bikes. The place looked just as I remembered.

My sister pulled on my arm and I glanced to where she now was. My parents stood next to a man I had heard so much about, and in his hands he held a large white sign reading, 'Herlihy Family.' My lips twitched up into a smile as he introduced himself as Marc. A soft breeze pulled at my shirt and sent forward bundles of plastic bags and bottle caps as I rolled my

suitcase towards the white Jeep that would be our source of transportation to the small beachside village. I glanced back to the people, their wide eyes watching and I felt a familiar wave wash over me. I couldn't place it, but it was there. I wiped my brow and hauled my suitcase into the Jeep, the contents thumping around inside. A few cars sped wildly across the street and a handful of stray dogs scampered along the path. In the darkness, the scenery was not appealing. It was crowded and loud and stifling with heat. But as I climbed into the Jeep I placed the sensation. It was not the look but the way it made me feel.

I reached around me to pull on the seatbelt, only to find that it was not there. We would be riding on tattered seats for over two hours, but it was nothing new. In the dark hours of the heat, I pulled off my sneakers, letting my toes taste the sweet air. As the car rolled out of its parking spot, I cranked the window down. Faces drew across my vision and sights pulled at my heartstrings. Children walked across the cracked highway, their bare feet dusted and bruised. But ever present was the smile on their faces. I wiped my hairline as the Jeep hit a pothole, jostling me into the seat ahead. My brows crinkled together as thin dogs weaved between the cars. As familiar as the sights were, they shocked me nonetheless. Oh how different it could be around the world.

Sucking in a breath, we sped down the street, horns blaring, cars telling each other where they were. Cracked stone walls flickered through my vision as we drove down the vivid streets, alive even after dusk had settled. The large markets shone with orange light. Strangers exchanged words and inspected abundances of fruits, their brows wet with sweat. Rusty cans blew across the street, clattering with each gust. Scooters flew past me as we honked, thick air brushing through my hair. The night lived on.

It had changed so much yet stayed the same. Fair skin was visible even in the dark as we pulled up to the small beach town. Tanned faces poked up behind bushes, beside buildings, above roofs, everyone wanting to catch a glimpse of the Canadian family. I wondered briefly if our old friends were still there.

If they still collected shells on the shore, walking the long, radiating days to try and bring dinner to the table. But I knew the way it was. They had expressed it with their words and their actions, but mostly with their eyes and their smiles. Full of life and love and curiosity. A cool breeze tousled my hair as my eyes lit up. Tall frames of coloured bulbs twisted up into extravagant branches, lighting up the cluttered streets. The trees were gorgeously beautiful, and I knew that then it was

safe, and it was home. Rumours of the terrible things that happened here would not keep our family from venturing into the world. The great unknown. I smiled, and despite the differences I knew the people were happy. It was all they had ever known. This town of golden trees was their home, and sometimes things were not as they always seemed. Sometimes, nothing could be everything.

## Canadian Supreme ~ Personal Essay

by Ryan Grey, Gr. 9  
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There was a time when I used to feel overwhelming pressure at things that most people would say was absolute fun. The fear nags you; you might fail, embarrass yourself, or look stupid. There would be nights where all you can do is toss and turn, trembling like a guinea pig. I never knew there was more people with the same fear. When my dad told me he might enter me in the Canadian Supreme, the prestigious Cutting, Reining and Cow Horse show in Canada, I felt as lucky as a child with a candy, but the icy hands of fear grabbed me by the neck, tormented me, and the clouds of failure erupted my vision. Now I knew that the joy of summer would be prevailed by the most horrible thing of all: fear. Never did I think that I would show in the Canadian Supreme.

The day had come. I was buttoning up my shirt, but my efforts were fruitless, as I could not push the buttons, due to my shaking fingers. I felt as nervous as rabbit being chased by a wolf. I clambered into the truck, and thought the faster I get the nervousness out, the better. Before long, I had completed both parts of my show, putting together pretty decent runs. Relief spread through my body, like butter being spread on a hot piece of toast. My thoughts were interrupted as my father told me I had made the finals! Being excited to have made the finals in my rookie year, was clouded over by the dreaded fear: nervousness. There I went again, shaking like a rattler's tail. I was headed to the Red Deer Expo Center, competing in front of a sold-out crowd, and I was part of the final five. Hearing the announcer bellow out "Hello Red Deer! Who's ready for Saturday Night at the Supreme? The top five in each class have made it here, each one looking for the gold buckle!" Hearing the crowd roar, I shuddered, and was scared once again. Stroking my horse, I felt a bit better, knowing I was not alone, but with my horse. It was now or never.

I lunged at the cows hip, and my horse reacted to the prick

my spurs gave him. He kept close to the bovine, and drove it down the wall. The crowd reacted accordingly, and their roar of agreement prickled my skin. We pushed the cow back past center, and snapped it around, setting it up beautifully for the circle. I had executed my requirements well so far. We switched circles at center, and pushed it through the second circle. The crowd cheered as I slapped the cow, and the whistle blew. I found it very fun to have the crowd cheering, and feel your hand stinging as you smack the cow. The curtain of fear falls as you finish, as the warm blanket of relief encloses you. Walking back to the waiting pen, I got a few compliments. I did not win the gold buckle, nor received a payout. I was just proud that I had competed in Canada's largest horse show, up against adults, and making the finals. Something that really helped me was when riding in the practice pen, I talked to a woman who, like myself, was a rookie. She told me she was pretty nervous, and it was helpful knowing I was not the only nervous person, and she reminded me to have fun. While riding back to the barn, an old man walked up to me, and told me I had done a fine job. He told me though I had not won, I had all it took to win the Supreme, and he also told me never to quite. Looking back, I see there was no reason to be afraid, and the event was created to challenge horse people to do their best, and to have fun.

Now, I see that I am not the only nervous competitor. There was no reason to be so scared, as events are created for fun. Now that I have completed in the Canadian Supreme, I know I can overcome the pressure and fear of competition. I can look ahead to the future with confidence, and not dread competitions. I can shake off the grey cloud of fear, and not dread the future. I can be as confident as an eagle, and now, I can't wait for my next competition!

# Life Story ~ In-class Essay

by Isabelle Moore, Gr. 9  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

I had never enjoyed reading in all my junior high years, so when the teacher announced silent reading time, I'd be moaning and groaning and looking for literally anything else to do. Over time, I grew very fond of my alternative: writing. It became a regular practice for me and I got very good at it, but every writing piece had this same little issue that I couldn't quite pin down. Regardless of how confident I felt in my writing, I was held back-by some burning, undesirable urge and was never able to finish any of them. They started strong but without a certain plan made ahead of time, they were always lacking something and I'd get bored of them. Looking back now, I can say with certainty that each and every one of them was missing a main idea.

Life is like a book that runs on a linear timeline. It has a main idea and it may appeal to some while retracting others. Some end happy ever after while some end in tragedy, and they're all different. But what about the stories we don't read? The ones that don't get published. If a story has a beginning and an end but nothing happening in between, then who's going to read it? What you do in life can fulfil others and yourself, but without a purpose, your life story will never get published.

Simply put, a book would be boring if the main character never began their journey. Having a purpose benefits your mental, emotional and social life. It's a proven fact that you will be more motivated to get out of bed if you have something to do that day. Having a purpose can be time consuming but it helps you in the end and gives you a better way to spend your most precious resource: time. According to scientists, people who participate in activities or carry out self given tasks are also less likely to be depressed. A boring, uneventful life isn't interesting and a life like that will make you feel small and insignificant. Having a purpose or something to do will make you feel important and help banish negative thoughts. But apart from all that, it makes you a more interesting person to others. The most interesting characters in a story are the ones that are developed and have a backstory, or some specialized skill. Hav-

ing a purpose makes you more intriguing and fun to talk to. You'll have stories to tell and inside knowledge a lot of people might know about. With a purpose, you'll be able to improve your social life and meet new people. So now that you've begun your journey, what's more interesting than a character that doesn't change throughout their tale? A dynamic character who learns along the way.

