

# Voices That Matter



***MVMS '02-'03***

## ***Literary Arts Magazine***

6th, 7th, and 8th graders have  
a chance to be stars.  
They have their art, poems  
or writing heard because  
their voices matter!

*Cover design by: Allely Albert*

## Acknowledgements

We hope you enjoy this 2002-2003 issue of the Mill Valley Middle School Literary Arts Magazine! Students are shining stars as they present their writing and art work for publication. The theme for this issue is "Voices That Matter." Read on to discover some of our students' thoughts about our theme and uncover the hidden talents that speak through the writing and art work of our students.

MVMS Literary Magazine Faculty Advisor: Celima Smith

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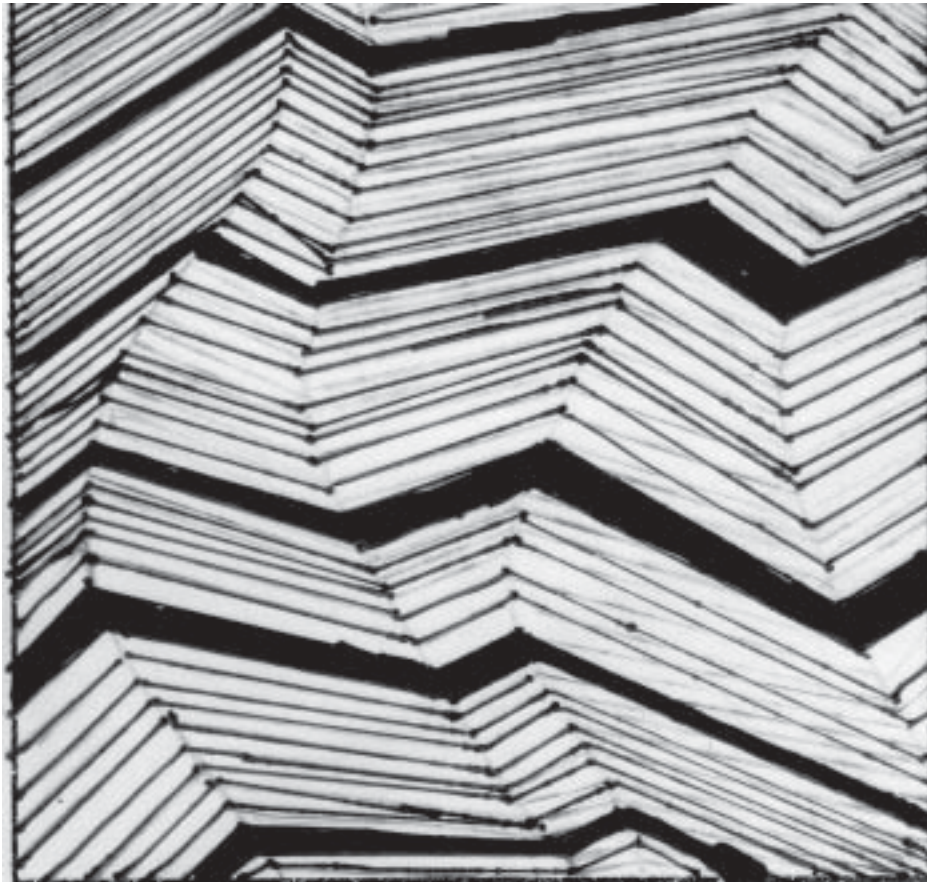
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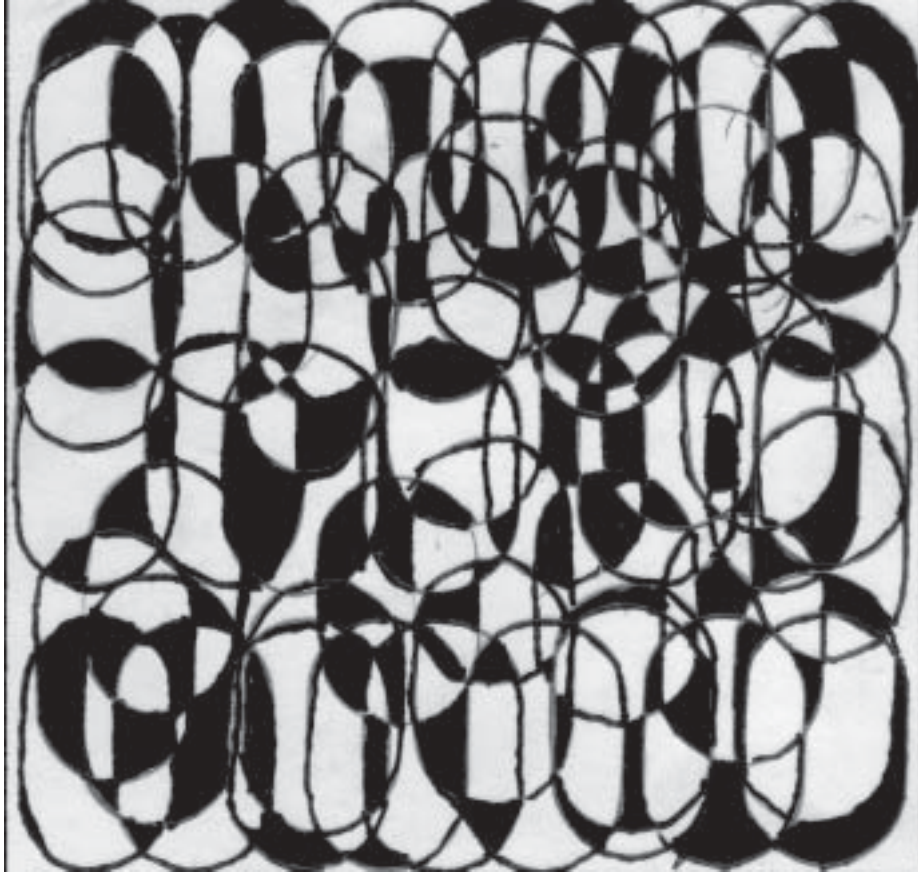
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Stephanie Houghton, 7th grade

