

# Connecticut Student Writers



Volume XI May 1999

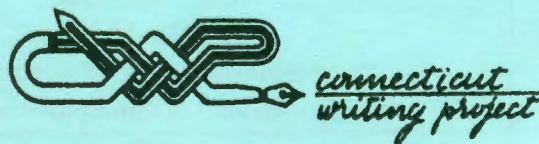
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Volume XI May 1999

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and the Aetna Endowment





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# FOREWORD

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The Connecticut Writing Project is very pleased to welcome the student writers of Connecticut back to the pages of the Connecticut Student Writers magazine. In the following pages, students across Connecticut write about themselves, their lives, their memories, their hopes, and their dreams. They write with honesty and with humor. They explore the range of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

Linda Flower, in describing the act of writing, states that "...writers don't find meanings; they make them..." This is what the writers within these pages have done. They have made meaning of their lives, their worlds. As we join with them, we can begin to understand their worlds and, perhaps, our own a little better.

The Connecticut Writing Project would like to thank the students across the state for their openness and honesty in welcoming us into their lives. We would also like to thank Lynn Bloom and the Aetna Endowment for providing the funding necessary to develop this publication. Their generosity enables us to celebrate the works of the writers here and all the others who submitted work to this magazine.

## **Editors**

Barbara Cohen

John Goekler

Jennifer Shaff





# Connecticut Student Writers

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## Flipper

One day in the ocean, there was a pod of dolphins. There were 11 dolphins in the pod. One dolphin's name was Flipper. He went in a different direction and got lost. Flipper felt lonely and sad. Then he saw 3 sharks. Then, another shark came, but then 10 dolphins came.

Flipper looked at the dolphins. They looked back at Flipper. Flipper looked at them again a little closer. They looked like his family. They had the same language. They were his family! But then, the sharks almost bit Flipper. But then, the dolphins jabbed their noses into the shark's gills and they killed the sharks.

---

**Justin Williams**  
Kindergarten  
North Stonington  
Elementary School  
North Stonington

## Meet Rosie the Dog

One night my family was watching television and saw the pet of the week. Her name was Queenie. The next day after school, we went to the pound to see if Queenie the dog was still there. When we got there, we looked in the big dog section. We didn't see her. Then we looked in the cat section, and there she was! She was so small she could fit in the palm of your hand. We asked if we could adopt her. They said yes, and we took her home and named her Rosie.

On the way home, we stopped at a pet store and bought a leash and a collar and a cage. Rosie sat in my mommy's lap the whole way home. The next day, we called the vet. After the vet looked at her, he said she was only four weeks old, but the pound people had told us she was eight weeks old. She was taken away from her mommy too soon and she was too young for any shots. We would have to bring her back another time.

She has one ear up and one ear down, is black all over with white down the middle of her tummy, has white paws and one paw larger than the others. She also has lots of designs on her belly. She is turning out to be a nice doggie. But she has her moments! I love her very much, and she has become a part of our family.

---

**Jill Griswold**  
Kindergarten  
Killingworth  
Elementary School  
Killingworth





Yanis Iddir  
Kindergarten  
Natchaug School  
Willimantic

## Birds Fly Way High

Birds fly  
way up  
high.  
Can they  
see worms  
from  
the  
sky?

---

Albert Zichichi  
Kindergarten  
Killingworth  
Elementary  
School  
Killingworth

## My First Fish

Last year I won a fishing pole and tackle box at my nursery school's Tiny Tots Fair. I was excited when they called my name. I went home and told everyone how I won my fishing pole. That night my Uncle Al called and asked me if I wanted to go fishing with him. He likes fishing. Chatfield Hollow was having a fishing derby for kids. So my mom woke me up early and Uncle Al picked me up. Uncle Al helped me set up my fishing pole. We put a big worm on my hook, and I cast my line into the water. Then we waited and waited and waited. When I saw the pole move, I ran to the pole, but that fish got away. I had to put a new worm on the hook. I cast my line, and again we waited for a fish to bite. Suddenly we saw the fish pull on the line. I grabbed my pole and Uncle Al and I reeled in my fish. I was excited. My fish was a rainbow trout, and it was 10 inches long! I won a hat and watch. Uncle Al showed me how to clean out the fish. We put it in the freezer, it's still there, and I show everyone my first fish.

---

Kristian Vicente  
Grade 1  
Hall School  
Bridgeport

## My Family

In my family there are five,  
A brother, sister, Mom and Dad...  
And me!

We have fun  
And we're always good.

I have no pets,  
But I may get one, yet.

---





## Rattlesnakes

I like snakes, and they are cool. This one will have more spots when he grows up because the snake is a baby. He will have big spots like his mom. I want a snake, but my mom doesn't want a snake. This rattlesnake can scare away big animals like bald eagles, hawks, and other animals with his tail. It has a rattle. That is how the rattlesnake got his name. When the baby rattlesnakes are born, they don't have rattles. When they grow up, they will have rattles. The rattle has lines on it that shows how old the snake is.

Rattlesnakes are very, very poisonous when they grow up, like this rattlesnake. It is in the sand right now. It can scare away crabs. The snake did not scare away the crabs. Rattlesnakes eat rabbits and mice. Snakes eat eggs also. They eat the egg whole, and they don't chew the egg. They hatch from eggs. Some snakes have a lot of eggs. Some people have snakes for pets to entertain people. Some people bring their children and their babies to the show.

Snakes can be camouflaged by the colors on their skin. They can be camouflaged anywhere like in a tree, on a leaf, and anywhere else. Snakes come in all different colors. Some colors are for protection. When something comes to try to eat it, it can go under the sand to protect itself, if it's on the beach. I like snakes!

---

## The Bat Who Thought He Was a Goose

This book is partly true. I saw a bat following geese in Maine last year.

Bat got out of his nest to see his friends. The geese were not there. He saw them flying south. His face was sad. He started to fly with them. His mom did not know where he was. Bat was lost. Bat was scared. He thought he could be a goose if he followed them. Bat thought he was a goose. But he was not a goose. So he turned around and went home. When he saw his mom, he was very happy. His mom was happy to see him, too. His mom brought him in his nest, and they went to sleep.

The End

---

Morgan  
Winston  
Grade 1  
Mitchell  
Elementary  
School  
Woodbury

Meryl Gersz  
Grade 1  
Killingworth  
Elementary School  
Killingworth





**Haley Hartzell**  
Grade 1  
Nathan Hale  
Elementary School  
Enfield

## **Winter**

A cloud lays on me  
A snowflake falls on me  
The rain sprinkles my face

---

**Seth Crampton**  
Grade 1  
Plantsville  
Elementary  
Plantsville

## **My Tools**

My tool bag is packed with tools.  
They are very, very, very cool.  
A hammer, wrench and wire clippers too.  
Little birdie, I made a birdhouse for you.

---

**Mark Spinello**  
Grade 2  
Mary T. Murphy  
School  
Branford

## **Hearts Joined by Wood**

When I step into my pop's garage, it is like a different world. I like to touch all the tools and the smell of sweet wood makes my nose tingle. Whenever I look up, my pop is always smiling. I think he likes me working on the wood with him.

My pop is like fresh pine wood and looks like a still, soft horse. His eyes are like smooth stones and he always loves me.

Whenever I leave, he hugs me like he loves me. He loves me so much because he is my pop, the best pop in the world.

When I get home, I feel good, and from then on he looks at me always. Wood brings us together.

---





## The Fall Poem

The cows are mooing.  
The bees are buzzing.  
And the birds are flying away.

The leaves are all falling.  
The geese are a calling.  
And the woods are all turning gray.

Witches and goblins are flying.  
All the pumpkins are smiling.  
And Halloween is coming this way.

HOORAY!!!

Jennifer Neri-  
Lorette  
Grade 2  
Jack Jackter  
Elementary  
School  
Colchester

---

## The Talking Castle

Every night, the king has a fight.  
Every day, the queen says, "Pick up the hay."  
Each and every morning, the princess says a warning.  
Each and every afternoon, the prince says, "There will be a full moon."  
Every single evening, the maid says, "I'll do the cleaning."  
Always at midnight, the butler asks, "Who turned out the light?"  
Even at the middle of the night, the guard says, "The prince is right,  
I see a full moon tonight."

Anna Heard  
Grade 2  
Julian Curtiss  
School  
Greenwich

---

## Wow! I'm Famous

Thursday is book day. Book day is when you write a book and Mrs. Klemanski will tell you if you can really publish it as a real book! No one, not in the whole school, had ever published a real book before. That is, except me.

It all started one Thursday morning. Mrs. Klemanski was passing out writing paper. "Don't forget periods, capitals, quotations, commas, and apostrophes," she reminded.

"Yesss," we all groaned. She said that every day. Pretty soon she came to me. She dropped a piece of writing paper on my desk. I began to write, write, write. I got four pages done because blabbermouth David wasn't there. He never got any work done, and if you were partnered with him for math, you would be doing all the work. After writing the four pages, it was time for lunch. I would

Erin Hughes  
Grade 2  
Noah Wallace  
School  
Farmington





have to wait until the next Thursday to go on. It would take forever! Finally, it was Thursday again. I got four more pages done because David wasn't there again. Then, the next Thursday, David was there. So I only got two pages done. The next Thursday, I finished! My book was called *Swimmy and the Sea Monster*. I brought it up to Mrs. Klemanski. She read it and did a big gasp! A hush fell over the room. Alison spoke up, "Does she get to publish it?"

Mrs. Klemanski nodded her head yes. "Yaaaaaaa!" everybody yelled.

"Quiet down, class," Mrs. Klemanski called. "Sarah, excellent job! On Monday you will go up to the office to publish your book."

"Oh man!" I sighed. I would have to wait all through the weekend.

Finally, Monday came. When I raced into the school door, there were about seven photographers taking pictures of me! I jumped with glee! They let me go in my classroom. When I raced in, everybody was jumping up and down saying, "Yeah! Yeah! Yee!" Even Mrs. Klemanski! Some kids were standing on their desks making loud clomping noises. When the class hushed down a bit, Mrs. Klemanski said, "Sarah, you may go upstairs now to publish your book."

"Yes!" I said. When I got upstairs, there were people filming me to be on television. Before I knew it, the news spread. The whole state knew about me! I didn't have to do any work because everybody was working with me. I was on TV, I had to be on the radio, they had to print the news in ads, and in newspapers, magazines and more!

The next day I raced into school, and to my surprise, there were no more photographers taking pictures of me. So I ran into my classroom to see the kids cheering and clapping for me. But instead, they were reading and doing their D.O.L. "Oh well," I thought. "Maybe Mrs. Klemanski just wants some quiet."

I walked to my desk. "You know why everybody isn't jumping up and down screaming for you?" whispered David. I paid no attention to him. "Well, it's because everybody is jealous of you."

"Jealous!" I was almost screaming.

"David and Sarah, please be quiet or you'll owe me five minutes on the fence," explained Mrs. Klemanski.

I sulked down in my chair and began to write my D.O.L. Even though I had just gotten to school, I felt starving. After a long morning, lunch finally came. I got up, pushed in my chair, and got my lunch box. When I was getting into line, I passed my best friend Jenny. I thought she was going to let me cut, but she didn't. I guess she saw me because when I came near, all she did was say, "Poof!" and stick her head up in the air. So I just walked to the end of the line behind David. At the lunch table, no one would talk to me! When I opened my lunch box, I was suddenly not hungry. I only took one bite of my peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a sip of my juice. At recess, I usually played with my two friends Alison and Jenny. But today, I played by myself. I knew David was right about the kids being jealous of me. I sighed. I really wanted my friends back. If only I had never written that *Swimmy and the Sea Monster* story. Then I had an idea!

On Wednesday, I raced into school again. I was extra early, for I had to





ask my teacher something. I unpacked my stuff and found Mrs. Klemanski.

"Mrs. Klemanski, Mrs. Klemanski! I shouted.

"Yes, Sarah," she said calmly.

"Um, did my book come back yet?" I asked.

"Why, no it hasn't. But, they're almost done," explained Mrs. Klemanski.

"Oh, Mrs. Klemanski! Can you please ask the typists to dedicate my book to Jenny and Alison?" I asked.

"Why, of course!" answered Mrs. Klemanski.

When lunch came, I knew no one would talk to me. And when it was recess, I knew that no one would play with me. But I didn't care. I was going to have my friends back in no time. When we got back to the classroom, Mrs. Klemanski told me that my book would come out on Friday. I couldn't wait. I would have my friends back on Friday!

Friday finally came. I ran into my classroom to see if my book had come out yet. Yes! It had! It was lying there on top of my desk. But instead of one, there were three copies. And then I guessed it. Mrs. Klemanski had called the typists again and told them to leave three books instead of one. My classmates started coming in. First Joe Noty, then Kathleen Terra, and finally Jenny and Alison. I raced after Alison. "Alison, Alison," I called.

She turned around. "What do you want?" she asked rudely.

"Here, this is for you," I said and I handed her the book. She just stood there for a minute. Then she sat down in her seat and opened up to the first page. She did a little gasp when she saw the dedication. I had given Jenny one of the other copies. She did the same thing as Alison had done. Then Jenny went over to Alison and whispered to her. She and Jenny walked over to me and said, "Do you want to be friends again? We're sorry."

And what do you think I said? "Sure!" And so all three of us were friends again! At the end of the day, Mrs. Klemanski read my book to the class! She opened to the first page and read, "Dedicated to my very best friends, Jenny and Alison."

---

## Crawl You Ant

Crawl you ant,  
Crawl you ant,  
Crawl across the road.

Until you reach  
Your home sweet home  
And dump your heavy load.

---

Brian Nowell  
Grade 2  
East School  
Torrington





Kasia Kluza  
Grade 2  
Sacred Heart  
School  
New Britain

## Max Saves the Day

I have a dog named Max. He is a German Shepherd police dog. When I wake up in the morning, I have to feed him and take him for walks every day. After our walk, I always tie him up so he will not jump over the fence. Max stays home all day while I am at school. My dad comes home before I do, so he puts the leash on Max and takes him for a walk. Sometimes they wait for me. When Max sees me, he jumps on me.

We eat dinner when my mom comes home, and Max gets some food too. Then I do my homework, and when I have half of my homework done, I watch television. When I am finished watching television, I finish my homework, get my jacket on, and go outside. I bring Max his favorite toy that he likes to chase. At night my dad takes him to work. My dad goes upstairs and Max stays outside. When Max barks, my dad looks out the window and knows it's time to go home. They come home, but I am already asleep.

One morning I took my dog, Max, to school for show-and-tell. It was my turn and Max kept on barking when one of the students, Joanna, cried out, "Somebody stole my notebook!" I told the class that Max is a Police Dog and that he would find it. The kids all screamed out that they did not take it. I said that Max would find it. All he has to do is sniff Joanna's hand and then sniff the classroom. Max did and began his search. He looked in the desks, the school bags, and the lunch boxes. Oh, oh, I guess he was hungry because he ate someone's lunch. Max found the notebook behind the bookshelf. Max brought the notebook back to Joanna, and she put a sticker on his collar. The kids asked if I could bring Max to school everyday. I took Max to the bus and we went home. It was an exciting day for Max at school!

Shantelle  
Gonzalez  
Grade 2  
Natchaug School  
Willimantic

## The Three Bears and Goldilocks

This is the story of "The Three Bears and Goldilocks," but it is retold in a very different way.

CAST OF CHARACTERS: Narrator, Goldilocks, The Three Bears

### ACT ONE

#### SCENE ONE: A Big Forest

Narrator: Once there was a big forest where a little girl lived. Her name was Goldilocks. (*Goldilocks pokes her head out of her house.*)





There were three bears who lived on the other side of the forest.  
(*The Three Bears wave.*)

The Three Bears liked to take walks. One sunny morning they went for a walk in the forest.

At the same time of day, Goldilocks left her house to take a walk to pick some raspberries.

Mama Bear: What a beautiful day for a walk in the forest.

Baby Bear: I like to walk; it is so much fun!

Papa Bear: Look! I see a beehive up in that tree. I'll just go over and see if there's any honey. I LOVE honey!

Narrator: Papa Bear stomped his way over to the tree. But when he was stomping his way over to the tree, he accidentally stomped too hard and the beehive fell and dropped onto a crooked house.  
(*Papa stomps, beehive falls, Papa jumps and runs back to bears.*)

Baby Bear: A house! A house! (*Baby Bear screams.*) Goldilocks lives in that house. All the bears say that she's the meanest girl in the forest.