During life, only through experience can you learn. With a main topic in mind, you can learn specialized skills and earn knowledge that will help you later on in life. With painters in the Renaissance, this held especially true. Did you know that painters like Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci would try and get into the rooms where dissections happened when people began getting curious about the human body? With the goal of improving their human anatomy in mind, painters in the Renaissance would pull strings so they could get an exclusive view of the human body and how it worked. Giving yourself a purpose will motivate you to learn and improve on what you already have or maybe don't have at all. Even attempting to learn and stepping out of your comfort zone to face possible failure can teach you lessons. If the main character in your book had a guaranteed triumph over evil, then there wouldn't be any suspense and the author would quickly lose the interest of their reader. Stepping out of your comfort zone is killing two birds with one stone. Over time you learn how to get better at trying new things and even failing will teach you how to do better for next time and to not make the same mistakes. Whether you succeed or not, you will benefit in life; as a person and in your specialized skill. When you go to college, you're going there to learn specific skills that are required to pursue a specific job. If you have a purpose, you'll look to learn specialized skills that not everyone knows about. A purpose can make you stand out from the crowd and make you unique. But alas, you've set a goal for yourself during your voyage and learnt so much about yourself as a person, but all good things must come to an end. Of course, no need to get down; you can rest easy and let your story be shared with the world.

When the curtain falls and you breathe your last breaths on this earth, those who stand out will have the purpose their life served shared like a good book; and they will not be forgotten. When you die, you want to be remembered in a positive light. What you achieved in life will be carried on and recited to everyone after you. Your accomplishments in life will be your reputation when you're 6 feet under. If you don't do anything in life, then who will remember you when you're gone? What makes you more than a lifeless corpse in a graveyard? You need those accomplishments and stories about the things you were able to do or nobody will really care. You need to set a name for yourself and paint your family in a good light, even after death. With a life purpose, you can continue to paint your family name in bright colors from past the grave. With a life purpose you can be a role model for everyone else, and

you can encourage and inspire others to find a purpose in themselves. Your life purpose can change people and the world they live in.

What you do in life doesn't just affect you; it affects everyone. When an author writes a book, they're deciding they want to share a message and influence others. The main idea isn't always clear and it's open to be interpreted however you want. It might inspire you to act a certain way or it might teach you new things. Maybe it will inspire you to write your own book. You might not realize it yet but you're already making a mark on this land like a pen on paper. You're already writing your own story. Now all you need to do is choose what your main idea is. Will your book get published?

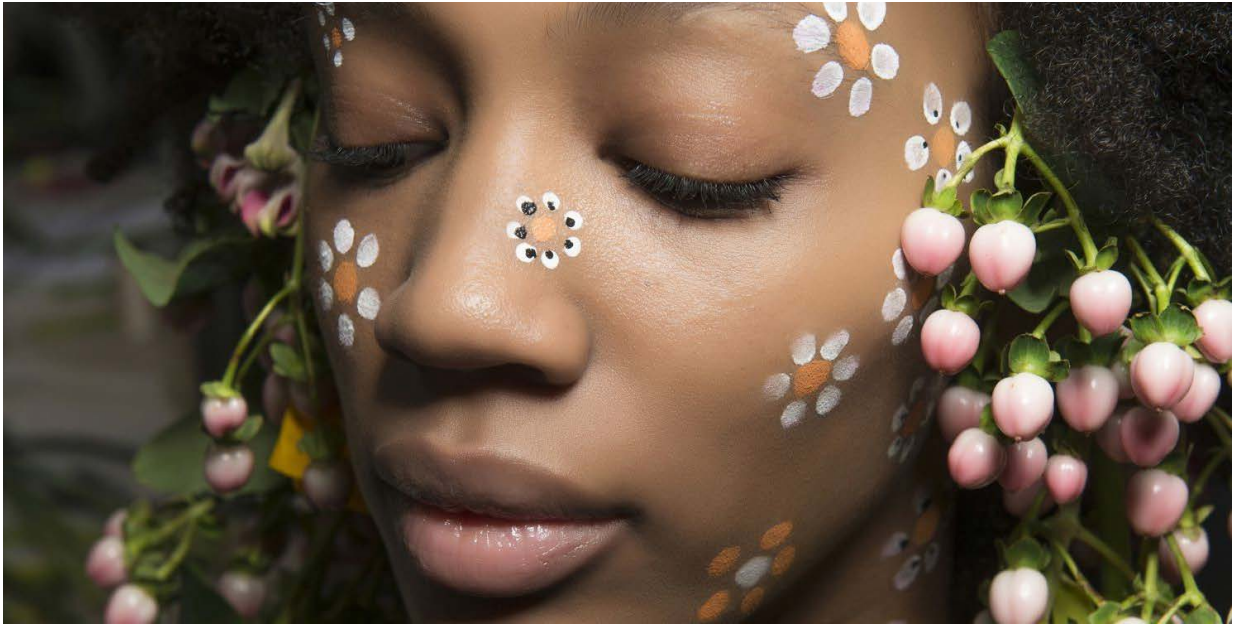
# Character Portrait Project

by Nico-Imogen Parkins, Gr. 9  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Miya Sho was a young girl - only seven years old- but her mind was wiser than even the elders of her village. Her thoughts were constantly enveloped in logic and reasoning. How this came to be, no one knew, being as the village was unable to provide its youth with education and Miya spent all of her days tending to the livestock. Today was no different. Her warm, sparkling hazel eyes scanned the verdant fields owned by her family as she searched for the familiar dulled coats of the livestock. Finally, she caught sight of a mocha pelt belonging to her favorite bovine. Miya had not named the yak however, since the one time she had suggested naming her beloved animal to her father, she had been scolded for having such childish thoughts and had been told to focus on contributing to the family. Her footsteps were steady and confident as she walked across the dew soaked grass. The wind whipped her long, ebony locks around her face as she grew closer and closer, the buckets of dry hay that she carried in each hand seemingly growing heavier and heavier with each step. Miya finally reached the herd, approaching steadily so as to not spook the animals. She emptied the feed into the lackluster troughs and stepped back as the cattle approached to have their fill. Her bovine was so close, Miya could've reached out and touched him, just as she had wanted to so many times before. This time, she felt a spark of courage rise in her chest. She had refrained so many times due to fear of spooking him -this yak was one who had experienced great trauma; abuse to be exact- but what could go wrong? If her yak didn't like it, she just wouldn't try it again. Her hand reached out slowly, connecting with the soft, dark fur of the yak in front of her. The

animal didn't flinch, but rather, turned his head to meet eyes with Miya. Miya continued to run her hand down the yak's back, smiling contently as the bovine continued to accept it. She had another urge; to climb onto his back and relish the feeling of being so tall and powerful. This time, she did not suppress it. She buried her hands into his fur, grasping fistfuls of pelt, before using all of her strength to pull herself up and over. She sat up straight and secure, looking out over the other cattle and beaming to herself. She had done it, finally. He was hers. She could feel it and she knew that he knew it too.