## Personal Experiences



Teddy Husker, 7th grade

By Cynthia Bathgate

## Etteas Forever?

“Wake up Andrew!” I would say at the beginning of the morning. Thinking today was going to be the day, the day that he would say my name correctly instead of calling me that stupid, ugly name “Etteas,” I said to him, “ O.k. My name is Cynthia. Now repeat my name.”

He looked all confused and said, “ Etteas?”

I shook my head and said, “No! It’s Cynthia. Now say it.”

He looked all confused again and said, “ Etteas?” I beamed at him. How could he? This was like the ONE-MILLIONTH time he said this. I can- not live with this name for the rest of my life! What if I’m stuck with this name for the rest of my life? People would walk by me and say, “ Look at Etteas! All grown up at five years old. Isn’t she cute?”.

” Well I’m not Etteas!” I said. “ I’m CYNTHIA GARCIA BATHGATE!” So I ran out the room stamping my feet and crying into the bathroom thinking my life was over.

Can you imagine? Every time I saw my brother when he was one years old he would call me Etteas? Well, that was life for me until he was two. He stopped calling me Etteas. Instead he called me... nothing. In fact he didn’t talk at all. Period. Sure he would say hmm or mmm but that was it. I felt so bad for him that I blamed myself for making him not talk because of me yelling at him for calling me the wrong name. Then, a miracle happened. He started to talk again at age three. I was so happy for his loud, proud voice to be back that I didn’t care if he called me the wrong name.

When Andrew was four and I was eight, I woke him up and teased, “What’s my name?” Expecting that he would say Etteas, I waited patiently. Then he started struggling with his tongue as a huge amount of spit started coming out.” SSSSSSSSS Cyn thiiiiiiiiiiiiiaaaaaaa. CYNTHIA!”

Before he could finish, I grabbed his tiny body and hugged him as hard as I could. I said in my second grade thinking, “ This should be in the newspaper. ‘Brother Finally Calls Sister the Right Name!’” I laughed so loud that I woke the whole house. I didn’t care if I got in trouble for waking everybody up. My brother called me Cynthia!

My brother always says my name now. Well, a little too much like “Mom! Cynthia’s bugging me” or his favorite, “ Mom! Cynthia’s playing the piano when I don’t want her to.” At least it’s not, “Etteas is playing the piano!” So I’m really thankful that I’m Cynthia, not Etteas. I don’t look like an Etteas, sound like an Etteas, or act like an Etteas. I don’t even know if it’s a real name. But I know one thing. I’m CYNTHIA and I’m PROUD of it!

By Andrew Latimer

## My Latkes

“Give it Brennan!” I yelled. My voice rang like a school bell through the house.

“Andrew it’s time to make our Hanukkah potato latkes,” my mom yelled over all of the hysterical fighting. I let go of the crinkled dollar bill, turned to run, then turned back to my brother and said to him in an evil voice, “You owe me!”

As I ran through the narrow hallway, I heard the swishing and whirling of the potato peeler. I ran fast until I hit the hardwood floor and then slid past the oven, past the stove and stopped myself at the cutting board.

“Wow,” my mom said, “You’re sure in a hurry.”

“Yeah, what do I need to get out.”

“Let’s see,” she mumbled, “We need six large potatoes, which I already have out. We need two medium onions, four large eggs, two tablespoons of lemon juice, but just get a lemon. We needed three and one-fourths cup of matzoh meal, some pepper, and let me not forget a bit of oil for frying.” As I searched through the dusty cupboards I asked,

“Why do we have potato latkes every year for Hanukkah?”

“Well,” she said, “It’s a family tradition.”

After I finished gathering up all of the ingredients, we started to measure them out. First, I took out all of the measuring spoons from the drawers and put the ingredients in a pile.