Papa Bear: Oh, I don't believe that!

Mama Bear: Sh-sh-sh, Baby Bear. You'll wake her up.

Baby Bear: She's not sleeping. She's picking raspberries. I can smell it from here!

Papa Bear: Well, probably she doesn't mind if we just walk in her house and we look at her stuff.

Mama Bear: Yeah, maybe not...

Baby Bear: Yeah, let's go!

Narrator: So the Three Bears just walked right in the house without even knocking. They were very curious and couldn't wait to see what was inside!

## ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: Goldilock's house in the forest.





Narrator: The Three Bears saw some porridge sitting on a table.

Papa Bear: Hmmmmmm.....some porridge. I have a plan. I'll take this pot of porridge, climb up on the roof, get the honey out of the beehive, and then pour the porridge into the hive. The bees won't know the difference!

Narrator: Papa Bear took the pot of porridge and got a ladder. He climbed up on the chimney. He found the beehive and took the honey out of it. Then he poured the porridge into the beehive to trick the bees. That second, the bees came back and stung Papa Bear.

Papa Bear: Oooo-eeee!

Mama Bear: Papa Bear, get down here!

Papa Bear: Oooo-eeee! Just a minute. Oooo-eeee!

Narrator: Finally, Papa Bear got down from the chimney. The Three Bears went back into Goldilock's house.

Scene Two: Inside Goldilock's House

Narrator: Once inside Goldilock's house, Baby Bear saw a little chair.

Baby Bear: Oh, what a nice chair. I think I'll sit down in it. (*Sits in chair.*) This IS a com-fer-dable chair!

Narrator: Mama Bear wanted to search some more, so she went upstairs. She saw a bed in a room.

Mama Bear: I'd like to try that bed. (*Walks over to the bed.*) I'd like to lay down in this bed. (*Lays down on the bed.*) This IS a comfortable bed!

Narrator: Mama Bear lay down on Goldilock's bed for one minute. Then she jumped up...

Mama Bear: Papa Bear, Baby Bear, it's time to go! We must leave now before Goldilocks comes home!

Narrator: Back at the woods, Goldilocks had filled her basket with raspberries, so she thought that she had enough of the raspberries. So she started to walk back to her house. At the same time, the Three Bears were walking out, too.

Goldilocks: (*Opens her door—looks really mad.*) What is this? What are you





doing in my house? Oh, my goodness—Get out mean bears!

Narrator: You see, Goldilocks wasn't afraid of anything or anyone! When she opened that door and saw the Three Bears, she was very angry. The Three Bears got very frightened. Goldilocks was so mad that she frightened them away.

Goldilocks: (*Slapping her hands together*) That's that!

Narrator: From that day forward, the Three Bears never came back!

THE END

---

## Untitled

The orange sky of evening,  
Mixes with the afternoon winter night.  
As I walk toward my house,  
I notice icicles fill the windows.  
Finally I see the moon,  
I know the slant sun of February is here.

---

## The Crocodile That Ate Plants

Oh hi! My name's Lumbo. I have a friend named George. George the crocodile. I'm a crocodile too.

There is one thing different about George. He eats plants. He used to have a problem with that. Let me tell you the story.

Once there was a crocodile named George. He was a dark olive green color and had blue eyes. He was a lot like other crocodiles except he ate plants.

One day he passed by his friend Clemo. George stopped to eat a dandelion. When Clemo saw this, he laughed his head off.

"You eat plants?" laughed Clemo.

George was embarrassed. He didn't care before, but now he did. He decided to go to Dr. Slump.

Dr. Slump was a bear. He had dark brown fur and bright green eyes.

"I can only eat plants!" moaned George, "I need to eat meat!"

Dr. Slump looked and looked.

"Maybe, if you throw away every plant you see, then you won't have a problem," said Dr. Slump.

"Well, I'll try your idea," said George.

Timothy Manko  
Grade 3  
Academy  
Elementary School  
Madison

Katelyn Sheehan  
Grade 3  
Buttonball Lane  
Elementary School  
Glastonbury





When he went back to the river, he saw his garden. He began to dig up his tiger lilies when something came over him and he threw his shovel in the middle of the river. The shovel went down the Crystal River. He decided then that he should get advice from me! Lumbo. He said that he couldn't eat meat. I said maybe if he ate a little bit of meat every day he would get used to it. He thought that was good advice.

On Saturday, he saw a baby antelope. He edged nearer and nearer to the baby antelope and he saw her bright blue-green eyes, her white spots, and her light brown fur. She was just too cute to eat. So he swam off.

On Sunday, he saw a giraffe, a teenage giraffe to be precise. George swam closer and closer. The giraffe did a karate kick on an oak tree and broke the tree in half! George thought the teenage giraffe wouldn't be too happy if George tried to eat him, so he quickly ran away.

On Monday, he saw an ugly bunny. "Perfect!" he said. "Not too cute, like the antelope (that's why he picked an ugly bunny) and won't hurt me (like what the giraffe did to that tree). While he was sneaking closer and closer, he didn't notice Sharp Eye, the red-tailed hawk. Sharp Eye swooped down from the sky and got the bunny first, before George could get him. George finally gave up.

He was moping around when he saw Thelma, the platypus.

"What's wrong George?" asked Thelma.

"I can only eat plants," sighed George.

"So you're different, right?" asked Thelma.

"Yeah....," started George.

"And you're glad about that, right?" asked Thelma.

"Uh-huh...." answered George.

"You've got it! Everyone's different! Everyone's different in many ways; everyone's the same in many ways!" said Thelma.

So George never had that problem again.

And the moral of the story is....

**Everyone's Different!!!**

Amanda Ghrist  
Grade 3  
Natchaug School  
Willimantic

---

## My Foster House

The first day at my foster house it was raining.

Splash

Splash

Went the rain.

Just as we were going outside, the rain stopped.

We got to play with Raven's Jeep. Raven is my foster sister. It was fun playing with the jeep because we went around and around in it. **I got to drive, and I was wild.** Raven laughed. I liked her because she treated





me like her real sister.

Now it was Raven's turn to drive. Raven drove s-l-o-w. I said, "Go a little faster, Raven." She said, "OK," and drove around the house fast. I held on, but I was shaking when she stopped. We laughed.

My foster mom, Beth, came outside and told us we had to come in and eat. I was nervous because it was my first day being in a new place. I had never been in a foster home before. Beth liked having me and my sister Crystal there. She told us that she liked having us because we kept Raven company. I was still nervous that first day.

There was another foster kid living with Beth because his mom couldn't take care of four kids. His name was Randy. He kept Ryan, Beth's son, company. Randy was a nice kid and he liked to share with us.

We stayed with Beth for two years. Randy stayed with us and Beth adopted him. It was hard for us to leave after two years. I remember Raven running after the car and crying. She kept saying, "Come back. Come back." I didn't cry. I just looked out the back of the window because I wanted to remember the color of her hair.

---

## Itchy and His Dream

Itchy was a plain old brown worm. He lived in a squishy compost pile full of vegetable peels. He was terrified of birds and rodents. Everyday it was the same thing; he ate crumbly dirt and helped his Mom. He was named Itchy because every time he spilled something on himself he felt tingling and prickly under his skin and he would say "Itchy!" He loved to read stories to himself about princesses and kings. He made up his mind that he wanted to marry a lovely worm princess when he grew up.

One day Itchy's mom said she needed oil for the family Wormaho car. Itchy went to the gas station to buy a thimble full of oil. Unfortunately, when he got there, a person walked by and knocked a huge oil can from a high wooden shelf. It came down and spilled all over Itchy. Itchy screamed, "Itchy!" Once he could catch his breath, he looked down at himself and noticed rainbow colors all over his tingling body. He thought he looked very odd. He liked his old brown color better than blue, green and purple. He forgot all about the oil and shuffled home as fast as his little body could squirm. When he got home, he revealed his new self to his parents, and they shrieked "Itchy, what happened?"

The next day, Itchy's mom and dad tried to clean him up. They handwashed him, and then by mistake they put him in the laundry. But nothing could remove the oily surface. They even tried the laundry-mat. Next, they went to their friend, Julianna, who had sores on her feelers from washing. She always got stains out, but not Itchy's.

Finally, Itchy's Mom and Dad took him to the Queen of Worms to get some suggestions about getting Itchy's brown color back. Once they got to the silver, jeweled Worm Palace, they discovered that the Queen was also rainbow

Lily Pfeifer  
Grade 3  
Wells Road  
Intermediate  
School  
Granby





colored! It was so unusual for a worm to have rainbow colors and the Queen admired Itchy's colors. Itchy felt special. The King and Queen had always wanted a worm with rainbow colors to be a prince for their daughter. They invited Itchy to stay at the Worm Palace to get to know the princess. Itchy and the worm princess got to know each other by doing puzzles together and playing hide-and-go-seek in the woods. All of a sudden one day, the Queen said, "If you want, you can marry the princess." Itchy very much wanted to. His dream had come true! The next day, they got married and forever after all the little worm princesses and princes were all rainbow colored!

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**Zachary  
Whitehead**  
Grade 3  
Killingworth  
Elementary  
Killingworth

## **Fog**

Fog creeps in unnoticed  
It's moist and misty  
Hovering above the land.

---

**Jamie O'Neill**  
Grade 3  
Mary T. Murphy  
School  
Branford

## **Fall Leaves**

Fall leaves  
fluttering through  
beautiful trees.

Red, yellow, green  
leaves  
soaring through the wind.

Flowing leaves  
all over ME!  
Oh! How I love fall leaves!

Crinkle, crackle -  
Brown leaves  
on the ground  
Oh! How I love fall leaves!

---





# Uninvited Guests

(This story's first two sentences are from the author Chris Van Allsburg.)

Suzanna Slater  
Grade 4  
John B. Sliney  
School  
Branford

His heart was pounding. He was sure he had seen the doorknob turn.

While a young man named Richard was dawdling down his basement stairs, suddenly a cloud of dust rose before him. Sure it was dusty down there, but something about it amazed Richard. Tiny, bright sparks of the colors silver and yellow flew out of the cloud and about. The old basement glowed from the sparks. All this time, he stood there too surprised to even move.

After a long period of time, the cloud slowly disappeared. Richard could see an odd shape against the stone wall, but barely, because he didn't have his glasses on.

He also caught a glimpse of a metal ball the color of gold. He moved closer and closer to the appearance on the wall. That's when it happened. The little ball started to turn, its aluminum skin brightly shining from the lamp above. It turned so fast that before Richard could shriek, a small creature popped out of the shape!

Not knowing what to do, Richard stepped back and stumbled over his own feet. The stranger standing at the shape (Richard thought it was a door) had a wide face and a short nose. Big rosy circles covered his cheeks, and he wore a ripped, faded black T-shirt which looked pretty big on the little fellow. His pants were like regular blue jeans, except they had designs stitched onto them. His eyes were sparkling with kindness and curiosity, but Richard did not trust him. He wasn't even sure if he was having a silly old dream!

"Eek, oodlee!" the uninvited guest blurted out. Richard begged himself to wake up from this foolish dream, but he really knew it wasn't one. The tiny man cocked his head to the side and said, "Olah?" Once again, Richard failed to understand, and he sat there helplessly shaking his head sideways.

"Uhh...hello?" Sure enough, the word came from the creature. Richard looked up, his eyes widening. He answered back saying, "Umm...hi, I...uh..." The small man clapped his hands several times. "Me greet you," he said. Richard was sort of listening, but a million questions were racing through his head. He didn't know what to say!

That's when he thought up a very important question and asked, "Who are you?" The little guy brought his hand to his chest and responded proudly, "Me Godal. Gnome creature. Me from land far away. Me sent here to see what your land look like."

Still sitting on the floor from when he fell, Richard got to his feet and dusted himself off. At that moment, the gnome Godal reached into the leather pouch which was strapped around his skinny waist. His fingers were holding some kind of dust. The sun shining through the window sparkled on it.

He looked around the room twice and, as quick as a blink of the eye, he threw the powdery substance onto the window pane. And with that, the window creaked open by itself, as if the dust was some kind of magic dust!





Godal raced to the window and threw his body over.

Richard stood silently in the soft breeze, now blowing his hair around. He wondered, "Where did that door come from? Where did Godal go?" But his questions will have to be answered later. He had a gnome to catch!

He zoomed up the stairs and out the screen door in a blur. He cupped his hand over his brown eyes and looked all around. In the distance, he could see a very small person, and of course, it was the gnome.

He was at the harbor wandering around near some rowboats, taking a long and serious time looking at each and every one. Richard guessed he wanted to go somewhere. "What if he wants to go home! Maybe he could go through the door back down in the basement," Richard thought excitedly.

While running as fast as his long legs could take him, Richard whispered to himself, "Just a little farther." When he reached the dock, he saw that Godal was getting into one of the rowboats. "Oh great!" Richard screamed angrily. Once again, he ran with great speed.

"Stop, stop!" he called, but his voice was lost in the sound of other boat motors. The gnome looked up and grabbed the smooth wooden paddle which was lying on the floor of the rowboat. Richard was so close to the gnome that he quickly decided to jump on.

"SPLASH!" Richard slipped on the boat's side and went under the cold sea. "Help, I can't swim! My ankle is..." He pulled himself up so at least his head was poking out. He then yelled for help, but Richard went right back under.

Godal saw that he was hurt and jumped in after him. Holding his breath, Godal also went under. He grabbed Richard's ankle and ripped the net from it, which caused him to get hurt. They both came up from the water gasping for air.

"Thank you so much," Richard said between long breaths. Godal smiled widely.

The gnome helped Richard back to his house. They hurried to the cellar and saw that the door was still there. "Well, goodbye Godal," Richard mumbled, still soaking wet. Godal stared at him and then at the tiny wooden door. He said, "Goodbye," and he stepped into the small door.

There was a blinding light as he stepped through, and the door quickly closed shut. Ever since, Richard would go down into his basement and wait for Godal the gnome to come back for another adventure.

Philip Waller  
Grade 4  
Renbrook School  
West Hartford

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## Monsterella Mania

This is an advertising skit about a new and great cheese product called **Monsterella** (which is a fake brand). It was first acted on February 5, 1999 as a talent show number at Renbrook School. The original actors were: Laura Michet as Announcer, Teacher, Interviewer, and Robber; Ian Robinson as the Monsterella Cheese; and Philip Waller as Student, Bill Parcels, and Robber.





*Chair in middle of stage facing stage left and box behind chair with props: piece of cheese (fake); fake cheeseburger; microphone; 2 bandannas; 4 cheese sticks.*

*Music stand to left of chair—teacher will stand behind it.*

Announcer: *(Walks 1/3 of way to middle of stage, from stage right)*  
*(Intro)* Monsterella is the best cheese money can buy. Satisfying hungry mouths everywhere. You think Monsterella is just for kids, but now major food chains are taking it up everywhere and grown-ups are going crazy over it. Here are some examples.

Monsterella: *(In a costume—sandwich board painted yellow with a monster mask on his head. Runs to middle of stage, from stage left.)*  
Teachers everywhere love Monsterella!! *(Exits stage right.)*

*(Kid sits in chair. Teacher stands left behind music stand and leans over him.)*

Teacher: Philip! Why haven't you done your math homework?

Student: HMMMM.

Monsterella: *(Stage right—comes out a little and starts jumping, then disappears stage right.)*

Student: *(Thinking)* That's right. I was making Monsterella snacks for class with my mom! Try one.

Teacher: MMMMMM. Good. You can get bonus points for this.

Monsterella: *(Stage right—comes out a little.)* OK. So everyday people like Monsterella. Let's take it to another level. Even famous football players love Monsterella!

*(Teacher and student are changing into Interviewer and Bill Parcells on stage while Monsterella is talking.)*

Interviewer: *(With microphone.)*

Bill Parcells: *(In blazer, with fake cheeseburger in pocket.)*

Interviewer: Here I am with the famous Jets' coach, Bill Parcells, Bill, how did you get your team from a 1 win and 15 losses season two years ago to almost being in the Superbowl this season?

Bill Parcells: HMMMM.





Monsterella: *(Stage right—comes out a little and starts jumping, then disappears stage right.)*

Bill Parcells: *(Thinking)* That's right. I remember. I gave the players Monsterella cheeseburgers before every game. But I forgot to give them one when they played the Broncos. That's why they lost that game. But I did save one cheeseburger. Here, have it.

Monsterella: *(Stage right—comes out a little.)* And it keeps well over time too!

