

"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 2022

 Christ The Redeemer
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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Published at
Christ The Redeemer Catholic Schools
June 2022

tablets & doorposts

A JAMBOREE OF WRITING

**“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 fourth edition of Christ the Redeemer (CTR) Catholic School's Tablets and Doorposts Writing Anthology. In these pages you will experience narrative, poetry and non-fiction written by students from Kindergarten through 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 the 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 past two years created many new experiences for the world, directly impacting students and staff. For some, writing became an outlet to express emotions and attempt to make sense of the world around them. This resulted in writing from the heart, providing the reader a glimpse into the lives of the authors. CTR Catholic's annual Doorpost Café was once again celebrated virtually, as the opportunity to share and celebrate writing continues to be a priority in the division.

The theme for Tablets 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.

My Brother After Hockey

by Laney HB, Grade 2
St. Mary's School



MY BROTHER After Hockey

illustrated

By

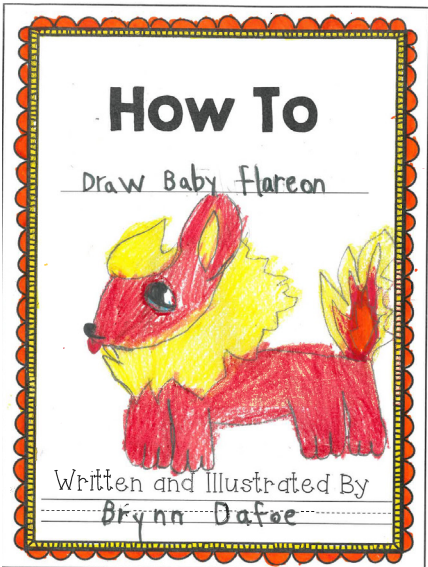
and written
Laney Boon 7

He smells like sweet.
He sounds like someone running 50 miles
He tastes like someone liking a muddy
He makes me feel proud of him.
He looks like he did his best.



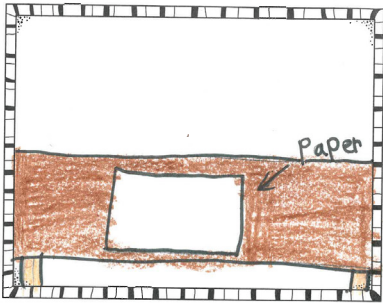
How to Draw Baby Flareon

by Brynn D, Grade 2
St. Mary's School

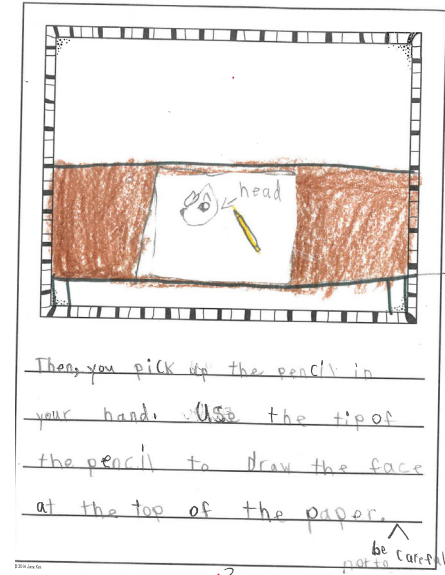


Materials Needed

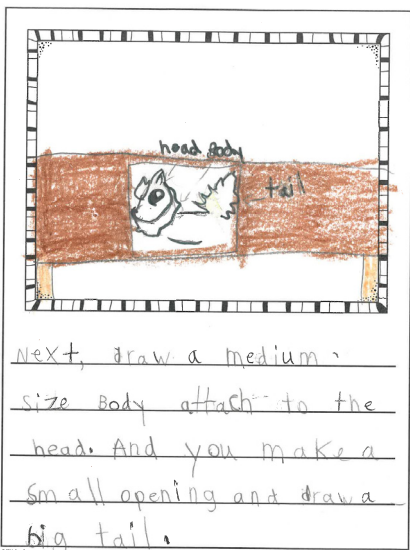
- pencil
- Crayons
- markers
- paper
-



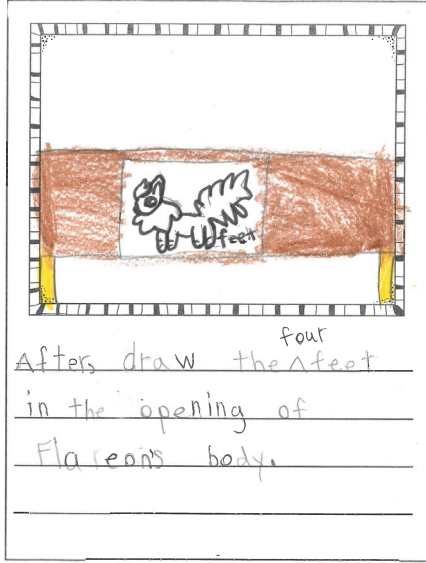
First, get one piece of white paper and put it on a table in front of you



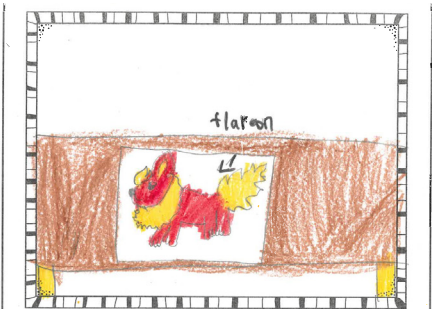
Then, you pick up the pencil in your hand. Use the tip of the pencil to draw the face at the top of the paper.



Next, draw a medium size body attach to the head. And you make a small opening and draw a big tail.



After draw the ^{four} feet in the opening of Flareon's body.



Finally, you color neatly in the lines and match the all colors.

If I Were A Polar Bear

by Hannah C, Grade 2
St. Mary's School



If I Were A Polar Bear

If i were a polar bear
my name would be Polarina.
I would live in an ice
mansion it is really really big.
My favorite food would be
penguin pizza with extra cheese
and extra penguin. I have
two freinds named: big guy
(bob) and little guy. Every
day i bake cakes with
my freinds, and watch tv.
I always wear shoes, skirts and a
t-shirt and a headband. Big guy
is big, strong, and afraid of spiders.
little guy is little, shy, and afraid
of spiders too. I'm afraid of walrus
because they have tusks. I
love to go camping with my
freinds. my favorite desert is seal
cake. I have a son named fred
he is twelve years old, I am
thirty-three. my birthday is my
fifth. My sons favorite food is

seal burgers. I also have a
daughter named Lisa. She is
six years old. her favorite food
is a seal, fox, and reds favorite
colour is green. Lisas favorite
colour is pink.

Ponies

by Freya M, Grade 2
Assumption School

DIVISION
1

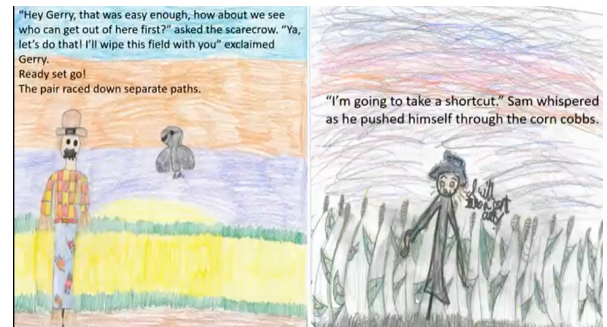
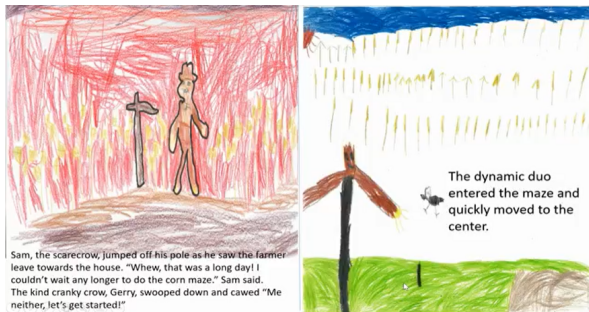
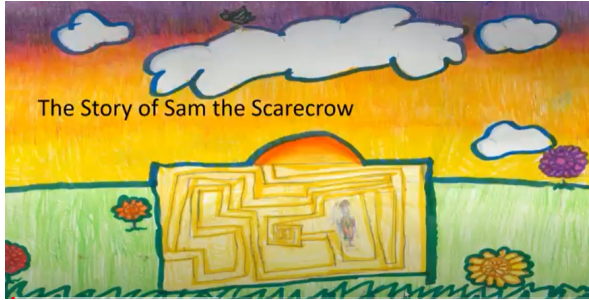
Ponies
By Freya



I love Ponies. Do you know
Some Ponies breeds have been around
for many many years? Also Ponies
in the Past were used for work. A
long time ago Ponies were used for
farms and coal mines. In addition Ponies
Live in Maryland and Virginia
U.S.A. In addition Ponies can
have spotted coats. Finally
herds have been around for
more than 500 years. I
hope you had fun reading
this.

The Story of Sam the Scarecrow

by Mrs. Patterson's Gr. 3 Class
Sacred Heart Academy



Emerging from the maize, the scarecrow spun around. A sinking feeling hit his heart. Sam did not know where he was. He was lost.

"Wha-a-at am I going to do? Cried Sam. He started pulling hay out of his hat. "Gerry, GERRY! He yelled. But Sam quickly stopped. "I can't yell" he whispered to himself. "Farmer Ben will hear me."

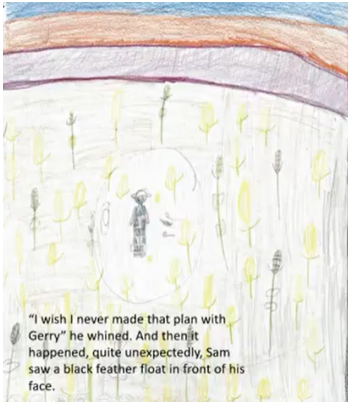


Sam hung his head as the sky grew darker.



Sam tapped his finger on his chin. "Hmmm, how can I get out of here?" Sam questioned. Suddenly dirt flew into the air. Dark furry heads popped up from a hole. "What's wrong, we heard you yelling Sam?" asked a family of moles. Sam exclaimed, "I'm lost, can you help me find my way out?"

"Yes of course, we can tunnel you out, follow us!" The moles turned around and started burrowing into the dirt. Well, Sam tried to follow. He tried to claw, swipe and scoop like the moles but his hands of hay would not cooperate. The scarecrow gave up. He kicked the dirt as a tear ran down his cheek.

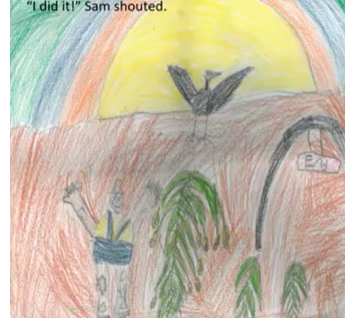


"I wish I never made that plan with Gerry" he whined. And then it happened, quite unexpectedly, Sam saw a black feather float in front of his face.

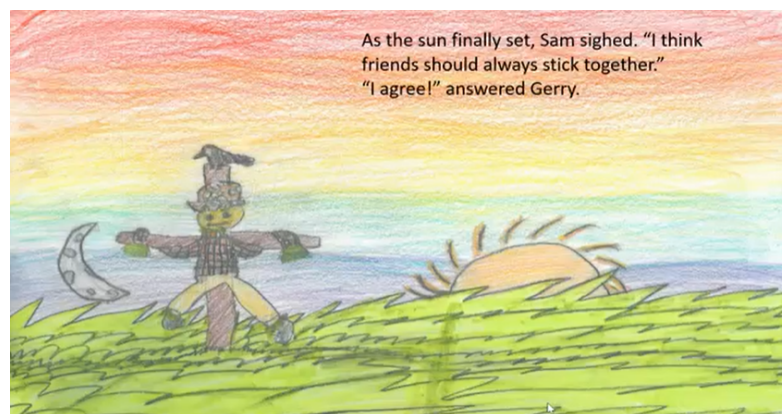
"I won! What happened Sam?" Gerry asked his friend. "I got so turned around in this maze that I got lost!" Sam sobbed. "I can help you Sam, I will fly above and you can follow me." Gerry laughed.



The two friends coordinated themselves. Gerry gave Sam directions to find his way out. One more left turn and Sam saw the exit. He sprinted and was finally free. "I did it!" Sam shouted.



His face broke into a grin from ear to ear. "I am so relieved!" "We did it together!" Gerry smiled as he landed on Sam's shoulder.



As the sun finally set, Sam sighed. "I think friends should always stick together." "I agree!" answered Gerry.

My Messy Closet

by Penelope W. Gr. 3
Sacred Heart Academy

Oh, my closet, how bad of he,
When he made a tornado that swirled up me,
I scrunched
And I punched
And he threw me into the sea!

The Rock

by Cicilia L. Gr. 3
Sacred Heart Academy

There once was a stubby old rock,
Who suddenly started to talk,
"Howdy, people of this place,
I shall challenge you to a race!"
But he got caught in a cage with a lock.


All About Track & Field

by Laine D, Gr. 3
St. Mary's School

DIVISION 1

I dedicate this book to
My Dad because he told me
about Track and Field.

Introduction



Do you want to know what track and field is? If you want to learn about it then read this book to find out. I don't only like it, but I like to look at it. I wonder what you think. My teacher says it has lots of different sports in it like running, jumping and many more different ones. Let's learn about track and field together!

Turn the page to start learning!

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My Diagram of

A Track And Field Field



Different kinds of Track and fields



running



Long Jump




Shot Put



high Jump

History:

How did this sports get invented?



Did you know track and field started out as a footrace? Greeks wanted to know of how good athletes they are. It started around 776 B.C. Track and field started to get popular in other places.

They wanted to show off how good they were at jumping. They would need to make a game for jumping. They made up games as they went. Now track and field became popular in lots of places.

continued on pg 10

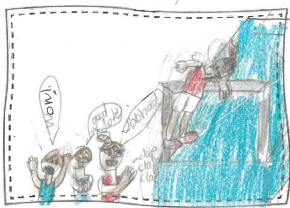
GRADE 3

page 9

| Tablets & Doorposts Anthology

Equipment:

What do you need to play this sport?



Did you know that equipment is a very important part to doing the events for track and field?

Running for running you will need grip running shoes. Hurdles you are hurdling. If you will need some hurdles because you can't hurdle without hurdles.

shot put you will need

shot ball, a shot ball is a very heavy ball, you will also need some space to do it.

Javelin You will need to do this event you need a javelin spear and a space.

High jump this the event I think is pretty cool, you use a stick and you kinda launch you self up to the bar attached to the stick and you turn around and you the center bar the equipment which is a stick and rope attached to a mat.

the equipment used in running shoes and hurdles for hurdling, for shot put you will need a shot ball, you will need a javelin spear for Javelin and last but not least my friend you will need a stick to push and a pole attached to a mat to fly over.

Warm Ups

Did you know that warm-ups are very important because they keep you from getting hurt?

Take jogging as an example, you need to do a bit of 'going' to get used to running and to keep you from getting hurt.

Jumping! Target stretch is jumping you need to stretch! stretching helps you and you can

get ready to start jumping.

Hurdling has lots of warmups that were going to talk about.

slow back try to remember it as little steps big steps, in clauden you run along the hurdles not on them! beside them, you have to lift up you legs you need to get used to lifting up your legs.

skip skip Hurdles means you skip twice and jump over the hurdles, that's why you call it skip skip hurdles, try this next one.

Progressive Hurdle, when you this the better you get the taller the hurdles you have to see if you can do that.

The Essentials:

How do you participate in this sport?



Half Part runs in the field and field is Hurdles.

You will start in the high part all the sports, once you know what sports you want to do you will start there. These

sports you practice those sports

and then maybe you will go to do the track and field.

Rules and Penalties

It's a surprising fact to know that track and field has ^{lots of} rules. Here are ^{some of} the rules.

1. Look both directions when you cross the track. Because if you accidently hit someone you ruin the sport.

2. Do not walk across the field during

throwing sports like: Javelin and shot put.

you could be very hurt. 3. Equipment

must be used correctly. Because you

could get hurt. 4. No head phones. Because

you need to hear! 5. You can only warm

up outside of the track. Because if

your warming up inside the field you

will get hurt or ruin the sports. If

you have to go to the other side

you have to walk off the field.

Competition:

How and where do you compete to be the best?



It starts out as next day in Div 1. You get ribbons and stuff. In div 2 do the sports like Hockey and stuff like that. It's a little different then cause you only

place 1st 2nd 3rd. To high school you start to get really good. Then you could make it To like maybe the Olympics.

Famous Athletes



Melissa Bishop-Wriagly is a Canadian runner. She won a silver medal at the 2015 world athletics championships. She was pregnant in 2018. She is born

in Eganville, Ontario. In Toronto

she ran 159 to win the gold. She finished 2nd in the 800 meters at the 2015 World Athletics Championships in China.

Glossary

WORD:	DEFINITION:
1. champions	people that are really good.
2 nd field	where the track and field makes place.
3. Olympics	where you go to compete when your really good.
4. 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	What you can place.

Index

Here are some key words and concepts in this book.

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2. Field PAGES 15
3. High Jump PAGES 59
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7. Start put PAGES 58

Meet the Author



I have been writing over 192 years. she has write If I Had A Unicorn, All At All Foxes, How to make a rainbow, Learn Fish tail and

all about truck and field. she is working on The Mermaid tail and created my 5 senses. Laine lives with her family in Okotoks, Alberta, Canada. Laine loves her dog, Izzy, Foxes, Crafts, Reading, exercising, camping, friends, playing outside, having the same teacher two years in a row and read all WRITING

All About Swimming

by Kate J, Gr. 3
St. Mary's School

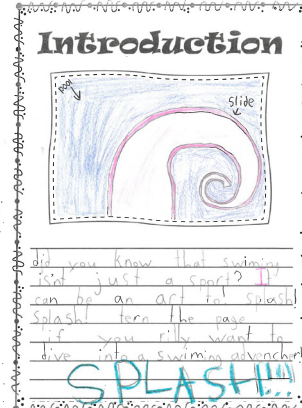
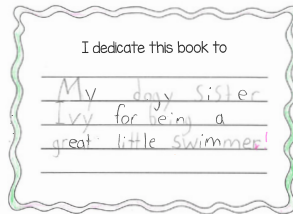
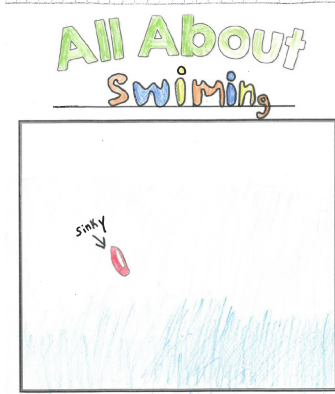
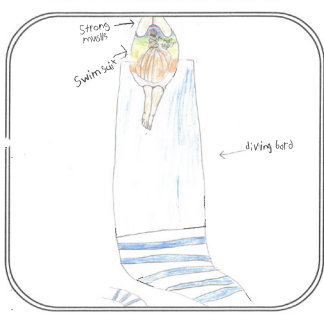


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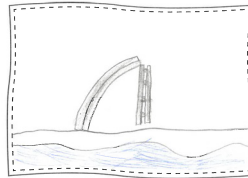
Different kinds of Swimming

My Diagram of A Swimmer



History:

How did this sport get invented?



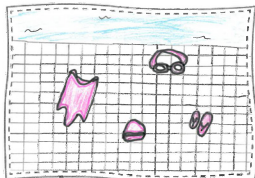
How did swimming get invented? Years ago the Egyptians did swimming in 2500 B.C. in ancient Greece and Rome young girls practiced swimming in their schools.

Swimming contests became popular in the 1800s the first swimming championship was in Australia during

1846. The history of swimming is cool!

Equipment:

What do you need to play this sport?

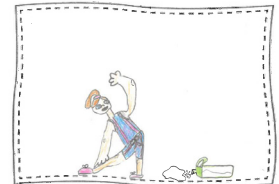


Hi teacher! Lets get started! First you need a swim suit, a pool and if you want a pair of goggles for practice.

for competition you need a swimming cap so your hair doesn't get in the way, a swim suit so your clothes don't get wet,

a pair of goggles so your eyes don't sting and flip-flops or sandals to walk on the pool deck.

Warm Ups



AWCH! Have you ever pulled a muscle rly? Well if you didn't you mite if you don't warm up. You can warm up by practicing stretching and running. This stretches your muscles so that you use to the sport that you are doing. If you are doing something like swimming I would

practs to warm up but it's your choice not mine.

You can even motivate your self to warm up the play music or look forward to something happening soon.

The Essentials:

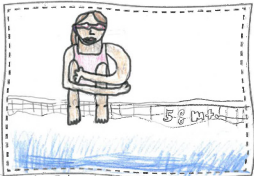
How do you participate in this sport?



Hi! lets get started! you need to know how to swim so take swimming lessons. Every year in swimming lessons you have to pass to go to the next level one thing for sure if you want to pass you have to pass your boundaries I should know bry way to pass your boundaries just

Remember to have limits. also dont be scared) Haer has never in my life been a time when I stopped swimming with out my instructor catching me. Swimming is fun! so if you get really good you can join a team and compete

Rules and Penalties



SLEEP! HAER is rules to keep that from happening a few more. No dunking people in the water because they will shake. Dont run or you will slip, take a shower so you dont get the pool dirty. Dont drink the pool water because you will get sick. Dont go too deep before you know how to swim.

Always listen to the life guard and your garden because they will keep you safe (races) you have to touch the wall so you start the race at the same time as every one else. You can only go when the pistol starts for the same reason you have to touch the wall dont touch the bottom because thats cheating.

Competition:

How and where do you compete to be the best?




Competing is hard! lets get started! you have to be strong to compete and you have to work hard to win but its just for fun so the winner is always a good sport which means you dont get upset if you lose and

you dont show off if you win.

Famous Athletes

DARA TORRES



Hi! do you know Dara torres? if you dont your about to! Dara torres was born April 15th 1967. She did games in Los Angeles Time: 3 min. Sec. 43.43. in 1988 She was Swimmer of the year NCAA. Dara Torres is cool!

Glossary

WORD:	DEFINITION:
1. Boundrys	knowing when it get to far
2. Instruktir	your teacher in a pool
3. Cheeting	not following rules to win
4. Pool deck	the ground around the pool like the floor

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Here are some key words and concepts in this book.

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Meet the Author



Kate lives in Okotoks, Alberta with her family. She is currently 9 years old. She loves art and riting. When she is not playing with her dog Ivy who she calls her little sister she is listening to gergera or Katy perry's music. She has often other books like the mice & mistery, how to make friendship and more.