“Then we shredded the potatoes and onions in a food processor and strained out all of the excess moisture. It made a pool of tan-yellow liquid in the sink. After that my mom took out a humongous bowl and we scraped in the potato onion mixture, poured in our beaten eggs and squeezed in the lemon juice. When that was over we mixed in the matzoh meal and seasoned it with salt. In a frying pan we heated one-fourth cup of oil and poured the batter into circles like you would a pancake.

When they were done, they came out golden and crispy like perfect latkes should and boy was I proud.

“Happy Hanukkah!” My relatives exclaimed as my family walked in the front door of my grandparents’ house.

“Oh Andrew look what you brought,” said my grandma as I passed her with the tray. “Hey everybody, tonight we’re having latkes!” My grandmother blurted out, so I assumed nobody had asked.

I set the table and then ran to the den to play the computer.

I found my brother there. But I wanted to play. I was about to shove him out of the seat when he held up a dollar bill. I grabbed the bill and left knowing there was no use arguing over the seat or he might tell my dad and get the dollar bill back.

“Dinner’s ready!” Someone yelled and we all ran out to eat our first night of Hanukkah dinner. I plopped down in my seat and looked around the table.

By Hannah Gordon

## Making My Star Tart

“Twenty-ounce roll of cookie dough, coarse sugar, and one and one-fourth cups of sweetened condensed milk, one half cup of finely shredded lemon peel, one-third cup of lemon juice, one cup of blueberries, and two cups of raspberries and strawberries.” My mother listed the many ingredients aloud, as I got them down from the high cabinets.

“They’re all here,” I replied to my mom, pointing to the arranged items on our white counter.

I was so excited! This was my first time baking anything special for the holidays. Those cookies were good, but nothing compared to this magnificent tart. When my mom made it every year, I watched the aromatic god-like tart, come out of the oven. Seeing it sit deliciously on our kitchen table, waiting to be devoured, made me jealous of my mom, because she got to make such a great tasting thing, and get all the credit. But this year, I got to make it too! I was chosen to make the infamous family Star Tart, to share with my family and friends.

I watched my mom attentively, as she preheated the oven, and greased the pan. As soon as she opened the sugar cookie dough, I took my expectant place with the sticky, sweet dough I loved to squish. I molded the dough along the hard, glass sides and bottom of the pan.

After a while, though, I got bored with the stubborn dough, which should have turned into crust already, and switched to making the star cookies. I spread the left-over dough out, and smoothed it down. Then I put the star cutter to the dough and cut away. When the crust was finally done, and it and the sugar cookies were baking, we started the tangy, creamy filling. The filling is the kind that tastes bad as you make it, but it is so good when everything is finished and ready.

While making the filling, I popped the unanswered questions. “Mom, why do you make the tart? Where did you find the recipe? Oh, and also, why are we making it today?” The questions whizzed out of my mouth, unable to stop.

“Whoa!” My mom simply said. “Slow down. First of all, I make the tart because I found the recipe randomly, but it looked so good, I made it the next day. It turned out excellent. It’s made for the Fourth Of July, because of the colors: red, white and blue. And last of all, yes, your aunt, uncle, and cousin are coming over tonight to celebrate July 4th,” she said.

“I get it,” I answered calmly.

The tart was simple to make after that. You poured the filling into the baked crust, and added the fruit and my special cookies. As soon as we set it in the refrigerator, the doorbell rang. I ran happy to the door, running off, as it opened, to play with my cousin.

After eating the delicious dinner my aunt had made, we opened the fridge. My greedy hands grabbed the tart, slamming it down on the table impatiently. I positioned myself directly in front, alert and ready, for a big piece of the yummy delicacy, that I could now say I made!

“This is delicious,” my aunt complimented.

“Thank you!” I yelled, braggingly, before my Mom got a chance.

Ever since, this tart has been special to my family. And to me, because it was the first tart I ever made. We bake it every Fourth of July.

By Ella Quittner

### **My First Jack-O-Lantern**

Whenever the season changes to autumn, my mind always drifts back to my first memory of a pumpkin patch. I couldn't have been older than three or four at the time, and I had been begging to go for weeks and weeks. Finally, the big day came. My beloved babysitter, Tricia, was taking my sister and me to a pumpkin patch in Melville, NY, not far from where I grew up.

Emerging from the stuffy car, I took a big gulp of fresh air like a fish being thrown back into the water. It was a crisp, cool autumn day, not unlike the ones we had been having throughout the month. Excitedly, I pranced around the parking lot waiting for my older sister, Zoe, to get out of the car. As we walked through the picket fence entrance gate, the tantalizing aroma of pumpkin pie met my nose. "Wow!" I exclaimed, as the exuberant pumpkins came into view. There were pumpkins of every color, heft, and shape. Creamy oranges, pearly whites, greenish yellow and fiery red were among the array of colors. They were everywhere! Along the fence we had entered through, quavering in the crannies, it felt as though the patch stretched on for all eternity. Let's put it this way. The pumpkins were not planted sparingly!