Interviewer: MMMMMM. That's good. I hope no other coaches learn your secret!

Monsterella: *(Stage right—comes out a little.)* OK. So even sport players and coaches like Monsterella! Let's take it to another level. Robbers like Monsterella too!

*Interviewer and Bill Parcells are changing on stage while Monsterella is talking, putting bandannas over their faces and holding a cheese stick in each hand.*

Robbers: *(Run to front of stage with cheese sticks in each hand and yell.)*  
Stick 'em up!

Monsterella: *(Stage right—comes out.)* Everyone likes Monsterella!

All: Monsterella! A little bit of monster in every bite.

Everyone: *(Singing and dancing—right leg kick, left leg kick, right leg kick, jumping jack.)* Monsterella! Monsterella! That's what we like!  
OH YEA!

Knikka  
Butcher  
Grade 4  
Regional  
Multicultural  
Magnet School  
New London

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## The Wrong Trail

Helped by God  
and treated nicely  
I turn my head  
and look in the past  
the trail I follow might be wrong  
but I live to understand

---





## I am from...

I am from the banged up bass in my room,  
my blanky in an old pillow case, and  
Lego systems, part built and part destroyed.

I am from the computer,  
resting on a brand new desk, and  
lacrosse sticks,  
waiting in my room,  
waiting and waiting  
and waiting for spring.

I am from the big tree I climb in the summer,  
from "Hey-ya-kid-ya,"  
"Time to take out the trash,"  
"Makalou,"  
"You have had enough TV time  
so hand over the selectors," and  
"Make sure to check in."

I am from Mom's homemade fries,  
which are crisp & crunchy,  
from ice cream with cookie dough,  
sprinkles, and chocolate chips  
that I love on blazing summer days.

I am from hot cocoa  
with plump marshmallows  
bobbing up and down,  
from pizza so hot and cheesy  
that it burns the top of my mouth.

I am from Mom and Dad,  
who have a great sense of humor,  
Grandma, who liked to party,  
Grandma Sharp, who is very smart,  
and my grandfathers,  
who were hard-working men.

I am from a family that loves me a lot.

Greg Barron  
Grade 4  
Mary T. Murphy  
School  
Branford





Eric Carroll  
Grade 4  
North Windham  
School  
North Windham

## Baseball

The grip and feeling of an unsanded bat in my hand.  
I dig my cleats into the dirt.  
The ball flies as I stand at the plate.  
It comes blazing toward me.  
I swing my heavy Louisville slugger.  
CRACK!  
My lumber breaks in two.  
The ball goes screaming in the other direction.  
I watch the ball take off like a jet  
Staring as it goes over the wall.  
Anxious to reach first I hear the announcer wail,  
"THAT'S GONE!"  
The glory as the crowd stands in an ovation.  
The happiness as I round third.  
SMACK.  
The sound of my cleats touching home plate.  
The glory of a homerun.  
The glory of baseball.

---

Kathleen  
Boland  
Grade 4  
East School  
New Canaan

## Sanibel Island

The setting sun  
pierces  
the sparkling navy blue  
water in the moonlit sky.  
The last seagull cries while a  
sandskipper slowly skips away.  
The foreign palm trees  
wave in the soft warm breeze.  
Abandoned seashells  
ghostly glow  
in the moonlight,  
moonjellies  
spread across the gulf,  
the waves crash against me  
while I stand there  
watching,  
listening.

---





## April

When the sun shines through the clouds of gray,  
And colors are bright,  
It's a fresh spring day.  
Grass is like an emerald  
Hanging from a chain,  
And daisies have grown from the days of rain.  
Leaves and buds all over the trees,  
And a gentle song from the hum of the bees,  
And there is life all over the town,  
To bring back color to the days of brown.

Clouds of dreams float through the skies,  
Snow is melting before my eyes.  
I have never seen such a wondrous sight,  
The eggs are hatching and the baby birds take flight.  
Days like this are what dreams are made of,  
Days as soft and gentle as the coo of a dove.

The rose's petals are soft and light,  
The smell of a rose is sheer delight  
The gardens shine in every hue,  
Scarlet and violet and pleasant sky blue.  
Butterflies fluttering all through the town,  
With wings as soft as dandelion down.

April comes but once a year,  
To take away the winter fear.  
So remember - When the sun shines through the clouds of gray,  
And colors are bright,  
It's a fresh spring day.

---

## The Beach

The sound of the gulls cawing and waves splashing on shore soothes my mind. I bury my hands under the scratchy granules of sand and just stare at the colorful sunset as the blue, red, pink, and purple collide to make a beautiful collage. I see a whale spout shiny blue water in the distance. I pick myself up and walk closer to the water. I see gulls resting on a sand bank nearby, and I envy their wings. I step in the warm, salty water. The smell of seaweed on shore gives

Shannon  
Tobin  
Grade 4  
Academy School  
Madison

Nora Lesko  
Grade 5  
Noah Wallace  
School  
Farmington





me an unusual feeling. I see a lighthouse on top of some steep rocks, and I walk in a little further, until the water is up to my waist. Welcoming me to their home, the fish swim around my feet. I dunk my head in the water and push my hair out of my face. I lick my lips. The ocean water tastes salty, and I wipe my mouth off. I walk in a little more until it is up to my neck. Then I hear someone calling, and I turn around to see a tall lady figure motioning for me to come out of the water. So I slowly do so. As my soaking wet dress tugs down at my shoulders, I hope the next day will be exactly the same as today.

---

Katharine  
Mackel  
Grade 5  
Daisy Ingraham  
School  
Westbrook

## Writer's Notebook

I can't stop thinking about  
snow.

How come  
it clumps,  
like baseballs?

Why does  
it stick  
to your boots  
when you  
try your  
best to  
knock most  
of it  
off

and then  
it melts  
on the  
floor and  
you get  
yelled at,  
even though  
you tried?

Why is it a  
trouble maker?  
Sometimes my  
questions melt  
and sink  
into my brain.

Like snow  
would on  
my floor.  
Sometimes





my dog  
eats snow.  
Sometimes  
something  
eats my  
thoughts.  
That's why we  
have  
writer's notebooks.  
To put down  
questions we  
have as children.  
When we're  
grown up,  
we look  
at that  
and laugh  
so hard  
until salt water  
runs down our  
cheeks in mini-oceans.  
Our  
writer's notebooks  
are used for  
memories.  
And  
for laughing  
at  
our small  
questions.  
Which  
seemed so  
wondering.  
Some  
questions  
don't have  
an answer.  
And  
we ponder.  
Writer's notebooks.

---





## What is Silence?

What is Silence?  
Does anybody know?  
Is it joyous, or melancholy?  
Should it be looked for or left alone?

What is SILENCE?

Silence is many things.  
Is that a surprise?  
Silence comes in many forms.

Joyous,  
Heavy,  
Peaceful,  
Suspending,  
Loving,  
Hurting,  
Reflecting,  
and Fragile.

Joyous silence,  
Light and Happy  
None can speak  
Everyone is silently laughing  
Laughing so hard.

Heavy silence  
Sad and Forsaken  
The darkest cloud  
Hanging over the land  
The silence of Death.

Peaceful silence  
Rare and Gentle  
Like golden sun streaming through a window  
A kind of Aloneness  
For which everyone yearns.

Anxious silence  
Eager and Waiting  
When all of time is suspended  
The instant before the winning goal is scored  
In a game of soccer.





Loving silence  
Peaceful and Gentle  
Planting a seed and lovingly patting the soil  
Watering and Waiting  
For a flower to grow.

Hurting silence  
Lonely and Miserable  
Like a coyote howling all alone at the moon  
Silence for crying, but don't leave me alone  
That will only make my hurting worse.

Mirror silence  
Reflecting and Remembering  
Dead silent, sharp as broken glass  
Just Quiet silence, Gentle like a sunrise  
Memory silence.

Fragile silence  
Soft and Easily Broken  
Like clouds and sweet-smelling flowers  
Like a golden shell  
Precious silence.

This is all silence.  
Silence is poems and peaceful days.  
Silence is rocks and waterfalls.  
Silence is the eye of a storm.  
Silence is everything  
And nothing.

What is Silence?

---

## Terrible Times

It was a cool clear evening. There were lots of stars. I counted each one while I sat in the back seat of my family's car. "When are we going to be at Poppi's?" I asked.

"We're there," my dad said as we pulled into my grandfather's driveway. I jumped out of the car and smelled the sweet damp air. I ran ahead of my sister, and my brother was being carried inside by my mom. I rang the doorbell repeatedly until finally, Viola, my grandpa's housekeeper, opened the door. I looked up. There at the top of the stairs was my Poppi, and he had a grin on his

Allyson Blueweiss  
Grade 5  
Tashua Elementary  
School  
Trumbull





face so big that it seemed to me like it stretched up to the sky. I ran up the stairs. I was so excited that I tripped on my way up. Yet he was ready. He picked me up and I jumped into his arms. He chuckled. I hugged him real hard. I wished I could stay forever in his big loving arms, so I could freeze that moment.

A couple minutes later, dinner was ready. We went into the dining room and had a wonderful meal. I would meet my sister, Marissa, under the table, and we would crawl around and tickle people's feet for a while. Before dinner was over, we would go find the key. To us, this was a legendary key, even though it was just an antique cabinet key. We would secretly take it and Poppi would come over and say, "Who has my key?" Marissa and I would giggle and say, "We do, we do." After dinner, Poppi would tell us stories. Some were fairy tales, others were stories about the key and that it had magical powers. It was always sad to leave, but we knew we'd see him soon.

In the summer was the lobster bake. Poppi would have lots of people over and we'd have lots of seafood and I just loved it. Poppi always smelled like his pipe and it was just something that comforted me. Then there was the day I learned of Poppi's sickness. He had cancer. I didn't know what that was, but I made Poppi lots of pictures and I would make him things in my cooking class. He told me I was going to be the best chef in the world. I would laugh and say, "No, I'm going to be a movie star." "I bet you will," he would say with a chuckle. To me, Poppi didn't seem sick. He seemed fine. When I lost a tooth, I called Poppi. "Wow, you're getting so big," he'd say and he'd give my dad a dollar for me.

A couple weeks later was my birthday. He told my mom to get us what we really wanted. When I came home, an American Girl doll was lying on my bed. I hugged it. That night my dad took me to the hospital. I saw my Poppi lying in that bed and it confused me. He was such a strong, wise man and now he was lying in a hospital bed looking pale and weak.

Two days later, my dad came home from the hospital. He took me into his room and we sat on his bed. I looked into his eyes and saw his expression. He too was strong; nothing seemed to hurt him. "Poppi died, didn't he?" I asked. "Yes," he said. I hugged him real tight. I knew that he needed it. I needed that too.

The next night we drove to Poppi's house to sit Shiva. I looked up at the stars again, but one caught my eye and was shining and glistening brighter than all of the others. That's my Poppi, I said to myself. That's my Poppi.

---





## Poetry

Essays have to stay on topic, plays must have a plot,  
Book reports must be on books, without one part forgot,  
School writing must have punctuation, and good grammar too,  
A story must begin and end, while making sense to you.  
But amid rules there is one style that makes me feel quite free  
There are no rules when writing it, so I love poetry.  
Though it will often be in verse, it doesn't have to rhyme,  
Sometimes it is not understood, but will be over time.  
Grammar doesn't matter here, throw out the punctuation,  
In poetry, I feel that I  
Am taking a vacation.  
It is not ink-as it appears- that spills out on the paper.  
It's dreams and hopes and all my thoughts and every crazy caper.  
People say "You don't make sense," or "I don't understand,"  
But if you read enough of it, you make your mind expand.  
Draw your own conclusions, there is no right or wrong,  
Read it slowly, close your eyes, it becomes a song.  
Poems are all emotions, strong and meaningful  
They draw you in, they make you think, they have some sort of pull.  
I know that when the world seems cruel  
That with some paper and a pen,  
I can set myself free to  
Go on dreaming now and then.

---

## Winter Wishes

One February morning, I awoke abruptly to the beeping sound of my brand new alarm clock. I rolled over to face my mahogany night stand and pressed the button on the top of the clock. The clock showed 6:30 AM. The beeping sound immediately stopped. I rolled over onto my back again and let out a heavy sigh.

"Oh mannnnnnn. . . ." I groaned.

I looked over my left shoulder out the frost covered window to my front lawn.

"Darn. It looks like another rainy day. I wish it would snow. I've been waiting since July. I'm tired of all this rain, I mean if it's gonna be cold, let it snow!" I mumbled.

"Kate, time to get ready or you'll miss the bus and then be late for school again!" my grandmother yelled from downstairs.

"All right, Gram, I'll be down in a sec!" I replied.

I stepped out of bed onto the cold wood floor and a shiver ran down my

Nellie Pach  
Grade 6  
East Hampton  
Middle School  
East Hampton

Allyson Angelini  
Grade 6  
Gallup Hill School  
Ledyard





spine. I shuffled over to my bureau, snatched a pair of faded blue jeans and an old Red Sox sweatshirt from the jammed drawer and put them on. I slipped into my mud-caked sneakers and walked down the creaky stairs into the sweet aroma of French toast and the smiling face of my grandma.

I gobbled up the meal like a Hoover vacuum, grabbed my blue ski jacket, and green book bag, and scurried out the door with a, "Bye, Gram!" and a loud boom to confirm my leaving.

Outside, I inhaled deeply a breath of fresh air. I stepped into the soggy grass and my foot sunk into the bubbling mud.

"Oh, if it was just a little bit colder, all of this rain would freeze and I would have my snow." I thought again.

"Hi, Kate."

"Hi, Taylor," I sighed heavily.

"What's up?" she questioned me.

"Nothin'."

"What's wrong?"

"Well, it's just that I'm tired of all this rain. I need some snow!"

"I heard on the weather station last night that we might get some this afternoon," Taylor squeaked.

"That's what they always say," I replied, recalling what I had heard the weatherman say the past two months.

"I know, but maybe, just maybe, we'll get some this time."

"Yeah right," I said sarcastically, "I've been wishin', and prayin', and hopin, and nothin's happened yet."

"I don't know what to tell ya, Kate, except that if we don't get movin', we're gonna miss the bus."

I looked westward, down the bus's usual route, and saw a large yellow object moving toward the stop.

"Look!" I screamed, pointing toward the bus.

Taylor followed the path my finger was pointing and we both darted down Seventh Street as fast as our feet could carry us, about as fast as a golden retriever. We made it to the stop just as the yellow doors were creaking closed and the stop sign was folding in. We made it just in time.

We dashed onto the bus and found a seat that wasn't completely torn open, although that was nearly impossible because the other seventh and eighth graders liked to rip them open and throw the stuffing. Personally, I think it's pretty gross and embarrassing to walk into school with a yellow piece of foam dangling from your hair.

"Phew! That was close!" I said, gasping for my breath.

"Yeah, I'd sure say so!"

We both giggled, recalling what had happened.

That day moved as slow as a turtle half asleep does. I didn't pay any attention to Mr. Gilligan, my homeroom teacher, or anyone else. It was so embarrassing when Ms. Fizzy, my science teacher, called on me to answer a question and all I could say was, "What?"

I just constantly gazed out the window, hoping to see cold, white flakes of





snow falling from the fluffy, gray clouds hanging in the sky.

As I was walking home, head hanging low, listening to the swish swish of my wind pants, a cold drop landed on my nose, rolled down to the tip, and dropped off like a parachute.

"Ahh, darn rain!" I ground my teeth together and kicked a pebble. It slid across an iced over puddle.

I kept on walking, a little more aggravated than before, when another drop landed on my shoe. I felt another and another. I looked up toward the clouds and, "Huuhhh!" I gasped, surprised in what my hazel eyes saw.

White snowflakes were drifting down. "SNOW!" I jumped with joy.

I skipped happily the rest of the way home, dashed into our off-white house, tossed my book bag carelessly on the nearest chair, and skipped upstairs into my room.

I pushed open the closet door and snatched my snow equipment, carelessly throwing the clothes on the clean bedspread. I then hastily began layering my clothes. First the snow pants, then the boots, followed by the heavy jacket, hat, hand-knit scarf, and fleece mittens. I peered out my window to find the ground covered in a white blanket.

I walked out the door into a winter wonderland. Wobbling down the porch steps into the back yard, I gasped at the dreamy scene. I listened to the crunching sound of my feet pressing into the snow.

I flopped onto my back to prepare to make a snow angel. I began flapping my arms wildly up and down.