"I'm going to name you Nico." Miya spoke softly and endearingly. Nico seemed to like that name, letting out a small noise of approval as he ate the last of his fill. She smiled down at him and that's when something else caught her attention. A long, white piece of thick string was among the cocoa furs of Nico's coat. Her delicate fingers grasped it, pulling it out of it's trap with ease. She stared at it for a while, thinking to herself. It was bland, but with some work could be turned into something truly beautiful, and if there was anything Miya was good at, it was working. It was all she had been doing her whole life, after all. She envisioned handing it, crafted into a traditional necklace, to her sick mother and watching her smile for the first time in at least a year. Maybe she could make some for her sister and brother too. She wouldn't make one for her father though. He saw such things as childish and wastes of resources. Miya knew she would get right on it, but for that moment it was just her and Nico, and she wanted to keep it that way for just a little bit longer.



## Blood of a Deer

by Hannah Marquardt, Gr. 9  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Gasping for air, I trudged through the snow, the drifts so deep my knees which were covered in thick leather pants were soaked, my boots an ocean of snow. My hands that were clad in fur gloves clutched my rifle for dear life, trying to sap even a slice of warmth from the freshly shot barrel. My eyes were pinned to the frosted land, eyeing the doe's hoof trail punctuated with drops of darkening red liquid blood. I'd shot her straight and true, and from the way her hooves went from lengthened leaps to hobbling stumbles told me enough; she was dying. I was also getting close.

I pushed away the thorny underbrush as I crouched, her trail abruptly stopping. Where did she go? It's not like she could climb a tree or fly, that would be ridiculous, but it seemed like that was not impossible. It was like she'd simply been swept off the map, ghosted away into the sky. My thoughts were quickly chased away by the sudden change in the air. It had increased in warmth at a shockingly quick rate, and the snow was suddenly gone from beneath my sodden boots, racing away from the outstretched fingers of the sun, that had magically broken free from the clouds while I was pinned to her trail. I gawked at the scenery that unfolded before me.

The grass was a rich viridescent, small luminous flowers swaying in a gentle breeze, a field of thick,

old birch trees arranged in a wide circle, and in the clearing lay my prey, her broad, thick furred sides heaving. I approached carefully, my eyes scanning the area.

It was so surreal, like I'd stepped over an invisible line into this world. The doe's bullet wound was stark against her dark fur, blood bubbling out of her gagging mouth. As I came within a few feet of her, a flash of brilliant light made me jump back, throwing my hands up to block my eyes from the burning light.

As I stumbled back I heard someone say something that sounded foreign but exotic, almost melodic but commanding. I blinked my eyes, the spots behind my eyelids fading away, a silhouette briefly framed in the aftermath.

My eyes slowly peeled open and I was met with crystal gold eyes, warm chocolate skin with firm set lips. My eyes were immediately drawn to her cheeks, however.

Laced with what seemed like painted flowers, her face was honestly that most marvellous of her features. Her thick, curly, ebony hair was strung with roses closed tightly into bulbs, pale pink against her skin.



Then she spoke, and I swear, it was like an ensemble of angels inhabited her voice.

"What are you doing here, human? Are you the one that harmed her?" The strange being pointed behind her, the deer's gasps seeming to have become a background noise once the women started speaking. I was completely entranced, my brain unable to process a single sentence on my head.

"I-I... yes," I managed to squeeze out, "I'm so sorry."

The way she looked at me compelled me to say sorry, even though I'd done the deed for my cause. She'd be my fifteenth doe, which would rack up some good bills.

"You dumb humans and your selfish ways!" She snarled, gripping my coat's collar and hissing in my face. As the wretched sound left her lungs, her skin turned black, zig zags of bright orange rippling through like she'd become a volcano.

Through all my hunting career, I'd never felt fear, but faced with a being like she... my heart raced around and around in my rib cage, begging to be away from her monstrous anger.

"You humans don't see how I, the Healer, work everyday to keep the things you relentlessly kill from harm. Do I look like I have the energy to save everything you destroy? What is your reason for trying to kill Nabaska?"

Her words were sharp and cold, her nails that were clipped long and sharp, piercing through my coat to my neck, scratching to the point of drawing blood.

"My friends-," I began, but then I heard them calling from the woods, "Pipe? Pi, where are you?" and I knew I was doomed.

The Healer, as she called herself, jerked up, her golden eyes seeming to pierce through the layers of thick trees, finding the source of sound from the way her eyebrows twitched and a growl ripped from her throat.

"You lead them to me?" She barked, her rage doubling, "if your human friends find me, Pipe, and kill me, which they undoubtedly will, the lands, forests and all living creatures will die! Once the Healer is gone, my brother will take my place as the Taker, and pluck you all up one by one! Choose now, is Nabaska more important to you as a living, breathing, running creature, or as a trophy you and your friends can gush about?"

Taker? I wondered, she has a brother?

"Healer," I began, my voice still shaking, "I'll do anything in my power to lead them away from you, I promise."

Her eyes burned with unholy light, searching my dark brown ones for any signs of a lie. Though I was terrified, I was also drawn to her, her majestic aura more powerful than the sun. I wouldn't let anyone kill her, especially if she had a brother that came in the form of death.

"Then show me you humans can do more than betray me," she leaned away from me, her eyes still hard with distrust. I could hear my friends approaching, shouting now; they were getting scared.

"Piper? Did you get the deer? Where are you?" One of my best buds was currently shouting. I flinched as Healer's eyes darkened with rage.

"Deal with them all, Piper, or else you'll be the reason that humanity is wiped out. I'll aid you, but only a little. I have to get this mother back to her fawns."

Great. So "Nabaska" was also a mother. I shivered as I thought how close I was to orphaning her young. "I'm sorry-," I began but Healer had already turned her back to me, sweeping Nabaska up in her arms like a mother cradling her baby, and disappeared into the darkening forest.

My blood ran cold as I heard a twig snap behind me, and I quickly scrambled to my feet, brushing my self off and trying to arrange my hair to look suitable.

Ben burst through the line of trees, looking around, his breathing short and in quick bursts. I can only imagine how I must have looked to Ben, my collar ripped and my neck drying with my blood, not that he might know that, standing once again in knee deep snow, crystal flakes fluttering down around me.

"Where were you?" Ben yelled the second I opened my mouth to speak. "We were calling and calling you! You could have at least answered! Where's the doe? I know you hit her!"

The patch that used to house the wounded doe had been covered by the thick layer of snow Healer had placed down when she'd left, taking the warmth and breeze away with her.

"Wolves got her," I simply lied, picking up my rifle from where I'd dropped it at the edge of the clearing, giving Ben's shoulder a punch as I walked by. "Let's go, before they come for us. I just barely got away with a scratch."

Continued on page 72

Continued from page 71

Ben looked at me with suspicion, but after looking around and not seeing anything out of the ordinary, he sighed and slung his rifle over his shoulder.

"I swore I heard you talking to someone," he muttered, but I ignored it.

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Back home, in my warm hunting cottage, I flopped down on my couch and sighed deeply, replaying everything that had happened nearly an hour ago.

Did I even see her? Is she even real? My mind continued to ask, looping like a constant circle. There's a huge possibility I'm just crazy, but Ben had also known I'd hit the doe, so I would have proof; not to mention I never miss, but it seemed one had got through my fingers.

My eyes slid closed, melting into the couch further, the burning fire crackling nearby.

I don't know how long my eyes were closed, but what seemed like a second later I heard a knock against my window.

I jerked awake, rubbing my eyes. Looking at the frosted windows, I squinted my eyes, wondering who it could possibly be.

Cautiously, I approached the window, popped the lock and pushed it open violently, waving my weapon of choice (the fireplace poker) wildly.