As we took a gentle stroll, we passed many different places. "I want to go there!" I told Tricia as we passed a cider stand. I will always remember the way that cider tasted. Freshly squeezed that morning, the statewide-known brand tasted great. I took one sip after another, my mouth filled with the sweet, tangy flavor. After buying a bottle for my family, we headed on. "What's that?" I inquired, pointing at a wooden gazebo filled with hay. The stench of hay filled my nose even more as we got closer. "Make your own scarecrow" a grubby looking sign read. My gaze drifted down to the ground, where I saw a high pile of old donated clothes.

We chose a flannel jacket and a pair of old denim jeans. After rubber-banding the bottom, we stuffed the garments with hay. We topped it off with a stocking face and an old dusty top hat. "Tada!" I said before dissolving into giggles and falling down in the hay. Squalling and squealing with laughter, my sister helped me up. Carrying our new hay friend, we giggled our way back to the pumpkins. And then I saw it, and I knew it was the one. I lifted it and waddled over to Tricia. "I found it!" I told her proudly. And so I had. My very first pumpkin. It was a rich orange color, and as smooth as silk.

As we brought it back to the car, along with the one my sister was lugging, I heard the crunching of leaves underneath my feet. I will never forget the beautiful leaves of NY: An artist's palate ranging from deep maroons to sunshine yellow. The drive back to my house was exciting as we decided how we wanted our pumpkins carved.

When we arrived home, I could barely contain myself. "Daddy, Mommy!" I yelled as I flung myself through the door into the house. I put my pumpkin on the table and began to draw a face on it. Beneath my pencil emerged two triangle eyes, a lightning-bolt nose, and a cackling grin.

Later that night, with the help of my parents, the pumpkin was carved. I recall scooping out the gushy, stringy insides of it. "This is fun!" I squealed, dropping a handful on the table. The gooey sticky mush was hard to sift through. After putting a lighted candle inside the masterpiece, and placing it in the window seat, we went outside to admire our finished work. Snuggling into the warmth of my family, I could have stayed there forever, gazing at my very first jack-o-lantern.

By Allely Albert

### **My Unique Name**

I like my name, Allely. I was named Allely because my mom wanted me to have a unique name. She found the name Allely and my dad agreed.

Allely was my great, great aunt's last name. I don't really know what Allely means besides being my great, great aunt's last name. I never met her, but we have one picture of her. She's kind looking, pretty with light hair and looks a little old.

My name is Irish but I don't know what it means. If my name were an animal it would be a cheetah because I'm fast and athletic. If my name was an emotion, it would be pride because my name is unique and I'm proud of that. If it was a day of the week, my name would be Friday because it is exciting.

If my name was a color, it would be yellow because it stands out. If it was a flower it would be a white rose because my name is as pretty as one and as unique. Also, if my name were an insect, it would be a bee because they are hard-working and helpful, but have many different qualities. If my name were a season it would be summer because there is a neat, fun mood that fits my name. If it were a smell it would be lovely because my name is lovely. If my name was a holiday, it would be Christmas because my name just seems like the festive holiday season.

My name's like no one else's and I don't know anyone with the name, Allely. It's warm and welcoming, rough and gentle. It is able to fit a lot of characteristics. I guess you could say that it's fun to have a name that no one else has, a name that could mean . . . anything?!

I always get comments on how pretty or unique my name is and I agree. When someone's name is Hannah, there is a chance there will be more than one person with that name in class. They might have to be called Hannah C. (the last initial) because there are two Hannahs. I am glad that with Allely, I won't have to do that - unless I meet another Allely (which I hope I don't). Also, when you write Allely in cursive, it's fun. As you can see, I love my name and how unique it is and won't change it. Ever!!

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By Turner Nowak

### **Solo Hike**

My legs wanted to stop, but I wouldn't let them until the next water break. They felt as if they would fall off if I took one more step. I urged the leader, Erin, to say those refreshing words, "Water break. Everyone stop."

"OK," Erin told us, "We're each going to do a solo hike here on Hill 88." When it was my turn to go, I descended from the group. There was so much to learn below me. It was so nice; the temperature was about sixty-seven degrees F and the trees swayed like the ocean's waves. The birds were circling above me. The wind was lightly blowing against me like a fan.

"It's beautiful!" I thought. All of the animals, movement and the silence made me feel like I wanted to stop and sit down. I knew I shouldn't do it. I didn't want to make Erin have to wait a long time.

When I got about halfway, I heard footsteps! My heart started pounding like a drum. I stopped so I could hear where the steps were coming from; but when I stopped, it stopped too. I looked around puzzled like a chipmunk. I stomped. It stomped. I sighed with relief as I noticed it was my feet echoing. The rest of the solo hike I didn't worry too much.