I stood up, looking at the creation I had just designed. The combination of the snow angel and the glistening of the snow reminded me of a wedding. The snow-like confetti, the happiness, and the start of a new beginning.

I was glad that I had made my winter wish for snow and that it had come true.

---

## The Mighty Warrior

The mighty warrior was running down the great plains.

His handsome face hidden behind his iron helmet.

His muscular body in the comfort of his armor.

His hands were ready by his great sword.

His face staring straight at his destination.

A small town slowly burning to rubble.

Behind the red and orange flames he could make out his target,

His enemy.

A legend long forgotten,

A mystical,

Destroying dragon.

Eric Rehm

Grade 6

Latimer Lane School

Simsbury





Its scaly body protecting the beast's body from the blazing inferno.  
Its cold white eye piercing the knight's soul.  
Its red rock-hard body coiling around the village.

No,

Our hero is spotted,  
The monster lunges with its claws trying to grab the knight,  
Saliva dribbling out its mouth.  
The knight jabs the creature's hand with his sword,  
And the abomination screeches  
So loud it makes all the remains of glass shatter.  
After that our hero feels a little woozy,  
But then he spots something that would definitely boost up his energy,  
A peanut butter and jelly sandwich,  
And he savagely stuffs it into his mouth.  
"Bobby," the dragon blurts out,  
"If you're going to be a savage, you might as well be polite  
and sit down."

The warrior obeys and sits down.

Later

The mighty warrior sits in his jail cell waiting for his punishment.  
A fat org with one eye opens up his cell and croaks  
"Bath time, Bobby"  
"NOOOO!!!!"  
A cry is heard throughout the land.

Colin Gibson  
Grade 6  
East Lyme Middle  
School  
Niantic

---

## Ghost Patrol

I wake up suddenly,  
To the sound of raspy breathing.  
My heart dips immediately,  
and skips a few beats.  
For I know who is out there,  
waiting for me.  
I creep slowly out of my bed,  
silently.  
A light mist hangs in my room,  
damp and gloomy.  
I pick up a baseball bat,  
To defend myself from the unknown.  
I tiptoe to my door,  
and take a peek outside.  
Nothing out of the ordinary catches my eye,





Yet.  
 I take a few steps out of my room,  
 Cautious, and curious  
 I walk down the stairs,  
 They crack loudly,  
 as if disturbed from their night slumber.  
 Into the living room I shuffle.  
 A moaning sound comes from all sides,  
 as if the life has been taken from a living being.  
 The hair on my neck shoots straight up,  
 as I hear footsteps.  
 A clanging sound seeps out of the closet,  
 like someone,  
 or something,  
 has been trapped forever.  
 The window panes rattle.  
 Spirits?  
 My lungs stop working,  
 as I hear a bloodcurdling shriek.  
 The tables and chairs move,  
 sliding across the room  
 They are controlled by a deadly force.  
 I see strange shapes moving around outside,  
 Haunting, dancing.  
 I have had enough.  
 I fly out of the room and tear up the stairs.  
 They shout in terror.  
 I bolt into my room and lock the door.  
 Diving into my bed, I shiver,  
 And wait for the morning.

---

## The Beach at Prince Edward Island

The sand dunes line the beach  
 Dotted with clumps of whispering sea grass  
 Which is shaking ever so slightly  
 In the gentle breeze

The waves splash softly on the shore  
 Carrying surprises for me to pick up  
 Seaweed, rocks, seashells, and starfish  
 Are some of the treasures that ride on the waves

Lindsay Larsen  
 Grade 6  
 Hebron  
 Elementary  
 School  
 Hebron





A kite soars over the sand dunes  
Like a hawk looking for its prey  
It dives and soars and sometimes drops  
To the ground with such grace

The sky looms overhead  
With its many shades of blue  
And clouds that are very narrow and white  
This is the beach at Prince Edward Island

Jessica  
Bialecki  
Grade 7  
West Hills  
Middle Magnet  
School  
New Haven

---

## Love is a Delicacy

Paint your mind with many colors.  
Sketch your heart with several tones.  
The body is a masterpiece, waiting to be sculpted.  
Draw your soul with many sides,  
All anticipating their unveiling.  
For the body is a masterpiece, waiting to be sculpted.

Hammer the minds of many people,  
with your wonderful ideas.  
The world is a house waiting to be built.  
Drill a hole into history,  
fine around the edges but extremely deep.  
For the world is a house waiting to be built.

Stir your emotions.  
And bake them well.  
Love is a delicacy waiting to be cooked.  
Blend them with another's thoughts.  
And season them with hope.  
For love is a delicacy waiting to be cooked.

---





## Wild Fire

Samantha  
Sheppard  
Grade 7  
H. M. Bailey  
Middle School  
West Haven

Sweat streamed down my forehead like a rippling stream. I had been up all night with the mare. Sugar Mountain, a ten-year-old Arabian, was just about to give birth to her first foal. Just ten minutes into labor, Sugar was already having problems. The foal was turned the wrong way inside her womb. The tips of the tiny foal's hooves were the only thing I saw so far. I was hoping and praying that Sugar could deliver her foal by herself without problems, but now I knew I had to help her. I felt sorry for Sugar. I knew that if I didn't deliver the foal soon, Sugar would die of birth complications.

The small mare's flanks bulged with pain. At last, after two long, straining hours, the little foal came out. The clear whitish slimy bag, which had contained the tiny creature for about eleven months, slid right off the pure black baby.

Then I noticed it. Sugar was still lying down breathing quite loudly. Her sides still bulged with pain. Sugar's eyes, once so full of happiness and delight, were now drained of everything. Her breathing was gradually decreasing and I knew I had to put her down. I walked aimlessly with my head down like a coyote with its tail between its legs. I felt defeated. I reluctantly walked to the small metal box containing all sorts of medications. The slightly rusted knob turned slowly, and inside I reached for the clear fluid. I put the medication into a needle and walked into Sugar's stall. The newborn, standing wobbly on its tiny legs, stared with uncertainty into my eyes. Tears captured my eyes and I let them fall, flowing very fast. I inserted the point of the needle into Sugar's hind quarters and crawled up over to the beautiful mare's head. I held her white muzzle and stroked her forelock. I managed a few comforting words like, "It's all right girl, it will all be over soon." I felt her weight just give way and one last sigh of relief escaped from her tiny nostrils. I knew my beautiful Sugar Mountain was gone.

I got up and picked up the new baby. It seemed as light as a feather. I knew the baby, which I named Double Dare, was absolutely starving. I got a bottle off the old shelf made by my father's father and attempted to feed Dare. Despite a quick couple of refusals, he eventually took to it. After three warm bottles, the baby sighed just as his mother had earlier before she left this world. Double Dare, very much alive, fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

I awoke the next morning to the blaring rooster's "cock-a-doodle-doo!" I got on my worn sky blue overalls, tied back my auburn-colored hair, and brushed my teeth. I walked down the empty old house stairs that creaked loudly under my footsteps. I headed into the kitchen. I grabbed a shiny green Granny Smith apple from the table and the clear bottle out of the dishwasher. I stepped over to the back porch door. I could smell my manure-stained boots and I remembered that back before my mother died, she used to always tell me to leave those "rancid things" outside. I never really understood because the smell never bothered me. It was as if it were imprinted on my soul. I slipped the old, tattered work boots onto my petite feet and made my way over the green dew-covered lawn to the big red barn. "Another beautiful day," I exclaimed to myself. I unlocked the barn doors and slipped inside. The barn swallows cooed and flew out the door. The





field mice scurried away to sleep for the day. I tried to walk silently by the horrid geese without disturbing them. As usual, it didn't work. "Honk! Honk! Honk!" they blared as they spit angrily. "All right, you stupid birds, shut up! It's not like you haven't seen me every day for the past thirty-two years!" In the middle of the barn, sunlight poured its happiness through the windows and, as it always did, it seemed like heaven to me. Peering over the ancient wooden stall door, I eyed the tiny foal standing more confidently now on its legs. Tiny cloud puffs flowed steadily out of his nostrils. "Well hello there, my beautiful boy," I whispered. I knew he was hungry, so I walked over to the goat, Big Mama, in the pen next door. I milked her and prepared the bottle. Again, the baby was uncertain of this stranger trying to feed him. Finally, Dare began to trust me. He drank hungrily.

Double Dare grew rapidly over the next two years. It was soon time for me to break him in. The first part of his early training was the bit and bridle work. I had once read in *Horse World Magazine* that a good first bit to use was licorice. I stuck a long red strand into his mouth. Dare chewed rapidly until his mouth foamed. I knew I was working with a stubborn horse. His early training would not be an easy task. After two days' licorice treatment, I used a metal bit and bridle. So that the touch of the metal wouldn't shock him as much, I held it tightly in my hand to warm it up. I put the crown piece over his long ears and forelock. "I know you're not going to like this, but you have to go through with it," I exclaimed in a steady voice. I knew horses could sense when a person was frightened, so I stayed calm. As soon as the metal bit touched, Dare rolled his eyes back with fear and anger. Up and down he continuously bobbed his head. He chewed and chewed the bit until, instead of foam, blood oozed in the corners of his mouth. Double Dare had the same wild spirit as his father, Atlantis.

After a period of time, Double Dare got used to the metal "enemy" in his mouth and allowed me to lead him through the corral. Dare began to lose his baby fur and began to grow a beautiful silk black coat that gleamed as he galloped under the setting sun and over the rolling hills.

About two and a half weeks after bit and bridle work, the time came for the most difficult of Dare's yearling training, the saddle and girth. I curried and brushed his splendor of a coat until it shone like a diamond. Then, as I spoke to Dare softly, I put the saddle on his back. Dare stomped his foot and snorted. I patted his long neck and strapped the cotton girth to one side of the saddle's billets. I walked over to the other side of Dare and brought the girth slowly around his belly. I was just starting to tighten it when he reared up and rolled his eyes again. I hit hard against the stall's wall with a loud smack. Just as the saddle was falling off, I caught it and quickly put it back into place, tightening the girth. Dare stomped even harder. I tightened the girth until it felt tight enough. Then I led Double Dare out to the corral. I walked him around the big circle about five times to loosen him up and calm him down. Then it was to the mounting block. I put the reins over his neck and swung my right leg over his strong back. As soon as he felt me put my boots into the stirrup irons, Dare bucked up and down like he had a bad case of the hiccups. I held on tightly with my thighs and heels. Double Dare whinnied and snorted. Finally, I said, "Whoa," and Dare stopped. My body had felt like a rag doll being tossed around inside a washing machine. I lightly





kicked Dare's side and he broke off into a gallop. My trembling hands pulled back on the Western-laced reins. Double Dare and I worked for the rest of the day. He learned a lot, and so did I.

Over the next twenty-four years of Double Dare's life, he and I went on to win many competitions including barrel racing and show jumping. He became a horse legend in Kentucky.

Even now, though Dare has been gone for a long time, I will never forget the wild fire that roared in his heart and the strong bond that is still between us.

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## The Affair at <http://www.Poe.com>

Nowadays, one cannot help but to be sucked into the information superhighway black hole. All that venture in, turn into computer nerds and cyber geeks. The Internet even put me in a trance, and I am a very strong-willed person. Before it, I was perfectly happy channel surfing or reading a book. Now I spend my days longing for a warp speed modem.

Most have come to love the odd clicking and whining of their modem revving up. The whirring and spinning is more like music than a conglomerate of technical noise. The Internet seems to make life easier. Research now takes an hour, not a day. Most kids rely on the Internet for a quick and easy A. My younger brother, Joe, was no exception. A very stupid boy he is, and very lazy too. So when he was assigned a report on George Washington, he went to the quickest point of reference: the cursed Internet.

However firm in my beliefs, I let him search without much of a lecture. After about a half-hour or so, he logged off and started typing his report. When he was done, I read it. Three sentences into the report, I was completely taken aback. Either he or I was greatly misinformed, and I am never wrong. One of his odd sentences read, "George Washington's favorite white horse was his black stallion, Midnight."

When I pointed out the error, he was sure I was the wrong one, not he.

"I got all my information from the Encyclopedia Britannica home page."

I logged on to the home page. I looked up George Washington. I read. Suddenly, the text I was reading changed right in front of me. My computer let out a noise that sounded like a cackle. I gasped. This couldn't be happening. And, just as quickly as it came, the mysterious words went away. I convinced myself I was dreaming and checked my e-mail.

A few days later, my sister Lily came home with an assignment to write a report on the tsetse fly. Being a bit wiser than Joe, she looked up the fly on the Internet but researched many different sites. When she was done with the report, she asked me to proofread. Once again, the words made no sense. It read, "The tsetse fly's deadly bite brings about great health and youth."

"What?" I asked. "How can something deadly bring about great health and youth?"

Emily Steers  
Grade 8  
Rogers Park  
Middle School  
Danbury





My sister replied by shrugging and said she got her information from an entomologist's thesis that was published on the web.

Once again, while I was reading the information, it changed while my computer cackled.

Later that week, a Thursday I believe, my class was assigned a report on a famous author of our choosing. I chose Edgar Allan Poe. We were to go home and do research. "Use any medium you want to get info," our teacher yelled as the bell rang.

During study hall, I found myself in the library with a stack of books in front of me. They were overwhelming and of little help.

When I got home, I got out our computer encyclopedia CD. I loaded it and was happily on my way. This time, information on Poe was pouring out. My report was five pages long when I typed it out.

Later that week, our reports were due. I went in ready to go. To my dismay, the teacher went alphabetically. I wasn't paying much attention until it was my friend's turn. "Oliver Wendell Holmes lived in a small town in Massachusetts. He loved to play the slots in the city hall."

A look of confusion passed over the teacher's face.

"All the sites I used were real, I swear!" she said.

After a few more people read and were questioned about the legitimacy of the sites, it was my turn. I turned out to be the only one who didn't use the net for researching. I breezed through my report; no questions were asked.

The next reader had also done research on the web. "John Steinbeck was the author of *The Red Pony*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Mother Goose's Fairy Tales*."

Now, a statement like this made no impact because everyone else had goofed up.

That evening, at around two-thirty in the morning, I heard the unmistakable clicking and whirring of my computer modem. "Hello Emily," my computer said in an eerily placid voice.

"ERR..." I muttered, opening an eye to see what the noise was.

"This is your Internet, Emily. I was just wondering why you didn't use me for your report, Emily. I could have helped you, Emily. Why don't you trust me, Emily? You're trying to hurt me, aren't you Emily?"

I got up and pulled the plug. It did nothing. "Emily, stop ignoring me, Emily."

I shut off the speakers to silence my friend and went back to bed a little more paranoid than before.

The next day, I noticed that my friend, the one who did the report on Steinbeck, was yawning and bleary-eyed. I asked her what was wrong.

"My cat turned on the computer somehow. It was making noise all night long."

"What did it say?" I asked.

"It said, 'Thank you for your support.'"





## Understanding

Dementia.

A cold, dark word.

A word I haven't even begun to understand,  
although I hear you say it often on the phone.

A dreaded beep.

The familiar number of Nana's "hotel."

You stay in the car on the cellular,  
while Erik, Dad and I go shopping.  
You come into the store,  
your cheeks stained with runny mascara.

"She fell,"

you said very quietly.

"And cut her head."

"I'm going to Cape Cod Hospital... tonight."

We rush home,  
and you begin to pack.

And you promise that you'll be back for my Open House.

And I reply,

"Stay with Nana,  
she's more important right now."

"No,"

you reply sternly.

"I need to be there for you."

And now *my* tears are flowing  
and mascara is running down *my* cheeks.

This "incident" has helped our relationship.  
Now, you share your problems about Nana with me.

We sit, munching on sandwiches and talk about selling her car.  
We joke about what I'm going to do when you lose your memory, and you say,  
"Put me in a place that doesn't smell, and make my room blue, not purple like Nana's."

I joke back, and laugh and smile.  
This is what I call mother-daughter bonding.  
We should do lunch more often.

I know I've been an acid-tongued, lying, manipulative monster of a thirteen-year-old, but I hope to change that.  
I'll be fourteen soon.  
It'll be better.

Your problems become mine, because alone, we're weak; mom, together we're unstoppable.  
Together we will triumph over that cold, dark word.  
Dementia.  
A word I have just begun to understand.