"Calm yourself, hu- Piper. It is only me, Healer," Healer whispered, pushing away the poker without much worry. "I got Nabaska home safely. She decided that she and her family will be moving, I'll let you know. I see what you did there with the wolves. Very wise. I was going to play into it by making wolf howls but you didn't need them."

I smiled, wondering if she'd be able to mimic the sound of a pack of wolves with the same eerie drone they all seemed to have with her light and carefree voice.

"Why'd you come looking for me?" I asked, leaning against the sill, her warmth enveloping me with her close proximity. I could literally see summer sitting behind her, ready to move on when she was.

"To thank you. You would have been rolling in more money than a crown costs, and yet you chose to give

it up for my doe," her eyes glistened like she had stars wrapped in the golden folds, and I couldn't help get lost in them.

"Of course, Healer," I shook my head to regain my focus, "I'd do it every time if it meant that the world wouldn't come to an end."

She chuckled, her eyes softening. "I don't normally do this," she began, stepping back, "but I'm willing to do it for you. Tell me Piper, what's one thing you wish for, with the deepest parts of your being?"

Good question, I thought. A sullen look fell over my face as I thought.

"Could you heal my family? I hunt only to raise money, because they have a life threatening disease and I'm looking for a cure, but I was too poor to pay for it. My father has already died from the same disease, and my sister will probably be next if I don't get rich and fast. I'm begging you, sacrifice me if you can't do us all. I just want my mom and sister to see the next sunrise." I even got down on my knees, my trembling hands clasped like I was praying.

Healer looked down at me, her face twisting in worry. "Oh, my," she reached up and plucked one bulb from her unruly forest of hair. Reaching out, she dropped the bulb onto my sill.

"This will save you all, and any others you wish to heal. It'll never run out, and it heals all types of disease. But use it wisely, Piper. Do not ever sell it. I hope to see you again, Piper, happy, alive and with your family. You proved to me that humans aren't as heartless as I was led to believe. I must leave now, but if you ever want to visit me, you'll know where to find me. The bulb will help you. Goodbye, Piper. Live a full, rich life," with those words, Healer turned and melted into a whirlwind of snow, her light fading into nothing.

I stared down at the bulb, so small, but so powerful, and a tear slipped free from my eyes and dropped to the sill. I lay my head against the wooden framed and wept, clutching the bulb to my forehead.

Thank you, Healer. Thank you, Nabaska for leading me to Healer. Thank you, for giving your blood so I could save my family.

With the last prayer of thanks, I got up, packing quickly to get ready to depart.

As I passed the window, I paused, before shrugging and leaving it propped open.

# Expository Essay

by Samarah Jeske, Gr. 9  
Centre for Learning@HOME

"I can never hide myself from me," states the work *Myself*. This quotation means that a person must always live with who he or she is, and so one must take care of one's character. One crucial aspect of a person's character development is self-respect, which is an individual's regard for their own value and their own identity. Finding out who one is and what one wants to be like is a struggle all people have at some point, often when they are younger. Establishing an identity based on self-respect influences how one behaves; a healthy feeling of self-respect even benefits a person. This is true in historical examples, in personal examples, and in literary examples. Developing a feeling of self-respect is important because it promotes a strong sense of identity and achievement in life.

Many historical figures demonstrate the importance of self-respect. Amazing men and women succeed because they believe in themselves. One especially pertinent example is the life of Helen Keller. Stricken with a fever at age two, Helen lost her sight and hearing. Unable to communicate properly with her, her parents let her live her first six years in a state of dominance over them. One day, they found a tutor named Anne Sullivan who began to open a new world for Helen. She learned how to talk using her hands, how to comb her hair, how to eat properly, and how to conduct herself with dignity and pride. This was all part of her development of self-respect. As a result, she began to place confidence in herself in spite of her disabilities. While being restricted, Helen pushed herself forward, realizing that the whole world was out there for her. She even learned to talk without ever hearing a single word in her life! Helen Keller went on to become an author, political activist, lecturer, and the first deaf and blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. This could not have ever been accomplished without Helen believing in her abilities and conducting herself with confidence. Her achievements exemplify the importance of self-respect.

Personally, like every other teen, I am in the process of establishing my identity. As a fourteen year old girl, I think about my reputation and character. One point

I have learned through my success, and my failures, is the importance of putting everything I've got into what I do, or believing in my capabilities. When I achieved honours with distinction in grade seven and eight, this was a real boost in how I view myself. Now I know what I can accomplish and I want to strive toward. I know that I have a door opened up where I can accomplish almost anything I put my mind to. Another example of a change in my view of myself was during grade 7. I began to realize that I should ignore comments and opinions that would lead me to change in a negative way. For example, why should wearing a name on a piece of clothing decide who a person is? I've discovered that not heeding to comments like that even heightens people's reputation since people appreciate assertiveness. However, I can use opinions to see how I may be able to improve. Once I strive to be that better person, I feel successful and happy. Caring about my conduct and personality has helped me be successful and content with myself.

Literature is also filled with powerful examples of how self-esteem is important in a person's character development. The book *The Ruins of Gorlan*, by John Flanagan, discusses the development of self-respect in the main character's life. Will is a fifteen year old orphan who has lived his entire life in the castle ward. A 'Choosing Day' ceremony is coming up and Will wants badly to be selected for knight training. Influenced by the bullying of another inmate, Will feels he is inadequate for any of the jobs the 'Choosing Day' offers. He cannot seem to find anything of value inside himself that would make one of the masters select him as an apprentice. When Sir Rodney, the battle school master, turns him down because of his size, Will is devastated. He feels that all he is good for is labour on a farm somewhere. Suddenly an opportunity comes up when he hears that Halt, a mysterious Ranger, has picked him. During his training with Halt, Will even goes as far as to save Halt's life. This shows how Will developed self-respect throughout his apprenticeship, allowing him to accomplish his potential and to be satisfied with his circumstances.

# A Dreaming Ballerina

by Leanna Villaver, Gr. 10  
Notre Dame Collegiate

I dreamed to dance,  
staring at the sky;  
with my glary glance.  
The wind whispers,  
as its air shivers.  
To dance is my passion,  
with my firm determination.  
By poverty's spear  
I was struck in tears.  
Brought my thoughts in fears,  
that my future seemed to be unclear.

## Explaining My Anxiety

by Michaela Bronsch, Gr. 10  
Notre Dame Collegiate

It watches me while I sleep and whispers sweet horrors in my ears. Some days my anxiety could be as light as the oxygen that fills our lungs and the next it'll be the unbearable crushing weight that pounds our ears when we've finally touched the bottom of the pool; lungs fill with water and the mind repeats "you'll never get air in time."

Step back, breathe.

I try not to leave my house, because when I'm out Anxiety wraps it's hands around my throat and gracefully squeezes my very life away. I forget to breathe. It holds on so tight that I can't help, but search through my own thoughts, my own memories; in a desperate attempt to find my own name.

Exhale.

They're watching me.

Suddenly I'm aware of every sight, every sound, every movement that the world and I make. We continuously tip-toe around each other, an endless dance. I run my hands through my hair, probably trying to wipe the feeling away. I shake with adrenaline; I look at the clock every two minutes.

Breathe.

My anxiety blinds me. My hands are frozen, my thoughts and vision are getting cloudy due to the lack of oxygen.

Breathe.

My convulsing knees slam together and I'm thrown to the ground. I grasp the sides of my head to crush the panic from my brain.

Stop.

This may feel like forever,

but the episode will end, the credits will roll, and the screen will fade to black. Hang on because it will pass. It may pass like a kidney stone;

But it will pass.