By Kayla Sponza

### Neutral Name

My name is a blur of green and blue because those colors are smooth and casual, like a breeze blowing through an apple orchard. It's like all the blossom petals drifting on the wind as it goes by. I like my name, Michaela Ann Sponza, but I am pretty neutral on the subject. But there are a few things I do like about my name. First off, it sounds original and it's a girl name, but it's not really girly, like Rose or something as soft as pure gold. Another thing that is interesting about my name is the spelling. The spelling is unique because instead of Micheala, the standard spelling, it is Michaelaa, which is easier to sound out and pronounce, even though new teachers still manage to say it wrong.

My name is not rare as rubies or common as coal, but my friend Bergen knows someone else called Micheala and since Bergen didn't call me by my nickname, Kayla, we always got confused. Bergen would yell across the playground, "Hey, Micheala!" and we would both turn around and screech back, "Yeah?" It may not sound like much, but it got very annoying, like a fly buzzing around your head. You keep swatting at it but it never dies, especially since we were in the same class. So for a period of time in early elementary school she called me Moe. I have no idea how she came up with that name and made a connection to me, so don't ask.

My mom thought of Michaela because it's Italian for Michelle and since it's Italian, my dad agreed on it. Only once in a blue moon do my mom and dad agree on something. Ah, what kids make you do and don't do. My dad also got to pick my brother's name, Luciano Alessandro Sponza, which is very Italian. My middle name also comes from my dad. Ann is my aunt (obviously on my dad's side). Ann is a feisty woman, about three feet tall. But when she yells, every man in the house drops what he's doing and listens closely, like trained dogs who know their master is angry. She also works very hard. I love my middle name even more when I think of where it came from.

Thank you very much for reading my paper to the end. I hope you enjoyed listening as I told you about my name. I hope I got the message through to you that my name (I'm getting sick of typing that) is different, as are all names, whether they are spelled differently or not. Names are a bit of you, even if they are not the most original as Rumpelstiltskin.

By Lila Scott

### The Messy Scary Room

You run back a couple of feet then thrust your body against the door to your room. Books, toys, your old jack-o-lantern, an empty ant farm, and your old teddy from when you were two collide into your fifteen casts you somehow peeled off when you broke your arm, allowing you to fall into the room. You can't look, you can't smell, but you must go on. You must find those tickets to the Giant's game. Plugging your nose and shading your eyes, you glance around the battlefield of a room. You spot in the corner, your baseball bat, your cobwebbed glove, a baseball you hit through the neighbor's window seven times and your T.V., V.C.R. which are placed right on top of your Giant's tickets. But how to get there; you don't know.

Gathering up all your courage you take a step into the rubble. Already you're knee deep in stuff. Glancing around you notice some places will be neck deep. "Oh shoot," you say. Something arises from what you think may be the bed. You realize it's your old dog Shoot, whom you thought died twelve years ago. He's covered in banana peels, old sneakers, your deflated inflatable chair, a ping-pong paddle, T.V guides and Bobo the Bunny, the book from which you learned to read. Obviously, he's been living on the old dog-food you liked to snack on in first grade. You shrug and press on; only six feet to go. Waist-deep in dirty clothing you trip on your old camera and it takes a picture. Your hand lands on your sister's doll and it says, "Mama."

"Oh shoot," Shoot howls.

Finally you get the tickets. The alarm clock rings marking 8:30 a.m. That means you spent ten hours in there. "Oh Shoot!" You missed the game Shoot howls.

AROOOOOOO!

By Grant Hulegaard

### The Very Berry Smoothie

"Orange juice, frozen berries, yogurt, frozen sliced bananas and honey," screamed my mom.

My tongue dangled from my mouth as limp as yarn. I could just imagine that cool creamy smoothie, slithering down my throat. The sun shined down through the bare windows as I scrambled from cupboard to cupboard. I soon had all the ingredients.

It was a hot summer day. As my dad would say, it was "hotter than Hades." Beads of sweat trickled down my face. The hard wood floor felt cool against my bare feet. I quietly watched my mom pour the ingredients with perfection. My dry, parched throat tried to swallow as my mom turned on the blender.

All of a sudden, I could hear the thump, thump of feet pounding the floor. The door behind me imploded as my brother and father came bursting in. As my mom poured out the smoothie, I could feel three pairs of eyes watching stealthily.

Almost immediately, three hands shot out and took a glass apiece. I clutched my glass greedily. I slurped and slurped. The creamy, cool berry smoothie slowly made its way down my throat. It triggered a wave of pleasure every centimeter along the way. The sweetness of the honey, the creaminess of the yogurt and the tartness of the fruit ran riot in my mouth. The fruit juices were transformed into something rich and thick.

When I finished, I stared at the glass dumfounded. I wished I had a lifetime supply of smoothie. The glass looked so bleak after the smoothie was gone. The thin coat of smoothie sticking to the glass was a pale reminder of what was once there. With great reluctance, I put my glass away. I knew that one day I'd have some more.