Sara  
Neumann  
Grade 8  
Madison  
Middle School  
Trumbull





Lauren Feinberg  
Grade 8  
Fairfield Woods  
Middle School  
Fairfield

## Dripping With Pollock

Interlaces of spiral streaks  
Piercing accents of tormented splotches  
Heaping layers of snaking splatters  
Apocalyptic yet a  
rhythmic rhapsody composed on canvas.  
Dribbling, Drowning, Drizzling, Drenching, Dumping, Draining,  
Drooling, Delirious, Delusions.  
Shadowing the dark fathom of exploding violence  
that conceal the enigma of the  
abstract legacy.  
Woven webs of ominous black  
Cradling vivid hues  
Framing and crystallizing unconscious imagery  
Punctured, tortured, saturated paint.  
Crusted colors of free-form expressions.  
Dripping with Pollock.

---

Danielle Christie  
Grade 8  
The Sherman  
School  
Sherman

## Untitled

As the night sky flashed by, I looked out the window for the last time.  
They say that children can somewhat see into the future.  
When children know something bad is coming, they should follow their instinct.  
And I knew something was nearing.  
It would be the last time I ever saw my loved ones again.  
Closer.....  
Closer.....  
Coming towards me ever so slightly.  
My breath became heavy, then lighter than air.  
The wind was lashing at my window.  
Almost as if a hand was reaching to unlock my innermost secrets.  
All of a sudden, my door opened, but there was no one there.  
No one was even home.  
While the clock struck midnight a strange, yet fading ghostly figure motioned for  
me to  
follow.  
Saying good-bye to all of my prized possessions:  
books  
stuffed animals  
pictures  
My eyes filled with tears.  
I was running out of time.





I followed with the utmost obedience.  
I was told with facial and body expressions what to do next.  
The directions were to lie in a box about my size.  
The thing was leaving, grabbing a piece of paper with names and addresses, on  
the way out.  
Before pinching myself, I realized it wasn't a dream, my thoughts were right.  
It was my last night.

---

## Winter Morning

Deafening silence pounds human ears.  
Miniature masterpieces delicately dance through the frigid air  
And finally rest on the soft dusting of pure white.  
The serene road is erased,  
Replaced with icy splendor.  
Crystallized trees are arranged along the street,  
Trapped in winter's brittle cage.  
Life pauses for a fleeting moment.  
A lone onlooker treasures the scene,  
Realizing the portrait will be destroyed  
With the rising savior that releases  
Winter's glacial grasp.

---

## Desires

If I could slow the morning hours down  
enough so I could visit the garden  
and watch the damp dirt give birth  
to leafy shoots, maggot-white  
and tipped with green  
in grub-like coil,  
and hear the beetle clack  
and whir and grunt  
chewing bitter leaf  
of early lettuce,  
and feel the emerald shadow  
of the maple illuminate  
the small hollows in my cheek  
and temple with its soft,  
familiar touch.

Jennifer  
Simard  
Grade 9  
East Lyme High  
School

Emily Madsen  
Grade 9  
Avon High School  
Avon





If I could slow the noon hours down  
enough so I could visit the stream  
and watch the silver fish spawn amidst  
brilliant flashes of pure light  
in the shallows,  
and hear the river amble its  
susurrant way,  
and feel the lazy sun warm  
the upturned face I give,  
sluggishly thick heat  
like honey pouring down.

If I could slow the dusk hours down  
enough so I could visit the forest  
and watch the grainy darkness  
descend like an old photograph,  
and hear the noiseless language  
of the quietflies, silentflies,  
fireflies, piercing leaf and trunk  
and grass with twilight motes,  
and feel the dimness  
chilling faintly  
a caress from the gloom  
on my forehead.

If I could slow the night hours down  
enough so I could visit the mountains  
and watch the sweeping expanse of  
black shiver at the edges  
and riddle with light,  
and hear the snow sigh carefully  
as the great hill  
shifts its prodigious weight,  
and feel the smooth gray  
flowing locks  
of the moon's prized tresses.

If I could.

---





## Surgery

Heart thumping  
pounding  
Ears ringing  
singing loud  
White surrounds  
Drowns, embraces, crowns  
Everywhere  
I am alone  
I am surrounded.  
Walking slowly  
legs shaky  
Floor quaky  
Sitting down  
On a table  
All white and clean  
Lying down  
Sighing down  
Breathing in  
And out  
In  
And out  
Mask over mouth  
Mask over nose  
In  
Out  
In  
Out  
I sleep

I wake  
Shooting pain  
I cry  
Salty tears  
Ouch!  
I hurt  
I'm moved  
Rolled down  
Clean, white corridors  
Into a clean white room  
LIFT!  
NO, don't move me  
No  
No!

Andrea Gross  
Grade 9  
Simsbury High  
School  
Simsbury





So tired  
I'm sleepy, Mommy  
So sleepy.

Awake again  
What?  
Where am I?  
What is this?  
My leg!  
Ohhhh!  
It hurts  
I push a button  
Yes?  
Asks a voice  
Above my head  
It hurts  
It hurts  
I'm here  
says the voice  
I'm here

Aahhhh...  
Relaxing  
Muscles easing  
Tension gone  
Pain gone  
Thank you  
I whisper

Sitting up  
Getting up  
Wheelchair?  
Me?  
Oh,  
Well...  
If I must  
Pushed, I roll  
Slowly now  
Down the corridors  
Of my life  
All the corridors  
So clean and white.

---





## The Journey

Carleigh  
Cappetta  
Grade 9  
North Branford  
High School  
North Branford

The white starting block was rough and hard beneath my feet. All I could concentrate on was the sound of my heart pounding. I gulped. My stomach turned and my body grew jittery. I had never done a 500 meter race in a meet before.

Looking up in the stands, I found my family watching me with big smiles on their faces. Then I saw my team, standing on all sides of the pool cheering for me. And all I could think about was, "God, I *can't* do this....."

As if to crush that thought, the official yelled: "Swimmers, take your mark." Then, within seconds, the buzzer went off and I pounced off the block into the water.

The water engulfed me like a cool aqua world. The muffled silence created a strange sort of peace. My swimmer's mind within me awakened, and I swam, rolling into each stroke. Stroke after stroke, each arm pierced into the water. I inhaled deeply, taking a breath every three strokes.

I couldn't believe I was doing the 500 meter race. I'd never swum any race this long before. When I reached the wall, with a spiral of energy, I flip-turned and pushed off streamlining.

One. One lap was all I had done. With a sudden overwhelming dread, I realized I had to swim that one lap nineteen more times. I tried not to think about the amount of laps. Instead, I concentrated on my rhythmic breathing.

One...two...three... One...two...three... One...two...three...

Forcefully, I kept my pattern, just like my coach had told me at practice.

Two. Practice. I could still remember my first real practice: awkward and confusing. I'd always been in a team sport and that wasn't so much as a disadvantage than a shocking realization that swimming was a much more individual sport than I thought. It was only later that I discovered that swimming was also just as much of a team sport, but in different ways.

Swimming had started out as just another activity to try, but slowly it grew on me and had become a huge part of my life, literally. You didn't have to be a great swimmer for the sport to engulf you because you race against the clock. No matter how good you get or how fast you swim, you could always be faster or get stronger. That's what I think kept me going—swimming's everlasting challenge.

Four. I loved swimming. I loved everything about it: the way I felt after a workout, and the butterflies I got before the meets. I loved the fact that all this swimming kept me in great shape, so that I could go crazy with huge ice cream sundaes without feeling guilty. I loved all the friends I made on my team too. They were so friendly and outgoing; you could always depend on one of them to have an encouraging cheer or positive comment. Most of all, though, I loved the way swimming made me feel about myself.

Eight. Swimming had given me pride and confidence in so many ways. I could remember when I first swam. Though, I had a good amount of confidence, it was nothing compared to the confidence I had now. Medium height and a little chubby, I had been a weak, slow swimmer with no endurance at all. Now look at





me, doing the 500 meter race! What a long way I had come.

After so many laps, your mind can wander and your body unconsciously takes over. Looking down towards the shallow end of the pool, I saw the number 12 on the counting board. Twelve! I was over halfway done! My body didn't feel that sore; my arms were automatically shooting through the water.

It's funny how someone can try out many sports and activities and finally find the right one. I mean, fourteen was pretty old to be starting a whole new sport, but then again, in the world of swimming, I guess that wasn't rare. Finally, I had found my sport!

Fourteen. My muscles were beginning to ache. Still I ordered my legs to keep kicking and forced each arm into the water. Six more laps. That was it. Only six more.

Then suddenly, for the first time in the race, I became totally aware of the girl swimming in the lane next to me. She was ahead by at least two body lengths. The competitive side of me awakened, and something inside urged me to kick harder and pull harder. Pushing, I inched my way closer and closer. I reached the wall and flip-turned kicking fiercely off the turn in a tight streamline.

Sixteen. This was my last 100 meters (four laps). I was getting closer and closer to the swimmer next to me. I pulled the water away from my body with stronger pulls, and I strained myself to breathe every three strokes, even though my body was screaming for oxygen. Each time I turned my head sideways to breathe, I could hear the defining roar of the crowd and my teammates. Then, when I turned my head back into the water, there'd be muffled silence.

Three of my teammates stood at the deep end of the pool. I could hear them screaming for me. I flip-turned and pushed off into my final two laps. With a busting adrenaline rush, I forced three strokes off the wall before taking a breath. I drove my arms into the water faster and kicked my legs so hard I thought they'd fall off.

My head was spinning, my body rubbery, my heart pounding, and the crowd was *screaming*. By now, I was even with the girl next to me. I could tell she was swimming her hardest, trying to beat me, but I was working hard too. I had barely two laps left. There was no way I was giving out now. Reaching the wall, I pushed off and streamlined, again forcing three strokes before a breath. The girl was still right there with me. Each time I took a breath, out of the corner of my eye I could see one of my teammates leaning over the side of the pool screaming and waving her arms into the air. The roar of my team grew louder and louder. And my heart beat faster and faster. My legs and arms were so sore I thought they were going to rip apart, but I kept swimming. I could tell that the swimmer next to me was getting tired, and so was I. I was exhausted, but I pushed myself, strained myself, finding every last drop of energy I had left to drive myself across that pool. I was ahead now, by barely a body's length, but I was ahead.

Finally, the last ten yards arrived. Strenuously, I took an enormous breath and shoved my head back into the water, holding my breath for those last five yards. I kicked ferociously and drove my strokes in as fast as I could. With one





last final motion, I slammed my hand into the touch pad against the wall. I lifted my head above the surface, gasping for air and gleaming with pride. The same three words repeated over and over in my head: "I did it!" The crowd cheered and my teammates exploded in a sudden uproar. I glanced at the score board: fourth place! I had beaten my fastest time by twenty seconds, and I wasn't last! I had beaten the girl next to me in lane five and another girl in lane one.

The girl in lane five leaned over the lane line and extended her hand. A smile was across her exhausted red face, "Great race!" she told me through gasps of breaths.

I shook her hand and smiled. "You too," I told her.

No one knew of the exhilarating journey my body and soul had just experienced. Sore and shaking, but full of pride and confidence, I accepted the hand of one of my teammates as she helped me out of the pool. "Awesome job!" she said, with a supportive pat on the back. I smiled at her, still heaving in breaths of air.

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## The Painting

Mary and her mother had just moved into a new house. Mary was anxious to pick out the perfect room, so she quickly threw down her bags and ran off to check out her options. After a long time of exploring, Mary chose a small room in the back of the house that was apart from everything else. She slowly opened the door and looked in. It was the perfect room and was just what she wanted.

She ran downstairs to grab her bags. When she returned, she noticed a rather small painting on the wall. It was very dark and gloomy and in an ornate gold leaf frame. It seemed to be quite old. Mary walked over to it to get a closer look. The painting was of a stiff and expressionless young girl wearing an elegant blue dress that appeared to be from the eighteenth century. She was holding up a wire cage housing a small yellow bird. Beneath the cage was a scrawny tabby cat looking up at the bird very intensely, as if it were about to pounce.

Creepy, Mary thought. She started to turn away, but something about the picture caught her attention. Around the girl's neck was a gold chain from which hung a sapphire and diamond pendant that was plainly missing two stones. He could have at least painted in the missing stones, she thought. Then she ran down to get her other bags.

When she returned, she happened to glance again at the painting. That's strange, she thought. The bird is dead. Why didn't I notice that before? Mary couldn't believe that she could have overlooked it. But then again, she thought, she had been looking more at the girl and the missing stones in her necklace. Mary also contributed her oversight to the fact that she was tired from her long trip, and excited at being in a new house. It was really only the color of the bird that had registered in her mind. So she dismissed the idea and went to bed.

It was not until the next night that Mary started to unpack. She had been

Landon Potts  
Grade 10  
The Williams  
Memorial  
Institute  
New London





so busy that day exploring her new town that she hadn't had time. She pulled some shirts out of her bag and got up to put them away. As she approached the closet, she felt as if someone was watching her. She actually turned around to look, then laughed at her foolishness, and continued her work. She reached in her bag and pulled out some pants and began placing them on the shelves of her closet. Again, she felt as if she was being watched. She turned, looked up at the painting, and yes, the girl appeared to be staring directly at her.

This is silly, Mary thought to herself. She was letting her imagination run away with her. But as she started to walk across the room with more clothes, she glanced up and the eyes in the painting moved. They seemed to follow her every step. Mary dropped the sweaters she was carrying and ran downstairs to tell her mother.

"Mom, the girl's eyes in the painting move!" Mary said nervously, "I'm not joking."

"Oh Mary, you should be happy. That's a sign of an extremely well-done portrait," Mary's mother said, not concerned. "The eyes are supposed to follow the audience." Mary thought it was creepy, but it seemed logical to her, so she decided not to worry about it.

The next day Mary bought a painting in town that she thought would add some color to her room. When she came home, she ran up to her room with a couple of nails, a hammer, and the new painting. Upon examining her room, she realized that the best place to hang the new painting was in the same spot that the old picture occupied. It spooks me out anyway, Mary thought, as she placed her new painting on her bed and headed for the old one.

As Mary walked closer to it, the girl in the painting seemed to stare at her harder and harder. When Mary tried to take the painting off the wall, it wouldn't budge. She pulled harder, but it still would not move. Weird; it must have been here a long time or else be super-glued to be this stuck, she thought. Mary gave it one last pull. The painting came off so easily that it was as if nothing had even been holding it. Mary staggered back and fell on the floor. "Ouch," Mary said, as she rubbed her head. Then she got back up and picked up the painting. When she picked it up, Mary noticed some words printed on the back. She carefully turned the painting around and looked at the words. In large red bold letters, it read: **DON'T YOU DARE REMOVE THIS PAINTING!!!!!!** A shiver went through Mary. She threw it in her closet and slammed the door shut. Mary stood with her back against the closet door for several minutes and took a couple of deep breaths. This isn't happening, she thought, still shaking. She ran outside to calm down. A couple of minutes later, her mom called her, "Mary, you have a phone call. It's Jill." Mary went inside and picked up the phone. Jill wanted Mary to ride bikes with her. Mary ran up to her room to grab her helmet. When she entered her room, her new painting was hanging on the wall. Mary ran downstairs. "Mom, I took down the spooky painting and now the other one is hanging, and I did not hang it." Mary stammered in confusion.

"Oh, I saw that painting on your bed, so I hung it up. What is with you and that painting? Calm down," her mother said as she washed the dishes. Mary





stood there for a moment. "Are you OK? You look a little pale." Mary said she was fine and quickly ran outside to meet Jill.

That night, Mary was awakened by a loud scratching that seemed to be coming from the closet. Mary was terrified. She assumed it was just her imagination, but the scratching seemed to get louder. Mary finally screwed up enough nerve to go look in the closet and prove to herself that it was just her imagination. She nervously tiptoed over to the closet, put her hand on the doorknob, took a deep breath, and pulled the door wide open. There was the painting lying face up on top of a pile of her clothes. Mary quickly shut the closet door and ran downstairs. The rest of the night she sat on the couch, scared to death, but ashamed of herself for being such a chicken. Mary made up her mind that the next day she would get rid of the painting.

As soon as it was light, Mary ran up to her room and grabbed the painting out of her closet. She hopped on her bike and pedaled as fast as she could. She wanted to get the painting as far away from her as possible. She finally reached town and saw a large dumpster. She jumped off her bike and was just about to throw it in when an old woman approached her. "May I have a look?" asked the woman. Mary handed it to the woman who eyed the painting up and down and from left to right. Mary watched her, very baffled. Then, all of a sudden, the woman looked up and asked, "How much do you want for it?" Mary was shocked. At this point, she just wanted to get away from the painting. "Keep it," Mary said and pedaled off for home. Mary was so relieved to get rid of the painting, she didn't care where it was, who it was with, or anything else. She was just happy it was gone.