Just Breathe.



# Letter Entry 3217

by Lillian McCallum, Gr. 11  
Notre Dame Collegiate

MARCH 7. 3217

Elizabeth. My thoughts wander wildly as I write about Elizabeth. Her disappearance surrounds me in my solitude. Running from the Fronts has never been so destructive. Elizabeth's death was at the hands of our controlling government. Caught. Rebel forces. I don't know if running from them is worth it anymore. I've lost everyone: my best friend, Mark, his son, Dan and my whole world- Elizabeth. Who would've thought that I, James Hartfield, would be the last original rebel alive. Lately I don't even know if I should be wearing the New Earth Association sign anymore. These younger, newer rebels don't have a cause, except for killing every government supporter. I thought that being 32 was young enough in itself. Now there are kids half my age running around with machine guns, shooting basically anyone without the symbol patched onto their suit. I don't want to be associated with these killings anymore. The NEA symbol no longer represents something great. It represents death and evil, no greater than the Fronts themselves. Perhaps us rebels are worse, destructing this sad excuse for a planet.

I like to think of what this place once was. I remember when Liz and I first got married. We found a book of pictures. The title read Earth. The pictures on it were beautiful. Unlike anything I have ever seen. There were green and brown things, like rods, but they looked soft, and the book said they gave life. I still don't know how they would. There was an odd light cast over the pictured place. This one I know. It was the Sun: warm and bright, giving optimism by being a reminder that man had not ruined everything natural. There is no Sun now. Or green and brown rods. There is just a vast orange landscape; barren except for the select few buildings spared from the Fiftieth World War. The Fronts explained that we, as humans, don't need the help of anything natural. We are fine on our own. From this was born the Great Fire, the only light on this place that was once called Earth. You'd think that the light the fire casts would help one be optimistic. It's actually the opposite. All it does is remind us that the Fronts have all the power, even the power of manipulating night and day. The fire is only good for its light. It is demolishing everything in its path. What used to be Europe is gone now. There are no oceans left that can put it out. It's hard to imagine that this place had once been bountiful in growth and beauty. But mankind could not let something peaceful stay. It took its disappearance to make us realize the beauty of what we had. We couldn't allow nature to

take its course, and govern the course of history. We sabotaged everything, and for what? Power over one another. How are we any different than the wild dogs who would roam around all those years ago? We each want to be the alpha, stopping at nothing to establish dominance.

I wanted to be better.

I know that my whereabouts have been discovered. I can sense the cameras, can hear their movement as I walk from my place of rest. Running from them is no use. They're everywhere. I'm out of options. Fighting with the rebels has left me homeless, starving, and alone. Is it better to be with them, or against them? I can't help but think back to the time when I was totally sure of whose side I was on. Elizabeth, Dan, and Mark died from running. Do I finish what they couldn't? Or do I learn from their mistakes? I know it's worth it when the cause you support is something you'd die for. Running has taken away anything I have ever loved. I'm running from something I now understand I should be running to.

I know it's not worth it. Liz died for a cause she didn't fully support. Running has only ever made things worse. If I've made it this far, I may as well live for something I actually believe in. I could be an asset for the Fronts, tell them how we have attacked in the past, and then prevent it from happening again. I know that being a traitor goes down as dishonourable and cowardly, but it's better than adding to the death toll.

And the truth is that I don't want to live without Elizabeth. The easiest thing to do would be to end my misery with a bullet. I could leave all of this behind, and go rest in the dark abyss of death. But I can't disrespect her by doing that. I know she wanted to end all of the killing, and help the Fronts stop all this madness. By leaving, I've finally discovered that the bad guys are not the ones who I've been trying to put an end to. It's the ones who wear the NEA symbol, the corporation that started this whole rebellion.

There is a truthfulness to us... It is in our bones, in our blood to want power. This desire, this need to be in control at all times, where does it get us? Separated.

And in reality, I am no better.

If there is a next time,

James.

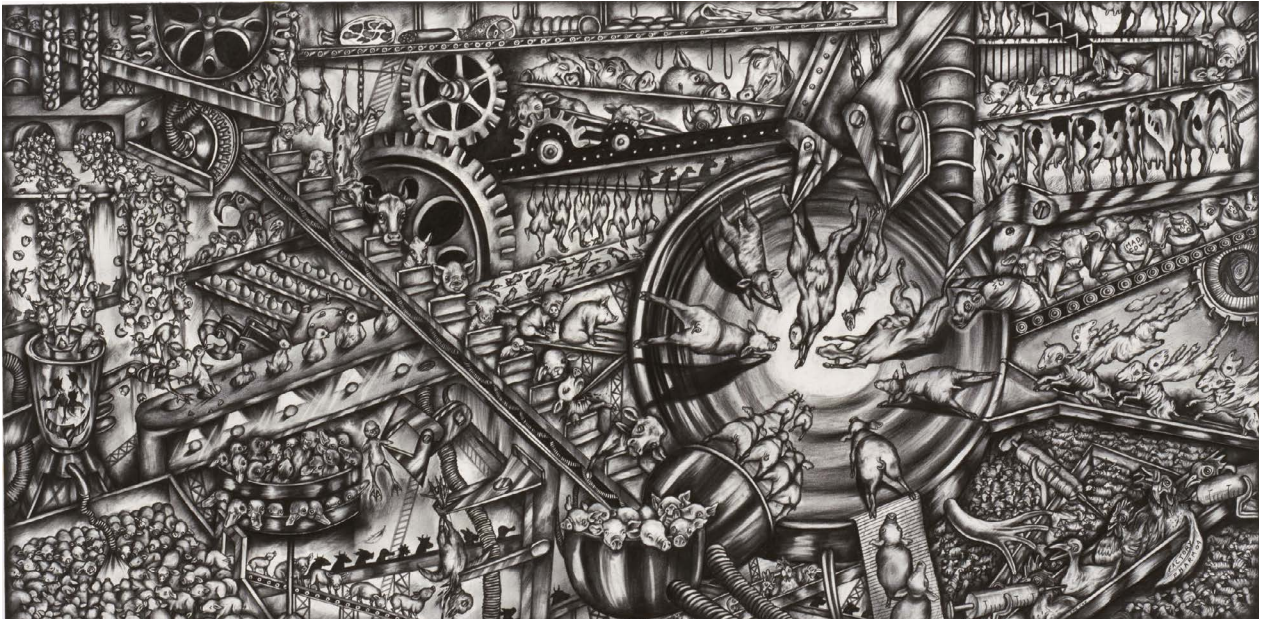


Image: Factory Pharm, Sue Coe

# Factory Pharm

by Donovan Snider, Gr. 12  
St. Anthony's School

Flocks, herds, families of gentle beasts  
Funneled in, strung up, sorted into stainless steel bins.  
They are alive and staring, crammed together  
Riding the factory roller coaster  
Leading them to death.

Round, fluffy chicks are poured down a ramp by the  
hundred.  
The trip down the slide is exhilarating, they would ride  
it again  
If it didn't end in a blender.  
Their pulp is fed to sweaty piglets down below.

Boars and sows are shunted along a conveyor belt  
– they are a conga line of bloated bodies –  
Waddle-dancing their way  
Into the gaping mouth of a starving slicer.  
Out the other end come deli cuts  
Leaking sticky blood, still warm.

Living steaks stand weary on knobby legs  
Udders shrivelled from lifetimes of relentless extrac-  
tion  
They are so exhausted that their heads fail to perceive  
the fun of the party around them  
Until their heads aren't part of them anymore.