## Poetry & Haiku

Nick Lindfield

If

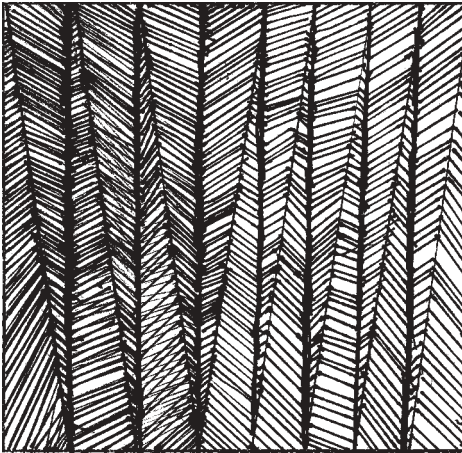
I were a giraffe  
that spat Out sunflower  
seeds with blue colored  
hair, everyone  
would laugh  
hysterically,  
especially  
when riding  
the school bus.  
I love to play  
jazz, becoming  
immersed in the  
music that seems as  
mystical as pyramids. Yet there is another side  
to me. I might fade into the background but  
rather like an elephant, I remain substantial and loyal,  
not at all undependable, like an ancient  
wreck. I'm sometimes a dreamer,  
i do have  
ideals, yet  
life can  
lose mean-  
ing when  
no- thing  
seems real.

I'M NOTHING LESS THAN A LANKY, FUN LOVING, IF OCCASIONALLY MYSTERIOUS,  
AND SOMEWHAT TEDIOUS, NOT USUALLY ORTHODOX, KIND  
OF A GUY!

By Michael Fearon

### Animal Wisdom

I am the elegant leopard.  
I see the plains, far as the eye can see.  
I see a gazelle herd, where I will hopefully find my dinner.  
I sit in the tall grass and hide myself.  
The ground is soft, like the hair on a wild dog.  
The grass is itchy against my body, but I don't move. I  
must keep silent and wait for the gazelles to come closer.  
I hear hyenas cackling, like human children playing in a  
field.  
The beckoning, babbling brook behind me makes soothing  
noises and makes me think about sleep.  
But I think of my task ahead, and ignore the brook.  
I look over to the herd, and the gazelles are close.  
I silently run over to them and launch myself onto a  
gazelle's back.  
The other gazelles run away, and I am victorious!  
The squishy, salty meat is delicious.  
As I eat, I wish that humans would stop hunting animals.



Teddy Husker, 7th grade

By Leslie Ann Bird

### Animal Wisdom

A shark is the sea spear.  
Every corner the shark turns it can smell the fear of all the  
creatures around.  
I am the king of the sea like the lion is of the jungle.  
When the ocean turns into the pitch black night, I become a  
shadow in the dark.  
I can't see everything, but hear the rushing riots of the sea.  
I am as dangerous as the king cobra.  
So, you better be careful next time you get into the sea . . .  
at night, because I might just be right behind you!

By Gabriela Guaiumi

**Animal Wisdom**

Alex Hugo, 7th grade

I live in a den in the snow-covered ground  
 Redwoods loom above me like giants  
 I have an abdomen the color of snow  
 And blue-gray eyes that glow like the sky  
 Light gray fur that keeps my pups and me warm

My summer den is on the edge of a lake  
 That turns a golden pink at sunrise  
 I wake up to the sound of water  
 Lapping at the rocks lined up on the shore

My snow-covered paws are silent as an owl's wings  
 Gliding through the night  
 As I run cold, frigid air enters my nostrils  
 I notice the trees hovering over me like giants

My silent footprints are etched in the snow  
 I am a wolf  
 By winter I will be alone again  
 So it will stay

By Aliyah Nakhuda

**If You Only Knew**

Who am I?  
 You think you know me but you really don't  
 You think I'm like a horse,  
 quiet, soft  
 friendly but shy  
 A horse that walks around mostly speechless scared  
 to be loud  
 But what you don't see is what is hidden inside,  
 beneath all the wrapping,  
 there is the loud girl, just like a parrot  
 talkative and always excited,  
 flapping my wings and going on and on,  
 hyper and excited to see everyone.  
 You take me as the color pink,  
 nice, boring, and plain.  
 Not too interesting, and always so kind.  
 Look harder,  
 look all the way inside of me, into my soul.  
 And you will see that I am like red,

fun, exciting,  
 happy and friendly, but not always so nice.  
 You think of me as very boring,  
 boring as a cruise ship,  
 slow, and taking my time,  
 so lazy, not wanting to do anything.  
 If you only knew what I was like on the inside,  
 You would say that I am like a speedboat,  
 fast, fun, exciting,  
 loving to zoom ahead of everyone,  
 so eager to do things.  
 If you only knew what I was like on the inside,  
 you would know me a lot better.  
 Sometimes people aren't who expect them to  
 be.  
 I am not who you expect me to be.  
 You would understand,  
 If you only knew.