A week later, Mary was eating dinner and turned on the television. While flipping through the channels, she stopped in amazement when on the evening news she saw a picture of the old woman she had given the painting to. Mary turned up the volume. "An elderly woman was found dead in her home today. She was found on the floor of her bedroom with her throat torn open and scratches all over her body. The investigation has ruled out robbery as a motive in the killing, as they had found next to the body a valuable antique gold chain with a sapphire and diamond pendant that was missing two stones."

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## Mommy

Somehow, somewhere down the line, I think you realized I turned out to be okay. You never really had to worry about me, but my success of making it through those tough first few years of adolescence should have reassured you all the more. Just one less thing to worry about. It's not like you had the desire to worry anyway. I have finally figured out the simple fact that children are not a priority in your life. I try to understand you, try to figure out what the big deal about children is. But you, the whole entity of you, is still unfathomable to me. I wish I knew what makes you like this. I mean, I should, after fifteen and a half

**Erica Rehnberg**  
Grade 10  
Windsor Locks  
High School  
Windsor Locks





years of being your daughter. You are my mother. It's kind of humorous how that word can be attributed to you. Once you think about it, mother is just a title, a six-letter word given to the woman that gave birth to you. But isn't there something within that woman that would give everything for her child that assumes the responsibility of raising what she created to the best of her ability? You didn't raise me. Only a slight attempt was made, when it was to your convenience. You weren't really around enough to bring me up. In fact, as I write this, sprawled out across my bed in my dimly lit room, as my seven-year-old brother is asking me if he can have cereal for dinner, you aren't home.

You left about fifteen minutes ago, your destination, as you told me, unknown. You lied, straight to my face. You do that often. I knew you were leaving when I heard the sequence in the kitchen: the refrigerator door opening for half and half and milk, the creak of the upper left cabinet for liquor, and with a twist of the Kahlua cap and a pour of your Absolut, I'm left with the all too familiar sound of the ice rattling against your exclusive purple plastic cups as you shook the White Russian creation to your perfection. Though I am in my room, I can see the twisted hint of a smile on your face as you lick the foam from the top of your cup, grab your jacket and purse from the brass doorknob of the closet door, and quickly glance over the kitchen to make sure its cleanliness gets your approval. Dishes done, everything away, cabinets closed, and you're off. Sometimes I wish that one of these days, instead of glancing around your always perfect house for that slight imperfection, you would take a look at your far from perfect life. And maybe think about it. But the screen door slammed, the van started, and you were gone, again.

You have been gone far too many times in my life. Where were you when I was not even ten years old and I sliced my finger open with a bagel knife? I was home alone, watching my eight- and two-year-old brothers. These are the things that I look back upon now and kind of shudder in disbelief. What were you thinking? I obviously know you weren't thinking maybe you should take me to the hospital upon your return home at quarter to twelve that night, because you told me so. Your words, "Keep putting the Band-Aids on; it's not that bad. I'm going to bed." You glanced at me one more time, in what I've come to realize to be a drunken stupor, possibly pondering remorse, or even guilt, but you trudged up the stairs. You shut your door slowly enough to let me hear the subtle click of it as it closed. I cannot begin to understand how you could stare into your daughter's innocent blue eyes and lie. You do that often. My cut needed stitches, and you knew that. You just didn't feel like taking a trip to the emergency room. You know what I did? I kept on putting those Band-Aids on, covering up a wound that needed a little more than a Band-Aid to heal. But it did heal, just as I have many times. I feel as though I have made it to the point where I don't get wounded anymore, because wounds need to heal, and healing leaves scars.

You would not be able to tell what goes on from the outside looking in. You're beautiful, appearing to be closer to the age of a sister than my mother. Dark curly hair, an inviting smile, the figure of a model, and sparkling blue eyes. Our house is beautiful too, your gardens turning people's heads as they drive by.





The inside is immaculate, with your personal decorative touch covering every inch of our perfect little home. But then there's you. Far, far from perfection. Though far from perfection, there is just something that makes me forgive and forget every single time. That thing that makes me want to spend every moment that I can with you. But you're not around all that much. And when you are, you're occupied by cleaning, drinking, or the telephone, and don't want to be burdened by children. People ask how I cope, and I answer, "I just do. Oh well." It's true, you get accustomed to those situations and stuff comes naturally after a while. I have many new uses for a smile and quick-witted sarcasm. Though I'm not very proud to admit it, I have acquired the talent of being a good liar, too. Not only have I observed it my whole life, but at times I've had to practice it. Questions like "Where is your mother?" or "Have you discussed this with your mother?" can't get answered honestly. What am I supposed to say, "She's out and she doesn't care"? You care when you want to, but that is not often. And I wish it were more often. I love the idea and the results of growing up an independent young woman with intelligence and experience in this day and age, but sometimes independence isn't what you need. Sometimes you need someone to be there for you. I was there for you through abusive marriages and broken relationships, tequila hangovers and bouts of depression. Why can't you be there for me? I understand if you don't want to, because your lack of guidance and lack of desire to raise me has made me into the person that I am. And look, Mommy, give me your attention, just once, and give me credit. I turned out okay.

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## Untitled

Casey got a dog yesterday. Not one of them little yippety nasty things like Mrs. Jackson got down the street, but a real, big, brown one. He said that his daddy bought it off of some retired school teacher that got allergic. I like it too. I asked Daddy for one of them and he just laughed. My daddy always laughs at me when I ask him anything.

Anyways, Casey brought his dog over yesterday and Mrs. Jackson came on down the street being nosy again. "Hey Boy!" she said, "you get your big old dog out of here! I don't want no nigger's mutt scarin' my Fluffy!" You know her little sorry peach poodle had some nerve barkin' like he was gonna do something.

"Ain't no one botherin' your dog, Mrs. Jackson," Casey yelled. But we move on to go to the park anyways.

"So what's its name?" I ask.

"Casey," he says.

"Boy," I say, "you can't name a dog after yourself!"

"Why not?" he asks. I don't have no real answer and I don't feel like arguing in this heat, so I shut up.

The sky begins to cloud over and little drops from the heavens fall onto the steaming, red earth between our toes. My feet start to get muddy and I begin

Ashley Hampton  
Grade 10  
Bunnell High  
School  
Stratford





to wish that I had listened to Mamma and wear my new sandals. I hate shoes though. Especially when they're new. I always get blisters. I look over at Casey's shoeless feet. "Don't he ever bark?"

"Huh?" Casey snaps out of his own world.

"Don't he ever make any noise?"

Casey grunts and looks down at the dog, now walking with its head bowed and tail tucked between its legs like he just got a beatin'. "I figure he's too old to bark. Too tired to make any kind of noise."

"Too old and too tired." I look up at the sky and see the angels are weeping now. "It's raining harder."

Casey pays me no mind and slows to sit on the wooden bench at the edge of the lot. I continue to stand and watch. The dog pulls himself up to a spot next to Casey and sets its large, dirty head on his lap. Casey pats it and looks out into the distance. My eyes trace his outline and form. Casey was not much taller than me. His brown skin was dark and his bare arms and legs were caked with dirt. His flat, broad nose and lips seemed to take up most of his face, but his brown eyes could gaze and seem to look right through you. But Casey knew better than to look at me like that 'cause I'd put him in his place.

"Whatcha starin' at?"

"Nothin'," I sit down on the other side of the dog and look at my own arms and legs. The rain keeps fallin' and melts the dirt off my skin and seems to melt the brown from under it too. I asked my daddy before why we got brown skin and other folks got white and he laughed at me.

"Casey?" I look up at him.

"Huh?"

"Whatcha thinkin' about?"

"Nothin'."

I let my chin drop into my hands and let my elbows rest on my knobby knees. Mrs. Jackson down the street said I got what you call "Bowlegged Syndrome." She says that little nigger children who ask silly questions get it. I don't ask her nothin' no more.

"Casey?"

"What?"

"Nothin'." I twirl the loose strings of my cotton tee shirt between my fingers. My whole shirt is damp now.

"Casey?"

"Spit it out, girl, what's on your mind?"

"Well, Mrs. Jackson says I was bowlegged."

Casey grunted, "Yeah?"

"Well, am I?"

"You ask too many questions."

"Casey?"

"Wha-at?"

"Well you don't need to get all puffed at me." He looked the other way. "Why does the sky cry?"





"The sky doesn't cry. It rains."

"Why?"

"I dunno." I know he knows. He just doesn't wanna explain.

Casey gets up and stretches his lanky arms to the falling sky. He yawns and does his best to brush himself off. The dog steps down off the bench after him and shakes himself free of the rain. I get up too. I watch as three black crows fly off the red earth into the gray, raining sky. I wanna ask Casey how birds fly but he'll snap at me again. Maybe when we get back I'll ask Daddy.

Now me and Casey and his old dog shuffle on down the road. Casey picks up a stick and throws it up in the air and spins it around him. The dog seems to bob up and down with each painful step. "How old is he?"

"Who?"

"The dog. Casey."

"Old enough."

That I can see.

Casey comes over with his dog every day after that, and every day we journey to the park. Casey just looks around and I ask questions. Daddy keeps laughin' and Mrs. Jackson keeps hollerin'.

One day Casey comes around without his dog. I walk down the dusty road to meet him and he sits on the curb and waits. His head is bowed and I walk to stand over him. I like to stand over him.

"Wanna go to the park?" I ask.

"Naw."

"Wanna go to the corner store? I got a dime."

Casey shakes his head. I turn to take a seat next to him on the curb and set my chin in my hands and rest my elbows on my knees. I look around and begin to fiddle with the buckles on my new sandals. I look over at Casey. He's still looking down into the ground. I play with my sandals again.

"Casey's dead." I look over at him again. He's staring blankly at his shoeless feet. He's completely motionless except for his two thumbs twiddling. I look from him to the sky. The sun hides behind a big cloud and stays there for a while. I get up.

"C'mon. Let's go." Casey yawns and stretches to the sky. I watch him start to shuffle away. He stops and looks towards me. "You comin'?"

I run to catch up with his swinging shadow and we move on down the street. I can feel the red earth slide back and forth in my new sandals as I follow Casey into the gray, raining sky.



Cullen Hagan  
Grade 10  
Lyme-Old Lyme  
High School  
Old Lyme

## Kaleidoscope

A summer evening,  
the sky turns different hues,  
a kaleidoscope of shades gleaming  
across a new sky,  
blues,  
reds,  
purples,  
all conform as one,  
naked black branches etching into  
the horizon,  
and wispy clouds say their last good-byes,  
as the sun falls to the ocean floor  
for its nightly slumber.

Night stretches out his arms  
and grabs all the remaining light,  
hiding it in his clenched fists,  
putting away the clouds,  
taking his old worn satchel and dusting  
the sky with stars,  
his beautiful gems.

Preparing for the ascent of the moon,  
proposing a symphony to the frogs  
and peepers,  
as they anticipate the nightly ensemble,  
harmoniously they play together,  
as they celebrate the arrival of their friend,  
the sun falls fast asleep,  
closing his eyes now only making  
an iridescent glow.

Darkness blankets all,  
covering the land with comfort,  
and casting shadows,  
the symphony ends,  
and the sun awakes,  
ascending to the surface after his night  
in the fresh blue waters of the deep ocean,  
as his friend descends to the sea,  
all darkness hides afraid of the light,  
as the sun's gentle rays caress the boy's  
angelic face and turn him over in his bed.





The moon now sleeps,  
and the night releases the light to everyone,  
letting the talc-white clouds float to the sky and  
greet us once again,  
changing into the clowns and elephants  
that we dream to see,  
we awake to a new day but will soon fall  
asleep to an old one,  
until the moon rises once again,  
and renews the land.

---

## Ghetto Love

Mrs. Thang is a woman  
That if you looked in the eyes of her smile  
You'll see a look that says she's slept in passion's alley  
With her pepper tongue swirling  
Men would stumble with strange smelling hands  
With eyes as fierce as a volcano's mouth  
Her legs as bold as the silver moon against a jet black sky  
Ten fingertips reaching out for love  
Something she just can't reach  
But besides all that  
A ghetto girl is what she is  
She knew about roaches too  
She said when she was younger  
Growing up on Kool-aid, Oodles O'Noodles and sunflower seeds  
She got a nickel for every roach she killed  
She always killed them with an old newspaper  
never with her shoe  
Because if you step on them  
Your shoes will get all slippery

---

**Kay-Ann Henry**  
Grade 10  
East Hartford High  
School  
East Hartford





## Girl

girl  
plays with her baby dolls and  
those china eyes judge her

girl  
wears a pretty pink dress  
but she knows that red  
can't always stay on the inside

girl  
dances in satin ballet slippers  
cause they told her that sports  
were for boys

girl  
writes with a purple crayon  
it's the closest thing to black she can use-  
without getting caught  
crying again

girl  
hides cats cradle inside seventeen  
and those cuts on her legs can't all  
be from shaving

girl  
puts on her makeup to hide her  
dirty face

girl says yes because she wants to  
hear him say that she has pretty  
eyes

girl  
watches the ring slide on her finger  
because she thinks that maybe it's worth  
everything she lost

*excuse me sir*

and if her baby dolls can't comfort her  
is she still a girl?

if her dress is black and blood-stained  
can she still be pretty?

if she runs with the wind can she still  
be fragile sometimes?

if she says no  
can you still hold her?  
can you still listen?  
can you still care?

*Well hello miss, that sure is a  
pretty dress*

*What did you say?*

girl gives him a boy and raises  
him just like daddy  
and just like him he learns not to  
see her cry

she withers in the heat of her tears  
and the stone that marks her grave  
can only say.....

"girl"





## Aunt Alice

Often we visited  
The little house:  
White on the outside,  
Dark on the inside.  
Aunt Alice alone there  
With a cat,  
Maybe two.  
Mom chatted  
But I skipped quickly  
To a large canning jar  
Full of buttons  
Hidden  
In the bedroom closet  
Just for me.  
Buttons to examine,  
Buttons to sort into piles,  
Buttons for my paycheck  
At the imaginary school.

When the buttons lost their magic  
I moved to the family room.  
There on a table  
Where the cats couldn't reach,  
A garden of glass paperweights.  
The colored teardrops in glass  
Like prehistoric scarabs in amber  
Challenging me to discover  
How they came to be trapped.  
Contentedly sitting on the brown carpet,  
While Aunt Alice and my mother sipped tea,  
I arranged the heavy jewels in endless patterns.

Gradually,  
The visits slowed to an occasional Saturday.  
I no longer sat on the carpet,  
But in the red velvet chair,  
Concentrating,  
*Balance the tea cup*  
*Don't spill on the velvet*  
Listening  
To Aunt Alice discuss her children  
Ed's latest letters from Kuwait.

Abby Carruthers  
Grade 11  
Old Saybrook  
High School  
Old Saybrook



Greta's newest story from her child-like mind.  
The buttons and paperweights tantalized only cats.

With glee club, band, softball  
The visits all but ceased  
The little house was replaced  
By a nursing home  
A hospital  
A cemetery  
Now, the paperweight she left us  
Is in our living room  
On a table  
Where the cats can't reach.

Scott Monroe  
Grade 11  
South Windsor  
High School  
South Windsor

## Escape

...The blast sends a chill through my spine. The bullets fly above my head; the blue sky turns into a fiery blaze. Everyone is running; complete chaos is unfolding before my haggard eyes. There is an eruption, followed by the bellowing of my brothers. I fall to my knees; the wind blows past the grass and into my face. I lay on my back, hoping that maybe I can blend in with the earth. It feels so soft and comforting. As I breathe in the crisp air, I'm sniffing the lilacs. No! I must get up. The enemy is coming...and I will not hide from them. Another one falls to the ground; I hold the gun close to my heart. They're coming; move! The sergeant is running too, so should I?

"Raynor! Take some cover man!"

I nod in terror, crawling over toward the dried brush. Duke took cover next to me. We were fighting together, bleeding together. I fumble the bullets in my aching hands. They're coming. The sky explodes again; clouds of fire descend above us. Another one falls to the ground. The glowing smoke rises from the jungle as I pull the trigger. Duke bellows like a madman, shattering all sanity. I need to find a way out of here, but there's nowhere to run....is there? Duke falls to the grass. I lean over next to him, putting his shaking hand into mine.

"D-Duke. I need to get you out of—"

"Let me be here. I need to die."