All About Figure Skating

by Fallyn L, Gr. 3
St. Mary's School

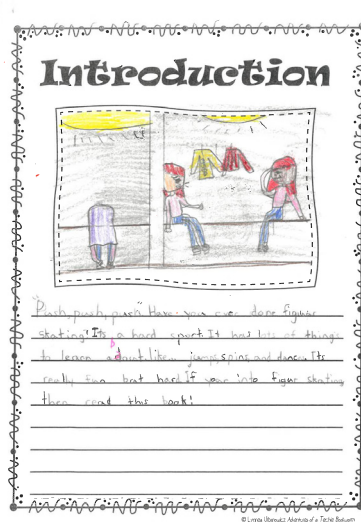
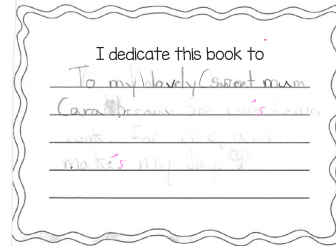
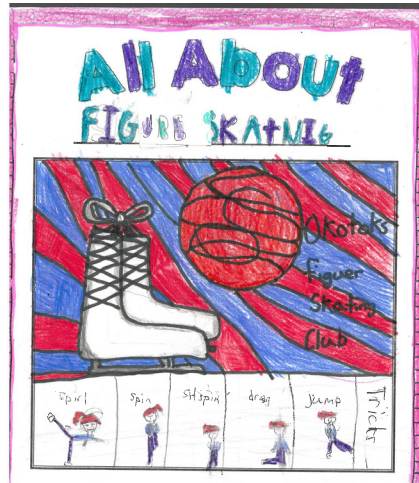
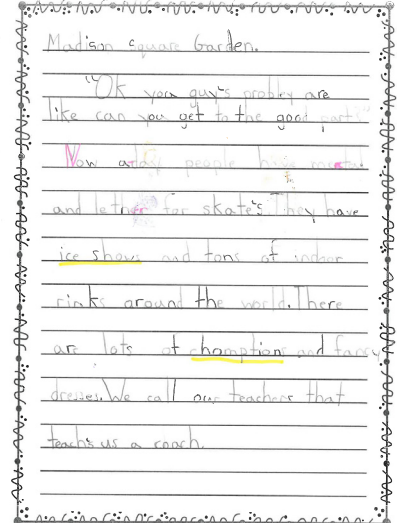
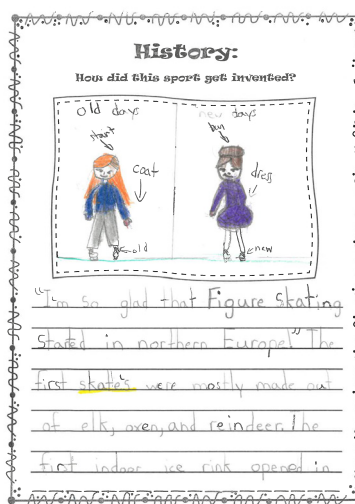
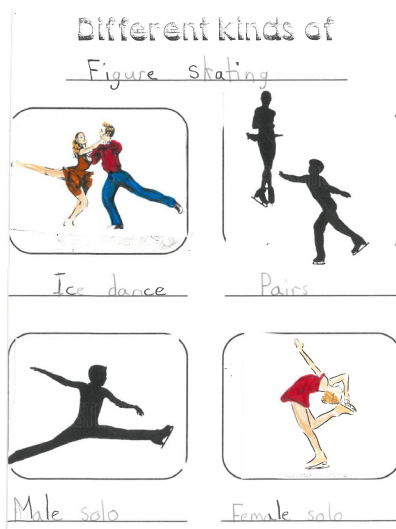
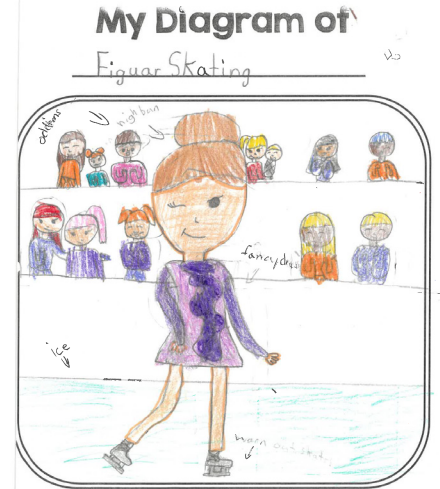
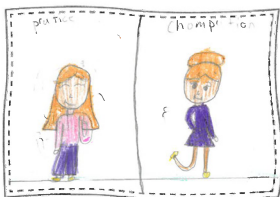


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Equipment:

What do you need to play this sport?



"So now you into figure skating? There's a lot of EQUIPMENT you need for competition and practice.

The first one you need need NICK is figure skating SKATES. The most important thing in figure skating to do jumps, spins and pairs. You need to make sure your skates fit. If you feel like there are going to fall off.

The second thing you need ^{gloves} ~~gloves~~ they are ^{important} to wear if your hands are cold but you can't wear them if you are a champion.

Third is a helmet (It's report skating wear it that's for it) It make your head warm and cut down at a champion.

Warm Ups



"Snap! did you hear that?" That is sound that can really hurt you if you do it wrong up in figure skating. Warming up is very important so you don't break a leg.

First for warming up in figure skating to do 8 laps in total. 4 laps forward, 2 backward, 1 lap around and go forward 1 lap then backward 1 lap.

The Essentials:

How do you participate in this sport?



"Snap! Did you forget your skate? Oops I did!" See even beginners can be forgetful. There are different levels in figure skating there are a lot of levels there are Can State Academy Junior intermediate senior and on to the diamond.

Can skate is the easy level. All you

need to do is your crosscut and you that it. Academy is a harder level.

You need to do jumps and spins and spins. Senior is a hard level.

You start my doing your tricks and then you get a simple whirl.

is a hard level. you get to do your and complete tricks. And you get to do harder dances.

Rules and Penalties



"Wait!" did you hear that? There are some rules!"

well maybe not. Some Rules are that you have to follow in figure skating it to have the proper skate it-

You don't you might get sent off the ice if you don't have a pick on your skate. For different levels of skaters it gets harder. There are some safety jumps and spins you can't do till your on a level.

At champions you have to wear a dress and tights or you could not participate. Your skirt can't be too long.

Competition:

How and where do you compete to be the best?



"I'm scared! what if I fall?!"

It can be scary to do your solo at a big competition. I once had to do my solo in front of everyone.

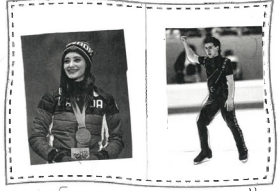
In figure skating you go in all

continued
on pg 16

continued from pg 15

Different disciplines. A lot of champions are in city or towns. You have scores, he scores are bronze, silver, gold. you mostly have to do your solo or a dance. International champion (world champion) people from the world not just from your country. National champion people from your country not from the world. If you like my book read book two.

Famous Athletes



"EKK! Famous figure skater!"


There is two one I really like. The first one I'm going to be talking about is Katlynn. She started skating at the

age of three. She moved to Edmonton at the age of ten. She was there longer than I was. Won three times London winter camp. Born December 5, 1992. Elvis Stajko. Was three times world time champion 1994, 1995, 1997. He was born in Canada. Started skating at the age of

Glossary	
WORD:	DEFINITION:
1. Olympic	a big champion.
2. International champion	world champion
3. solo	are little routine. to dance to music.
4. Dance	not jumps just simple moves.

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Here are some key words and concepts in this book.	
1. camp	PAGES 19
2. bronze, silver, gold	PAGES 17
3. solo	PAGES 16
4. ice show	PAGES 7
5. state	PAGES 6
6. head warmer	PAGES 9
7. laps	PAGES 10

Meet the Author



Fallyn Loney

She lives in

DRUIDS ALBERTA

She has two pets, a fish and cat.

She has a tiny family, her

mom lives with her and

her father.

Born June first 2013

The Pancake

by Dodge K, Gr. 3
Assumption School

I started out as a gloop in a bowl. Poor and lonely, sitting in a bowl, doing nothing.

When all of a sudden a giant spoon came and scooped me up! "Help!" I cried out to the other bowls as I was being lifted up, but none of them heard me. Suddenly, the spoon tipped over and poured me onto some sort of giant table. As I was being poured, my body began to evolve. Other gloops were created from me. A giant outsider pressed a button on this table and it started to get hot. Not just hot, but



VERY HOT. I was thrown up and smacked upside down back on this hot table. I soon began to feel myself stiffening up.

Soon I was not a gloop anymore. I was a fluffy, floppy sort of circle. I didn't feel hot anymore. Once again, I was scooped up and put onto a plate. I felt safe. Then a kid came by and grabbed me and the plate I was sitting on. "Wait! No! Please, I'm innocent! Please don't eat me! NO!" I yelled, but the kid didn't hear a word I said.

Le Musée Hanté

by Madeleine J, Gr. 4
École Good Shepherd School

La lune était la seule lumière qui brillait au-dessus du musée où Jacques était terrifié. Dehors, les chauves souris, noir comme la nuit sans étoiles, ont fait des cris horribles pour ajouter à l'environnement lugubre. Dans le musée, le vieux piano soudainement a commencé à jouer de la musique horrificante qui était comme un avertissement de partir, sinon. . . Mais, ce piano n'avait pas fonctionné depuis des années! Jacques savait à cause de toutes les visites que sa mère lui a forcé de prendre à ce musée. L'odorat dégueulasse des moisissures était dans les airs. La poussière était partout et a causé Jacques d'éternuer. Directement avant de ses yeux, les peintures ont commencé à bouger! Les fantômes mystérieux (Jacques savait toujours qu'ils étaient vrais) des conservateurs du musée qui étaient censés d'être morts ont flotté partout et ont demandé à Jacques

désespérément de venir avec lui. Le petit garçon était obligé de toucher un verre de terre énorme et étrange avant de continuer. Ensuite, il était forcé de toucher une araignée veuve noire! À chaque porte, les poignées de portes glaciales touchaient ses mains. Après cela, il a mangé lentement le seul sandwich sans moisissure qui restait dans son sac à dos. Plus tard, les mouches étaient la seule nourriture possible à manger dans tout le musée, et Jacques avait TELLEMENT FAIM!!! Il a décidé de regarder pour une façon de sortir le musée hantée. C'était aussi un peu parce qu'il ne voulait PAS manger des mouches, justement. Enfin, Jacques a trouvé un cintre pour mettre dans la serrure de la porte du musée terrifiant et s'est échappé. Il était tellement content. Donc, le garçon n'a jamais fait l'erreur de dire qu'il n'a peur de rien!

Untitled

by Ruth T, Gr. 4
Assumption School

My special place is in our backyard, specifically under the old, strong tree in my backyard. It is my special place because I have had so many exciting moments of my life there. I feel very warm and cozy under that tree, even in the winter time. Occasionally my pets come and visit me there and snuggle up to me. Recently I have made a little nest for my cat in a three-sided shed in my backyard for my new kittens. On some rare occasions, I see my family members' cars thundering down the road coming for a visit. On hot summer days,

when my parents are feeling really thoughtful, they give us freezies there. We have a peaceful lake in our backyard, where my dad will be installing a huge hammac soon. In my yard I feel loved, lucky and joyful. Every morning when I go to feed our cats, I always hear a meadowlark singing. When I look around I see our road, the hayfield and our many animals playing. These many reasons are why I call our backyard my special place.

Sad

by Liam O. Gr. 4
Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Academy

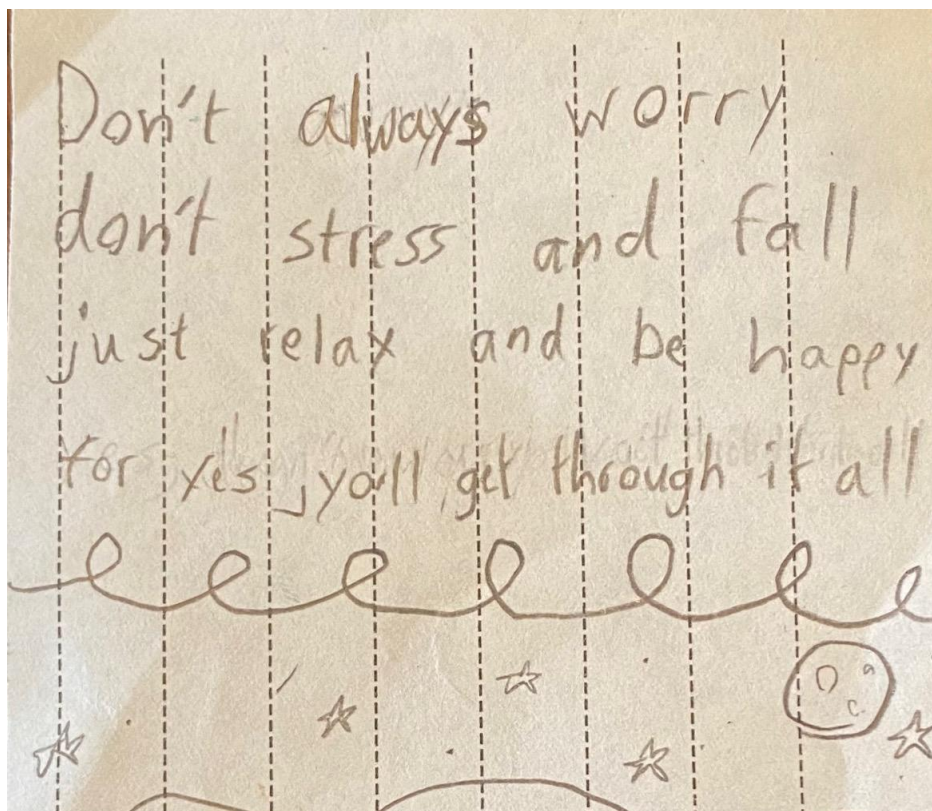


Sad.

The cold feeling that runs down your spine.
Feel the empty space and grab onto a piece to fill the space.
But you lose your grip, and it flies away like a dove.
And you are left alone in the grasp of a cold darkness
But you are not alone God is still with you.
Watching to see how you stand sturdy.
He has never left you and He never will.
So, forget about your sadness and think about the things He
has brought you through.
I doubt He will leave you at the edge of your tears.

Untitled

by Lara D. Gr. 4
St. Mary's School



Petit Chaperon Blue veut un chien!

by Emily H. Gr. 4
École Good Shepherd School

Petit Chaperon Bleu veut un chien! (Un conte réinventé)

Une fois, pendant l'été en juin, Petit Chaperon Bleu a demandé à sa mère si elle pouvait avoir un chien. « Non! » disait sa mère. « Tu n'es pas responsable encore. »

Petit Chaperon Bleu était triste. Mais, sa mère a dit à elle « Aller voir ton grand-père et son chien et apporte ces biscuits de chien et les biscuits pour ton grand-père.

Donc, Petit Chaperon Bleu n'était pas triste et elle est allée à la maison du grand-père. Mais, elle vivait en Afrique du Sud et un chien sauvage a senti les biscuits de chien et les voulait.

Puis, le chien sauvage avait lui chassé! Petit Chaperon Bleu lui a donné un tout petit peu d'un biscuit de chien, mais il voulait plus! Elle a essayé de lui donner plus de biscuits, mais celles des humains. Il les a juste ignorés! Sans savoir quoi faire, Petit Chaperon Bleu a grimpé un arbre. « Il ne peut pas me manger ici. »

elle avait dit. Elle n'était pas correcte. Le chien sauvage pouvait grimper les petits arbres comme ça.

Avec beaucoup de peur, Petit Chaperon Bleu a sauté de l'arbre et a approché le chien sauvage. Elle lui a choyé sur la tête... et il a aimé ça! Petit Chaperon Bleu a dit, « Je suis rempli du courage! »

Elle est allée et a donné les biscuits à son grand-père et au chien du grand-père, Snip. Ensuite, elle est retournée à la maison, mais le chien sauvage avait lui suivi.

La mère de Petit Chaperon Bleu a dit « Oh! Un ami!

Petit Chaperon Bleu a dit « Est-ce que je peux lui avoir?

Oui! » sa mère a dit.

Tu es responsable maintenant! »

Youpi !! » Petit Chaperon Bleu a crié de la joie.

Spring has Sprung

by Gwen F. Gr. 4
Assumption School

Spring has Sprung

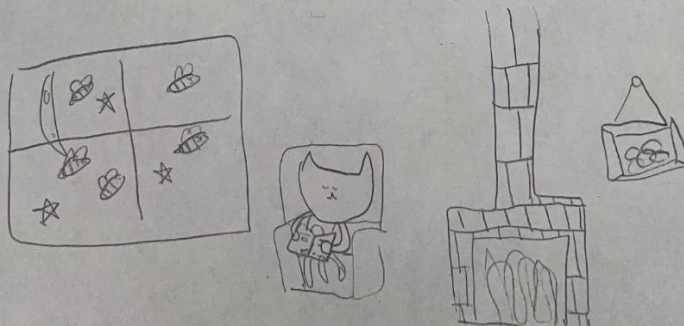
Beautiful flax fields,
White, elegant fluffy clouds,
Tiny chicks hatching!

The Little Weird Kitty

by Aubree C, Gr. 4
St. Mary's School

The little weird kitty
by Aubree

One small town not far from here had a little cat mischievous and weird. He walked through to park and up the hill, where daisys and lillys smiled with cheer. They blowed through the wind and up through the trees, but the little cat had nothing in need. Then he found a little brown beech with bees, and he couldnt relly find his pink and purple keys. Then he ran down the hill with angry buzzing bees. The little cat ... squished a bee. Then after his weird, weird day he could finally be free, even though the bees were still mad at him!



This World

by Maisie R. Gr. 6
St. Mary's School

What's happening to this world?

You tell me

The roads, the animals, the climate too

This world is turning into one big zoo

Water bottles, cans, and plastic bags

The world is holding up it's white flags

Just grab a garbage bag and start to pick up

The earths oceans are starting to give up

And what about climate?

From polar bears to turtles

This world is turning into one big hurdle

Why can't everyone take a break and try?

Before the animals continue to die

And don't get me started on colour of skin

Why can't we just focus on what lies within?

Black, brown, yellow, red, blue, or

white



I don't know why colour has to start a fight

"You're stupid, go jump off a cliff"

Cyber bullying is not a myth

It hurts, it stings, and there's no taking back

We were made to do better, and that's a fact

What is this world if we are no good?

Didn't God create us to do what we should?

We all know better, let's just say it

We are treating this world like a game,

and we play it

Let's start being better, and do what is right

The power's within us, we must not lose sight

There's so much beauty surrounding us all

It's time to stand up, and hold our head's tall.

The Power of A Storm

by Renn K. Gr. 6
Assumption School

The storm

Who comes in like a fox

Swift, keen and unforgiving

With rolling clouds of thunder

And lightning that strikes like a prod

Its own beauty holds itself together

While nature takes its toll on the land

Its own feelings are under cover with the power it has at hand.

Its muscles plunge into battle like a furry filled wave

And roars a full and powerful roar that only a storm can roar

But who knows what this storm has in store.



Actually, The Jokes on You

by Kiptyn T. Gr. 6
Assumption School

The crowd starts laughing and smiling when I walk Missy into the round pen. I wonder what they were thinking about.

Who would ever buy a horse like that? That horse is gonna be my dog's next meal. Slowly, I spun Missy, 14.3hh Bay Roan mare. I stand her straight to where the audience can see the whole left side of her body. Soon I notice that it makes the crowd grow louder. My head looks down across her short back. It makes me so sad looking at her face that I can't tell if it's sweat or tears trickling down my face. I take a deep breath as I show her right side to the whole laughing crowd!

Softly, I tuck my head into her muscle smooth neck. At this point the whole crowd is silent wondering if I'm actually being serious.

"It's ok girly, I promise I'm not going to let anything happen to you."

Soon I realize that nobody is going to bid on her, so I lead her back to her tiny rusted metal pen. Cautiously, and sadly I slid Missy's halter over her bruised tired face. I wrap it like rope coils and hang it on one of the uneven old red rusted metal posts. Even though the red is just chipped off and there are only clumps of it left. As I open the gate to leave Missy comes prancing over to me as if she was yelling help me, save me. It was like she was looking at me but deeper. Like threw my soul. Though, it wasn't a scary type way, but almost like she was the one scared. Drowning in a pool with no lifeguard to save her. It didn't take me long to decide that I would go and be that lifeguard for Missy.

"I'll be right back girl!"

It seemed as though I couldn't run fast enough. My heart was beating with joy, anticipation, and hope.

"Excuse me sir, are you selling Missy?"

"Yes 'mam', what about her?"

"Well I would love to buy her! Nobody else is."

"Hmmm, how much are we talkin?"

"I'll give you 300\$".

"No. 345\$."

"Oh c'mon! 325\$."

"330\$! Give or take"

For a split second I hesitated. Though, then I thought of her beautiful eyes looking at me.

"Deal. I will go and grab my check book."

As I started walking back I never felt like this was a horrible Idea. I felt confident and proud of myself.

"Here you go sir."

Thank you very much 'mam'.

When I shut my ram truck door I heard the salesman walk by and chuckle. Missy is now happy and healthy. She's gone on mountain trips, Gymkhana, Rodeos, and is now carrying around kids in wheelchairs once a week. So I think back to that rude salesman thinking to myself, I should be the one chuckling under my breath!!

Nature's Peaceful Ways

by Rain M. Gr. 6
St. Mary's School

Peace drapes over me, like an understanding friend placing a fuzzy blanket over my worried shoulders. All around me, Aspens twist and curl around each other like they are dancing softly to a beat no one can hear but I can almost feel. Mulch crumbles under the weight of my feet, barely holding me from drowning in the majestic landscape. Out of my brain's ocean of thoughts and emotions one thought stands out to me, "Nature is intoxicating." It surrounds me and gets taken in by my senses. The sharp aroma of pine needles is carried by the delicate wind. I can hear the sounds: the drakes in the distant pond, the rustling of the brambles, the winds soft whistle, but they all don't matter to me right now. The breathtaking foliage make it impossible to focus on anything else because everything pales in comparison to it. Nature is peace.

Nature is the mix of the old and the new; of what has happened and what will happen. The perfect blend of all living things. I see it everywhere. I see it in the miniature sapling surrounded by the gigantesque evergreens, in the late blooming flower bud so close to the full bloomed daisy, the pebbles living atop the mountain. Every organism on the planet

wants to reach for the stars, to feel them with our hands, our branches, our petals. But nature shows us that everything beautiful takes time to make. Every ring on every tree was formed with time and dedication.

The sky is drenched in tiny glitter flakes, like little flashlights millions of light-years away. The moon is their guide, their leader like the stars are for us.

Nature is the family that goes past race or species; the perfect family.

Nature is our role model because in nature rocks stand with stars and rivers stand with trees.

Everything stands with one another like humans should. People say nature is about survival of the fittest but it's really about solidarity, about togetherness. If natural things didn't stand together everything would die. I think humans could learn something from nature. If we did this Earth would be a better place.



The Run

by Renn K, Gr. 6
Assumption School

"AHHH!!" I scream. I was hanging onto one skinny handful of mane, dangling on the side of a galloping gelding. He and his herd were running for the life of them in the middle of a thick forest. Dodging trees and jumping fallen logs in their way. I heard them licking their lips behind us. Snapping their jaws at the horses' heels. Wolves. We were on the path to tragedy. Attempting to hurdle fear but failing ourselves.

Digging down deep in my shallow soul to find the single ounce of strength to throw myself onto his back of silk. I found barely enough to make do. Still I had to try. Failure was not on my agenda today. I did not realize till after the fact that if I do fail I would probably slip and be trampled to death. I say a small prayer before this action-packed move comes into play. That's when I noticed the tree we were headed toward.