By Gabi Bigrass-Masse

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a long chain following everyone  
It is a spirit that has no color, shape, taste or sight

It is a buzz in your ear buzzing and buzzing  
Until your shame cannot take it anymore

It is a complicated obstacle that you must overcome  
It is like a beautiful bird released from its ancient care

Forgiveness is a voice on your shoulder saying, "Forgive,  
Forgive." The other shoulder holds sadness and shame  
Trying to battle your wisdom

Forgiveness feels like your heart is about to burst into  
A million pieces of joy

Forgiveness fills that black hole in you

A hint of forgiveness is inside everyone's heart  
Can YOU feel it?



Ben Courtney, 7th grade

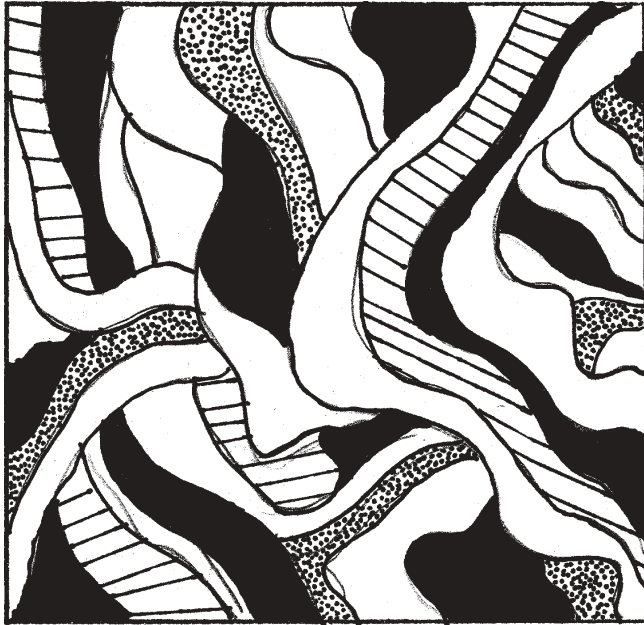
By Gabriela Guaiumi

### Darkness

She is darkness  
She is night  
She is sweet  
Serious  
Silent  
Beautiful!

Her only friends  
The moon and stars.  
Sleeps during the day  
Creeps out at night  
Creates dusk  
Creates dawn  
Then fades away  
Until dusk comes again.

Dawn, then dusk  
Dusk, then dawn  
Lady night  
Sleeps.



Carrie Coats, 7th grade

By Steven Manriquez

### Earth Dust

The dust is the earth's breath  
 The way you can tell where you're going  
 And where you want to go  
 It helps you find what you are looking for  
 And everything that you need,  
 Because that is how the earth breathes.

By Etra Caldes-Liu

### Animal Wisdom

I am a large bald eagle.  
 I rule my land.  
 I've always looked the same in my species history with a white head.  
 powerful brown wings and body.

I live in Yosemite Valley atop of El Capitan.  
 I hunt for my prey, the Rainbow Trout.  
 As I spot one, I go as fast as I can to capture it.  
 I catch one and bring it back to my nest, and start to devour my prey.  
 I see a group of tourists ecstatic to see me nestled in a clump of trees.

As I rip through the flesh, I see my world, as pure as the oxygen I breathe.  
 There are only a few of my species left but we thrive in Yosemite.  
 Our destiny is to never see a hunter again.  
 I hear the "caw, caw" of my fellow birds of prey; they have made a catch.

In my life I have never seen a hunter, but we are a rare sight and an endangered species.  
 But still we are America's symbol, A symbol of FREEDOM.

By Taylor Gamboa

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is yellow.  
Yellow as the shining sun.  
Shines on anything.  
The happiest thing in the world.

Forgiveness is a circle that rolls around and  
around.

Forgiving everything in its path.  
Forgiving people and animals.  
All the people and animals are forgiven.

Forgiveness feels like nothing else.  
When I forgive someone, I feel good, great, and  
better.

Forgiveness makes me a happier person.  
It makes everyone a happy person.

If everyone forgave.  
The whole world would be joyful.  
There would be peace.  
No wars or fights.