I quiver next to his body. His eyes slowly roll back into his tired and bruised head. The sky explodes again. I'm bleeding for two now. I've got to get out of here. Duke got free, lucky man. I close my eyes as the brush tickles my cheeks. The screaming starts to sound like the high-pitched squeal of children...

...The kids ran across the soft grass, chasing each other. I snapped open my eyes. My wife, Kerry, sat beside me reading the newspaper. The sun gleamed





down from the beautiful blue sky. I smiled at the flock of birds sailing over my head.

"Honey, are you all right?"

"I'm fine dear, just dozed off is all."

"I think a day in the park will do you good; you look exhausted."

It was a great Sunday afternoon; Kerry and I had the day off. Danny, my son, trotted through the park, throwing the crimson Frisbee to my daughter, Lauren. The cool breeze passed through my hair. I noticed some of the tree's leaves were gliding through the air, sailing towards my head. Danny took cover behind a large rock as the Frisbee shot towards him quickly.

"Lauren, don't throw the Frisbee so hard! You could have hit Danny."

I rested my eyes again, letting the birds chirp in the distance. My heart dropped as Danny screamed.

"Daddy!"

I popped my eyes open; the Frisbee was shooting toward me...

...The explosion came in an instant. The bullet pierced my flesh. Another one falls to the ground.

"Raynor!"

I lay on my back, thrown back by great force. I began to bleed from my shoulder. The sergeant and Hawkins rushed towards me. The fire in the sky erupted once again. We shouldn't be here...I should be home. The screams were joined with the melody of my wailing. I felt at peace with my surroundings; it was dream-like. Hawkins leaned over me, wrapping a large cloth around my pain. I saw them, the enemy moving through the trees. They were clever things, loading their furnished rifles. Hawkins cried out. He fell on top of me and the smell was like dead daffodils. Everyone retreated, running aimlessly into the fog. The creatures came closer and I stared into their small, rodent eyes. They're crawling down the trees...

...I looked to my right, startled as a squirrel crawled down the pine tree. The creature scurried around, searching for nuts to eat. My wife leaned her head on top of my shoulder.

"I'm so glad you're back, honey."

"I know; it was horrible, but I'm here to stay now. I gave them my service. I just needed some time to get away from it all. I spent two hours this morning cooking that roast for supper tonight with your mother."

"I don't know what I'd do without you."

"You don't have to worry."

Danny and Lauren rolled through the evergreen. My Jeep was parked next to the entrance sign; the sun's reflection gleamed off the hood. Children ran in every direction throughout the park. Leaves fell to the ground, one after another. The squirrels continued to descend from the treetops; they looked very hungry. Smoke from a barbecue flew by, blocking the bright orange sun. Everyone's doing something, everyone but me.





"Hey daddy! Come and chase us!" Danny suggested.  
I nodded, then smiled as I stood up and ran towards them...

...I sprinted towards the horrid-faced enemy. The sweat of many men trickled from my face. The sky exploded once again as I charged. The orange smoke encircled the area, painting horrid scenery. I held the gun close to my heart; my eyes fixed on the creatures. They're coming! Run! I've got to move! But I want to go home; I want to get outta here. I'm barely alive as I swim through the red-swell. I'm frozen inside this painting of Hell. Duke got out; so did Hawkins. What about—  
The Frisbee hit me, right in the temple...

"June 16, 1965...Corporal James Higgins Raynor. Body identified as deceased due to gunshot wound to the upper forehead."

"Vietcong got him at base camp outside of Chu Lai...they ambushed the entire squad."

"Should I ship him back to the States?"

"Not yet; notify his wife. Damn shame; the poor guy hadn't even laid eyes on his two kids yet."

The two men in regiment uniforms fell silent. They zipped the body bag closed and moved onto the next one.

Amanda  
Armstrong  
Grade 11  
Greenwich  
Academy  
Greenwich

## To Meet a Real Person

Steve Schwapa is the kind of person that you hate for no reason. He makes you grind your teeth and curse under your breath when he leaves the room. He speaks in clichés and tilts his head when he finishes asking rhetorical questions for which there is obviously no answer. Steve Schwapa is one of my superiors at the newspaper and I hate him.

Schwapa is head of the advertising section. He swaggers back and forth, water cooler, coffee machine, water cooler, coffee machine, water cooler, damn, me. Steve Schwapa likes to talk to me about journalism and if I feel comfortable in the office. Well, journalism, should I tell him I only like creative writing? Well, no, maybe not. And comfortable in the office, yes, when he's not around. Steve Schwapa wears white silk pants and striped sailor shirts; he's definitely walking on the other side of the road. He always talks to me about the interns that came in before me—Allie, Alex, Renee—yes, all aspiring journalists, according to him.

I usually come into the office at around one and stay until four-thirty. This includes three and a half hours of possible run-ins with Schwapa, fifteen minutes of talking to him almost guaranteed and five minutes that I have to stay late because he seems to think that talking to him is much more important than the





paper's deadline.

Steve Schwapa always eats Fig Newtons, the all-natural kind. Not the Fig Newtons that the other 99.9% of the world eat in the yellow packaging and red writing, not Schwapa. Have you ever talked to someone for a long time when they have food in their teeth and you aren't in the position to say anything? When he talks to me, he always has fig stuck in between his front teeth. I hate it, but it's fixating. It makes his mouth look like it's rotting, like his teeth will fall out any minute and he won't be able to talk to me anymore. Wishful thinking, my mother would say.

The other day, Schwapa pulled me into his office and asked me a favor. "Hey Kim, what do you think about helping me out with an interview for the Garden Club? You know it will really get you out there and take a whole load of work off my hands. How about it?" He was staring at me, searching my face for the answer he was looking for.

"Well, Steve, I am leaving in a few days for vacation, so I don't think I would be able to get an interview done in three days, and I have to pack. I really only have two or three days." My head was swimming; I had no idea what to say to this man. I knew that I hated him so much, yet part of me didn't want to disappoint him. It was like he had this power over me. It was the same exact feeling I get; you know the one deep in the pit of my stomach, when I disappoint my dad. When he would look at me with empty eyes and a forced smile, the expression reading: "I am trying to make my daughter think I am happy with her." You can see through some people so well.

"Well, hey, why don't you just get back to me; do you think you could do that?" When he said this, he didn't even look up. Another one of those rhetorical questions.

The next day I was at the office, I seemed to completely avoid Steve, a Schwapa-free day. I worked that day until five; almost everyone had left except the secretary who I had to give the last few press releases to that I was typing. She and Steve were good friends, so I had declared her my enemy by association. When I finished what I had to type, I gave her the papers and ran out the door.

To my surprise, Schwapa himself was standing outside the building smoking an unfiltered cigarette and staring at the reflection that the passing cars made in the windows across the street. He seemed so distant, like he had gotten lost in himself and his body wasn't his. Schwapa seemed almost upset, not like I really cared, though. When I said "hi," he put out the cigarette and started to walk down the street. Smoke followed him like a trail or how I imagined it always would. Before he turned the corner, he swung his back and, with his lanky arm, waved goodbye.

I continued to stare where he had been walking. The man puzzled me and I hated it. As I turned back around and faced the building, I ran into the secretary.

"So, you said goodbye to Steve, right?"

"Uh, yeah, what do you mean?"

"Doug fired him, said he wasn't getting the job done. Poor Steve. He told me he just had too much work."





"Are you serious? Why would Doug do something..."

"Well, I gotta go. See you tomorrow. Last day, right?"

"Yup, see you tomorrow."

All of a sudden, I began to feel horrible. Just maybe if I had done the interview, he would have still worked at the paper. I knew I would never see Steve again, and for some reason, that bothered me. It wasn't like I was going to miss him; well, maybe I was. Steve Schwapa was out of my life for good, and I felt like I had lost something. Sort of like your favorite sock in the dryer. You're sad because it was your favorite, but you're annoyed as hell because, "Where do those damn socks go anyway?" Schwapa: Last seen, 5:02 p.m. smoking a Camel, black jeans, white shirt, collar up.

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Maria Carboni  
Grade 11  
Joseph A. Foran  
High School  
Milford

## The Olympic Gymnast

I am standing, hunched over in the corner of my bedroom, trying to press down the stubborn yellow strap onto my worn-out sandal with two chewed up nails, when I realize I am late. I creep down the spiral wooden stairs, trying to sneak out the front door before Lucy can open her pasty pink lips and give me some advice about the "awkward stage" she has recently decided I am in.

"Frances?" she coos, sashaying into the hallway like a hurried ballerina. I look over at her to tell her that I know that she is talking to me, but I don't say a word. "Dear, is that all you're going to wear? Maybe you should put on some shorts or something." I shake my head and slip out the door before Lucy can give me any more motherly advice.

When Lucy first moved in with us, Abby tried to explain her behavior to me. "She's like a brand-new gymnast, stepping onto the balance beam for the first time," Abby had patiently said, illustrating her point by staggering on a curb. "She keeps trying to turn and jump and leap, but she doesn't quite have a feel for it yet, so she keeps falling."

I walk across my overgrown lawn, still drenched in morning dew, and step out onto the dusty road. The dirt sticks to my wet toes, and I wiggle them as I travel around the corner. Like many things in my life, I will never take the time to brush off my sandy toes. Instead, I will stare at them and wish they didn't itch.

When I reach the baseball field, Abby is already there, sitting on a wooden log that helps form the perimeter around the park. "Good, your hair is in a bun." Abby smiles approvingly. She says that all good dancers and gymnasts have to wear their hair like this.

Abby holds out a frosted Pop-tart and a banana, and we sit down on the grass in our bathing suits. I hate Pop-tarts, but I eat one every day and thank Abby for bringing it to me. Even on school days, she wraps one in tin foil and carries it to my house. I eat it on my way to school and wish it was a bagel.

"Stretch with me," Abby commands, and we straddle our legs, holding our feet as Abby counts to fifteen. Pretty soon, the other neighborhood kids show up





and silently sit in front of us. They all watch Abby, mimicking her every move, and then quickly scramble to their feet when she says, "Get in your lines!"

Under Abby's strict instruction, we practice our dancing and tumbling skills in straight lines down the field. I stay in the back, not wanting anyone to see when I forget to straighten my legs and point my toes. Sometimes, Abby uses me as an example when she is teaching something. She says, "Everyone, watch Frances's round off." I blush, but feel proud, and do a better round off than I had thought I was capable of.

Abby and I decided that she is going to be in the Olympics. I am going to sit in the stands and watch, and when Abby wins, she is going to tell all the television cameras that she couldn't have done it without the support of her best friend, Frances. She will hand me the gold medal, and I will wear it for a whole week. I drew a picture of this, and Abby has it hanging on her refrigerator.

I remember when I first met Abby, two years ago. She walked into Mrs. Jackson's fifth grade classroom and sat down right next to me. I remember how Sheryl-Anne and all the "cool" girls had wanted to be friends with Abby because she was from California and took gymnastics and dancing lessons. But Abby was not interested in Sheryl-Anne's gossip or Sage's six boyfriends. When all the giggling girls rushed over to ask her to be their reading buddies, Abby had simply grabbed my wrist, and said coolly, "I already have a partner."

That day marked the beginning of our friendship and the start of Abby's reign over the entire student body. Whatever Abby did, we all did. And Abby did gymnastics.

Today, Abby firmly announces that we are going to use my swing set to practice the skills necessary for the uneven bars. As I walk back around the bend to my house, followed by twenty hyper kids of various ages, I pray that Lucy has gone shopping or something.

Today is especially hot, and sweat trickles down the back of my neck. I swat several villainous insects and try hard to pay attention to Abby's lesson. She is standing on top of the monkey bars, saying something about balance and strength. All I can think about is how nice it would be if we all went swimming in my new pool.

Maybe that is why I don't hear Abby's choked scream, don't see her slip off of my monkey bars, don't watch her bash her head onto the metal swing below, with the big red clown's face painted on the seat, his smile mocking Abby, as she lay on him, her hanging unnaturally to the left side.

The first I know of the accident is when Sage starts screaming. I look at my distorted friend, trembling with disbelief and fear, trying to figure out what to do. Before I can react, Lucy is running down the lawn in her cheap white high heels. She gently tells me to go inside and call an ambulance, and then sprints over to Abby.

After I dial the ambulance, I sit in the air-conditioned kitchen and stare at the coral-colored tiles on the floor. The tile pattern repeats and repeats, and repeats...Suddenly I feel nauseous and angry, and I tear the bun out of my mousy brown hair. It defiantly tumbles down onto my shoulders and I stare at the tiles





again.

It has been three weeks since Abby's fall, and she is coming home from the hospital today. When the doorbell rings, it is Abby, and I know something about her is different immediately. Her thick black hair is in braids, and she looks at me and says in a halting voice, "I can't do gymnastics anymore."

I look at her neck brace and wheelchair and nod. Then, she smiles and hands me a crayoned drawing. I hug her for the first time ever and hang the picture on my refrigerator. Then, I go upstairs and get a backgammon set and teach Abby how to play.

The next morning, I hurry across the sandy street, quickly brushing off the irritating dirt that clings to my toes. Once at the field, I plop down on the grass and begin stretching. Abby is sitting across from me and smiles as I count to fifteen. We eat our Pop-tarts in silence and wait. Little by little, the usual neighborhood gang trickles in, cautious at first, and then bolder.

When it looks like everyone is there, I hear myself say in the loudest voice I can muster, "Get in your lines!" The kids look at me for a moment and then hop to their feet. Their attention makes me blush, but I feel proud. No, I am proud. I look over at Abby, who gives me the thumbs-up sign, and we both smile surreptitiously, thinking of a particular picture on my refrigerator. It is the one that Abby drew of me winning the Olympics and her wearing my medal for a whole week.

Benjamin Gross  
Grade 12  
Simsbury High  
School  
Simsbury

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## The Tale of Invisible Ben

(based on a true story)

Here's the story, oh it's epic, though I doubt you've heard it told,  
'Bout an intermural warrior with a gift as rare as gold.  
He fought with skill and iron will upon the Frisbee green,  
Though on that list of Frisbee greats, his name is never seen.  
He's not the strongest thrower and his catches aren't the best.  
His running's not the swiftest and he often stops to rest.  
But Frisbee players near and far, from every hill and glen,  
Speak his name with fear and awe; they call him Invisible Ben.

He came upon the Frisbee field way back in '96,  
He'd heard from friends it was a pleasant way to get a fix,  
Of good and healthy exercise from which real men are made.  
Besides, it would not do for him to laze out in the shade.  
The people soon split up in teams, time after time they passed,  
O'er innocent young Benjamin, though they did pick him...last.  
The teams diverged and slowly walked to opp'site ends of field.  
Each side would fight until the end, and neither one would yield.





The disc was hurled into the sky, and so the game begun.  
The players ran and threw and caught and scored points one by one.  
Ben ran with all his effort, he yelled for all his worth.  
But he was just a freshman, the lowest scum on earth.  
Some sympathetic teammates let him try to play a role.  
They let him catch a pass or two, but never score a goal.  
The afternoon passed quickly, and soon the game was done.  
Ben still felt like a loser even though his team had won.

The time passed by and Ben played on, in every Frisbee game.  
But every week he found the situation stayed the same.  
He struggled to improve his skills, to throw like Mike or Lee,  
But at the crucial moments, then he'd mess up royally.  
A reputation grew on him, despite his good intentions.  
And soon at games he found himself the subject of dissension.  
"You take him now. We had him last!" one captain would proclaim.  
"Tough luck," the other would reply. "*We* want to win the game."

Until one day some years after his entry to the game,  
He had a revelation and would never be the same.  
The game went on as normal; he was picked again dead last.  
He thought that things would never change. His future was his past.  
And then one play, he stood unblocked, beside the other goal,  
(It's at this point that fate steps in and really takes its toll.)  
For in that mad attack with people yelling left and right,  
Ben wasn't noticed anymore: a shadow in the night.

The team threw him the Frisbee, and he caught it with a cheer.  
(It wasn't very tough of course. The thrower was quite near.)  
He didn't realize what it was that made this goal so great.  
The group all thought it was a fluke: Ben had a lucky break.  
But as Santayana tells us, if you don't mind his advice,  
Those who don't remember past mistakes are doomed to make them twice.  
And so it was with Benjamin...the other guys would say:  
Okay you cover that kid so he won't score the next play.