There was room for the gelding but not for me. I had to think of something fast.

Almost too fast I could not think. There were so many stories of the past that my people told of girls who go on the horse's side, escaping gunfire and drastic moments. That was what I was doing at the moment. But maybe I could hang on to his neck instead of the position I was in right now. It was worth the risk. I could not think of many other options. So I flipped some of his mane to the other side and started to get that swingy momentum I needed. Eventually I got at the brisk pace I needed to make my move. Woosh!! I went under the neck and grabbed a second handful of mane. Astonished, I lost my second hand full of mane to a flash of unexpected pain.

Instantly I yanked it back in. Fiercely I clenched it into a fist and felt a hot liquid dribble down my fist. A wolf had nipped my hand. Or it tried to bite it off but did not get to far. That piece of pain gave me a little extra anger. So that helped me get a tad more energy. I tried a second time to get up and with a single yank, I sat up and urged him on. Thankfully, I missed the tree by inches. All the horses were beginning to sweat up a severe storm and so was I.

The wolves were beginning to get a whole lot of tired. One by one they softened their grip on us like they were riding us with tight reins and a too small misfit bit. Basically they were doing that to us this whole time. Finally the herd slowly came to believe they were not being chased any more and we all calmed down. All together, we walked ourselves to a nearby stream to take a long drink of the brisk icy water. I also slid off and took up a cup full of water. Gently I dressed my wound. Rrrriipp. I wrapped a strip of my shirt around in a bandage. We waded with each other and cooled off in the pool of water. After we all settled down, we prepared to fall into a deeply tiresome sleep. With me on the gelding's back and the rest of the herd standing wearily with their humble heads low, we slept.

Seasons

by Sadie N, Gr. 7
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Cold dust floats throughout the night,
Swirling here and there
Blanketing the forest in shimmering white
Fallen in God's care.
Then snow melts and April's showers
Let May blossoms bloom
Bringing forth June's sweet lilies
Putting winter in its rightful tomb.
Warm turns to hot, grass grows green
Children everywhere
On days so beautiful and fair.
Then it's my favorite time of year
Of leaves auburn and gold
When dainty fawns are born to deer
And a harsh wind blows.



Evil

by Vivian B. Gr. 7
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Present Day

I was the Queen. The most powerful woman in all the land. I worked hard to get where I was. I used to sit in a throne but now I am locked in a cell. All because of her, Snow White. It all started 17 years ago on my wedding day. Where I said "I do" and where the weight of the kingdom was willingly placed on my shoulders. Sure I agree to marry the king but never in my vows did I say I was fit to be a Mother. For 17 years I had to listen to her petty complaints and indecent wails. I guess having complete silence down here is better than having to hear her constant rambling. I tried to be her friend, knowing playing the Mother card would be an argument I could not handle. Also the fact that her Father dying and having both her parents dead could be a contribution factor. Then being left with the "Witch" is the worst thing that could happen. She was ungrateful all her life and now she is getting everything she wants. My crown, My palace and My life. I saw her attempts to steal the crown. She would follow me everywhere, vying me to trip or fall. She would never dare to push though. Then when I follow her when she runs to the middle of nowhere it is completely unreasonable. She deals with me by locking me up. If she thinks I am going to stay down here without a fight, she is wrong. I am the Evil Queen after all.

3 days ago

"Snow will you just come out" I plead while trying to pry the door off her bedroom open.

"No, just go order someone else to do what you want" her muffled high pitched voice replies

"Can you just open the door so we can talk?" I tried to negotiate.

"I can hear you just fine, Your Highness!" she shrieked back. I fought the urge to correct her. She deliberately said "Highness" when she knew it was Majesty. Anger filled my chest as I fought to keep my cool. I can't give her more reasons to hate me than she already did.

"Fine," I said blankly.



"You miss dinner and will be locked in here till morning." I fumed and spun on my heel. She needed to be reminded who was Queen and what power I withould.

2 days ago

I sit alone in the dining room with mounds of food placed perfectly in front of me. I sit at the head of a long rectangle table where the King used to, but now I am in charge. And of course Snow sits next to my right, but the seat is empty. I try to wait patiently for her arrival, telling myself she will be there even though I doubt it. My patience doesn't last long.

"You" I ordered to the nearest guard.

"Go find Princess Snow now" I demand forcefully. He nods sharply and walks away. I don't know what aggravated me more, that he nodded, did not say "Yes, your Majesty" or the fact he was walking.

"And for goodness sake, run!" I sneered and heard the patter of his footsteps grow quicker. I ordered the butler to fill my plate, unable to wait for Snow. As I lifted a spoonful of strawberries to my lips as the guard who I sent off earlier burst through the oak doors with an ear splitting crack. I hop to my feet to see the guard hunched over, heaving in deep breaths.

"Officer Hanley, who do you think you are--"

"I apologize for my entrance but I think what I have to say is more important" He interrupts. Complete fury consumes me as I erupt,

"What I say is more important than each breath you take, I can sentence you to your death with a flick of the wrist and trust me at this point I am not opposed to that idea." His face blankens and he wheezes.

"Snow's gone"

2 days ago

"What do you mean Snow's gone?" I demand harshly, with my fingers pinching the bridge of my nose. That was around the 30th time I had asked that question, but they kept circling around the answer. They moved me to the sitting room around the 12th.

"She was gone when Officer Hanley reached the room, with the windows open." My head Guard tells me.

I scoffed a laugh angrily.

"I don't think you understand what I am asking, what did you not do in your job that let her get away in the first place!" I yelled with poison dripping off every word.

"We have guards covering every inch of the forest, she isn't getting anywhere we assure you," he affirmed.

"The only way I can be assured is if I go there myself" I tell them. Someone get me my coat, apples and the vial on my desk!" I ordered

"Yes your Majesty" the guards stammered in unison and escaped from my sight. My plan was simple, I would try to find my way through the forest. Once I was close I would coat the apple in the liquid from the vile. Snow could not resist apples so I would present them as a peace offering. I would use that time to explain myself. Shortly after she would be sedated for a few hours, just enough for the guards to carry her back. She could run but she certainly could not hide.

2 days ago

A cluster of mosquitoes swarm my head and I wave my hand mindlessly to clear them. Dozens of trees lean over my head, twisted and weaved into a makeshift canopy. But somehow the sun seeps through the thin leaves and sits directly on me. When I feel that I am seconds away from bursting into flames a gust of wind coats me with a trail of dirt and crushed leaves. Although it grants me a moment's coolness, then the cycle repeats. I swear this forest has something against me but I won't let it keep me away from finding Snow. Even if it means staying in this grueling state. I am perched on a long dead tree stump and squinting to see through bushes and greenery to see a quaint cottage. Vibrant flowers cover the yards and a large window displays a circle shaped table. With again, dainty flowers placed in the middle. Oddly enough it was sized to fit at least eight people, but then again Snow was never one to downsize. After being a princess and all, this place was perfect for her. I step off from my resting place and run my hands through my thick black hair tangled with twigs and the occasional pinecone. This was the best it was going to get. I walk towards the cottage, failingy doging fallen trees and gopher holes. But nothing could bring me down, I was getting Snow back.

That's what matters.

2 days ago

"Snow" I call softly as I push through the front door. Silence replies and my hope weakens. As I turn the corner I come face to face with Snow. She looks different though, a calm expression replaces her signature scow but I can't ignore the sharp stick wrapped around her fingers. I proceed with caution and take a short step forward. I am close enough for her to hurt me, kill me but I hope she has just an ounce of patience to hear me out.

"I just want to talk, to explain myself" I pleaded and grasped the bag of apples tighter and presented them to her.

"There Granny Smith, your favorite" I offer and smile weakly. After a moment of silence she gestured to the table I spotted earlier and I took a seat gladly.

"I know I have not been the kindest to you but you need to understand my position" Snow said just above a whisper." I notice she left the stick on the other side of the table so I pass her an apple, she bites eagerly and swallows.

"You were almost a complete stranger and my parents were dead but that didn't give a reason to treat you the way I did. Besides you were the closest thing I had to a mother." she mumbled gently. My heart stops mid beat and guilt fills my chest until the pain is almost unbearable.

"Snow! Don't eat that apple!" I cried urgently. Snow drops the apple and her face whitens.

"What did you do, I thought I could trust you!" Snow uttered dazed and then tumbled to the ground, motionless.

2 days ago

"Snow" I shout, shaking her shoulders forcefully.

"Snow please, please just wake up!" I urged. I felt tears threatening to overful. I kneel over her and grab her limp wrist and wrap my hand around. My hand is shaking furiously as I try to find a pulse. I can't feel anything, just the coolness of her skin. I had been angry, upset when I made that vial, I had made that vial as a precaution in case Snow got out of control. I might have gone overboard.

continued on pg 28

GRADE 7

| Tablets & Doorposts Anthology

page 29

continued from pg 27

"Please" I begged, sobbing uncontrollably now, tears spilling down on and making dot shaped stains on her dress. I hear foreign voices flood through the walls, speaking in a strange jargon I don't understand. I jump to my feet and wipe my eyes with the back of my hand, smearing tears across my cheeks. My face feels numb and my body feels frozen in a way, like my soul has escaped my body and my remains are pulling me to the ground. I pushed through the pain and dragged myself out the door before the people realized I was there. Behind me I hear muffled voices gasp and low voices shout. As I reach the end of the yard and I stand at the border of the forest as I hear the rustle of my guards waiting for me.

"Let's go back" I mutter under my breath, staring blankly at the forest floor.

1 day ago

As I reach my bedroom I feel the type of exhaust that I have never felt before. It turns out walking quietly for hours gives you time to think. To mull over the mistake you made. Every muscle in my body is aching and begging for sleep, but I decide to change first. I slip into a silk nightgown, not bothering to touch my hair. I exit and head straight to my bed. As I stumbled forward I saw something from the corner of my eye. I turn to see a reflection of myself in my floor to ceiling mirror. I barely recognize myself as I watch this stranger staring back at me. My limbs stand weakly

and my dress hovers loosely around my ankles. My dark hair is held up by dried leaves and bark scraps. My almond eyes look distant and my heart shaped face is smeared with dirt and sweat, I feel eyes shutting and my body relax. I blindly run to my bed and I hardly make it when I pass out into a deep sleep.

Present Day

I woke up that next day in the cell, with the same dirty hair but a slightly tarnished dress. I was given a message from my guard that I was charged with "attempted" murder and "Queen Snow" has overthrown the monarchy. I am to rot down here till my last dying breath. It is dark down here without a source of light, and I have dozens of rusting metal bars locking me in. It is even worse being haunted by your thoughts. I will probably be known as the "Evil Queen" years after my death. People will tell stories and rumors will spread about my reputation. About how I tried to kill my daughter, how I killed my own husband to get to where I was. The truth will be hidden and unheard but you and I know now, that counts for something. If I could do it all over again I wouldn't change a thing. I would rather be known as the Evil Queen than the girl who ate the apple. "Queen Snow" will just be a name kids will be forced to learn then forget. At least "Evil Queen" will stick. I will live happily ever after being

Evil.

War: The Battle of the Mind

by Kaelan M. Gr. 7

St. John Paul II Collegiate

General Will was resting and planning for the long battle ahead against Germany. Britain's site was on the plains of Germany and was surrounded by tired, overworked soldiers who worked valiantly to protect the land. You, the reader, might think that war is just a battle against two opposing forces (and you're right) but it is much more complicated than what the eye can see.

Will finished his plans with the chiefs and went to his bunker to think. Will has been in Germany fighting for over a year now and it has been taking a toll on his mental health. Will struggles with depression and longs to see his lovely wife and beautiful children. He feels like no matter how hard he

tries, the sadness, pain, and suffering will last forever.

But all of a sudden, one of the chiefs stormed in with a frustrated face and barked at Will "Go to your station, General Will. We do not have time to waste and you're just sitting there being more useless than a lump on a log!" The typical insult that Will faced, which only added on to his depression. As the leader, he forced his legs to move one in front of the other to tell his fellow soldiers to get stationed and prepare for the long sleepless battle waiting ahead of them. Will was good friends with one of the German soldiers named Andrei who was kind of like a therapist for him during his times of struggle. Occasionally, Will talked about his battle plans to Andrei which was risky but

Will trusted his friend. Will was releasing some of his sorrows to Andrei before they started planning the battle stating “We’re planning to surround the German base and then try to trap them inside ” but then he noticed Andrei acting a bit suspicious and was worried something was amiss. After that, he continued saying “But in actuality, we’ll be hiding right where the forest is located and camouflage there.” Andrei replied stating “ That’s interesting. I have not heard what our plans are but I’ll keep in touch. Farewell and best of luck on the battlefield.” It happened again. Andrei was acting weird and Will didn’t like it but he waved farewell and started heading towards the fort.

Will went back to his station and explained the plan to his men. He explained that they’ll plant bombs in a cave and create a landmine and hopefully kill the German soldiers inside. As usual, Levi (who is always dramatic and asks way too many questions) asked “But how will this work? The German soldiers aren’t gullible enough to just run into a landmine.” Will replied saying “Trust me Levi. everything will work. Now zip your lip and get to work, soldiers.” Levi mumbled “How rude!”

After a couple of hours, the landmine was all set and ready. With a move that confused everyone, Will forced everyone to stay at the shelter and under no circumstances leave the base. The startled soldiers marched in the shelter grumpy, confused, and frustrated. Levi said “I just can’t believe it. How dare he abandon me like that. I find it very offensive!” Nobody knew what was going on except the chief who was set to tell everyone when the time came.

Will walked closer to the landmine step by step waiting for his fate. Will’s the General for a reason, he’s very intelligent. He knew right away when Andrei responded to him earlier that he was a spy and was giving all the information to the Germans. So Will gave him the wrong information and the Germans think they’re going to a forest but in reality they’ll be killed in the explosion. Will has to activate the explosion which will unfortunately kill him too. But he knew it was the only way to win this battle. Will was hiding in the landmine ready to set the explosion any second now. For his luck the Germans decided to come to the cave to find shelter being unprepared for the storm outside.

All the Germans are inside and Will is just about ready to set the bomb. But first he meets eyes with Andrei and says “Take this you jack-ass traitor” and presses the button.

3...2...1... Ka-boom!

As he feels the vibrations rattle through every single part of his body, he sees a bright light surround him and in the blink of an eye, it all ends. There’s nothing left but corpses under the big pile of broken and shattered rocks and dirt. The British soldiers had just heard the news and were running as quickly as a 7 year old when they hear that there’s free ice cream. All of them stopped in their tracks as they saw the pile of dead bodies and broken up dirt and rocks. All of them felt an uneasy feeling of both happiness and sorrow. They made a circle around the pile, held hands, and sang Will’s favourite song “Let It Be” together in harmony to remember and honour the actions of a hero.

On that day, Will saved hundreds and maybe even thousands of lives and was single handedly the reason why Britain won the war. Will is now honoured and recognized as a national hero with his own day to commemorate his heroic act. Will’s wife and children grew on to have happy and successful lives and lived on his legacy. Will has inspired many young adults to join the military and fight for the freedom of their country and for those who need it most just like Will would have. It was eventually told to the public by Will’s wife named Abby that Will struggled with depression and with his mental health. Abby started a charity named after him to raise money for research for those who struggle with their mental health just like Will did. Will has taught us all that even the strongest people in your life struggle and that you should take risks because they will be rewarded and you’ll change the world if you take those risks, even if it’s just one step at a time.

Emotions

by Estella P. Gr. 7
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Emotions,
There are so many different kinds.
They come from
Our hearts and minds.

Happiness,
The feeling of joy.
The feeling of when you open a brand new toy.

Sometimes,
You jump up with glee.
It happens to everyone,
Even you and me.

Sadness,
Being gloomy,
The feeling of being down,
Bad and moody.

You slouch over
And don't want to move,
You want everything in your life
To just remove.

Anger,
The feeling of being mad.
Your face turns red
And you're not very glad.

You stomp
And you yell
As loud as
A church bell.

Fear,
When you're scared
When you can't fall asleep
Cause you're dreaming of a bear.

Scared of the dark,
Scared of what's under the bed,
And your parents tell you,
"It's all in your head."

Disgust,
When something is gross,
It's so bad
You can't even get close.

You might gag
Or even vomit
And you know for sure
It's not chocolate.

Emotions can be showed
In so many different ways.
Emotions show up every
Single day.

Terror in Paradise

by Jacqueline B. Gr. 7

Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Academy

I awoke to the soft sound of humming coming from the whirling fan above me, helping as the sultry air pervaded the room. As I rubbed the lasting sleep from my eyes, I took a look around at my surroundings. Unique paintings of various sea life hung on the white walls. An ocean blue carpet with the design of a sea turtle rested on the lime washed floor. The bed consisted of a deep blue sheet, with light gray pillows. Large sea shells were displayed on top of a wooden cabinet, on the right side of the room. I hopped off my bed and opened the wooden blinds. Outside awaited tropical palm trees and the crashing waves of the Hawaiian ocean onto rocky shoreline.

Today marked our sixth day on our Big Island, spring break, family vacation. We were staying in a beach house in Kona, right next to a surfing and snorkel cove. This was our first time ever on the Big Island. We were extremely excited, especially my two younger twin siblings, Connor and Chloe, who were bursting with joy. I suppose that is what you would expect from two seven year-olds, who hardly see the ocean when we lived all the way in the snowy Rocky Mountains in Canada. On the white fridge in the kitchen, was a sticky note addressed to me, Ashley, left by my parents. It stated that they were going to the mango market and would be back by lunch. Ever since I had turned thirteen, my parents had been trusting me more than ever to take care of my younger siblings. With that I went to wake up Connor and Chloe, so we could go surfing that morning.

As soon as we had finished devouring our blueberry muffins for breakfast, we opened the beach house's glass door and stepped outside onto the scorching hot sand. We made our way down the rocky beach to Kahalu'u Bay Surf and Sea Shop, where we would pick up our surf boards. The sun radiated all around us, making the air thick with Hawaii heat. Thankfully, a salty sea breeze blew over us, offering us a reprieve from the humid morning. The crashing sound of the turquoise waves filled my ears. Surrounding us were large tropical palm trees towering overhead. As we got closer to the bay, I began to slowly make out clusters of people running away from the cove. Something was amiss, as all the island's birds were retreating to the ocean above. At first I thought the beach was expanding, but as I looked more closely the water was receding into the horizon. All of a sudden, tsunami sirens wailed loudly all around us.

Instantly, it felt as if everything had frozen in time, as the realization crashed over me. There was a tsunami coming for

us. This single, horrifying thought replayed over and over in my head. I took a deep breath and counted back from 5...4...3...2...1.

It was not the time to panic. I had just done a research project on the 2003, Thailand Tsunami. Ashley think, I tell myself. We have to get to high ground. I glanced down at

Chloe and Connor both with tears running down their rosy cheeks. I grabbed their sweaty hands, and started sprinting towards the beach house.

Mercifully, a long ladder hung off the flat roof of our contemporary beach house. "Climb Chloe! Climb Connor! I yelled at them panicking as I spotted a wall of water, headed directly toward us. As soon as we reached the roof, I grabbed onto my siblings' frail bodies, and together we hung onto the shingles for dear life. Within seconds the tidal wave was upon us. I took one last fearful breath just as the wave devoured us. The moment the wave hit us, it was hard to see or hear anything. The force of the ice cold water was so great the entire roof detached from the rest of the building. I lost my grip and slid from the rocking roof. I was rolled over and over by a whirled pool type current, while objects of all sizes jabbed and cut into my sides. Up until something large struck the back of my head and everything went dark.

Wet drops of salty water fell down onto my face. My vision was blurry but I was able to make out two figures hovering above me. "Ashley's waking up Connor! She's alive!" I heard Chloe's sweet voice sing like a melody. I slowly sat up, my head throbbing violently, followed by a pain piercing through my entire body. I was in a grass field that was completely flooded, with debris floating around everywhere.

Chloe and Connor hugged me so tightly I thought they would never let go. As we held each other they told me about how I had fallen off the roof, and how they were scared to death when I didn't come up to the surface. Eventually, they spotted my neon green tank top about a hundred meters away from them, and jumped in to save me. The current then carried us to the swamped field, where I wouldn't wake up. As we embraced one another, I was so thankful that I was alive and had my siblings right by my side. Although we knew we had each other, our journey would not end until we were reunited with our parents and then we would truly be home.

Wonderland Song

by Gabriella S. Gr. 7

Our Lady of the Snow Catholic Academy

"Welcome to Wonderland, we've got it all, houses and cottages, butterfly souls, I'll be here watching from up above, don't be sad you'll feel it too, work hard and dreams will come true."

Beep!Beep! "Uhh, five more minutes," I pleaded as I slammed my alarm off.

"No, get up! It's time to get ready for school," Mom shouted. I slowly get out of bed, open my roughed-up dresser door, and I grab my blue and white uniform. I spin towards my clock, oh my gosh, it's 7:45 AM, I only have 10 minutes, I telepathically scream. I rushed down the stairs and shoved the soft fluffy brown pancakes in my mouth.

"You decided to finally join me," Mom teases.

"I didn't know it was 7:45", I attempted to pronounce with crumbs falling out of my mouth.

"Really? Because you had time to sing that song your sister Cassie used to sing," she replies.

"I just had a dream about her again," I whisper.

"Ally, it was almost three years ago, she probably would have wanted us to move on by now," Mom suggests.

"I know, but I always see her on that hospital bed singing that song to me," I mumble.

"Oh! You have to go, it's 7:54," she informs me. I grab my scrunched-up black backpack and sprint for the door.

"Bye, I love you!" I shout as I close the door behind me. The big yellow bus impatiently waits for me. I jump on and find my labeled seat in the back. My thoughts fill my mind as the bus takes off.

I know my mom wants me to move on, but Cassie used to sing all the time. Not just to me, to everyone, before she got lung cancer. The only other time she sang was when we were informed she only had one more week to live. She told me The Wonderland Song will be the song she sings to me every day. So far, she's kept her promise.

The bus stopped and everyone hopped off. "Ally," I hear from behind me.

"Oh hey Ash," I shouted as she ran up to me.

"I'm so sorry I couldn't help you study for the math test last night," Ash apologizes.

"It's fine, Cassie, Ca... Cateo helped me," I stutter.

"Your cat helped to study?" She exaggerates.

"Stop asking questions, I already had a talk with my mom," I mumble.

"Was it the Wonderland song thing again? I know what I'm about to say, I've said before, I don't mean it in a harsh way, but I think you should go to therapy, or at least have a one-on-one conversation with me," Ash begs. "Think about it," she insists.

"I have to go to class", I observe, just realizing we're in the hallway. "You win, I'll have a one-on-one conversation with you, see you tonight at Baker Park", I force out as I speed walk to Social class.

"Okay class, turn the page 253 in your textbooks" Mr. Wills orders as I slouch down in my uncomfortable navy seat. If only Ash was in my social class, I think to myself. She always makes everything fun, though I might just think that because we've been best friends since grade two, ten years of friendship hangs onto you. It was super easy becoming friends with her because we had so many things in common. We both have blonde hair, cats, the same favorite show, favorite food, and we both have nicknames that start with an A. My actual name is Alena, and Ash's real name is Asher. I bet she's happy right now, she's actually convinced me to talk with her about Cassie after non-stop begging me. I'm only doing this for Cassie and so my mom doesn't put me in real therapy. "Miss Alena, answer question 35", Mr. Wills demanded as if he knew I was distracted. I flipped through my book and spotted the question.