Lambs bleat to the beat of their own defeat,  
As they're ground up into meat.

Roosters cock-a-doodle-doo  
As they're flayed and cleaned for you.

Chickens and ducks are picked and plucked,  
Their feet removed and wings are tucked.

Finally, they arrive in our grocery stores, and we troll  
through the freezers  
Selecting cuts and joints and shanks and links.  
We see their styrofoam cases as shelters, not coffins  
Looking forward, only forward, to the ways we will  
roast their fatty flesh.

Juicy steaks, sizzling bacon, plump meatballs,  
Patés, pan fries, meat pies and gravies,  
Hamburgers, nuggets, hot dogs,  
Wings, barbecue.  
Delicious.

How convenient that this meat was so easy to buy  
Fun to prepare  
Tasty to eat.

The animals may not think so.

Nor do some people  
But they're crazy.  
Vegans and vegetarians  
Get a grip, the animals would be eaten by other preda-  
tors eventually  
Don't you understand?  
It's the animal's purpose to be eaten,  
It's just the end of their roller coaster...

# Into These Halls I Roam

by Matthew Ward, Gr. 12  
Notre Dame Collegiate



Into these halls I roam,  
With no sense of being, no place feels like home.  
Developing a heart of stone,  
Every time I hear those screams, every time I hear  
those groans.

Your heart is damaged and mine is too,  
Somehow that makes me feel, like we're the lucky few.  
We know the feeling of emptiness inside, We've seen  
what not to do, we've seen our loved ones cry.  
I want to pick you up and clean the blood off of you, I  
hope we can do the same for me, and clean my heart  
too.

At times I feel irrepara-  
ble, like there's nothing  
we can do.  
Until I see your smile,  
reminding me that there will be  
peace soon.

Our child will never know those screams, the same  
ones heard by me and you.  
Our child will only know that mother is beautiful and  
father lets her know everyday until it can no longer be  
true.  
Not meaning beauty is gone but that souls have now  
escaped and gone a different route.

# The Torture Chamber

by Rayanne Tietge, Gr. 12 St. Anthony's School

The base creaked as I advanced through the massive, tat-  
tered, dull wooden door into the amaranth lit room. The walls  
and roof were covered in ailing mold, peeling paint and what  
seemed to be blood splatters. This abandoned, torn-down  
building was once one of the most brutal, bloodcurdling insane  
asylums in the world.

Spine-chilling stories have been told from east to west about  
this crumbling manor, whispered to stop a man's heart by just  
one look at the place. Some rumour that on the most unillu-  
minated nights you can hear the hair raising wails of the dead  
from five miles away. The residents that once were locked-up  
in the prison for the mentally unstable to be tortured, beaten  
or abused, were either horrified and would never speak of their  
time in the manor, or they be DEAD.

I advanced, slowly and carefully into a very dimly lit  
hallway. My breath catching in my throat. "Why did I accept  
this dare anyways? Was it all for proving to everybody that I  
am not a weak scare girl, that can't even have the guts to walk  
into the place even adults wouldn't even dare step foot in." I  
considered to myself. I am here to prove for one that I am not  
a scared little girl everyone sees me as, and two there is noth-  
ing to be afraid of in this old crumbling, torn to pieces manor.  
It might have been the most gory place around when it was  
opened but now it is just a place that is abandoned, sitting here  
to rot away.

"Slam". What was that? I abruptly swung around towards the  
sound. A amonish shadow crossed the floor, wisping back and  
forth, with howling in a low moan, slowly disappearing into the

shadows. I steadily started toward where the phantom was.  
The moaning still echoing through my ears. My hands quaking  
as I approached the eerie doorway where the shadow slithered  
across the base of the next room.

The walls were lined with stalls, that were most likely use for  
the hernias torture sessions that were put on here, through all  
of those years. The bars on the stalls where bend, eroded, or  
jarred out leaving sharp death traps, if you accidentally trip and  
fall. The floors stained brown and red from all the blood shed  
throughout the years. Almost like the screams of terrors still  
resonating throughout the now empty stalls.

As I slowly and careful crawled through the spikes to reach  
the other side, I felt something glide against my back. I hast-  
ily finished crawling through the small, cramped space to look  
back to realize those weren't only bars but hands and arms  
hanging from the stalls. All of a sudden the one that brushed  
against my back twitched, it was then I realized I was not alone,  
there was something other than me here, something not alive  
any more.

Here I am running for my life out of per terror, just because  
a stupid dare, but all I know I'm not sticking around to find out  
what the horrifying thing wants. I should have never come,  
ever!

Still hearing footsteps behind me I turned the corner to find  
myself with the thing I was running from. It grabs me I strug-  
gled to get free but to no provel. "AHHHH"

# Girls Don't Read

by Emily Dudgeon, Gr. 12  
Notre Dame Collegiate

"Are you out of your damn mind!" The sharp words pierce through the silent blanket of night like bullets aimed for the minds of the hopeful, shattering the facade of peace I'd foolishly let myself fall into. "Boys don't dance! Who are you, what happened to my son, he was a real man." My father's anger-tinged voice shoots up the stairs from the family room as if it too couldn't wait to escape him. I sigh, already feeling the familiar vibrations of the walls as my brother slams the front door. I wonder if it'll be the last time I hear his retreating footsteps violently smacking the pavement outside, maybe he's finally had enough and will leave me to endure my father's tirades alone. This thought causes me to quickly shut the dusty tomb of the library book I'd smuggled into the house. "Reading isn't for women". My thoughts adopt a nasally tone as I picture my father's cracked lips reverently forming the words, as if they were engraved in the Holy Bible itself. How exactly he expects me to know the bible if I can't read, well, I don't believe he's thought about it much, people like that often don't. I soundlessly slip out of the desk, dropping to the dusty floor, and peel back the centre board under which I know lies a hollow compartment full of books, just like the one I gently lay inside the dark crevice. Books my 'pretty head' can't understand. I hear it then. The ominous creak of the stairs accompanied by my father's indignant muttering. Panicked, I slide the floor board back into its place and lunge for the lamp. The room is submerged in an uneasy darkness, but somehow it seems safer than the soft glow of the lamp that had previously flooded the room. I hold my breath as I see the slight shadow of my father's feet pause outside my door, as if contemplating whether or not I will ruin my life as he believes my brother's doing. If only he knew. My hand absently slips into the folds of my skirt burning warmly against the acceptance letter I'd concealed there. Yes, maybe it is better he does not know.

I return home from Jane's shortly after 4:00 in the afternoon. As I approach our faded front door, the tiny hairs on the back of my neck are called to attention as I am struck with an instinctive feeling of fear. The kind where you know something is wrong, but you don't know what, like thinking you left the stove on, or wait-

ing for a storm to blow in, but worse. The door haltingly scrapes open under my weight as I hesitantly creep into the house, calling out for my father.