Well, kids tried their best to block him, and of course he didn't score.  
He stood by his team's goal and waited for the proper door.  
When nobody was looking he would use his special gift.  
He'd walk away and soon the opposition's thoughts would drift.  
They didn't notice he was gone, they still thought he was bad.  
They didn't know the danger of that unassuming lad.  
He slipped into the background and stayed there for a while.  
Then he reappeared and scored a goal and gave a happy smile.





Oh, if you join a Frisbee game, you kids of nine or ten.  
Remember well the story of that Frisbee player, Ben.  
For he took a disadvantage and he turned it to a skill.  
And now he loves the sport he plays and never gets his fill,  
Of the stealthy art of Frisbee, the honor of the spy.  
And though he's sometimes picked the last, he doesn't ever sigh.  
For he knows that on the Frisbee field, there won't be a time when,  
The people ever notice him. He is Invisible Ben.

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Elizabeth  
Archibald  
Grade 12  
Loomis Chaffee  
School  
Windsor

## Math Test

First, graph the  
exponential decay of  
curiosity  
on the why-axis,  
wondering why wonder  
and age  
are, perversely,  
inversely proportional.

Then, reminisce on the  
ex-axis  
to find the points  
where regret intersects joy  
where love and hate coincide  
where the parabola of daily routine changes sense  
where hope plummets infinitely.

Next, integrate integrity  
by parts,  
separating honor from self-interest  
to find the region  
bounded by  
pride and fear.

Finally, evaluate the worth  
of hyperbolic truths  
of circular lies  
of glimpses of infinity:  
What is the absolute value  
of the function  
of love?

---





## Mom's Birthday Lobster

I was so acutely aware that you were alive  
Before we threw you into the pot.  
I talked to you, offered you your last rites, tried to get you to move as much  
as possible because I knew  
that in a few minutes something would be gone from you that makes you  
move.  
The muscles and tendons and exoskeleton would still be there.  
The brain and heart and little tiny organs would still be there.  
But you would not be there.  
Now you're red  
and dead.  
sitting in my mother's stomach  
A gift for her.  
And as you twitched for the last time I saw no ghost rise up, felt no spiritual  
presence, heard no voice of a god,  
and all this makes me wonder  
where your life is.

---

## The Thief

As the subway car swayed, most of its passengers took a step to steady themselves, but not him. Although he was one of the ones standing, he kept his balance easily by leaning against the back of a seat near the door.

"Harvard stop," the loudspeaker drawled, as the Red Line car came to a halt. He stood up, brushing off his clothes to make sure he looked presentable, and when the doors opened, he laid an interrogating eye on the new passengers who came in.

The college students and professors were ignored out of hand. They generally paid with the subway credit card or with tokens, not even meriting consideration as they obviously knew what they were doing. One couple, however, caught his attention.

They were a mother and daughter, from his estimation, definitely tourists to Boston and almost undoubtedly college searching. His deductions were validated each passing moment, as the mother asked the conductor how much she owed, and then took a few minutes to find and count out the eighty-five cents required. The daughter, meanwhile, was looking at some glossy, multicolored booklet which he assumed boasted about Harvard, but he couldn't tell for sure. The mother, having paid, broke her daughter's reverie and guided her deeper into the train. He slipped into the line of passengers, walking down the corridor after them, and took up a position slightly behind the family.

Becky Miller  
Grade 12  
East Lyme High  
School  
East Lyme

Geoffrey Booth  
Grade 12  
Branford High  
School  
Branford





"I've had enough for today, Mom. Let's do Tufts tomorrow," the daughter complained. "It's getting late. Let's just have dinner and go back to the hotel."

"Okay...." The mother opened her purse and grabbed the Boston transit map which was on top. He was careful to note that she neglected to zip the purse closed while she had the map out.

"Where did we park again?" the mother asked.

"Brookline Village. It was on the Green Line, I think," the daughter replied and craned her neck to try to see the map.

"Brookline, Brookline...I don't see it on the map, honey. You sure it was Green?"

There was a moment of silence as they scanned the rest of the map, but failed to find the Brookline Village stop on any line. This was his cut to step in.

"Excuse me, I couldn't help but overhearing, did you say you were looking for Brookline Village?"

The daughter was offended by his eavesdropping and looked antagonistically at his face, as he had hoped she would. The mother, also as he expected, didn't even notice his rudeness and reacted with joy that someone would help her.

"Oh, yes, yes, we were just in Boston today looking for colleges and..." she gushed. He smiled understandingly, nodding every now and then, and turned his attention to the map during her spiel.

He pointed at it, interrupting her. "Your daughter was right. Brookline Village is on the Green Line, but it's too small a stop to appear on this map. You see down here where the Green Line splits into three splinters?"

As he was talking, both the mother and daughter paid close attention to the map, and his other hand moved soundlessly into position above the mother's open purse. The car pulled into another station, and as it slowed, there was a jolt.

He was well prepared for it and had braced himself. The mother had not, and she fell into him. He very politely assisted her back to her feet, especially because he had every reason to be polite—the wallet from her purse was now in his coat pocket.

"So here we are, Park Street. Get off here and wait for a Green, D-Line car headed for Riverside to come by. Make sure it's D and not another Green Line. Then just ride it to Brookline."

"Thank you. I can't thank you enough. C'mon, hun, we gotta hurry. Thanks again!" The mother ushered her daughter quickly through the mob and between the doors of the train.

Once they were off the train and safely out of earshot, he snickered, "You're welcome."

"Pretty expensive directions," a voice said from behind. He spun around, reaching into his pocket, but the wallet was gone.





## Grandpa's Hands

Erin Loughery  
Grade 12  
Norwich Free  
Academy  
Norwich

"OK Grandpa, now it's your turn," I remarked as I hoisted myself onto the couch.

I reached over and took the tiny drum from his creased hands, making sure that his hands and mine made no contact. There was something about his hands that frightened me. Maybe it was the rough, cracked skin or the way the veins pulsed when he flexed his wrists; either way, I wanted no part of it. He stumbled to his feet, caught his balance, and stood tall. I sat there examining his tan Dockers that were held up by a leather belt which clanked as he stood up. The brick red shirt that he wore reflected against his pale, fragile skin. With this deceiving complexion, you could never tell that he was deathly ill. A brain tumor was inhibiting his mind and crippling his body. He moved to the center of the room, and as I beat the drum, he began to dance, moving in a circular motion, flailing his arms and shuffling his feet. We took turns dancing and playing for what seemed like hours; however, as the sun grew tired, so did Grandpa. The beating of the drum waned, and it was time to go home. I threw my arms around his broad shoulders. I felt his hands caress my back, and it sent chills up my spine. I reached up to kiss him good-bye, the stubble on his cheek tickled my lips and I pulled away.

I inhaled the scent of his Aqua Velvet cologne as I whispered, "I love you, Grandpa," into his ear.

"Right back atcha' kid," was his reply.

I was anxious to return home. I reached my bed and climbed to the top bunk. Pulling back the blankets, I felt the cool cotton sheets against my skin. I lifted the quilt past my shoulders and buried my head in the soft pillow. Unable to fight off the fatigue any longer, I drifted off the sleep. I was awakened by the early sunshine of a warm July morning. Feeling completely rested, I decided to spend the quiet morning hours watching television. I had only made it to the top of the stairs when I was interrupted by a phone call. Oblivious to the rarity of these calls, I reached for the receiver.

There was no greeting, just a command, "Get your mother now!"

I placed the phone on the table and ran to get my mother. I shook her violently, and her eyes widened when she questioned me. She reached for the phone, listened for a minute, replied with "OK, I'll be right there," and returned the phone to its original position.

Wearing nothing but the shorts and T-shirt she had worn to bed, she sped out the door. With no explanation, she left me standing there in the kitchen with only the faint sound of the operator recording in the background.

Hours passed with no call from my mother. It was not until about 2:00 that afternoon that I heard the news. My Grandmother pulled me up onto her lap. Her right arm wrapped around my stomach and her left hand rested on the table.

"There's no easy way to say this," she hesitated. "Grandpa, he...he died of a heart attack earlier this mornin'."

Her eyes swelled with tears. A single tear rolled down her wrinkled cheek. I





Rebecca  
Ullman  
Grade 12  
Simsbury High  
School  
Simsbury

dropped my head and watched that tear as it bled through the napkin that lay on the table. I leaned down and rested my head on her hand. What I wouldn't have given at that moment to touch his hand or smell his cologne. As the tears ran off my face, my grandmother pulled me closer, and together we cried.

---

## Poolside Reflections

The girls wore microscopic bikinis and flaunted the developments on their chests, not knowing exactly how to behave around the new additions. The boys wore jean shorts with leather belts for that rebel-without-a-bathing suit look. I watched intently as the separate camps snuck peeks and showed off for each other. They yearned to merge but were prevented by an intangible and paradoxical thing called puberty that made them want to be together like never before, but then drew a constant line of tension and awkwardness like the fumbling about before a first kiss. Sometimes it got too intense and too real for me, not being removed from "IT" for all that long, and I had to look away.

I met these and over one hundred other children this summer. I smiled at them as they ran by me, clutching themselves on their way to the bathroom. I listened to stories about birthday parties with Power Rangers, dogs that ate macaroni, and Barbies who went to Hawaii for vacation. I was shocked and frightened by the baby pool water poured on my toes by some mischievous toddler. Then I smiled at him in secret collusion while his mother scolded him for disturbing me. Like a scientist looking down from her chair on the subjects who put themselves in my mini world, I scanned and surveyed, watching for signs of struggle or danger, but also for life and the mysteries and comfort its patterns bring.

I watched the mothers struggle with their gear: pink polka dots and stripes, skirts and cover-ups, sunglasses and hats and sunscreen, baby carriages and lawn chairs, *Ms.* and *Redbook*, juice boxes and animal crackers, pool toys and towels, and usually a couple of little people running wildly towards the biggest and deepest pool with the reckless abandon found only in childhood and love. If it was a slow day, I would look at those mothers who were tired from life and try to picture them young and firm and pretty as everyone once was. I wondered if this is where they had thought they would be in fifteen years when maybe that mom over there had sat where I was sitting and thought about which party she would go to that night. Did they choose to be there or did it just kind of happen, like flabby thighs and wrinkles? Did they "know" as I know that I will not be child weary or routine when I am thirty? I needed some assurance up there that those children, in time-out or at the bottom of the pool staring at each other through their fifth pair of goggles that summer, were worth every second of the weariness they seemed to cause. And more than that, I needed to know that "old" cannot just happen to me unless I let it come in. As I look back, I think that I know the answers—that I will be who I make myself, that old happens, but that it is what I make of it that counts, that someday I will be happy just to go to bed





early on a Saturday night, and that those kids who are now little alligators looking for toes to bite are probably the best thing that ever happened to the mom with the sagging stomach. I know these answers somewhere deep in the part of my heart that is already old, but right now I am looking for the life that will help me understand them.

And as I watched that pool, I thought perhaps that I got a glimpse of it all, just a peek though, because I am not ready for the whole. As I stand at the brink of the adult life that I choose to make mine, confronted with all the questions and the answers but no way to put the two together, I realize that I am no pilgrim. The mom in the stripes stood in my place, and the girls trying to ignore the boys will be here in a few short years. I am not simply jumping into the dark abyss of the future, but blindly groping for the voices of those who have already been here that call to me from the end of the tunnel. I am awkwardly fumbling about through the patterns laid out for me by those who have gone before and waiting for another glimpse into the mystery.

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## Honorable Mentions

Molly Ackerly  
Hilary Barax  
Chelsea Black  
Anna Brown  
Cynthia Brunelle  
Kelsey Burke  
Chris Byrnes  
Dana Rae Chitwood  
Catherine Ciacio  
Stefania Ciarleglio  
Christina Clements  
Hannah Colbert  
Megan Denstedt  
Magda Erik-Soussi  
Sara Foley  
Clarissa Gerber  
Kim Goodman  
Camila Grello  
Katherine Ivers  
Kelly Keiper  
Ted Kupper  
Ellen Linzer  
Bilal Little  
Andrea Maillet  
Ciarra Minacci-Morey  
Hillyn Natter  
Koby Nelson  
Anthony Nieves  
Matthew Reynolds  
Leo Richardson  
Laura Robertson  
Akemi Saji  
Colin Sanford  
Ranju Sarkar  
Lindsey Sell  
Jacob Stern  
David Taricani  
Jeffrey Tebbs  
Lauren Teixeira  
Harry Tokarz

Rowayton Elementary School  
Bi-Cultural Day School  
Hebron Elementary School  
East Haddam Elementary School  
Academy School  
Buttonball Lane School  
King and Low Heywood Thomas  
Frank Scott Bunnell  
Gainfield School  
Church Street School  
Long Meadow Elementary  
Cornwall Consolidated School  
Middlebrook Elementary School  
Conard High School  
East Lyme Middle School  
Elizabeth Bennet Middle School  
Frank Scott Bunnell  
Eric Norfeldt School  
Mercy High School  
Bolton High School  
Conard High School  
Bi-Cultural Day School  
Stamford High School  
Natchaug School  
North Canaan Elementary School  
Valley Regional High School  
Regional Multicultural Magnet School  
Washington Elementary School  
Mary T. Murphy School  
Newtown Middle School  
Stamford High School  
Philip R. Smith Elementary  
Natchaug School  
King and Low Heywood Thomas  
East School  
The Williams School  
Flanders School  
Westhill High School  
North Branford High School  
Mary T. Murphy School





Katie Trotta  
Etan Wenger  
Zoe Wheeler  
Jill Wyvill  
Jessica Zamiara  
Zachary Zeilman  
Brittany Zuckerman

John B. Sliney School  
Conard High School  
Samuel Staples Elementary School  
Canton High School  
St. Francis Xavier School  
Claude Chester School  
Cornwall Consolidated





## Teachers of Published Authors

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Medria Blue  
Kristen Brighenti  
Rhoda Brozdowski  
Susan Buoniconti  
Marilyn Burgeson  
Richard John Cassar  
Javier Castillo  
Diane Cerreto  
Laura Colgary  
Susan Cowey  
Catherine D'Agostino  
Ginger Dendas  
Barbara Dombrowski  
Sally Fern  
Cheryl Flaherty  
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David Hepburn  
Miss Jesionowski  
Michele Johnson  
Karen Kelly  
Christine Kieltyka  
Charlene Kilcomons  
Carol Kraus  
Sharon Lehr  
Frank Lewis  
Esther Magee  
Joanna Marsh  
Jennifer Mazzucchi  
Maureen Minnick  
Jane C. Newpeck  
Roy Ogren

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Simsbury High School  
West Hills Middle Magnet School  
Latimer Lane School  
Tashua Elementary School  
Nathan Hale Elementary School  
Hall School  
Rogers Park Middle School  
Regional Multicultural Magnet School  
Natchaug School  
Gallup Hill School  
Mary T. Murphy School  
North Branford High School  
John B. Sliney School  
Norwich Free Academy  
Mary T. Murphy School  
Joseph A. Foran High School  
Killingworth Elementary School  
H. M. Bailey Middle School  
Noah Wallace School  
Loomis Chaffee School  
Bunnell High School  
Wells Road Intermediate School  
East Lyme High School  
Noah Wallace School  
The Sherman School  
Daisy Ingraham School  
Buttonball Lane Elementary School  
Sacred Heart School  
Latimer Lane School  
Natchaug School  
Academy Elementary School  
Hebron Elementary School  
Academy Elementary School  
Julian Curtiss School  
Mitchell Elementary School  
Fairfield Woods Middle School  
South Windsor High School  
Branford High School





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Mary Provini  
Kristi Putorti  
Martha Rakovan  
Paula Robinson  
Sharon Rabideau  
V. Jane Schneeloch  
Jeffrey Schwartz  
Judith Shively  
Beverly Skinnon  
Sherlene Skov  
Cindy Smith  
John L. Stanizzi  
Sheri Steinman  
Maureen Stingel  
Georganna Trosky  
Katrin Walton  
Roberta Weiner  
Richard White  
Julia WIELLETTE  
Charles Wolfe

Killingworth Elementary School  
East School  
Old Saybrook High School  
Mary T. Murphy School  
Jack Jackter Elementary School  
Natchaug School  
Simsbury High School  
East Hampton Middle School  
East Hartford High School  
Greenwich Academy  
East School  
Plantsville Elementary School  
East Lyme Middle School  
Jack Jackter Elementary School  
Baron Academy  
North Stonington Elementary School  
Renbrook School  
Windsor Locks High School  
Killingworth Elementary School  
Madison Middle School  
The Williams Memorial Institute  
Avon High School  
Old Lyme High School