Ring! As soon as I heard the bell I ran outside to find Ash. "I swear the bell gets louder every time," Ash complains, popping up beside me.

“It’s almost as loud as you,” I joked.

“I’d argue, but I have to prepare for tonight and grab all the snacks in the world for you and me,” Ash smiles.

“You mean your pantry?” I correct.

“Maybe,” Ash whispered suspiciously.

“Bring me Oreos,” I emphasized right before I got on the bus. I searched for my seat again and let out a sigh as soon as I reached my seat. After 10 minutes, the bus slowly came to a stop and I rushed off.

“Mom, I’m home,” I shouted to the empty house. It was so quiet the only sound that filled the house was my echo. “I guess it’s just you and me, Cateo,” I tell my cat. I walk upstairs and dig through my dresser and pull out a black shirt with light-colored jeans to go with it. I throw it on and then walk back down the stairs. I slowly stepped into my black Vans and before I reached for the door I heard a soft and quiet voice tell me, “Don’t go.”

“Not now, I’m actually doing something good for me,” I spit at the voice I thought was my nerves.

“Don’t go,” the voice tells me again. I opened the door and walked to the park anyway.

“Finally, you made it,” Ash groaned.

“I walked eight blocks because my mom wasn’t

home,” I complained.

I’m shocked it’s already dark out,” Ash quivered.

“I know, I can’t see anything beyond two feet,” I yawn.

“Did you bring a flashlight?” Ash questioned

“Actually, I think I did,” I giggled, pulling out a flashlight from my back pocket. I point it right at her then see a masked man pointing a long gun at Ash. “Ash, Watch out!” I scream in terror.

I dive in front of her knowing I can’t lose her too. A sudden pain rips through my chest and I hit the hard paved ground. Everything goes black. I slowly open my eyes assuming I’m in the hospital, but I only see Cassie. Tears spilled down my face. “Welcome to Wonderland, we got it all, houses and cottages, butterfly souls, I’ll be here watching from up above, don’t be sad, you’ll feel it too, work hard and your dreams will come true,” I sing with Cassie.

Short Story

by Chloe K. Gr. 7

St. John Paul II Collegiate

I start my day by walking down the sad old dirty dock and hop into my banana yellow kayak sitting on top of the sparkling turquoise water. As I’m slowly paddling away from the dock, I think about how much of a paradise this place is: the perfect cotton candy clouds, the sun beams beating down on the crystal water, the salty ocean air and the fact that the only sound I can hear is the sound of the the ocean slowly rocking my kayak. After about a mile from the shore line, I turn back to look at the huge rolling hills when I notice I’m not alone, a dark ominous shadow circles me. My heart stops, I recognize that shadow; it’s a shark! I don’t believe it, I can’t believe it, this isn’t happening! My only hope is to get back to the beach.

I swerve to the right hoping I don’t fall right into its jaws and I start paddling for my life. Beads of sweat drip down my face, I feel my heart pounding in my ears and my arms are on fire. I’m getting closer. I’m about 200 meters from the beach when I feel the shark’s nose bump the back of my kayak trying to keep up with me. I know I don’t have much time until I fall into the jaws of the giant predator trailing behind me. I can’t quite catch my breath. I’m so close.

Don't Panic

by Charlotte L. Gr. 7
St. John Paul II Collegiate

"I can't breathe! I can't breathe!" Then everything went dark. My name is Jack Martins and that was just a brief summary of what goes on during one of my panic attacks, panic attacks/anxiety attacks happen when you have a panic disorder or anxiety, I have both. I was diagnosed with severe anxiety when I was just four years old, my dad left me and my mom when I was two, ever since then it has just been me and her. When you are unfortunate enough to have severe anxiety or anxiety at all you sometimes you might have what are called panic attacks but it depends on the person, some get them very rarely and others such as myself have them daily. You may be wondering, "what is going on in his head when that happens?" Well, let me tell you. To start, certain things can trigger an anxiety attack and other times panic attacks just come out of nowhere. Anxiety attacks are triggered and panic attacks are usually random, what happens in them is pretty much the same just one has a trigger. Like I was saying, what happens in someone's head during a panic attack is different for everyone but for me specifically before a panic attack it feels like something awful is about to happen, even if nothing is. During the actual attack it feels like the walls are closing in, it feels like I can't breathe and this part is kind of embarrassing, but I often cry. Now that you know a bit more about me I can start telling the real story. I started middle school in a week, my anxiety was skyrocketing not only from nervousness but also excitement.

On the first day of school I started walking towards the door and got a sinking feeling in my stomach. Not today, I think to myself, I can't have a panic attack before I even get inside the school. Pressing the feeling deep down I strut inside the large metal doors feeling as confident as ever, prepared to take on whatever comes at me. "Pipsqueak!" "He's so tiny!" "He'll get eaten up here." I hear strange remarks all about my height, my grade and how I won't survive the year. I never really thought I was short until I saw all the 8th and 9th graders, I became super self conscious within the first few

weeks of going to that school.

After school started, besides a few bumps in the road it was going really well until I met Parker, a supposedly "nice guy" he has been pushing me around since we first met but I can't call him out, no one would believe me. Parker is Mr. Popular at the school, not only is he a year above me but also most of the teachers' favorites, he's really good in all of his classes and all the girls like him. The first time we saw each other it felt like he was targeting me, I just didn't know to what extent. Anytime he sees me he shoves me or elbows me to the point where I go home with bruises all over my torso, sometimes a teacher sees him push me so when that happens he pretends to apologize and make sure I'm okay but as soon as the teacher looks away he pushes me right back down. The past few weeks have been tiring but the worst of it was still on its way.

A few months into the school year, Parker's still tormenting me but I can deal with it. What I can't deal with is that I need to present something in front of the entire school in two weeks. In my social studies class our teacher selected one student to present about a problem in today's society and of course I had to be the one chosen for it, she said that it will "be good for my confidence" I think it will completely ruin what confidence I have left. One week into the two weeks I have to work on this and I only have the introduction slide done, the only thing that's been on my mind lately is the presentation yet I still can't get the slideshow done. The days seem to blend together and everything has been a blur, my panic attacks have been getting worse and more frequent, nothing is making sense anymore and Parker isn't making it any better. Every time he sees me now, rather than pushing me he brings up my big presentation, whenever anyone brings it up it nearly pushes me over the edge into yet another panic attack.

The day of the presentation everything went downhill, it started off okay, it was a bit odd though,

I was getting lots of “good luck!”s and “you’ll do great!” but besides that it started off normal. I was obviously nervous for the presentation but that wasn’t until 3rd period so I had time to rehearse and prepare myself for either the most humiliating time of my life or the best time of my life. Either way, I was nervous.

Third period came much quicker than I thought it would, I left class around the middle of period two but it was science so I didn’t mind. I got my slideshow read and I prepared myself for how anxious I was going to be the entire time. I did many breathing exercises while waiting for the other students and teachers to enter the auditorium. As more and more seats filled my anxiety rose, I felt as if I was about to die but the curtain started going up so there was no running now. The curtain was finally all the way up and as the applause started fading into the distance I picked up the microphone to get started. My vision started to get blurry, I couldn’t tell if it was from tears or my body starting to shut down but either way I couldn’t turn back. I tried to start speaking but all that came out was a little croak, my heart began pounding, my hands were shaking and everything started to go dark.

When I woke up I was in the nurse’s office, she saw me get up from the bed i was laying on and she immediately ran over making sure i was okay. I felt alright, just my brain was still quite foggy. “What happened?” I managed to ask. The nurse told me I passed out during my presentation and the principal rushed me to the office as fast as she could. As everything came back to me I began to panic. Oh no, I passed out in front of the entire school, everyone saw me have my panic attack! I thought. I got up from the bed and started to walk out but I needed to sign some paperwork before I left, I signed and then went back to class. As I walked in to Mrs. Brown’s class everyone’s attention turned towards me, “What happened?” “Did you pass out?” “You fainted in the middle of your

presentation!” So many questions flooded the room but before I could answer any of them the teacher interrupted, “Now now class, let’s give Jack some space. Eyes on the board.” Everyone stopped talking and began writing notes but Mrs. Brown walked over to me, looking at me like I was an injured animal, she asked me how I was doing and then left but a thought came to mind. I didn’t want everyone treating me like I was broken, I only passed out but now every person I see looks at me differently. Even Parker stopped picking on me, nothing in my school life was normal anymore.

Weeks passed and everyone at school still babied me but i started going to therapy outside of school for my anxiety, everything was turning around. I started talking to more people at school and I managed to make a few good friends. I got on anxiety medication and it was really helping. I didn’t have panic attacks as often and when I did I could ground myself out of them. Life was going a lot better, I thought no one would ever look at me the same after the incident and no one really did but the amazing thing about life is you can ignore certain things so I decided to ignore the looks and the comments that I got in the hallways.

When I was in college I came across another occasion where I needed to present something of my choice so I decided to do a similar presentation to the one I was supposed to do in the 7th grade. I took a deep breath, started reading from the document and it started something like this, “I can’t breathe! I can’t breathe!” Then everything went dark.

Lucidity

by James G. Gr. 7

Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Academy

I remember it clear as day. As if it was etched into my mind like intricate hieroglyphs, but who could forget something like that? Who could forget watching your brother dying, but through his own will? Nothing, not even dreams were the same after that. They were all lifeless. Monotone images that moved like fluids in my mind every night. They had no reason, no purpose. They just stood there, weighing down like anvils in my brain. I remember them all exactly, too. After seeing something like what happened to Luc, you don't forget. Forgetting is just giving memories to a dark void.

A week passed. Nothing was different, but at the same time, everything was different. Because how could it go back to normal after something like this? 2006 was a dark time. My life compared to a dirty, dusty attic, or a shattered mirror. Fall, what was one of my favorite seasons turned into a living nightmare. Then, I tried to sleep, but I couldn't. My mind paced faster than ever before. Thoughts rushed in and out, shooting around like ricocheting bullets. Then I awoke to a bright room. Sun shone through the window onto my sand littered carpet. Piles of sand around my room, which looked equally as messy. My blanket had particles almost woven straight into the fibers, and I felt tiny needles poke into my skin. Their feeling of pain was replaced by a strange itching sensation.

I threw the blanket off of me and a cloud of sand and dust shot into the air. They floated around by the ceiling before performing a dance whilst floating down. The sun glistened off of them like glitter. They floated down and landed on the floor. I lay there, almost lifeless on my sandy mattress, then got to my feet. I walked groggily out into the hallway. The front door was wide open as piles of sand, some up to my torso, lay peacefully in the corner. More sand covered the floor, and outside, a desert. I decided to investigate by walking slowly out the door. Something was off. I walked onto the sand, my bare feet pressed against the dirt and dust that lay there. Cacti and small, dry ferns lay there planted deep into the ground. Their roots were hungry for water. Rain would never come. Yet, they still hoped.

I looked around, and to my left, a city by the ocean. Words shot into my mind. Novi Eboraci. Latin? Why Latin? I studied it heavily as a child, but even now I am still second guessing my words. Novi Eboraci. I scraped up some old knowledge; New York. Where Luc... died. I saw the freeway, with giant skyscrapers standing still around the thick road, then the bridge. Cars drove as if nothing happened there at all. As if a person hadn't just died there. I checked my watch, which was wrapped quite tightly around my wrist. The time on its digital screen flew by like a waterfall, numbers morphing into others. It must be broken, I thought.

No. This place is broken. I don't live in a desert. I live in New Hampshire. Yes, this was my house, but I don't live close to New York. Then it hit me. This was a dream.

A voice boomed loudly in my head. It called to me in Latin. *Nolite Timere*. Be not afraid. I closed my eyes for a second, and now, I was in a dark oak hallway. Like an old library, almost. Books lined the walls of the spacious hallway. Another thought shot into my head. *Domus Memoriae*. House of Memories. I looked at a book, titled 'March 2004.' I cracked open the dusty book, and each chapter was just numbers. 31 chapters. 31 days. I read the first line of chapter 5; then came to another realization as I flipped through the old pages. This was my life, spread out into books.

"Good thinking, Mark," a voice said to me from behind. He sounded almost too much like me. I turned to see a man with my exact body, but wearing a golden tuxedo, a watch lined with diamonds, and a crown made of rubies. "If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have thought of that, however. So, good job, both you and me."

"W-who are you? How do you know my name?" I took a hesitant step backwards, and I clenched my fists.

"They used to call me *Cerebrum*." Latin, once more. This time, it meant the brain.



“Brain?”

“That’s what they call me now, but I prefer the former. Either way, I am you. I have gained partial sentience from you, and now I realize how messed up your life is. You walk a harrowing path, boy. One that if not treated carefully, or treaded at all, could lead to a fate worse than Luc’s.”

“And that is?” I took an accusing tone. This was just a dream. Right?

“Insanity.” He snapped his fingers, and I was returned back to the desert. He reappeared in front of me. “That there,” he said as he pointed to the city, “New York. Go into New York.”

“No, I-I cant. Thats where Luc-”

“Died?” I stayed silent. “Listen, Mark. The only way for you to get out of your depression, and to get out of the dream, is to get over it. I know it will be hard, but you can’t get into the future while clinging to the past. Forgetting isn’t leaving memories to die. Forgetting is to move on. Go into New York.”

I walked carefully, as if one wrong step would enrage Cerebrum. I felt an invisible wall block my way. I pressed my hand against it, but it was no use. I looked back to Cerebrum, now standing beside a woman in a yellow flower dress.

“This is Eva. The embodiment of you, essentially, if you, Mark, was the past.”

“Is this a test?”

“Think of it as a performance.” Cerebrum smiled smugly and walked backwards, then turned into dust. I walked up to Eva, but stopped as a thought hit my head. Solitudo Veritatis. Desert of Truth. Is that where I was? Eva walked to me, took my hand, and smiled.

“I will never let you go.” Her voice was raspy and harsh. Her eyes stared hard, her gaze like daggers. “Let’s take a walk.” She spoke now in a pleasant tone and grabbed my wrist. She took me walking for hours, around the hot desert mountains, smooth plateaus, arches made of eroded rock, with weathered cliffs and canyons. She kept an iron grip on me the entire time. It seemed infinite. Then, she stopped by the edge of a canyon.

“Eva? What’s wrong?” I asked as my voice quivered.

I wasn’t just scared of the dream, I was scared of her. Suddenly, a robot appeared. Eva looked at the robot with an angry look, then rushed into a fistfight. She must have feared losing me. The robot attempted to evade, then headed straight towards me. He tackled me, and grabbed me as we both plummeted to the bottom of the cliff. I heard Eva yell my name. I let out a scream in return, but the sleek robot stayed silent. I didn’t know if I would die or not. I was scared of the lack of knowledge of this new reality. My nerves tensed like the strings of a violin. We then were teleported to a cloud. So many other clouds floated around. I laid, panting, on the soft, fluffy cloud floor, as the robot looked at me. “You shouldn’t be here, Mark”

“How do you know my name too?” I became nervous again.

“My name is Figment. I am your expectation of a perfect life.”

“What?” I was still confused.

“You think a perfect life is one where you can save others. That is what I do. Thing is, you only thought that was a perfect life after Luc died. As I was saying before, though, you shouldn’t be here.”

“How so?” I got to my feet, and stared at him with a look of deep thought. I wasn’t scared as much as I was now curious.

“You should be in the regular subconscious, but now you’re in the heightened one. One that is the last warning from your brain. You shouldn’t be here in the clouds, either. Pax is reserved for special occasions of dreams.” I felt a spark in my heart as one of my questions was answered. I was in a dream.

“What about the barrier? To Novi Eboraci?”

“Cerebrum knows about that. I’m more of a guardian, Especially from people like Eva. The people here aren’t what you think they are. I learned that the hard way.” As Figment stopped speaking and slightly slouched his head down as he remembered his past, Cerebrum appeared. “Speak of the devil.”

“Hello, Figment, and... Mark? I see you left Eva to come to Pax, hmm?” Peace in Latin, but I wasn’t concerned about that now. “I heard your conversation, and I have come to a decision.” Now I was scared. His voice was manipulative and strong, and had a

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butter-like slyness to it. Even though it was me, he still felt different. “I will help you, on one condition,” I would do anything to get out of the dream. Say it, wise weirdo. “You will fix your life after you wake up.” I didn’t think anymore. I agreed.

I was back in Solitudo Veritatis. Cerebrum stood next to me. “I will control this dream now. All you must do is go to the city.” I looked at him, then turned to the city. “Go.” I darted through the desert, running for my salvation from this place. I kicked up sand as I ran down the desert hillside. There was no barrier anymore. I could finally escape. I entered the bustling downtown area, expecting to wake up, but nothing happened. I look around, confused, as if maybe a doorway or a portal or something opened up. Then I saw him. Luc. I missed the sight of his curly brown hair that dazzled in pure sunlight, with his glasses on and his sweater tied around his waist. The sun was shining heavily, a contrast to the light that was there when the event actually transpired. He sat on the edge of

a bridge over the freeway, his legs dwindling over the cars. I rushed up to him, and tried to get his attention, but he didn’t respond. He got to his feet, too in a breath, and I saw him lean forward. I closed my eyes hardly, and blocked out the sound.

I was back in my bed. No sand, no sun. It was the middle of the night, and I was wide awake. I remembered the entire dream. Every detail was written into my mind, and probably also into one of the books in the Domus Memoriae. I smiled for the first time in a week, thinking about the dream. I can get better. I will get over this.

Everything will be okay.

They will be back.

Fates Entwined (excerpt)

by Chloe Y. & Clair S. Gr. 7
St. John Paul II Collegiate

I stepped out of the building into the quickly brightening sky. I had brought a canteen in case I got tired during the training sessions I thought I would have, like usual. The canteen had split when I fell from the smug Tmtth, but it was still useful. I walked back down the well-paved road, which I'm calling Wpr #1, back to the crash site. I saw lots of snow there. "Sprout! Look!" Tsuki called. "And yes, I'm awake."

I walked up in the direction of Tsuki's voice. She ran up to me. "Water. A pot of actually clean water. Jesus has blessed us!" She ran back into the make-shift shelter, and I made a mental note to scold her about the usage of that kind of language later. I jogged after her, noticing for the first time the soft touch of warm sunlight since I floated gently down here while definitely not being caught up in a blizzard. I was still salty about that. The shade descended over me like a gray cloak of fog, and my eyes seemed to have adjusted faster. I sped up and caught up to Tsuki, who had stopped over a slightly bigger than average pot. I peered in closer. A liquid was in fact inside, and I pulled out my canteen to scoop it in. "You seriously had that all along?" Tsuki growled. "It's not like I had a chance to tell you, Tsuki." I mumbled back. I screwed the dented top on and set it aside, then reached out and cupped water with my singular working hand. It tasted like dirt.

We started walking back, hearing our footsteps echo in the shade. For once, we could finally relax. Tsuki collapsed on her cushion, and I looked for two rocks that could start a fire. It took a minute to find them, but when I did, I was satisfied. They were far exceeding my expectations. I tuned myself out to

the clicking of the rocks, and watched Tsuki find a decent stand for the beans. The rusted and dented plate was found a lot faster than the rocks, let's say that.

Tsuki nudged me slightly, and I ignored it. She was probably just trying to get on my nerves. I went back to setting the fire up. Tsuki nudged me again. Harder. "What, Tsuki!" I growled. Couldn't she see I was busy? She tilted her head towards the opening. A jolt of fear went through me. There, standing at the opening, were two Crows. Sunken cheeks, pale faces, torn clothing, everything.

They were staring straight at us.

Chapter 13: Hinute

January 20

I walked up to the doors. It was slightly cracked, just a bit. Seriously, how did Asahi forget to close the doors all the way. It's not that hard!

I sighed, not letting myself get riled up just because of one stupid thing. I walk through the doors, and see something. Someone. There are people here. Crap! How did they find me?! Are they with him?! No, they aren't here for that. It looks like they're settling in. In MY house! What in the world do these morons want?!

And look here, one of them found those beans that I lost and the other is laying down on the bean-bag. Just how long have they been here to have already settled in?!

Mit'mar of the 4th Tribe

by Nathaniel W. Gr. 8
Notre Dame Collegiate



"Again."

Mit'mar stood up and raised his oak shield, ready for the oncoming assault. Pasqeh lunged at him, her broadsword leading the way. Mit'mar smacked it with the flat of his axe, then closed the gap on his mentor. Pasqeh slammed into Mit'mar's shield, attempting to collapse it and give herself an opening. The young student attempted to back away, but his mentor swung her right hand, and although it was dulled, still stung Mit'mar as it bit into his leg. Now off balance, the student took a step back, and looked up to try to devise a new plan, which gave him a perfect view of the oak shield heading straight for his forehead.

SLAM.

Mit'mar opened his eyes to see his mentor standing over him, although for some demented reason, she had a twin sister standing beside her. His head throbbed. The enchanting moonlight was suddenly blinding, and her ears rang as Pasqeh muttered, "That's enough for today."

Mit'mar didn't argue as he took his teacher's hand to help stand up. He was always surprised with how strong she was. She had dark brown hair that was cut level with their piercing blue eyes. She wore simple fur clothes despite the cold, harsh weather, as did everyone in their tribe.

"Go to bed," Pasqeh yelled back at him as she turned to walk away. "You'll have a long day tomorrow."

Mit'mar did as he was ordered, and strode through the village back to his tent. He ate a hearty dinner, then rolled into his bed and promptly drifted into unconsciousness.

Mit'mar woke early to train when he heard the blaring of war horns. They were faint, but he knew that he could reach the sound before whatever made it reached the encampment. He ran towards it, hardly breaking a sweat. As he gazed at the oncoming army, he estimated about 50 of the smelly green things. They had long ears and noses, as well as brown hair.

"Goblins," he growled with distaste. He rushed at the army, hoping to scare them off before the goblins reached the camp. He looked to his left and right, expecting to see other warriors of the tribe along side him, but he saw none. They all must all be asleep, he thought to himself. He couldn't yell to wake them up- they were too far away- and he couldn't turn to run back to camp, as the goblins were almost already on him.

Mit'mar only had one choice. He slammed his axe into a goblins head, calling upon his tribe's renowned rage. He swiped his double headed axe in a sideways motion, cleaving through five of the green things at once. He continued to whittle down the army, taking a few hits every once in a while, but he didn't take much notice. At last, they only had seven remaining. They all ran off and Mit'mar rejoiced, until he looked up and over the hill.

It was a beautiful view really, with rolling hills covered in snow. He could see the giant Border Mountains to the east, and a forest of evergreens blanketed in snow to his west. But the gorgeous sunrise view was tainted by the oncoming goblin army, twice the size of the last one.

As it barreled down on him, Mit'mar saw the seven remaining goblins from the last fight were joining their comrades. Mit'mar didn't know how he would deal with them all, but he knew he needed to try.

He began to run down the hill, then skidded to a stop as he realized who was leading the army. It was War Chief Yekhan, the winter blessed. Not only did he command the goblin tribe Tsuten, fifth tribe, but he was also supposedly blessed by the god of winter. Mit'mar saw this now as the chief strode onto the battlefield in nothing but leather shorts. He shouted a word in the goblin tongue as he commanded his army into battle.