"Papa, are you home? I'm back!" My words bounce airy around the empty room before crawling back to me, dejected at the lack of a response. I shrug, thinking perhaps my father has gotten caught up at work again. I'm about halfway through trudging up the stairs when I hear the rumbling sound of laughter drifting down towards me. I jump the last couple of steps and curiously creep towards my door, the laughter causing even my own mouth to tilt upwards in a light smile. That is, until I see the scrap of wood laying discarded in the doorway. A million words that my father would definitely deem unlady-like run through my head. Why's he laughing though? This thought gives me some small comfort, maybe he believes I shoved the books under the floorboards while cleaning, because what else could I possibly be doing with my spare time? I guess thinking that isn't fair. I could also be doing other acceptable activities like cooking or husband hunting. Those pastimes just scream excitement. I'm snapped out of my own thoughts by the sound of my father's voice, "Mary, is that...". He doesn't finish the sentence as his throat is filled with another bout of laughter. I stand in the doorway not entirely sure what I'm looking at, half believing my father has been replaced by a much calmer, or much dumber, doppelganger. He's standing next to the upturned floorboard, holding my letter from med school, the crisp white paper making his face look that much redder, presumably from laughter, or drinking, or both. Probably both. The distinctive ruddy brown heart shaped beauty mark on his left cheek is the only way I can truly tell this man standing before me is my father. I feel a familiar pull in my chest, and try to banish the thought from my head that it is disappointment. Disappointment that he hasn't miraculously been replaced by another person, any person really, I can't afford to be too picky.

"Is this some kind of joke? You really think you could be a doctor! I knew one of my kids had a sense of humour!" My father's voice, though muffled in laughter, breaks me out of my reverie. I knew sooner or later



I was going to have to tell him I was leaving, and that he'd be upset that I was doing something frowned upon, but I never thought he'd laugh at me. Have a heart attack maybe, wave around his bible and fill the house with empty bottles, but not laugh at me. I feel it ignite in me, consume me, like a lit match dropped on an oil slick, the spark of defiance. I'd show him. I wipe the smile from his face with just three words: "I. Am. Going." He looks at me in such confusion that my hands prickle with the urge to check my head for spontaneously sprouting horns.

"You applied to school.....". The room is nearly swallowed by the looming mouth of silence that stretches between us, then strangely he shrugs his massive shoulders in resignation, "We'll just have to talk to them about sending us the wrong letter and make sure you're in the appropriate classes." My mouth inadvertently pops open in shock, as I try to sneak a look for bumps on my father's head. After my not so subtle inspection turns up with nothing, I allow a smile to break across my face and the stress to drain from my hunched shoulders. He must've been laughing for joy, something I almost didn't believe he was capable of. "My classes are already all in order. They gave me a scholarship for pre med!" I tell him excitedly. "I'm so glad you understand, you have no idea how scared I was to tell you. I was thinki-".

"Excuse me." The coldness of his voice causes my next words to freeze in my throat, like the iceberg that sank the Titanic. "You're really going to try and be a doctor? This wasn't some ludicrous mistake, no misprint? I thought you were going to be a secretary. You are going to be a secretary," he amends. The bullets he fired at my brother last night have found their new target square in my chest. I try to explain, to tell him I want to help people in this way, that I know I can do it, and can be happy doing it. This is met with more laughter, and the simple cutting sound of, "You cannot do it." I begin to speak up again, the defiance in my chest growing, and pushing me towards this decision more than ever, until I am cut off again: "Drop it Mary. No daughter of mine is ever going to make a fool of herself, make a fool of me, by even trying to fill a man's job. You'll be sent home in a week. Being a doctor is hard. Besides, the neighbour's boy has been looking for a wife, now that's worth your time, don't waste it on silly dreams." He finishes off with a condescending smile that feels like a pat on the head. We face each other for a few more agonizing seconds, the walls of the small room seemingly holding their breath along with us, the dust settling in wait of a decision. In this silence I hear the defiance whisper into my head: 'Don't let him win. We can do this.' I think it's a combination of this defiance and my passion for my dream that causes me to take those five steps towards the closet, where my bag has been packed for weeks, in prepara-

tion of leaving. These few steps and my next words, seal my fate, they ensure that there is no turning back. Why would I want to go back anyways I think, there is nothing behind me. I sling the rough canvas bag across my back and face my father, not letting him see how deep his look of disgust and disbelief cuts me. "If you go, you're not my daughter anymore." He spits the venomous words at me with such force I can feel the windows threatening to shatter in their frames. I blink back the traitorous tears that claw at my eyes, and I push past my father towards the stairway. I've just twisted the handle of the front door and stamp violently out onto the pavement when I hear his departing shot echoing from the confines of my old home, "You will never save a life."

I walk through the vibrant shrubbery on campus, surrounded on either side by ivy covered brick walls that stretch endlessly towards the sky, mimicking what I want so badly to do. I keep my head up as I stroll across the grounds, trying to look like I belong and know what I'm doing, even though I'm fairly certain I've passed these endless walls about eight times in the last ten minutes. I may be a little lost. I pause to look around me, then down at my map again. I sigh and futilely push up the sleeves of the lab coat I'm currently drowning in, I look like a child playing dress up in her dad's clothes. The smallest size they had was a men's medium. I don't care though, I'm finally here.

Once I make it to room 203, I stand outside the shiny brown doors, and take a deep breath to steady my nerves, but the shake in that one breath betrays my true emotions; what if I don't belong, what if I can't do this. No, I will do this, I think to myself as I say a silent prayer and turn the handle, stepping through those doors into a new world.

The second I enter the room, 50 pairs of eyes casually glance at me, look away, then snap back as if in realization of an incredible discovery. I awkwardly smile and shuffle towards an empty seat near the back of the room. On my way over I risk a glance up through the curtain of my hair, and spot another classroom separated by a bank of windows. In the centre of this room is another young woman walking towards a seat of her own, she looks scared out of her mind, her face is flushing red and I can see the whites of her knuckles gripping at the edges of her too big sleeves, the men around her are staring at her like some kind of zoo exhibit. I can practically hear their whispers through the divider, jokes about kitchens and losing her mind. I think I see her forcing back tears but am

Continued on page 80

page 79

Continued from page 79

snapped back into my own situation by the professor's voice: "Excuse me miss? Have you taken a wrong turn by chance?" I shoot him my hardest look and sit down crossing my arms defiantly. I need to do this. For me, for that other girl frozen like a deer in headlights amongst the judgment of so many others.

Loaded down with coursework and the stares of my peers I begin walking towards my next class. It doesn't start for another hour, but I need to allot at least thirty very productive minutes for wandering around aimlessly and cursing my map.

By the time I've passed the statue of some man long dead for the twentieth time, I decide I better take a break and clear my mind. While searching for a quiet bench I notice the girl from earlier, standing across the campus in front of some sort of glass sculpture that I am too tasteless to understand. She looks tired, the bags under her eyes appear as if they could hold the entire world and still have room for more, but yet, she seems oddly free. I realize with a start that we've been keeping eye contact this whole time and quickly look away. Staring is rude, I half heartedly remind myself, too distracted by the appearance of a bench to truly mean it. As I sink onto the sun warmed seat I can't help but allow my thoughts to run away with me: why am I really here? What pushed me to take this leap? Was it solely to prove my father wrong, to gain my independence? I think partially, but not entirely. I reflect back to my time volunteering at the hospitals. I loved it. No it's not just defiance guiding my actions, it's passion. These forces both scare and excite me, but I know I'm happier than I ever was in that dusty attic and the sky is my only limit now, even if I have to build my ladder there rung by rung, seeing others whip by me on their planes to the top.

In my second class I once again slip into a seat at the rear of the classroom, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, which is exceedingly difficult when I feel like a gazelle in a herd of lions. Despite my nervousness, the second I glance up at the lesson on the board I can feel my heart beginning to erratically flutter in my chest like a great hawk shoving against the walls of its cage. This is it.