Mit'mar knew he had only one chance to win and that would be if he scared them away, but he had already tried that, and now with Yekhan taking charge, they would never back down.

"I've got it!" he shouted before realizing that no one could hear him. Mit'mar took the spear off his back and began to aim. He would only have one chance once they got in range. Mit'mar waited a cold, long minute, took a deep breath, and threw it.

It looked like it would hit, until at the last minute, when it started arching to the side, but the spear got caught by the wind and carried it straight into the chief's chest. It impaled his unarmored skin with a sickening crunch.

Mit'mar jumped up and down, celebrating joyously, until he realized that they hadn't stopped charging, in fact they got faster. They stepped on Yehkan's corpse as if he wasn't there.

He fell into the snow, crestfallen.

"I'm so sorry," he murmured solemnly.

"Don't be," said a voice behind him as they patted him on the back with their surprisingly strong hands. Mit'mar looked up to see his mentor smiling down on him.

"We'll help you know," she continued, gesturing to the tribe behind them.

After a day of much fighting, Mit'mar was glad to be celebrating their victory with much ale and spirit. The light of the campfire provided a gorgeous glow to the

camp and the tribe's evening activities.

"Quiet!" Yelled the war chief, calling everyone's attention.

Pasqeh strode over to where the chief stood. She took in a deep breath and yelled with much gusto, "Today, we honor a new hero in our tribe. Mit'mar, would you please come up!"

He walked over, sweating despite the cold weather.

"Mit'mar, you have done well today despite all odds, and now we wish to thank you. Without you, we all would have died. So now, we welcome you into the Council of Elders!"

Cheering awoke from the crowd. They all started yelling, "Mit'mar, Hero of the 4th Tribe!"

Mit'mar smiled, happy to be sharing this moment with his closest friends and family.

"Mit'mar, Hero of the 4th Tribe," he mused. "Doesn't sound too bad."



Sparks of Hope

by Matthea S. Gr. 8
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Fire. That's the feeling welling up inside my chest. All of the emotions I had kept inside had finally become too much to bear. What started as a small fire to keep warm ended up engulfing the entire forest of my thoughts. My head was so clouded up with smoke that I didn't even attempt clearing it. Instead, I ran. The wind screamed in my ears, perhaps trying to tell me to slow down as I hopped, dodged, and ducked through the surrounding forest. Where am I even going? I thought to myself, beginning to think this was the wrong sort of reaction. But just as quickly as it came, the thought left, incinerated by the heat and intensity that was my emotions. When I finally arrived at my destination, I wasn't at all surprised. Of course I ended up here, why hadn't I guessed it? I entered the clearing, taking one ginger step at a time as my heart began to calm. The memories came flooding back, just as they always do when I come here. I decided to rest beside the thin, burbling stream at the edge of this special place. As I sit, I reach out to brush my hand across the soft, bumblebee yellow dandelions that grew beside me. The petite plants stretched up to the sky, basking in the sun's golden kiss. I tried to do the same, hoping I could feel the same peace they did. These flowers always remind me of my dearest friend, Opal Volland. We often escape here together when things become too much. Or, just when we want to have a moment alone together. Opal is a little like these dandelions in her own perfect way. She's bright, cheery, sweet, and right by my side practically everywhere I go.

"Khan? Khan!" A voice calls, emerging from the greenery. Her hands were on her knees as she tried to catch her breath, and her golden, curly locks appeared to have gone rouge on her sprint over here.

"Hi? Opal, what are you doing?" I ask, looking over to her in a brief moment of confusion. Although this feeling didn't last long, after all, who else would have come looking for me? Who else would have even noticed I was gone? She walked over in her usual springy way, and invited herself to sit right by my side.

"I've come to see if you're okay, of course!" She answered simply. "I noticed you slipped away during the town meeting. You know, the one about trying to make peace with the rebels? We need you there! You're like, kinda the figurehead here!" My heart sank at her reply. The meeting, I hated the meeting. I wanted to say how I didn't want anything to do with this. I wanted to say how all of our efforts were futile. I wanted to say that I couldn't handle this anymore. I wanted to say that I quit.

Instead, I picked one of the delicate, blooming buds and placed it on her lap. "I'm sorry."

"Why?" She picked up the yellow flower, placing it in my short, raven black hair, giving me a compassionate smile. "Is it because you're afraid? Khan, that crowd won't bite! If you want I can give your speech for you? Whatever you need I'll be here for you." She takes my hand into hers and I can feel the fire begin to settle.

"Thank you, but that's not the only thing." I now draw my attention to the stream, wishing for nothing more than to peacefully float away on it, at least until this whole ordeal is over with. She's right about one thing, I am afraid.

"Khan, you know I'm here if you need me. Talk to me! I'm sure I can help—"

"No, no you can't" My mind is so clouded that even the serene sounds of the surrounding woods won't calm my nerves, at least not this time.

"Why won't you tell me? I can see something is wrong, that much is clear. So let me fix it!"

"That's the thing! It can't be fixed!" I begin to raise my voice.

"Well how do you know that?" Now even Opal seems to be growing impatient with this conversation. I can't sit any longer, so I stand up and begin to pace. As I do so, I unintentionally step on one of the poor little dandelions beneath me. But at this point, I have bigger things to worry about. "My father is the head of the rebels. How do you expect me to fix this? To bring him to his senses? He must know that

if things continue like this, it could mean something terrible for those who come after us. It's not easy to recover from war, you know that! He knows that!"

"Khan—"

"He's so blind! So selfish! He thinks what he's doing is virtuous. He thinks what he's doing will save us. How am I supposed to snap him out of it?"

"Khan—" Opal stood up, her voice became louder, yet still remained patient.

"But if I fail? If I don't save him from his own actions, then what? What could I lose? I could lose you, that's what! I can't do that Opal, I can't."

"Khan!" Opal placed her hands firmly on my shoulders, putting a pause on my spiral. "Listen to me. You are his son. If there's anyone he would listen to it's you! You are his world. Use that. Bring him back home, safe."

"My father is set on revenge. He's like a moth drawn to a flame. Opal, there's no stopping what's coming. It's inevitable."

Opal let go of me, clenching her fists. Her eyebrows were knitted together in an almost unreadable expression. "But what if—"

"No, there is no what if! I know my father, he's a determined man. He will go to the ends of the earth to get what he wants, and if he were to drown in the deepest, darkest seas during his voyage, we all know he would drag each and every one of us down with him." I spat, looking at the dandelion I had previously crushed.

Silence.

The two of us just stood there as I studied the features of the mangled flower. It's better than focusing on the crushing silence, isn't it? I take notice of how the once lively petals were now wilted and sorrowful. I noticed how the flower no longer stood as tall as its peers. I even caught myself feeling sorry for the little thing. Opal looked at all the miniature flowers lying beneath us, but her eyes stopped at the same one I was fixated on when a look of understanding crossed

her face. "Fine."

I looked up at her in confusion. "Fine?"

"Fine, let's say you do fail." Opal's voice was grim. I had never seen her like this before. Now that she had stopped believing, the little hope I had left completely drained from me. "Let's say you do fail and your father goes through with his plans of attack despite your protests." She puts her hands back on my shoulders, squeezing them tighter as she speaks, as if gripping for stability, herself. Perhaps the thought terrifies her just as much as it does me. "If that happens, I'll be right here with you. I'll stand by your side just as always, and we will figure it all out together, okay?"

Tears began to fill my tired eyes. I had been keeping all these worries in for months now, why didn't I tell her sooner? We share everything, and she always knows what to say, it's true. I knew she would be there for me, yes, but I guess I had forgotten for a little while. Without hesitation, I pulled her in for a hug. "Thank you."

"Of course! You can tell me anything, you huge idiot." She replies, and I let out a laugh. Another classic Opal-move.

"Oh, hush." I scold her, teasingly. Sitting back down, I pick a new flower, a less crushed one. I gave it to her once more. "But really, thanks."

Opal sat beside me, doing the same. "Any time." She smiled, as we each took the dandelions that the other had just offered. Together, we sat. Enjoying the blissful escape from the rest of the world, at least for another few moments. With each other, we could face any forest fire, that much I'm hopeful for.

Rain

by Aynsleigh B. Gr. 8
St. John Paul II Collegiate

The clouds crowded the stars out of the sky as two juveniles stood silently, anticipating the downpour. The two friends stood unmoving as the rain began to fall. The droplets bounced off the two, reducing in opposite ways. As the precipitation hit the taller of the two, the drops sizzled off into steam.

From afar it would seem the boy was encased in a cloud of smoke. The girl on the other hand, looked like she was in a completely different weather system, one with hail instead of rain. As the ice flung itself off of the girl it would hit the boy and send a

whole new wave of steam up.

The boy took a long look up at the sky. He gave out a dejective sigh as he glanced over at the girl. Once. Twice. The girl on the other hand was vibrating with anger. She glanced at the boy. He shifted uncomfortably under her glowering gaze.

We could go inside? He asked quietly. All he met was silence.

A moment later he heard a quiet but definite "Yes".

Beatrix (excerpt)

by Moira C. Gr. 8
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Surprisingly, the ground started to shake with an intense power, triggering a few pieces of wood from above the houses to stumble downwards. Immediately, a dreadful and tight feeling in my chest started to make itself apparent once again. Observing my brother, I can see the same feeling plastered on his expression, turning paler and paler. Suddenly, the alarming heat reminded me of the episode that will lead to multiple peoples' demise. Unexpectedly, I grabbed his wrist and started to drag him in a direction that I can only hope is towards Capri.

Although Aristotle didn't appreciate my wrist squeezing, he stopped squirming when large dark clouds started to crowd the skies. Quickly, they started spewing dark, fine ash from up above. While traveling through the rushing horde of families, children, nobles, and commoners, the heat worsened, causing gallons of racing sweat to swiftly make their way down my face. Without warning, his voice boomed from behind me, "Where are the watch's hands?", he called out in desperation; while tapping the face of the miniature clock strapped on his wrist.

"It must have broken from the impact of our fall!" I cried while the loose robes of the swarming of civilians danced around the stoney paths these people

made a few days before the disaster. Beside the bustling people and their screams of terror that could only fall of deaf ears, were the multiple structures of stone and wood tumbling down from the weight of the black dust that rained from the sky which surrounded this ancient town. Suddenly, the familiar voice that I heard seconds before spoke once more, but his voice scratched against the incoming ash that entered through his throat, "Why did Mount Vesuvius erupt while thousands of people are still residing in this city?", he asked, trying to search for a reasonable explanation.

"They thought that the signs of a powerful eruption was a message from their god, showing his gratitude for preparing a festival for him.", I quickly answered; ash clutching to my head and shoulders, threatening to push me down from the weight. However, my legs continued to push off the dusty and worn out ground from beneath us, the fear of death looming over my consciousness. Until a golden gleam made itself visible to me at the corner of my glasses.

There, resting on the ground of a collapsing building layed two separate mini arrows made with gold. Finally, our way out of this catastrophe shone

towards us, reflecting the sparks of a fiery drizzle from the black sky. Quickly, my legs changed their course of direction, turning around and slamming into many individuals, causing a chain reaction of stumbling pedestrians. However, the sweltering heat intensified while my vision went in and out of focus, making it merely impossible to see my objective in front of me.

Out of nowhere, the hand I squeezed for a hazardous amount of time and strength, wrenched itself from my original grasp. Rapidly, a tall, pale boy made an ap-

pearance in front of the tragedy and my field of vision, pushing and floundering through the sea of distressed people. Nonetheless, a miracle made itself present once his thin fingers managed to grab the golden arrows which were undisturbed since our arrival. Unfortunately, his victory did not last long, before me was the same boy being pulled away from my sight from the frightened crowd, and towards the mountain which ended thousands of civilians with its terrifying death sentences.

God Save the Prom Queen

by Simone M. Gr. 8

St. John Paul II Collegiate

It sounded like piano music and it was coming from my living room. No way. The only person who plays piano and would be in my house is my girlfriend Veronica, who was at home studying. Unless... no. No! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! She can't be back early! She's so passionate about her classes. She wouldn't be here unless something serious happened. She must have noticed that I haven't answered her calls since last week. It's not that I don't love her, I'm only in this situation because I love her. Besides, it's all their fault I'm in this situation anyway. Something tells me that argument won't hold up in court. Even with a lawyer, which I know my dad can't afford. Either way, I know in my heart I'm not responsible. I go to grab the old carpet from the attic above my room and pray to every deity I know of that Veronica doesn't hear the noise of the creaky step ladder from the floor below. After I'm inside the attic, I pull the 20-year-old, dingy, paisley-printed

thing from the attic and unfurl it on the floor. The sixties must have been awful for interior design, I think to myself. I ponder if the carpet will be big enough for all of them as I grab some of the extra towels I bought just in case and the herbs to cover the smell. I pull them out of the closet and place them on the carpet. Heather Chandler, who once ruled Westerburg, now reduced to a blue-stained corpse coiled in a carpet along with the linebacker and quarterback. I push them out the window and climb out myself using the makeshift ladder I assembled of old wood planks. Turns out woodworking wasn't useless after all. After I dispose of them in the landfill, I return to my room only for Veronica to knock on the door.

"Jason?" she calls from the hall, "Do you know what the gross smell is?"



Heart Beats & Phone Lines

by Yassen B. Gr. 9
St. Luke's Outreach

A stale static sound accompanied by choked sobs filled the seemingly claustrophobic room, in the corner of the void black room a petite small figure laid huddled in her bed, tiny spots of her navy-blue comforters stained and damp, the girl's black hair messily laid out on her white pillows some even hanged off the corners of the giant bed. A wooden sign that spelled the name 'Stella' was hanging off the doors coat hook it would be usually hidden from the visible eye with a coat, a strewn of dirty clothes hid the black-haired girls small flip phone from wandering eyes a slim rectangle of light under the door reflected off the smoothly varnished wooden floor it was the only thing that kept the room from being totally pitch static black.

The sound of a land line phone beeping echoed repeatedly inside her ears like a never-ending loop the girl's figure shook even more her tears pouring down her face like a waterfall her mouth hung open like she was silently screaming at something, her small frail arms rhythmically banging on the damp navy-blue comforters her dark chocolate eyes brimming with grief mixed with sorrow her mind felt like static and numb. Stella could hear a familiar voice that used to fill her with warmth be muffled with the annoying beeping of a landline phone, the void black haired girl's chest heaved in and out she felt lightheaded from the lack of air.

It felt like an invisible thorn of roses suddenly bloomed inside her lungs and repeatedly pierced her the moment she began to dig deep in her memories maybe she was finally going crazy but her eyes saw the once vibrant colours in her room turn ashen grey it seemed like her life turned into a 90's tv show, a painful dry laugh was tore out of her dry open mouth tears still in the corners of her eyes but before Stella could continue hysterically laughing the muffled sound of a continuous chime snapped her out of nightmarish day dream her dark chocolate eyes frantically looked around in her static dimly lit room her heavy tired eyes landing on a bundle of clothes that was located beside her tall looming door.

Stella debated a second or two before slipping out of her disorganized bed, the frazzled haired girl slowly walked like a sloth towards the continuous chime. Her short tan arms rummaging through the pile of dirty clothes, her rough lanky fingers roughly pulled out the white flip phone that was still beeping, her eyes squinting in darkness she pressed the green call key of her flip phone she held the phone to her ears not taking a second to look at the caller name's "Stella?". A warm baritone voice asked but Stella could clearly hear the deep concern of her friend's voice. For some reason she began to sob again small warm tears escaping the corners of her puffy red eyes her knees buckled roughly scraping the wooden floor.

The crying Stella strongly held the flip phone in her ears she opened her mouth to speak, her once gentle voice now hoarse and scratchy "Ch-Charles..." the caller obviously rushed to reply concern laced in his voice "Stella, are you okay? I heard what happened..." she tried to move her legs, but it scraped harshly against the wooden floor, Stella winced in pain but quickly stood up from her uncomfortable situation she held the small white flip phone with both of her hands "I-I'm f..fine," she blatantly lied like she was not having a mental breakdown a couple minutes ago. Stella knew that her childhood friend would quickly spot this obvious lie of hers "Are you sure...? I... can visit your house today and we can do something to keep your mind off it." Charles hesitated on some of his words like he was afraid of doing something that would offend her, this made her let out a quite giggle "I promise I'm fine silly, I... We can meet up at the Plaza?" her voice still scratchy but it seemed more happier this unknowingly comforted the male caller.

"Sure, I'll see you then?" the male spoke, his relief hiding his deep-rooted doubts and worries the midnight haired girl didn't spot her friend's left-over worries "I'll see you then! Thank... you again Charles I don't know what I would do without you," Stella paused but she quickly expressed her thankfulness towards her childhood best friend, unknown to her Charles on the other side of the flip phone let

out a big sigh of relief. His pilling guilt now gone a big smile wandered on his face “Of course we did make a promise after all?” The tanned skinned girl smiled pain still in her eyes, but it was hidden by her happiness “We did, I’ll see you soon bye!” both childhood friends swiftly said their goodbyes towards each other.

The sound of a clicking echoed throughout the pitch-black room the long waisted hair girl quickly changed out of her heavy sleepwear and changed her clothes in darkness, happiness and content written on her face Stella grabbed all her necessities and headed outside her room. Her puffy red eyes were quickly flashed by the bright lights of the living

room, but she wasn’t bothered by it her dark chocolate wandering eyes spotted the cool grey landline phone sitting on the living rooms coffee table, but she quickly tore her gaze away “Stella there you are! Are you okay now? Where are you going?” the tanned skinned girl looked towards her mom who had quickly berated her with ongoing questions “I’m fine mom, I promise! Don’t worry I can get through this I know aunty Judy will always be watching over me.” Stella reassured her mom and swiftly left her childhood home a content smile on her face.

The 3am Train

by Presley S. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

The train always seems be come late at night,
It passes and slows through the rickety tracks of my mind
Interrupting my peaceful slumber,
Waiting for a new thought to pass.
The engine roars as my thoughts soar through an endless
Cacophony of impossible ideas,
always a new one popping up around A twist,
a turn or a corridor of files that fill my brain.
Each one unorganized or called the incomplete his tory of thoughts forgotten.
Being able to remember everything must be a curse and a gift,
If that gift had a note saying that if you lose it you will be stuck
In an endless paradox filled with constant chirps of crickets.
With the memory of things that occurred, past, present or
future has the ability to drive one’s

own person insane with the con
stant reminder
That this happened, you were there, was it your fault?
Our brain slams these thoughts through like a train wreck,
A constant reminder that shoves itself down your throat,
A reminder... that never calms down.
The loud steam whistle interrupts my sleep as it passes through the neighborhood, awaking people along the way.
The impulsive thoughts cause the nervous system to be on alert, like butterflies in your stomach or like cockroaches,
And once again the mind stays awake for another restless night
Of ideas, impulses and thoughts,
Crashing through your mind like a train.



Stuck in the Middle

by Maya F. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Back and forth and back and forth again.

Pack your bags

Get in the car

I just got settled when I get swept off my feet again.

Hearing the muttering under their breath, the disgust.

Dont tell your mom about this

Stop bringing up your father

It seems like I'm always stuck in the middle.

Do I wanna try or give up?

Relax or work harder

These standards here, those rules there.

How can one begin to get comfortable when everything
is always changing

Are you at your dads this week?

Wait, your mom has a boyfriend?

How do I answer what do I say?

I'm a Newton's cradle, being hit back and forth and back
and forth again.

All my life I have been told

by my mother to relax. That my
grades are fine.

That I need to calm down and
breathe.

Break days are fine you need them

She's the warm welcoming wonderful fire on a cold
night helping me exist.

All my life I have been told by my father to work harder.
That my grades needed work.

That I need a wake up call and to stop fooling around.

You can't miss schools its your whole life

He's the cold ice I slip on but eventually I learn to
balance, even if it's hard.

How can I seem to manage with both?

The fire melts the ice and the ice cools down the fire.

I need to do both but both harm each other.

I go back and forth and back and forth again.



Living the life of a merry go round

by Kirsten L. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

It's either scorching hot or freezing cold.

I'm either buried in emptiness or bound in the mo
ment.

I'm either unable to sleep or could sleep endlessly.

There isn't anything in between.

I'm like a flame, blazing, raging, and vivacious.

igniting everything I come into contact with
absorbing energy and only growing stronger

You'll regret putting your life on the line for me.

Then all I've worked for comes tumbling down.

My flame has gone out.

My entire world is collapsing when I understand

what I've become, and I know I'm the one to blame.

Until a spark ignites my heart

And I've already completely destroyed another
home that bears a part of myself.

I can't keep anything together; it all falls apart.

My life's pieces do not fit together.

Everytime I hit rock bottom

I hit it harder each time

How do people keep moving

It's a pattern to a never ending puzzle

You must continue to pick up the parts, even if they
do not fit.





My tight knotted braid

by Maxine M. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

I like my hair braided,
I like how my mom calls me Eskimo Anne Or
50 cent
I don't like how she sorry,
Sorry for not knowing how to clean,
Sorry for when she raises her voice.
How can she be sorry when she was just raised
that way?

Yet I have a sorrow gutt feeling,
That feeling when I see the coloured glass ceiling
Or the cross at the top that feels so ghostly.
I can still feel them,
all there.

I can feel them even with their voices erased
Just like the second commandment misplaced
All from the same place
Just from their race.

My sensitivity is always there
It's there when a white man says it was
long ago,

Or when I was holding her hand
and
asked if I was her's
It's still there.
It forms in realization that all they
can see is little
old me
With an ugly old breed
Coming to save me
With there "white night" stereotype

I have all all the features of her
Yet people still question the deleterious possibilities.

I like my hair braided,
But not when my own family can't share the
same contentment.
I should feel a well built bond just as much as
the knots in my hair
But I feel lost when we don't get the same
Recognition
All I want for us is to wear braids in my hair.

Dear God of Gravity

by Kensley I. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Dear God of Gravity
I concede into your almighty power
The stronghold will of your grip
The grip that bounds me to the earth
Like a helpless sing-song bird squashed into the jaws
of a crocodile
You envelope my surroundings, allowing me to
Run, jump, and dance
Each passing moment where you do not cross my
mind
I don't feel guilty or remorseful
I do not need to acknowledge you for you to hold
me together
When I notice your abstinence, I am a helpless float
ing ball of flesh
Searching for the comforting ground
When you abruptly kick my knees out from under
me, I feel small to your control
Like the feeling of realizing you left the stove on but
finding out when the kitchen is on fire

Dear God of Gravity
I take you for granted
All the times you've held me together without
thanks
All the times you've allowed me to
Run, jump, and dance
The, "Have a great day!" texts, I put aside
The offered lunch dates I overlook
The small gifts and gestures you do to show your
love that I push away
The genetics I so greedily stole from you
The heritage you gave me that I so shamelessly stow
away
When you are on my mind
I underestimate the things

you've shown me
The underlying lessons
you've subconsciously
written in the foot
notes on my biography
The lessons that makes me understand how im
bound to the earth
The first time I felt like a balloon, floating into the
sky before I was caught in your arms
The first time you let me sit on your lap, steering the
white truck you loved so much
The first time you brought your beautiful daughter
flowers for her "stunning performance"
The first time I saw your face distort when I brought
up the topic of boys
The first time I cried into your arms when I realized
how much words cut like knives
And no matter how much I push you away, you
rebound back, welcoming me with inviting arms
Because your the one who bounds me to the earth,
holding me together
Teaching me how to
Run, jump, and dance
It's these moments where I realize how you fuel me
Ignite me with compassion and love,
Teaching me to recognize the little things
How you hold me together like a puzzle that keeps
adding new pieces
Like you, God of Gravity

So Dear God of Gravity
Forgive me for overlooking your comfort
Thank you for bounding me to the earth, holding me
together
Thank you for allowing me to
Run, jump, and dance.



The Best

by Jack B Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

The final horn sounds.
Everyone charges upon the field, like a stampede.
But I stand ALONE.
THINKING.
Thinking about WHY.
Why in a time of great joy, I am so annoyed.
Annoyed about not being the best.

All I want... is to be the best

Everyone talks about my strengths, and look up to
what I do like I am a movie star,
But the things they list are the things that send me
into a panic.
I sit,
Scrolling endlessly on social media, filled with
anxiety, watching people that can,
Run faster,
Jump higher,
Catch better,
Shoot better,
And are smarter than me.
There is a new star sprinter, his name is My Thoughts.
He runs through my head furiously, because

All I want ... is to be the best.



When I'm handed a test
and the first number begins
with anything under a 9,
My face begins to turn the
colour of blood dripping on white shiny
snow.
A wave of embarrassment crashes over my body like
the Pacific Ocean on a Hawaiian Bay whenever
someone asks what mark I got.
I began to doubt myself, because

All I want... is to be the best.

When I was younger, I was overflowing with FAITH.
Every time someone asked what I wanted to be
when I was older,
I told them in the N.B.A
I had NO DOUBT in my mind that I would make it
there.
Although my dreams have changed, the thought of
letting my younger self down is enough for a water
fall of tears to splash against the floor.
For I have worked hard,
But I need to work hard some more.

If I want to be the best.

Dear Daisy

by Julianna B. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Dear Daisy

Memories of the day we first met,
Still sail vivid in my mind,
A sea of emotion and love.
Summers so long ago but memories so close,
I cling to you,
Such a young, pusillanimous, curious puppy.
With the whole world laid out in front of you.
In seconds, loving every last strand of your golden
air I stroked,
As I held my sweet, little mashed potato.
First nights sleep in your new world falls,
Peeping in your crate,
I caved, brought you to my bed.
You cushioned in my arms
Such a perfectly, precious, pup,
I covered you in blankets,
Told a story,
Then turned the lights off.

Dear Daisy,

To quickly, the little puppy I once held,
Soon sprouted into a ravishing, loving, loyal dog.
In the prairies we'd play and run.
In long swaying grass chasing ball after ball.
So full of life.
Exploding with excitement and energy.
The sun painting a watercolor picture in the sky,
As it sank waist deep in the horizon.
Then soon the day's end would roll in.
We'd lie together,
Covered in bed,
Your head in my lap,

Tell you a story

Then I turned the lights off.
Then in my sleep the nightmare came,
Never truly thought it would.
But that one inexorable trip to the vet,
When that needle drained the life,
Of my whole world.
Eyes flutter with tears,
Like a feeble butterfly in rain.
Choking back on my regret,
On the times I demanded,
Commanded,
Stranded,
Reprimanded.
You, and the fear of never being happy again,
On the floor of my bathroom,
Drain the bath and my tears.
Fiddling with the ends of my hair,
I was so scared...

Dear Daisy,

Why did you have to leave?
Why did everything come down,
In pouring rain.
Why did everything have to unravel this way,
Into an infinite elongated tape roll of loneliness?
Why did you have to go...
Just why?

Dear Dog Pessimists and Cynics,

TELL ME that dogs are filthy!
TELL ME that they're just animals who are incapable
of comprehending the ways of the world,

When us humans are just as confused and lost.
 TELL ME that dogs are a handful and tiring!
 But can you tell me this...
 WHY did I cry a thousand more tears when Daisy died,
 Then when my Grandpa died,
 A thousands more tears shed,
 Then when my Grandma died.
 Then WHY did it seem like Daisy was the only one who
 understood me?
 (breathe in and out)

Dear Daisy...

I promise when I look up at the sky at night
 Alone, I will see your reflection.
 In the vast, dark ocean of despair,
 I will see the stars beaming down
 The twinkling of your eyes,
 Scintillating down on me with love.
 I promise when I hear the poignant, plectrum, plucking,
 Of a weeping guitar
 I will think of you,
 And feel melancholy.
 As the music soothes my wounds,
 Just as you soothed me,
 Even on the foggiest,
 Most unclear days.
 I promise at the smell of a wet, drenched dog,
 I will not shiver and block myself from the fetid stench.
 Rather, I will soak it in that water like a sponge,
 Soak in the memories of you and me.
 I will smile at the thought of how happy we were together.
 So I will take off that artificial smile pinned on to my face
 And I will say it is okay to cry,
 Crying is not weakness,
 Not being defeated.
 Our hearts way of expressing its gratitude,
 Honoring what your broken soul has held so dearly,

Asserverating an adoration towards a lost
 love.
 The soul waving goodbye,
 At what it once had,
 But now all gone.
 Now I am alone.
 All much lonelier, ever so despondent,
 Without your reassuring head at my feet.
 So I cover myself in blankets,
 Tell myself a story,
 And turn the lights off.

Dear Daisy,

Every night I kiss your worn collar,
 And hold it, hugging my heart.
 Worried when the memories of you,
 Begin to fade in my head.
 But you were there with me,
 Even when I was at fault
 (following is said faster)
 And thank you for helping me shine.
 So much more than just some canine,
 All the memories in my mind,
 Wishin I could rewind,
 The time,
 Your heart, so loving and benign,
 So much more than some canine.

Dear Daisy,

I don't know if you knew
 So now I will say,
 Thank you,
 You taught me to be strong.
 You taught me how to belong.
 So I wake and get out from the covers,
 Stretch at the morning sun of a new day,
 And turn the lights on.

Waterfalls and Wilted Hands

by Hailey W. Gr. 9
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I can't write a poem.

I hear such beautiful words
Tumble from the infinitely complex minds of
brilliant people
Like waterfalls to the ravine below
Their powerful words drench pages, minds
and hearts

My mind isn't a waterfall
It isn't beautiful or powerful
It doesn't purify the water of my thoughts
As they're spewed into unknown lands

I thrive with graveyard applause
With the stiff laughs of the deceased
Following my performance

The early 50's comedy recording erupts for me
With every word well spoken
Every thought well had

Prompted applause thunders from wilting hands

My mind isn't a waterfall
The words on my page aren't so wondrous or
awe-inspiring
My words drip from the surgically precise slit in

my brain
The selective drops stain the
page a
proscenium curtain crimson

The graveyard erupts again
The fickle silence broken as
The dust on my tongue and the blood on my page
Proves satisfactory

Rome wasn't built in a day
But it fell in one

My mind isn't a waterfall
But it looks like one or my dynasty falls

So
Sweet
Words
Stain
My every action

I take cover behind the rush of words
A poem forms from the scratches on my page,
but it seems like no poem at all

The dead return to their silent state

And I still can't write a poem.

The Women Who Were Born With Fire

by Grecia S. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Women were born with fire accelerating in their bones. Which one by one the world will stamp out of us.

You will recognize it when you open your mouth and flames explode out from the back of your throat, like you are the fire breathing dragon in a fairy tale. Forcing yourself into the spotlight, leading them all to say, "Do not raise your voice, you are a lady."

You will understand when you strut around in skin tight clothing, that hugs your body so perfectly it leaves you breathless. While watching your dad's eyes fill with terror before you get nailed for looking like you have been stripped naked.

You will have your eyes peeled open by reality when you sit at the end of the booth and order a pizza. Feeling eyes dart your direction, meeting the back of your neck with cold, forceful, judgment that creates a path of goosebumps stomping up your spine, into your ears making your head tremble.

You will realize when your back starts to sweat because of the layers that have been pounded onto your body to avoid the uncomfortable sensation of being prey to the eyes of men who will grin and

call you names that yet, you are still too young to understand.

You will notice when the word beautiful is strung together by all those around and placed on a bar too far out of reach, while being discredited with twisted, bitter lies. Making it a race between you and history, leaving you worn out on the sidelines with the word loser carved into your back for everyone to see even if scarred to the exact shade of your skin.

But as soon as you let the world walk away with the flames that burn from your soul, they win. So you must burn brighter than the sun. Be witty, be reckless, be independent. You were born to belong to you, and you only.

The Haiti Protest

by Gage G. Gr. 9

St. John Paul II Collegiate

This is a true story about me, Gage, who got stuck in the Haiti protest of July 2018. I am a kind, generous, nature-loving child. I may be a puny 11 year old, but I love soccer. It all started when we were going to Haiti to see my sister Mikerline's sister (Naica), and their grandma. We met my Naica and her family at the hotel we were all staying at in Carrefour. The hotel was great. It had a pool and awesome food.

One day, we hopped in a van, and drove off to the beach in Jacmel, where we ate crab for supper right on the beach. During supper, we listened to the FIFA World Cup finals. The Haitians all root for Brazil, and they were in the final game. After that, we went to play in the ocean, splashing each other and swimming. When we were all done, we started heading back to the hotel. That was when something completely unexpected happened....

Cars were everywhere, surrounding the gas stations. Frantzy, who worked at the hotel, asked someone what was going on. The man replied that, "The government is going to raise the gas price by 46%, people are trying to get as much gas as they can before it happens."

While we waited in the van, we started to see smoke coming from from up the road. People in their cars started to turn off the road and head in different directions. I was really confused about what was going on. There were signs and lots of people. I couldn't read the signs because they were in Creole, but I am guessing they wrote to lower the gas price because Frantzy told us. When we got closer to where there was smoke, we realized that people were burning tires across the road to block it off.

The smoke coming from the tires, it was a thick, black smoke, and it smelled really awful. We passed by the burning tires and the people easily. A couple seconds later, we saw more smoke, and it looked as if people were putting huge boulders on the road. They had closed off the road, we couldn't pass.

Ricardo, our driver, turned the van around to go back where we came from, as the crowds were larger here, and the people were angry and shouting. The road

was completely closed, and it was getting dangerous. The temperature outside the van was about 35 degrees, and it was humid. We could hardly breathe in the van with all the windows shut. When we tried to open the windows, it was really hot, it hardly made a difference. On top of that, it was dangerous to have the windows open because of the mob of people outside. We had barely any water or food left because we had drunk and eaten everything during the day, and thought we'd be home in about an hour.

Ricardo was trying to drive us back where we came from, as he and Frantzy thought it would be safer. He slowly started to drive over the rocks, and BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! People were throwing rocks at the van from the sides of the road. Frantzy yelled at us to get down, and we all did. More rocks were being thrown at the van, and one hit just above the window where my dad was sitting. If it had hit the window, it would have greatly injured him. "They've trapped us!" Frantzy bellowed. Oh, great they trapped us, I thought. Now how are we going to get to the hotel? My dad told Ricardo to, "Get us out of here!" Ricardo floored it in reverse, and drove back to where we were before. The road was still barricaded. We realized that the first men had let us pass because they were trying to get as many vehicles trapped as possible. Shortly after we had passed the first time, they shut that part of the highway with boulders and burning tires. I knew this was really dire.

A large group of men attacked a large truck, and pulled people off of it, and out of it. They started throwing all the produce on the road, and setting fire to the straw. Suddenly, gunshots went off around us. My mom shouted for Mikerline, Naica, and me to hit the floor, and she threw herself on top of us to protect us. It was really scary!

Ricardo had parked the van on the side of the road, and we all sat there, silent. About three hours later, it was night, and we were still in the van, trapped in the middle of a riot. We all sat there, petrified. Frantzy told us, "I am going to look around for a different way out." He disappeared into the darkness, with all the shouting and raging people rioting around us!

I was sitting in the van, and I was really hot and thirsty, and it felt horrible. Later, Frantzy came back and told us, "I may not have found a way out, but there is a guy here that I know. He just moved to the village over there." I was upset, but happy at the same time. Frantzy and Roody, his friend, hopped in the van, and Ricardo started it. We drove into a field in the pitch black; we had to go really slowly because it was bumpy, and there was a wall beside us.

Suddenly, a bunch of guys jumped out from behind the wall, and started screaming angrily at us. They were waving weapons around, and we got really frightened. They told us couldn't pass unless we lived in the village, and they were looking in the van. Frantzy tried to tell them we all lived in the village, and they looked right at my mom, who was in the second seat...they knew that no White woman lived in the village. They wanted us to all get out of the van, and we were super scared (my dad later admitted he thought that we were going to be executed in the field). Frantzy and Roody kept insisting we all lived there. What was really scary is that we couldn't understand the language - all we could understand were their weapons waving around, and their anger. All of the sudden they all started laughing, including Frantzy, Ricardo, and Roody. To this day, I have no idea what was suddenly hilarious to them all, but they let us pass.

We got to Roody's village, and hopped out of the van, gasping for air. The people were nice, but the only problem was I could not understand what they were saying. They grabbed us some chairs, for us to sit down. After that, they brought us pop. It was warm and did not help with our thirst, but we were still grateful.

They showed us a house that we could sleep in, and we walked in the bedroom to see a few blankets on the cement floor that had been lent to us by some of the villagers. The room had one window, but with no glass. We all layed down to sleep. Oh, and there was no door on the house.

The next day, I woke up to a cockroach and a spider right beside me! My mom was freaked out that they would land on me, she literally threw me across the room! That point about adrenaline? It's true. In the afternoon, we also found out that my dad and Frantzy had seen a HUGE tarantula right outside the house...

they didn't kill it, just shooed it into the jungle...it was awesome when we had to spend another night there in the doorless house.

For breakfast, I had a fresh mango, and it was delicious. Later, I saw some children on the street playing with a flat soccer ball. I went over and asked if I could play, and ended up being the goalie. Even though we couldn't speak each other's languages, we played for two hours, and it was awesome. I even forgot that I was in a protest and hiding in a village for safety.

My mom had been forcing me to drink a lot of water, and I did understand that; I knew I needed to keep hydrated. Closer to the afternoon, it started to rain. I was okay with the rain because it was super hot outside, it was quite refreshing. It was a thunderstorm with lightning. I was wondering to myself when the storm would end, but it kept on going. All of a sudden, CRACK! After that, a whole bunch of yelling. I got up out of my chair to see what all the yelling was about, and it turned out that a coconut tree had been hit by lightning, and was on fire. I thought to myself, Great. We're in a protest, and now we're going to be in a forest fire. Eventually, though, the rain put out the fire. We later found out that this was the village's best-producing coconut tree, I felt really awful for them.

We were all tired and hot and hungry, and my mom and I were starting to get dehydrated and sick. The villagers pooled their food together and made us some rice and beans. I really enjoyed it, but my mom was too dehydrated and sick to eat. She felt really guilty because she knew some of the villagers were going without food that day.

Later, they made us some labouyi, which is a Haitian cereal with banana in it. This has always been one of Mikerline's favourite Haitian foods, she was pretty excited. It was great that she remembered eating it when she lived in Haiti. We ended up having to sleep there another night because the riots were still going on. It was awful on the cement floor with the men snoring, and the bugs all over the place.

Frantzy came back the next day from checking the highway, and exclaimed that the S.W.A.T. had come and moved the boulders. I was overjoyed to hear this news. I really wanted to go back to the safe haven that was our hotel. We waved goodbye to the people who had taken care of us, and hopped in the dented

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van back to the hotel.

On the way there, we got trapped again by a new protest. We were lucky enough to be near an orphanage that Frantzy volunteered at, and they took us in and fed us. We had to stay there for several hours, and it looked, we'd have to spend the night there. Out of the blue, we got the call that the roads were clear again, we later booted it to the hotel! When we got there, I was in a pang of relief that I burst into tears and kissed the ground. We stayed another night in Haiti, and were one of the first flights out of the country when the airport reopened.

If you would want some more information, please

come and see me. Also, we have been helping the villagers who helped us. We gave the children new soccer balls, we gave the village lots of food, and we also bought them a bunch of school supplies. During this trip, we found out that my sister's grandma was actually a slave, our friend, Stephane, helped us find her a new home. He went and took her away from the slave-owners, and now she has her own house. She doesn't have to be a slave anymore. Each month, we send Stephane money to buy her food and other items she needs, and we pay for her house. That makes me pretty great inside.

Good People

by Eva R. Gr. 9

St. John Paul II Collegiate

What truly makes a good person?

Are they compassionate, and kind?

Do they hold others up, even when they can't
hold themselves?

I don't believe in good people.

And I don't believe in bad people.

Nobody is good, nobody is bad.

We are all just people.

And people can make good choices,

And people can make bad choices.

And sometimes those bad choices outweigh
the good choices

And sometimes those good choices outweigh
the bad choices

But they are just choices

And we are just people.

There were two people in particular that I
remember.

I believed one was good, and the other was bad.

The bad one left me when I needed them the most.
Their hurtful words cut me open and weighed
me down.

My confidence and pride was shattered.

Everything was my fault, they said.

Every bad thing in the world was my fault, they said
And so as a small child, I felt so unworthy of
love, and appreciation.

The good one was always there for me.

Their words of kindness, sweet and warm filled
me when I was empty.

My happiness that was once gone

Came back rapidly like it had never left

I don't need to cry, they said

I never did anything wrong, they said

And I have never known such peace in my entire life.

One of them was good, and one was bad.

That's all I knew.

But I was young, so I didn't know.

I didn't know that the bad one didn't actually
have any resentment towards me.

I didn't know that the bad one didn't have anyone
to teach him how to treat human beings.

I didn't know that the bad one was easily
influenced by society, and that they thought
that what was wrong was right.

I didn't know that the bad one needed help.

I didn't know that the bad one wasn't bad at all,
just misunderstood.

I didn't know that the good one grew up rich
and wealthy.

I didn't know that the good one got everything
that they wanted.

(louder/more aggressive)

I didn't know that the good one lied to get
things their way.

I didn't know that the good one didn't
understand boundaries.

I didn't know that the good one didn't
take "no" as
an answer.

I didn't know that the good one didn't

take "stop" as

an answer.

(pause)

I didn't know that the good one wasn't
good at all.

And after I didn't know,

I knew.

And I learned

(gentle tone)

That nobody is good and nobody is bad.

We are all just people.

And we make mistakes

And we treat people poorly

But we're all just people

And we are kind

And we are loving

But we shouldn't make ourselves seem that we are angles

Because we're not angels

We are all just people

Nobody is good

And nobody is bad

We are all just people



Forces of the Unknown

by Ella D. Gr. 9
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The world works without us most days, we don't even realize what's going on until it's thrown right in front of us. We lose our footing and fall into the deep hole that the entirety of the universe seems to have been digging. That's what happened the day we found out my dad had cancer, and nobody saw it coming.

The day was like the others, days with school always seemed the same. The long hallways reeked of antiseptic and the teachers had their fake smiles plastered on their faces like those stackable wooden dolls. Lunch is shared with friends and laughter is exchanged. These are the days where life feels normal, the routine isn't broken and you feel invincible, like nothing on earth can touch you and at no cost your actions don't matter.

The bus ride home is filled with screaming kids and bumpy roads, fast passing cars and bugging your siblings, and every so often the bus driver chimes in with a loud booming

"Get back in your seat!"

Getting off the bus my feet touched the pavement and the humid air blew in my face. I was oblivious to the fact that when I was to enter my front door everything would change, my world would crash to ashes and the rest of the world wouldn't come crashing down with me. It was like a bad apple, the outside of the apple looks lush and delicious drawing you in, but when you go to take a bite of said apple the flavors stick to your tongue and bring an unexpected tangy flavor that lingers every-time you go to speak.

The cool metal of the door brought small electric shocks up my arm, raising my hair every which way, with a careful twist of the doorknob I was inside. Inside the house that now held the inevitable, the news that would change my life forever.

My mom and dad sat side by side, our white kitchen chairs tucked underneath them neatly. Both of them had solemn looks on their faces as if someone had died. In that moment the activities of the day were now washed away by those looks. Something had happened. Each of my siblings including me took off our shoes quietly and gathered around our kitchen island. It seemed that if we did speak, we would break some kind of invisible barrier

that was holding us back from saying anything. But eventually someone had to shatter that barrier, and that someone was my mom.

"Your dad has cancer."

Four simple words, with earth shattering effects. You always hear the heroic stories of people fighting cancer on TV and in books. Sometimes it feels like a made up disease blowing over our heads because it doesn't concern us. Until it does. My mom was speaking and my dad was joining in here and there but I couldn't hear them. I was in a deep tunnel and their voices were like mere whispers in a deep ocean of water. My legs felt like rubber and undercooked noodles. though my legs could no longer hold my weight they didn't dare buckle. Would he ever be able to walk me down the aisle? watch me have children? Help me move into a dorm or help me drive my first car? But as my mind exited the tunnel I could hear what my mom was now saying.

"It's a rare form of cancer but they can help him, there's a surgery and they will put him on chemo. Your dad will be ok."

"Do you have any questions"

I had a million, it felt like my brain had exploded and pieced itself back together again, forgetting some pieces along the way. The moon shaped crescent imprints in my skin from my nails had subsided But my shaking hands stayed by my side as the one thing my mom said ran through my head stuck like old gears.

"Your dad will be ok."

The world really works without us, but it also works for us. That day he could have had a cancer that isn't curable. our whole family would fall apart and hole that was already

Dug for me would become a black abbis. But instead whatever force is out there worked with us that day. It decided to give us a sliver of hope and pull me out of that deep hole slowly. The world will always try to throw you off track, it will stomp on you until you're flat and begging for a slice of light. but always look for a silver lining. Even in the bad situations.



The Ultimate Convenience

by Devyn H. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Everything began with the 19th century, there were spas that worked around normal springs, promising a one of a kind spa experience with solid mineral water. The water pools were showcased to assist individuals with stomach related issues and clear up skin illnesses. Individuals were additionally not reluctant to drink spring water.

So little glass bottle organizations began to be beneficial by packaging the faucet water. Life was good but they were ignorant, allowing dirty runoff and badly managed pipes to leak lead into the public water systems creating contamination to their tap water. People started to get sick and then the realization of contaminated water brought on a lot of diseases and took many lives in the 19th century.

That's when the main uprising in general well-being was the revelation to add a little chlorine to water. This movement allowed everyone access to safe tap water. The need for glass bottles disappeared, and the bottled water businesses closed.

In 1979 there came the unforgettable voice of Orson Wells, marketing the new "perfect" drink for a new healthy age, Naturally Sparkling Spring water PERRIER. Founded in France and sold millions worldwide, this beverage industry boomed with 3 million bottles sold the first year and then up to 200 million bottles the third year. The new idea to market water exploded into a world wide obsession. Bottled Natural Spring water started to replace tap water.

Spring water by Perrier and the 19 century myth about mineral waters health and wellness all started this bottled water craze.

But it was ONLY the Beginning...

The Springs were just not large enough to feed the massive growth of demand in Spring Water. Bottlers found an amazing solution ever since the mid 90's; they were able to sell the "so called" spring water without getting it straight from the spring; they were able to drill down to the water table as long as the water connected somewhere from any spring.