"Damn it." I whisper under my breath as the colour in my cheeks begins to rise at record speeds. Who forgets to bring a pen to class, I silently curse myself, while attempting to discreetly check through my bag one last time. The frustrated tirade I've been carrying out on the contents of my purse is abruptly interrupted when a large calloused hand breaks into my line of vision and extends an olive branch from his world

to mine: a blue pen. I hesitantly smile my thanks at the young man next to me, fearing a flirtatious wink or condescending comment in response, but he's already hyperfocused on the lecture once again. Before I gratefully turn back to our lesson, I can't help but catch a glimpse of a large scar or birthmark splashed on the boy's tricep, the ruddy brown of it so strangely familiar. Before I can beat it back, a wave of nostalgia and quiet acceptance rolls through me as I think back to my father. I know I will never see him again. I guess in a way he never really saw me in the first place.

...

"And there we go! You're all set." I say with a smile while tying off the end of the neon blue bandage. The little girl, who now possesses the bandage, smiles shyly up at me, while her mom gently lifts her off the examination table, and pockets the prescription I'd given them. They call out their thanks as they open the bright yellow door of my office, and head out into the sunlit waiting room. I smile faintly to myself and begin cleaning up my work area.

The feeling of the sunlight streaming through the windows takes me back to that first day in college, when I wondered what I was doing there, and if I was making the right choice. I know my answer now. I guess in a way I always did. The smile of the child in the cast is answer enough for me. That little girl listening to her brother being yelled at never could've seen herself where I am now, but oh how proud she would be.

I stop my daydreaming, reminding myself that I'm probably better off actually doing my job than attempting to contemplate its deeper meaning. I laugh at myself and peel off my gloves as I move towards the sink. As the cold water pours over my sore hands, the girl from college, dressed in a snug lab coat, brushes past me smiling, her eyes look clear and focused, and her skin is glowing as if she contained a thousand fireflies in her very being. I look into the mirror, yes, that smile definitely belongs there.

The door is hurriedly pushed open, bumping dully against the wall, as a nurse bursts into the room. "We have a man in critical condition in the OR. Car Accident. We're prepping for surgery!" Then as quickly as she came she disappears leaving only the shaking hinges of the door, and the echoes of her footsteps. I quickly follow.

We both dash through the doors of the OR to find an older man lying on the operating table. I immediately begin to suit up while another doctor clinically describes the state and identification of the victim: "Punctures on both legs, collapsed lung, broken collar bone. He's perhaps late 60's, dark hair, heart shaped birthmark on his left cheek."

# Going Deeper

by Siarra Weisensel,  
St. John Paul II Collegiate

They say “put out into the deep”  
But the deep is dark and scary  
It means to trust in the unknown  
Be you tired and lost and wary  
But with that trust, that faith  
Comes more than you could ever know,

A love so deep and wonderful  
Your heart can't help but grow.  
I'll try to put into the deep,  
I'm sure it might be harder,  
But I'll close my eyes and trust in God  
And remember, He's my father.

# Love me

by JoAnne Akerboom, St. Anthony's School

I punch, I kick, I scream, I bite  
Even though it doesn't seem right  
I just want someone to notice me  
And help me be all I can be

Sadness washes over me,  
Even my mom can't help me see  
Even though I am very smart  
Where do I even begin to start?

My body is an energy ball  
I go and go until I fall  
Who will be the one to catch me?  
Please, won't someone try to save me?

Day after day I push away  
The very ones that are here to stay  
The shining lights that constantly say

We know that you are going to be okay  
They guide my way  
Even when I dare to say  
I hate you and don't want you  
Leave me alone, I'll kill you

I just want to die!

They pick me up and hold me close  
These angels of the Holy Ghost  
They listen to my every word  
Even when it's quite absurd

Please pray that I become the man  
That follows through on the plan  
Remembering all the time and love  
These teachers gave from with help from above.

# Remembrance of a Friend

by Olivia Liboiron,  
Christ the King Academy

(thanks to benjamin f. williams)

my heart is still  
as we stand by your grave.  
I wish you were still with us,  
your face breaking into a childlike grin,  
your blue eyes sparkling.

your 90 years were fruitful  
you, who toiled for long hours  
tilling, planting, harvesting –  
working tired hands to the  
bone to feed five hungry  
mouths and to build a  
life with your beloved wife Ann

you, who sat back  
contentedly in your automatic recliner,  
cheering for the Habs,  
enjoying half a can of beer,  
roaring at the sight of  
five-finger shoes.  
“they’re from the devil!”

you, my grandpa Liboiron,  
who is resting peacefully  
in God’s kingdom,  
while Ann keeps your  
recliner seat warm.

knowing

they’ll never spit in your face  
they’ll never throw stones  
but their words will scar and tear  
at your flesh and bones  
you’ll fight heart and soul  
you’ll fight ‘til the death  
but it’s really your wavering image of self  
that you’re battling within  
and the harder you fight

the more you’re torn down  
no matter what. In spite  
of your more earnest efforts  
it’s time to give up  
throw your hands up  
look up...

and you crash  
d  
o  
w  
n  
.

it’s dark here.

a still, unsure voice –  
you ask for some light  
then you’re bathed in a radiance  
ready to fight  
and He raises you up  
and dusts you right off  
not a word of contempt, never a scoff  
t’wards your weak and your tremulous image  
portraying  
a scared, weakened child not used to obeying  
but it’s time to step down from what you thought  
was once true

and discover that only in Him will you find you.

not in the words or the judgments of others  
not in the makeup, the clothing, the covers  
hiding your majesty, hiding your glory  
now He’s the author, and here is your story:

I know this is right.  
I know this is true.  
I know Love is heart-wrenchingly, unabashedly  
You.

# Of all the things I did... right?

by Naomi Hartery,  
Christ the King Academy

As a mom, it's easy to sit and think about  
All the things I did wrong.  
The negative moments replay in my mind  
Leading to late night regret.

Speaking harshly  
Judging and snapping  
Choosing a bit more time on my phone  
Cursing in their ear shot.  
Arguing with dad in front of them.

Do I do enough homework with them?  
Do I make enough healthy food?  
Are their H2O bottles BPA free?  
Do I play enough with them?  
Do I work too much?

Wait...

As a mom, I should sit and think about  
All the things I did right.  
Let the joy play in my mind  
Leading to restful nights of sleep.

Reading endless stories  
Camping with late nights and sticky  
marshmallows.  
Swimming at the pool on quiet Sunday  
afternoons.  
Decorating for birthday parties with each new  
fad.  
Praying before bed and meals.  
Enjoying endless board game wars.  
Watching their hockey games and dance  
performances  
Missing them when I am away.

How did my kids learn to be so fun?  
How did they become people who are good  
friends to have?  
How did they become so wise already?  
How did they become cute muses for endless  
Facebook posts?  
How did my children become so loving?

As moms, it's not about all the things we do  
wrong.  
It's about all the things we do right!!!

The following piece of writing is a teacher model from Writers' Workshop, mimicking the poem "You have Two Voices" by Nancy Prasad.

# I have two snow tools

by Vince Marion

Centre for Learning@HOME

I have two ways to clear snow,  
a snowblower or a shovel.  
When I blow snow away  
the experience empowers me  
like Dr. Strange or Ironman  
vanquishing enemies from our realm.

But then I pick up a toothpick  
when I shovel snow in a squall.  
Each movement is a swat at a fly.  
I swing vainly and madly, but to no avail.  
The fly taunts and teases and eludes capture.  
Defeated, I discard my toothpick in fitfull disdain.

I have two ways to clear snow;  
only one conquers a blizzard.  
Put on a Superhero cape.  
Feel the combustion engine superpowers  
annihilate the frozen element, declaring to  
the world: "Hulk Smash Snow!"



**Submit to next year's Tablets & Doorposts!**  
**Email [ckuemper@redeemer.ab.ca](mailto:ckuemper@redeemer.ab.ca)**