Now they needed to find places for pump stations and find pockets of underground water ways. Since there were pump stations all around it embarked with controversy about depleting the streams, lakes and springs.

In the late 1900's bottlers found a new way to profit from bottled water without the hassle of drilling. It was called

PURIFIED water. Pepsi and CocaCola jumped all over this opportunity, they used massive amounts of the public's water system and run it through reverse osmosis to take literally everything out of the water and transform it into a distilled water, which is not appealing to the taste buds, so each company like Pepsi and CocaCola added their own special mineral recipe back into the water.

You will still find these purified bottles of water today inside any store cooler; Dasani is a CocaCola brand, Aquafina belongs to Pepsi and Puralife is Nestle, just to name a few of the bigger brands.

Even after this whole journey the bottling business is worth 35 million dollars a year, 3 times the size of the movie industry, and FUNNY enough the resources are essentially FREE.

Thanks to the success of purified water, this water is able to support the poorest parts of the world where communities don't have access to safe drinking water. Community stations are built where villagers can access and fill up tubs of clean, fresh , purified water.

Without water there is No Life, No Economy, No Community. This new way of bottling provides an option of healthy water for those who don't have access to clean drinking water. With this great solution, comes an even bigger challenge, the disposal of plastics.

So when people have access to safe drinking water AND STILL purchase a bottle of water they should be thinking, "Do I really need this water?" "Where will the plastic go?"

But going a bit deeper than that, they should actually be thinking, "Where does this water come from?"

When in fact it comes from the same public water system as our tap water.

Is it just the Ultimate Convenience?

Water for Life... Not for Profit...

Dear God of ADHD

by Cashlyn Y. Gr. 9
St. John Paul II Collegiate

Dear God of ADHD

Why are you always so disobedient when you
need to be reticent

You always do the opposite of what I say like

Thing 1 and Thing 2

I don't remember anything I need to but
everything I don't

I could sing you every word to the song from
five years ago

But what did my mom ask me to do five
minutes ago?

I have no clue

Wanna know fun facts about turtles?

I got you

How about what I learned in Social today?

Just kidding I don't remember.

Just for a minute would you please stop

Be placid

Slow down

Take a break

Breathe

You're too overwhelming

Why can't you be more reserved

I don't want to be yelling all the time for no
reason like a banshee

Can you just let me focus please?

One minute you're on fast forward about
something random and the next you're in a
whole other world

Probably with butterflies to catch and tracks to
run around

But I hate running

Although if it burns off your
energy by all means
run until your legs fall off

Or maybe just take a day to yourself

Have a 4 hour nap

Just rest

I wish you were less loud and out there and more
like a mouse

You're a bomb waiting to explode and when you
do you don't stop

You're always go go go

Distracted, disorganized, daydreaming

It's too much

But I would like to say thank you

You give me flavor

You add excitement into my life

There's never a boring moment without you

You challenge me to be more organized by
forgetting everything

My personality is built around you

Everyone knows me as outgoing, over the top, or
out of the world

Thanks to you

Dancing must be your favorite because you
always seem to have me moving in some way
Jumping or spinning sometimes flipping

Thank you for being annoying and absorbing

You make me the best person I could possibly be



Delusions of Grandeur

by Sophia K, Gr. 10
St. Anthony's School

And there I was stuck in a glazed haze of narcolepsy and an impending state of lustrous contentment. My eyes were closed, and I was in a state of sleep, but I was conscious of my surroundings. I felt his arms slide under my knees and neck, lifting me out of my position on the cold wood floor. I knew that at this moment any familiarity that I had once had was to leave me forever, as my husband had gotten in trouble, and in an abrupt fashion, had made me pack up, for I have to forsake my current home.

As I was levitating, my eyes opened, and I caught a glimpse of the window and saw that my once beautiful garden had succumbed to my husband's pill habits. Overgrown grass filled the lot, the fence was lined with pale balmy infant white clovers, and a vibrant cherry tree that used to stand much taller than most men was now tucked in the corner of the fence. That's where I used to lay. I spent sunsets laying on a linen blanket that smelt like cherry nectar, listening to the children being called by their mothers, and their fathers returning from work. The sun ran through the branches in just the right way, where it kept me warm as the evening came. Now all I feel is the cold air as I'm being carried into the car.

My fingers reached my eyes as I tried to wipe the slumber out, but it had already weakened me to the point where my head was hanging to the side of my body, my hand barely reaching my lips. My body hit

the firm cotton seats. I heard a door slam and the rumble of an engine, dug my uncut nails into the unfamiliar fabric lifting my face, my nose escaping the scent of the coffee-ridden seats, in the back seat of an old car that I'd never seen before. I felt like a child the way I watched the house distance itself from me in the back window. I knew it was normal to feel sentiment, but I hated the guilt that I experienced.

I lied back down, but my shoulders were on the seat, so I watched him, one hand on the wheel, the other resting on the open window. He worked as an investment banker, I never really understood what that meant, but I never needed to, as he insisted on me staying home. There are certain things about a man such as him, that make him think that he's a godly being. He's a smart man who got a career at a young age, which made the words that he spoke always wise and never to be argued with. Delusions of Grandeur.

It's just that I realized that I was taken from my sleep with the expectation to leave, I never got the ability to consult what my life would've looked like, I never even got the thought, but one thing that I do know is that there are things about a woman such as I who likes to enjoy the evenings underneath the cherry tree, and it's that I have a firm stance, and a newly found will power which has allowed me to come to the decision that I will simply not go.



The Last First

by Sophia B, Gr. 10
St. Anthony's School

Somewhere in a far off kingdom... some time long ago...

"Sire! Sire! Listen quickly, we had a person come to shore from the old land!" Yelled a guard from second class, as he dragged a man into the throne room.

The dark mysterious figure raises his head to touch the back of the throne, gazing at the people who stood before him in the dark desolate room. One of them was the king of old land. The one who scarred the face of himself with a wretched blade, said to be God's holy blade. It was said to be made from the cross Jesus died and bled on, my were those good days. Whreahan, was where it was prophesied that before man, on our planet Xania existed two kinds, good and evil... It was written that God tried to kill Lucifer because he was growing in power, but failed because it was wrong to kill; especially one of his angels, even if he was a fallen one. Instead it was foretold that Lucifer offered a deal to God, that if God gave him half the angels and people on earth he would not kill God and all good. God being like everybody was selfish at that time and cared for his life more than his children, and the thought had never crossed his mind what was to befall them far in the future, so he accepted. For the first and last time ever, God made a deal with evil hoping for great things, but no good comes to God's people from the devil. As a consequence of the mighty lord's actions, the lord of darkness had a plan to kill good forever, but no one would know when.

Clearing his throat he opened his mouth and began to speak. "What do you think you're doing here son of God, King of the good. Anthony the six, Baptized at birth? Give your life to God on day one. Why would someone like you be at the feet of me, who was damned by Satan. What could you possibly want?"

"I want to warn you. My people are strong and prosperous. We have twenty thousand good men. It was said the prophecy would come to play at this time, but no evil big enough, not even the devil himself, could defeat the minds of good. So I suggest you stay away. There is no fight you could win against us." Anthony spoke in a powerful, commanding tone.

Shunk. An arrow ripped through the chest of Anthony and drug him to the back wall, vibrating as it hit stone. "Little do they know but the devil tricked God, and said the fight would come in one hundred million years. But we are to wait 300 years until our time comes to kill all of the good forever." croaked Aragon, in a raspy voice.

300 years later in the old kingdom with Anthony the 11 in charge.....

"Ugggghhhhhhh! We have waited three hundred years for those inferior devil damned sons of Lucifer to come. AND THEY HAVEN'T!" I can't believe those people, how could they not come to fight us after they killed one of the kings before me. Another low moan rose from Anthony's stomach. "How could those people do it to us? Guard, send for Elron. We have his wedding to plan."

Harder, faster, uhhhh, mu-ust beat my time, uhhnn. I can do it, Elron kept replaying in his head as he pulled a two hundred pound man in a wagon. "Yes! Woohoo! Hahaa, I did it. And you fools didn't think I could, now who's the loser." He shouted in an enthusiastic voice.

"Still you." Exclaimed Eomer, son of Dagon. While speaking he made a glance notioning that there was someone behind him.

"Really." Stated the guard in a monotone voice. "Come on. Your father wants you."

"How many times does he need me in a day?" Elron sassed back.

"A million times, now come on."

They started walking along the dirt roads. While it was almost first snow, some breathtaking flowers were still in full bloom. Like the Everose. The Everose is part of a very important legend in the Vivaria kingdom. It is foretold that the kingdom will have a good year if the Everose never dies, but if it were to drop a petal, bad luck would come to pass. And for many millennials it hasn't dropped even a chip. While walking back Elron saw Celcily helping her mother sew clothes in their shop. "Hey Celcily, come walk with me." He said in a manly tone.

"Sorry I can't. I'm making a dress for duchess Prim for tonight's duel." She stated.

Wow. this is sad Elron thought. Not even Celcily who adored him would walk with him. I can't believe this. Whenever I'm in trouble she usually walks with me, well whatever. Walking in the palace Elron noticed the glare from the chandelier was worse than normal. The glinting rays from the crystals shot into his eyes like a sword stabbing him. He could see that everything had been freshly polished and cleaned. Elron wondered what his father had in store for him now.

"My son, I have great news that will delight you." Anthony stated in a proud gesture.

"What now, father?"

"We have found you a beautiful wife. Her name is Princess Elana and she is The Duke of Cornwall's daughter." He took a deep breath before scolding his son. "Do not make any rude comments to her or else."

"Yes father." Elron planned to follow his orders be-

cause he did not want to figure out what that or else meant.

"And Elron - one more thing. I need you to spend less time with that tailor girl, people are starting to ask questions." He took a deep breath and continued. "You understand, son?"

"Mmmhmmm." I can't believe that man. He thinks he can rule my life. All I am is a pawn in a game of chess and he keeps making the knight do things that aren't fair.

Walking down to the shore because he was mad at his father, which was a lot, and this spot was where he came for comfort. Elron noticed a faint noise coming from ships approaching the shore. It sounded like cheering and roars. The hurtful sounds made him confused and in a blur. But one thing he was sure of was that Everose had lost a petal and doom would befall the kingdom of good for a long time to come.



A Killer's Confession

by Cadence O, Gr. 10
St. Anthony's School



"You were referred to me to confess something, correct?" a tall man waltzed in the room, slamming the door behind him with a loud echo.

"Yes,," it's time to expose the truth. Just tell it like it is Amy.

"And what is the nature of this confession?"

"Murder sir," hearing this, the man took a seat across the metal table from me.

"Of who?" his eyes widened.

"Jack Hunter...my...landlord." The chair screeched like an injured child as the officer stood and left the room, surely locking the door behind him. Now it was completely empty other than the cameras. Just me and my thoughts. That could be dangerous.

Once again he entered, holding a file and shiny, silver handcuffs.

"Ma'am put your hand on the table please." Slowly, my right hand reached up onto the cold surface. The handcuff made a slight click around my wrist. He placed the other cuff around a bar beside my hand, connected to the table.

"I have Jack's file. He went missing three months ago...and you reported it?" the man seemed confused at this predicament.

"I did, sir. I mean, I was the first to know he was missing," that crossed a line and I knew it. At this poorly tasted joke he shook his head. "I guess you don't like dark humor then," that crossed one too, but to be fair, so did murder.

"Tell me...how did you know this man? Other than the landlord part."

"Simple. I took a year off university and needed a cheap place to stay. So, then, I lived in his basement suite. We chatted and had some drinks together sometimes."

"So you were friends?" he sat once again.

Not even. Acquaintances really."

"That's all? Nothing...romantic or even-"

"GOD NO! For one I have standards. For second-second is that grammatically correct? Anyway for second he was gay."

"How did you do it? How did you get away with it?"

"Murder is...easy if you have a plan. Like I did. Boy did I have a plan. A damn good one too. I hatched it four months ago in June but put it to action in July."

"Hey Jack, I got some new vodka...you want some?"

"Rough day at work?" I answered his query by popping open the clear bottle. "I'll find something to watch," while he searched Netflix I poured our drinks-although mine was very different from his. I put...bleach in his drinks. Only a little in all of them, so no taste was present.

We both became drunk...so it was...easier to feed the man more until he simply died. Well... simply is not the word. The symptoms started with vomiting...Jack assumed it was the alcohol. Suddenly he collapsed off the couch, nearly hitting his head on the glass coffee table. A haunting expression of pure terror across his face. To this day it appears inside my nightmares. Those wide fish eyes...the open mouth with foam slowly reaching out, trying to find daylight. And the sounds....gasping, gagging and a soft whimper, as if trying to scream...but failing to do such a simple task.

The young officer's face was mortified. Try seeing that first hand.

"May I have some water sir?"

"Can you finish first?"

"I am quite parched. You could say-too dehydrated to talk anymore."

"Fine. Enjoy your last glass of water you will ever get outside of bars."

"Way to add in a cheesy line mister," to my own joke I smiled. Giggled even.

Within a few minutes he returned with a white styrofoam cup half full-Beggars can't be choosers.

"As I was saying, he was dead."

I must say seeing Jack actually laying there...the life corroded out of him by a household cleaner....shocked me a little. Those eyes still stared...blankly now-with no soul. In response I sat on the couch and finished the rest of my drink.

Next was the big cleanup. While dragging the empty spirited body behind me, I felt nothing. Absolutely nothing. No fear, anger, sadness, happiness or not even guilt. I brought him to the garage and set him inside a large clear bin I bought earlier that very day. First I removed those eyes so he could stare no longer. Although, he did but this time with empty sockets. Did you know people with no eyes can still gaze upon their surroundings, following you around the room like the MonaLisa?

I removed all identification, eyes, face, hands and even hair. That's the moment when it hit me: I killed someone! No-I brutally murdered and mutilated Jack Hunter, devastating his entire family.

I put the-identification in a garbage bag, surrounded by trash. Every week I put a different piece of my land-lord in the trash-until he was gone. It took five weeks. Five excruciatingly long weeks.

After all that, I was left with a bin of blood. A lot of blood. Every day I poured some down the toilet. All of that was gone in about a week. A very long week indeed.

The next step was to deep clean the entire house using vinegar mixed with dish soap-bleach was too obvious. My clothes just needed a wash with baking soda to get the blood stains out.

I thought of everything. Everything except the guilt. His family, friends and boyfriend all still had hope that Jack was alive- thought he was simply missing. Search crews lost faith in ever finding him. They all deserve to know the truth. The bitter, brutal truth. Tell them all what I did-but spare a few details.

All of this I could have gotten away with, if it wasn't for my conscience. Weeks on end I spent crying, drinking and trying to sleep-but when I close my eyes, Jack's hollow sockets peer back at me.

Make sure no one ever forgives what I did, as long as my lungs are breathing. Lock this criminal in jail, never to see daylight again. I deserve to slowly, painfully fade away-alone. I'm begging you to put me in prison or kill me in this very spot yourself. All of it was a mistake-an unforgivable "oopsie". Planned "oopsie" for that matter. My mother always taught me to take responsibility for my...mistakes-

"So that's what I'm doing here. I killed Jack Hunter and deserve whatever sentence you give me. Preferably A long one."

"Why? Why did you plan this in the first place? What drove you to this madness-enough to kill a living human being?"

A wide smirk stretched across my face, "Some people just drive you completely insane don't they?"



Why Shadows Crawl

by Cadence O, Gr. 10
St. Anthony's School

Tears were slowly rolling down the child's face, as her father explained their situation. They sat on the third step of the stairway. The house, once full of life and memories, now remains a shell, full of packed away items.

"I'm sure you'll love the new house."

"Is mommy going to be there?" For a moment it seemed like she had hope. It's astonishing how kids have such faith in life and their future.

"I'm sure you will see her soon." Sometimes lies such as these are needed to ensure the child remains hopeful.

"How soon?" Her red swollen eyes looked up at her father's face, covered in grey stubble from neglect.

"It's late. Get to bed."

"Only if you read me a story." Cassandra had been the parent who read two or three books nightly until her daughter fell asleep. Since she left, no more Robert Munsch or Dr. Seuss.

"Okay, but just one." Someone had to take on the missing role.

"Two?" Her cute puppy dog eyes sealed the deal.

"Fine, two short ones." Jonathan plastered on a fake smile to tell his daughter everything was going to be okay but even he wasn't positive that was true. Both money and sanity have been tight lately and a little girl needs her mother. I need Cassandra too. It's my fault she's gone anyway.

It was predictable that Annie chose the same two books as always, one about a man that lived in the woods and the other surrounding a family of goldfish. She was tired but clearly refused to sleep (Annie hadn't gotten a good night's rest since Cassandra had gone).

"You want to sleep in my bed again tonight?"

"Yes!" Annie sprung up and dashed across the hall in her fuzzy, bear patterned pyjamas. Once again her joy made Jonathan forget his grief-momentarily. He tucked her in, ending with a kiss and a goodnight. The

rest of his night consisted of the television, then joining his daughter in bed.

Although the Hoskins' bank account was small, Jonathan knew a caretaker would be needed for Annie when he picked up some extra shifts. The search went on for a week or two before the perfect candidate called: Sana- a 30 year old woman who emigrated as a child from India. She worked at a daycare for 4 years until it closed down for financial reasons. Sana loved the children so much, she put out an ad to become a full time nanny for a younger child. Her background check came clean, the real question was, how would Annie react?

A light knock wrapped on the hardwood door at 6:05 AM-only five minutes late, another impressive feature.

"Is it mommy?" Annie ran down the stairs, practically stumbling on each step.

"No honey. It's...a woman who will be living with us for a while." Jonathan opened up the door to see a mocha skin coloured woman with long brown hair down to her waist.

"Good morning Mr.Hoskins."

"Come in-and please call me John, makes me sound younger." She stepped inside and looked around the empty estate.

"This must be Annie, the girl I've heard so much about. You must be about seven right?"

"No," a cheerful giggle, "I'm four."

"Are you sure? You look much older."

Instead of replying Annie thought for a moment. "Are you going to be my new mom? Cause I want my old one back." Jonathan frowned knowing every child needs their mother and he hoped that Cassandra would come to her senses and at least visit her.

"Goodness no! I'm here to play games with you and prepare yummy meals and read stories!" She was clearly an expert on how to deal with kids, "My name is Sana, what's yours?"

"Santa? I thought Santa was a boy with a looong white beard."

"Indeed he is. Why don't you just call me San, that applies to you as well John." They all smiled.

"Let me give you a tour of the house. It's a little empty, as you can see, we're hoping to downsize a little."

"Troubling times isn't it?"

"Very. Pardon me asking but have you ever gone through a divorce?"

"Never married. And feel free to ask questions, it's better to get to know the stranger moving into your house."

"Indeed." He continued the tour and hooked up the security system to her phone. Then, Jonathan left for work.

The house smelled of spices such as garlic and chilli when Jonathan entered at 5:20. He wandered to the kitchen to see Sana cooking and Annie setting the table.

"I hope you like chicken. Annie mentioned it was one of her favourites."

"Oh-yes chicken is great...you don't need to make supper, I should always be home in time for that."

"It's my pleasure...if that's fine." He nodded, glad another responsibility had been taken from him.

"How on Earth did you get little Ann to set the table?"

"I told her it would impress you."

"Bless her hea-" the oven interrupted with multiple beeps. Sana placed a plate with spiced chicken on the table alongside a large bowl of cesar salad.

"It's ready." Everyone settled down in their seats and reminisced about their day. Annie was very pleased with her new caretaker-so was Jonathan. Soon after was bedtime for the little one-her father still ensured to take on the role of reading stories and tucking her in. Once again she migrated over to his bedroom instead. The little girl fell asleep easily-at first.

A small rattle awoke Annie from a light slumber. The noise got increasingly louder by the second. It's just a rat. Or a monster....a ghost? Unlike most children who choose to hide under the blankets, Annie investigated the mysterious sound. What if it's a snake? Her heart practically beat right out of her chest as she looked around the room. Slowly the girl squatted down and hesitantly pulled up the sheets. The noise continued to grow louder and louder. Annie peeked under the dark bed. A cardboard box shot out, sliding across the hardwood floor, nearly hitting her head. Reacting to this strange event, Annie let out a screech, using up all of her possible lung space.



Shadow Forge: Kick Star (excerpt)

by Taylor L. Gr. 12
St. Luke's Outreach



I stumble across the scorched carpet falling onto my knees. My eyes continue to water because of the heavy smoke. My ears ring from the pulsing thrum of the smoke detector. It gets increasingly challenging to breathe as the seconds tick by painstakingly slow. There is a moment when I consider giving up and surrendering to the flames. However, that moment becomes a brief memory, passing as quickly as it came when the image of Skylia appears behind my stinging eyes.

I can picture her form hunched over in a tight ball on the floor as tears stream down her tiny soot covered face. Despite what all common sense is screaming in my ears, there is absolutely no way I can leave this building without her unless I am carried away kicking and screaming.

"Skylia!" I coughed out once again hoping it was loud enough to echo off the walls and make its way to her ears. My throat burns, a blistering feeling deep in my slightly asthmatic lungs.

I recall, with eerie unease, how similar this situation feels to the game Skylia and I would always play when we were young. The one she would always end up winning. Hide and Seek.

Only this time the stakes are higher... deadlier.

Whereas a loss in the children's game would merely mean temporary defeat until the next round, if I lost this more permanent game...

No! Don't think about it. I remind myself, redirecting my focus on my main goal. The only way this night can end is on a positive note. It has to.

Unless Skylia ran from her bedroom when she heard the alert signaling danger, she should still be somewhere upstairs, perhaps unable to escape. My only other hope is if she already managed to break through an upstairs window. If not, then my strained journey to find her will be delayed further.

Or become entirely futile.

The thought crosses my mind without warning, but I immediately push it away. Instead filling my head with what I force myself to believe.

I will find her in time. I can't lose her! She will not die!

As I continue crawling through the smoke towards the staircase, I begin to feel even more unsteady than before. I can feel my skin boil as the flames lick across it, snaking its thin fingers around every indent. My eyes barely record how it sears painful black marks into my once pale limbs. The increasing heat appears to char through my summer inspired attire. The pictures on the wall across the room merged into an unidentified mess through my watering eyes. They begin creeping towards a large pool of ink black. My head begins to cloud and I start to lose connection with reality.

"T-Tyler, I'm s-scared!" Skylia's voice trembles through the depth of the glowing house, pulling my mind away from the dark. I'm almost certain her terrified, shaking voice came from above me. A sound so close to a whimper, that I wonder if she thinks I abandoned her.

If I could only get up there quicker, I could get us both out of the house before the unforgiving flames engulfed the entire thing beyond repair.

Closets were her favorite places to hide. I could never quite see her beneath thick layers of clothing.

The rhythm of the previous alarm continues to drill through my head, increasing in volume. It seeps through my tiny ears, drowning out the heavy gasps emitting from deep within my flaming lungs.

Despite the oncoming flood of nausea, I manage to get one more sentence barely past my dry lips.

"I'm coming Sky. I won't... leave without... y-you!" I answer back with a raspy excuse for a scream. With a sudden burst of protective energy, I idiotically ascend to my feet, instantly submerging my head in the thick smoke hovering in the air. To be fair, this is technically

not the first stupid thing I've done today, considering I'm refusing to leave until I find my cousin. I can't leave her to fend for herself until help arrives though.

I need to make sure she is safe.

Being hit by another cloud of smoke completed the out of body experience and I felt my body slam hard into the coffee table. I knew the impact was sure to leave a nasty bruise. My sore arms connected with the ground, sprawling across the ashen floor. I must have knocked over a vase because I can just barely see as the glass shatters on the ground, sending charred flowers and a puddle of water across the surface. As I lay in the water, that is surprisingly cool, I can still hear a scared voice calling me from what sounds like light years away.

Where are you hiding Sky?

I try desperately to get back up and reach my cousin, but I can basically feel the energy drain from my limp body. The sweat trickling down my face doesn't even have time to form before it evaporates from the surging heat.

I can't give up until I find her. It's my responsibility to keep her safe. I shouldn't have left her alone.

If I was with her, we would both already be outside on the safety of the cold cement sidewalk across the street. I will never surrender to the heartless flames

engulfing the house!

No matter how much desperation courses through my scorching veins, it is not enough to overpower the coiling black wisps increasing in size. I suddenly register that the blaring alarm no longer emits its deafening shriek.

Did I lose my hearing somehow without realizing?

I can sense a sharp sting emerge on the surface of my hands, presumably deep cuts from the sharp pieces of glass. However, I feel an odd tingling sensation form in my fingers and rush through my arms, which doesn't quite match the pain of the recently inflicted wounds. I also notice how the freshly spilled puddle disappears instantly, as if it was never there to begin with.

Before I have time to question the logic of the surprising events, I regrettingly kneel to the savage power of the fire. My final thought is of my little cousin as the faint sound of distant sirens fills my ears and I grudgingly lose consciousness for good.

I give up. You can come out now.

Once again... I had lost the game.



Thread

by Ann E. Gr. 12
St. Luke's Outreach

Held onto tight ropes
And tugged it back and forth
In a direction that would tear us whole. Told her,
"It'd be okay-
The rockiest mountains
Clear the most beautiful views." Apologized for
the small details And was silenced for the worst.
An eternity of no contact
Couldn't bear to hold on When that willow-y
blue Drifted over our tune.

Tugged once more
In an effort to change.
Didn't bother to communicate
The worries that were breaking us apart.
Breaking me
But I'm no victim.
Loved with a portion of my heart Couldn't give
it whole
But she understood.
Didn't protest that it was unfair to her-
Chipping away at her confidence Wondering why
I wasn't capable.
"Can't bring myself to



devote to you But I can
stay
a while."

Grabbed at whatever strings were left and she
was content.

Okay with the pieces-

Unhappy with the ones that lucked out.

Convinced she could put in the effort for two
In place of what I couldn't.

Let go when I saw the cracks. Begged for me to stay.
Said it's okay
That she didn't mind.
Sobbed and grasped at what she could-
Pleading until it snapped.

There was an understanding That we were
falling together But landing on separate ends.
Called out my name "I'm alive
So
Tell me you are too And I won't leave."

World of Crumbs

by Abigail W. Gr. 12
St. Luke's Outreach

I was fifteen years old when the world began to decay. My life and the lives of those around me ended in a heartbeat. Some rose to the top, taking advantage of the situation to stay in power. Those that disagreed with them were forced into solitary, shunned by the outside world.

It was a normal day, like any other. I awoke to the smell of frying bacon, a tradition for every breakfast my mother made. Going down the stairs felt strange that fateful day, everything seemed too quiet. I peered around the corner at the base of the stairs into the kitchen, my mother was not there. The bacon left alone to die in its own fat, so I took it off the heat to keep it from burning.

"Mom?" My voice hung in the air, no response to end the question. The sudden noise of the television startled me, had I not heard it before? I moved slowly towards the archway that divided the living room from the kitchen. Curiosity stung my mind, I heard people talking inaudibly. In the living room my mother was sitting on the coffee table, elbows on her knees, tv remote in her hands, hands on her face, eyes glued to the television. Her entire demeanor was strange to me, she seemed to be sitting in quiet panic, terror reflecting in the white of her eyes. "Mom?" I asked again, curious as to what she was witnessing. She waved at me, but the meaning was unclear. Did she want me to leave, or be quiet? I tiptoed to stand next to my mother, itching to see what the noise of the television meant.

"It seems as though the government is keeping the matter under control. Let me remind you people, stay indoors, do not venture into the streets. It. Is. Dangerous." The news anchor sat at his desk with his hands folded in front of him. What was he talking about?

"Mom, what's happening?" This time I wanted an answer, so I stood between her and the scene. She clicked a button on the remote and the noise stopped. She rubbed her eyes and cleared her throat.

"Umm," her voice echoed in my ears. I stood patient,

letting her mind process the words she wanted to speak into existence. As I waited, my eyes wandered to the window that overlooked our front yard and the street before it. It was a sunny day, no doom to be seen. Could the newscaster be mistaken? But then a shadowy storm enveloped the street, rows of darkly dressed soldiers marched in unison. What could be the purpose? "There was a terrorist attack, everyone's blaming each other, the United Nations has been broken, and they renounced any allies. This was a long time coming. We are alone." That could not be the only thing.

"What else?"

"There is rioting in the streets. People are stuck in other countries and are being killed for being foreigners."

"Are they doing that in our country?"

"Yes. There are protests, but they are being killed as well. Marshall law has been put into effect."

I understood, the government was scrambling to gain control before the people went into mass panic. Resorting to killing those that disagreed with their hastiness. The view out the window was now tarnished by the dark cloud of government troops. Across from my gaze a man exited his house. Investigating the pandemonium. To mine and my mothers horror, the man was struck down. Soldiers began to advance to the houses. I regained my ability to think. I grabbed my mothers hand, she was sprawled on the couch, sobbing into her arm. I dragged her to her senses. She took control of her emotions, and wiped her face free from her sorrows.

"Get Ceasle," She said. I hurried back up the stairs from which I came with my initial hope for the day. A door was the inconvenience of my mission. My hand fumbled on the chipped fake gold door knob. I somehow managed my way in. The small bed in the corner had race car sheets. I tore them off the small lump that lay sleeping. I pulled Ceasle to his small bare feet. He rubbed the exhaustion out of his eyes as I dragged

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him back to our mother. She took us to the cellar in the backyard that was hidden behind our shed. It stank and had a large colony of spiders, but it was safe. We huddled together in the dark, damp cellar for what seemed like forever. The time that passed seemed to be painfully slicing away slowly. By the time we left the cellar it was the night. My mother opened the hatch cautiously. As we made our way back to the house, she was constantly peering over her shoulder at the back alley. Afraid that the soldiers were close by.

“Mom, what are we going to do?” I asked within the once haven that was our home. It was now a mess from the soldiers. They had torn everything apart. Looking for something. What?

“We’re going to have to go to Gramma and Grampa’s house,” She paused, I could tell her mind was not fully with us. Her eyes wandered around the destroyed kitchen. Mentally packing the things we would need. She knew we would be safe there, they lived in the middle of nowhere.

“Mommy, I’m hungry.” Ceasle tugged on the sleeve of the sweater she wore.

“Here Ceasle,” I handed him the cold bacon from that morning. His small mind was still incapable of perceiving the events that had taken place. He knew something was wrong, but he was only focused on what he could control, his hunger. His eyes lit up as I picked the bacon up from the pan with my fingers and handed it to him.

“You can go upstairs and pack a few clothes with Ceasle, I don’t know how long we’ll be gone.” As it would turn out, we would never see that house again. But the hope of returning made packing easier, less bitter.

I took Ceasle by his small hand that was greasy from the bacon. I hurriedly packed the few belongings and some clothes that I could fit in the bag I used for school. A memento that I still keep to this day. An anchor to my old life. Ceasle followed me to his bedroom. I don’t know what made me do it, but my body was drawn to the window, like a magnet to metal. I stared out and the image of the man from the morning was burned into my brain. He lay in the same place as I remembered. Only now his body was stiff in a pool of his own blood. I looked away.

“What is it?” Ceasle began to run to the window, wanting to see what I did. I reacted in time and tackled him to the floor. He began to cry.

“Shhh, shhh. It’s alright, there’s nothing to see outside. C’mom let’s go find mom.” I helped him to his feet and wiped the tears from his eyes. We went on our way to find our mother. We ran without looking back.

Now I am still running. The life I knew is gone forever. It’s been years. The government has attempted to gain complete control, so we hide. They think that us wanting our freedom is wrong, dangerous. They think chasing us and locking us up will help. But it does not. My freedom is mine, not to be taken or beaten out of me to empty and pool like blood. We are in a world of crumbs, messy and difficult to clean.

Life Preserver

by Andrea McGeachie,
St. John Paul II Collegiate

The darkness is all around
It weighs me down -
Slows my limbs
Steals my motivation
Blinds me to my surroundings
It seems as though it penetrates
My will
My mind
My heart
Freezing them...
Seeping in and overtaking me.

With what feels like
The last of my energy
I open my eyes
Looking
Searching
Seeking
The light.

The sunlight pushes through the dark
Illuminating the sights and sounds
Previously hidden -
Green grass
Joyful songs of the birds
Fragile leaves bursting forth
Laughter of children
Warmth on my skin
Life springing forth.

For a moment,
My heart remembers
HOPE
And I cling to it -
A life preserver
In the swirls of darkness.

Family Tartan

by Andrea McGeachie,
St. John Paul II Collegiate

The fabric of our past has threads that extend
to distant ancestors.

We trace our lineage, following those threads
as they weave through time.

The nubs of hardship;
the knots of trials;
the snags of challenges overcome.

Time softens these;
the fabric of our past comforts us,
grounds us,
And reminds us of where we came from.

Our ancestors and their individual lives
overlap and come together
in a unique pattern.

We feel the pull of the threads from the past,
as we spin our own story,
and add to the weave and warp.

We add our own patterns, colors, and designs;
our own nubs, knots, and snags.

Our generations and family history
come together in a unique weave;
a cloth that wraps around us,
and is passed on to our own children,
who continue the process.

Stories of History

by Rachelle Dedam
St. Mary's School

"Grandpa, I don't want to listen,
To your stories from long, long ago.
There is nothing for me to learn from them
Stories of history, I already know."

My grandpa looked up at me sadly,
His eyes bore deep into mine.
"Child," he said in a whisper,
"It all started when I was just nine."

Grandpa's body went hard for a moment
And his voice quivered and shook.
As he began his story, "Late one night,
My life and hope they took."

"The soldiers stormed in angrily,
They threw us to the ground.
In fear and fright, I quivered
But mom motioned for no sound."

"Grandpa, what did they want?" I asked,
But hear me, he could not.

He continued his tales of that fateful night
Haunted by memories he'd never forgot.

"They threw us out in the cold," he continued,
In my pajamas and only bare feet.
Soldiers pushed my parents towards the ground

And held them there in defeat.

My hair fell down over my eyes,
As the rain was pouring down.
My family and I forced into a train,
With no goodbye to our home
or town.

Freezing, my mom and I huddled,

But I could feel her shivering too-
I looked up to her for reassurance

But could tell there was nothing we could do.

They took us because of my Religion,
My heritage and my fate.
They stole our life and identity,
Then spread through the world
their hate.

I felt the train halt abruptly,
It was a long ride, I began to tire.

'Stay strong,' mom whispered with her
only strength,

I could tell the situation dire.

The days that followed became a blur,
Like a fog in the deepest wood.
My father and mother disappeared that day,

As many others would.

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My body starved, my mind distraught,
My faith, my hope now gone.
Within the walls of a
Concentration Camp
We were striped of any brightness
that shone.

I lost everything in my life that day!"
My grandpa stammered as a
single tear fell.
If one doesn't hear the stories of
history,
Then there's no more justice for
those who fell.

My dearest child," he looked at me
Holding me with his wrinkled hand.
You don't know the stories of history,
And I hope you never understand.

But come the day that we forget,
These stories of history's regret,
Then be the
day you too
will lose,
The power of "Lest we Forget."

The Unexpectedly Real Rugby Coach

by Naomi Hartery
St. Luke's Outreach

My first impression of our new Rugby coach was not just one of disappointment, but more of a mix of bitterness and defeat. My disdain for our original coach who was too immature and hormonal to appropriately handle a girls high school Rugby team was written on my face and that of my teammates. Thankfully, my lasting opinion of our new coach was very different.

In my grade ten year, I traded basketball sneakers for rugby cleats. I really enjoyed being outside, with the smell of spring and autumn mud constantly hovering from my cleats and jersey. Also, it was new and different. At that age, I could run fast, which was my main job as an Inside Center in the back line. When I first joined the team, Coach Al was leading it for a second season. When he was younger, he traveled and played Rugby in Britain, but he moved home and opened a pub downtown. The girls on the team thought he was quite handsome, but he was at least forty, which in my mind was old at that point.

We did well that season and finished second overall. I had learned so much about how to handle the pitch.

Also, he had set up several Rugby clinics for the fall, which were excited about it. However, when we came back to school the following year, we learned he was banned from coaching for dating one of the girls on the team. We were not only disgusted, but worried about the season. Without time for us to process the news, the principal announced he had found a new coach whom he immediately brought in the room. We all tried to politely clap, but when Coach Brian walked in, he looked like he would have been more of a chess player, who would blow away in the wind. However, we quickly learned that an effective and motivating leader had nothing to do with being all brawn and British, but more about heart and skill.

At our first practice, Coach Brian announced that he would place us in the forward pack or back line after he saw us run some drills for a week. So many of our jaws dropped open. Our identity was based on being one or the other. In Rugby, the forwards were the tough girls who had to do most of the tackling and participate in the scrum. If we lose the scrum, which involves eight

strategically placed girls on each side, locking and pushing each other as hard as they could, to get the ball out to the back line, we risk being scored on. Once we had the ball, our job was to run, pass, and set up plays to score a try in the end zone. I tried to imagine myself jammed in the front back and my head immediately started to hurt. Plus, the front pack girls were the ones at school you didn't want to mess with and mostly hung out in the smoking pit. Yes, in the 1990's the staff worried our smoking students would be cold, so they had an open shack built for them. Immediately, girls started to complain. He blew his whistle and we all started to run except for the two girls who quit right away.

After a week, he posted our positions, and none of our spots had changed. When we asked him why he did that, he turned and said he wanted to know who the team players were and who had too much ego to entertain changing positions. I looked around at the girls and most of us looked nervous or kicked the ground as none of us wanted to change, but at least we hadn't quit. That one lesson was the first step in really helping us play better as a team.

Halfway through the season, some of the girls still challenged or mocked Coach Brian as he just didn't seem like the Rugby type to us. He had an accounting firm in town, and drove a minivan, where Al had a jeep and a bar where you could throw peanut shells on the floor. Then, one day Coach Brian arrived at practice with a pile of permission forms to go to a Rugby Sevens weekend tournament out of town. We all listened in disbelief as it was already clear to us that we were learning more about the game under his leadership. Of course, we all were desperate to go. That weekend, we played Rugby Sevens in a horse stable against teams from across Prince Edward Island. We no longer smelled like mud, but also like manure. We loved every second of it and placed first in the tournament. The owner of the hotel stood at the entrance of the pool and demanded we all showered before entering. After so much running, I didn't expect we would then swim and splash like kids for a couple hours in the evening as well. At one point, I watched some of the girls from the forward pack laughing and talking with

Coach Brian, which made my heart swell as they were the ones who were closest with Coach Al. Brian didn't need to show up in a cool vehicle or tell us about his glory days as a Rugby player in Britain repeatedly, he just needed time to show us that fun can be pure, innocent, and simple. Also, we were having fun being focused on Rugby and enjoying an activity that was age appropriate. As a teacher and mother, I still remember leadership lessons from Brian regularly.

At the end of that first season, we didn't win first. However, we went into the following year focused on the game and ready to mentor new players as we were more confident in our roles on the team. At the first practice of my grade twelve year, I chuckled as Coach Brain told the new girls that he would tell them if they were part of the front or backpack by the end of the second week. We could place them based on what we knew about them by the first water break that day. However, it was also great to see them pushing and working so hard trying to earn their spot. As returning players, we were also not totally sure Coach Brain wouldn't shuffle us around as I know he wanted what was best for the team, so we worked even harder than the new ones. Every wind sprint mattered more than the next. Also, every properly wrapped tackle needed to be perfectly executed. At the end of year, when we were celebrating our well-earned championship, I was asked by my father what made the difference this time. I knew my answer right away. Coach Brian made us work for it and focus on the game more than the social side of the league.

Decades later, Coach Brain's leadership as a high school Rugby coach, still shapes my values and how I lead my children and students. I remember little about Coach Al except his Jeep and the weird way he flicked his hair when he was trying to teach us how to snap the ball better. Coach Brian took a simple, skill focused approach while also teaching us to be team players and hard workers, which changed our games and our souls. I hope someday my children will find a leader like him that they will remember when they are adults coaching a team or directing a play.

My Pillow

by Meaghan Patterson
Sacred Heart Academy

It was 10 o'clock,
I crawled upstairs
ready to lay down my head.

But
My pillow had other ideas.

First it danced across my bed.
Then it needed a snack,
Crumbs everywhere.

It bounced, spring and squealed.
It swang, swung and chuckled.

My pillow burrowed under my blankets.
Next it was push ups, sit ups and whole bed
sprints.
It finished its work out by singing at the top of
its lungs.

I lunged forward.
I managed to wrestle it.
I held on tight.
It wiggled, jiggled and giggled.
It squiggled, pushed and screamed.

But, with one big breath it calmed down.
It slowly wrapped itself around my neck.
My pillow laid its head back down.

It snuggled, cuddled and sighed.
It hugged, huddled and snored.

Bed time.

A memoir on failure

by Ryan Fox

St. John Paul II Collegiate

I have a copy of Chris Hadfield's 'An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth' that I have never read. It's signed by him and everything, but I just can't bring myself to read it. It's still too hard. Not the reading, just that particular book.

My first childhood dream, at least my first real one, was to be an astronaut. I've wanted that since I was 12. I still do. For about ten years, everything I did was focused on achieving that impossible goal. In the short version of the story I sacrificed that dream to become a teacher. I wanted to become a teacher, I know it is my God given vocation, and I love it, but I also know it means I'll probably never go to space. That's simply not on my path. I did try though. I took a shot at something I knew was impossible.

In 2016 the Canadian Space Agency hired two new astronauts. This only happens about once a decade in Canada. At first when I saw the news it stung. I had recently faced a couple of unrelated setbacks, and then my impossible, faded dream was dangled in front of me, far out of reach. After a couple of days of feeling sorry for myself, I had a dumb idea. I was going to apply. I knew my chances were pretty much zero, and it was actually going to be a fair bit of work applying, but aside from some pride and some time, what did I have to lose? At least then I could say that I failed, instead of saying that I just quit trying. Somehow that seemed better. I also figured that if I was going down in flames, I might as well share the journey. Why shouldn't my friends, family, and students witness my inevitable swing at the longest shot I'll ever take, and the subsequent, virtually guaranteed failure?

The first step was the application, which needed a reference. If I was going to try this I might as well give it everything right? I emailed my chief superintendent. "Scott, I'm applying to be an astronaut, will you be a reference for me?" The response was quick, and a little surprising: "Hi Ryan, I'd be happy to. Peace. Scott"

To my surprise, I met all the requirements and got invited to write the entrance exams. At this point I felt like I needed to tell someone really important. Her name was Arlene Christie, my Jr. High Language Arts teacher. She, more than anyone, encouraged and facilitated the

early days of my dream. She truly believed I could succeed. Because of her I got to meet astronauts, give rock-etry demos around the city, and develop my passion for space and science. Because of her I truly believed that wanting to be an astronaut wasn't a stupid, impossible dream. When I tracked her down and shared my story she told me she was proud. In that moment I was too.

I made the cut-offs on the tests: 90th percentile in math, 80th in interpersonal skills. I guess to live in something the size of an RV with 5 other people, 400km up, for 6 months at a time, you need to be able to get along with other people. My application was actually going to go forward. I couldn't believe it. A real person at the CSA was going to look at my profile and decide if I was worth a closer look.

Sadly, that's where the story ends. A few weeks later I got an email from the CSA. On October 27th, 2016 my lifelong dream finally died a dignified death. That's not what the email said, but that's what it meant. What it actually said was "The pre-selection board has retained 1000 candidates... although interesting, your candidacy was unfortunately not retained." At least they thought I was interesting.

I sent one last email to Mrs. Christie letting her know it was the end. I had beat 6000 other applicants, but it wasn't enough. I thanked Mrs. Christie for all she had done for me over the years, and for believing in me. It was over.

I thought it was over. Two weeks later a brown, paper and twine, finely wrapped package showed up at my school, hand addressed to me. I had no idea what it could be in it, or who it was from. I opened it, standing in the office hall, and then broke down crying. It was a signed copy of Chris Hadfield's kids' book, 'The Darkest Dark'. I didn't get to be an astronaut, but I did get something I will always treasure. I even read it. I don't know how Mrs. Christie got it, especially on such short notice. It's almost like she had it in waiting, just in case. In that moment, 30 years after I started on an impossible road, I was more proud of my biggest failure than almost anything I have ever succeeded at.

In Loving Memory of Arlene Christie

Selection Committee ~ Teachers



This year we were given the opportunity to participate in the selection of winners for our Anthology. It was a privilege and a pleasure to read the outstanding work throughout the division. Although the students have been challenged over the past few years during Covid, their talent, passion, and voice in their writing is stronger than ever. Students are taking risks, honing their craft, and sharing who they are through their words. There is strength in language and our students are powerful. It takes courage to put those words on a page, and even more courage to have them published. We would like to thank the students for their vulnerability and for sharing their incredible talents with us.

~ Nadine Dash and Meaghan Zolpis

doorpost café

What I love most about writing!

Statements from Top Twenty & Honorable Mention Winners

I love using my imagination to make stories and writing makes me feel calm and happy.

It's easier to put ideas into words on paper than it is to say them out loud.

I think my favorite thing about writing is being able to express myself in ways that I sometimes can't formulate with day to day words. Not only does it let other people understand how I feel but also get a better understanding of how I feel myself!

My favourite part of my writing is being able to take any one idea I have and spin it into something artful and unique.

I like using my imagination to create stories and characters.

I like writing because it is an outlet for any very strong emotion that your brain can only understand in writing. Writing is a way to work out, understand and show people and things. I recommend writing to anyone who has creative, imagination and/or passion.

I think what I love most about writing is how it makes me feel while doing it. knowing that I can put the words onto the paper in such a powerful way, makes me feel good!

Writing is something I love to do and writing Evil was one of my favorite pieces I have done.

The thing I love most about writing is being able to express my feelings and wonder about the world. I feel like I can freely say what I think about the world when I put my pencil on my paper.

My favourite thing about writing is; Being able to slip into a world of unlimited imagination, carefully tailored to my liking.

What I love most about writing is that there are no limits or boundaries to it, and that you can write about anything you want.

I love writing because it gives me endless boundaries with limitless imagination, creation, and a general escape from the real world.

My favorite thing about writing is "watching" the characters develop and change as the work continues.

tablets & doorposts

A JAMBOREE OF WRITING

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

Proverbs 7:3; Deuteronomy 6:9



Submit to next year's Tablets & Doorposts!
Email jnickerson@redeemer.ab.ca