---

By Caroline Finn

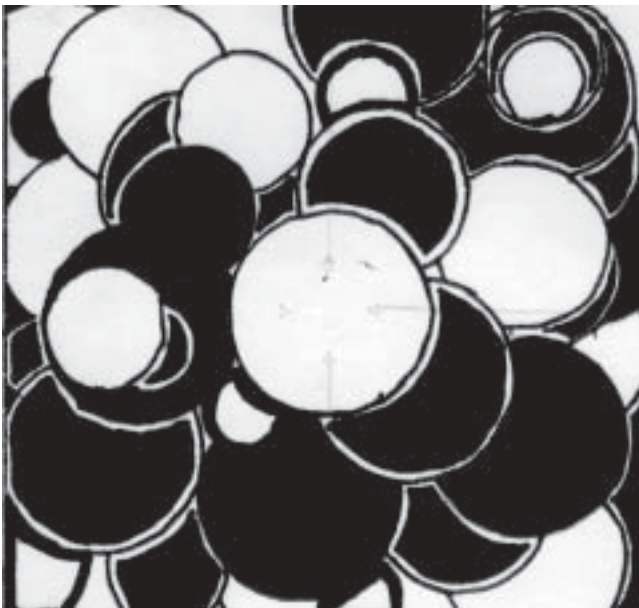
### Forgiveness

Baby blue is the color of forgiveness,  
It shimmers like a glistening star ,  
It is the color of the beautiful day sky,  
It is the shape of a rose, as beautiful as can  
be,

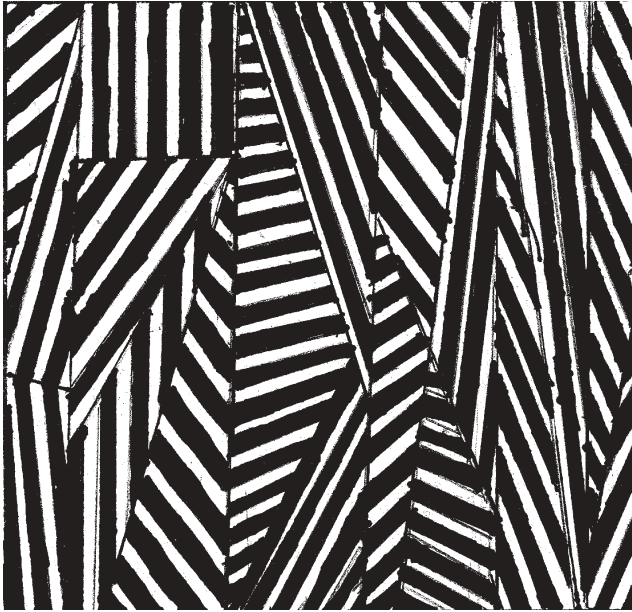
ruby red glistening in the bright sun.  
It feels great to forgive someone, you finally  
get that dark yucky feeling out of you.

Forgiveness is being as brave as can  
be, standing up for yourself.  
It is love that bursts out of you like a shot  
gun.

It is everywhere, and should stay that way,  
I am forgiving, forgiving everyone I need to.  
I am as happy as a clown when someone  
forgives me, or  
when I forgive someone else.



Casey Hanley, 7th grade



Charles Klag, 7th grade

By Casey Price

**I Am**

I am the wolf's howl that drifts into the night's  
sky invisible but it's there so loud and pure.

I am like the oceans' waves so free and full  
of life

I drift into the sea shore  
I crash into the cold hard sand of the beach.

I am like a leaf that blows in the wind day  
after day

I go on without a care  
wherever the whistling wind takes me.

I am a puppy so energetic  
I feel as big as a mountain in my mind I  
conquer all.

I am many great things.

By Ben Mahrer

**I am**

I am a tree growing green, growing tall, looking out  
for miles over my surroundings, the jungle. Every kind  
of creature calls the jungle home, from the smallest  
ant to the fiercest leopard.

I am king of a palace, a city, deep in the ground, thou-  
sands of feet below the ocean floor. Nobody knows  
about my polished palace of gold. Nobody knows but  
the people of my city.

I am like a beautiful bird, soaring the skies of heaven,  
free to roam where I please.

I am the trumpet blast of an elephant, echoing around  
the world, hitting the ears of every living animal, every  
human.

I am the light, the blinding light that strikes the sur-  
face of the river bringing awe to all who observe me.

By Jackie Rosen

### Blue

Quietly  
midnight fingers stretch to the edges of reality  
and sink into the depths of the ocean's waves,  
spreading silence and filling the space with  
distant blue.

Knowing the sky's constancy  
is a small comfort  
in a world lacking so much innocence.

Nothing stirs  
during a state of peacefulness  
found inside certain shades of blue.  
A haze dwindles near the lowest leaves  
tinting the uneven ground with relaxation.

When the anger fades  
leaving a blank backdrop  
dive in and let go.  
Is it really falling if there's nowhere to land?

---

By Alice Isley

### Beach

The summer moon reflects  
In the ocean's warm eyes.

And the sand is cold on my feet.  
A salty smell fills the air.

And the waves keep crashing.  
In the silent night.



Charlie Morrison, 7th grade

By Eve Jones

**I AM**

I am a human being who makes mistakes.  
 I wonder why other human beings can't get along.  
 I hear two voices in my head.  
 I see loved ones lost and reborn.  
 I am a human being who makes mistakes.

I pretend that the world is peaceful and happy.  
 I feel happiness coursing through my veins.  
 I touch the joys of others.  
 I worry that humans will become too overpowering.  
 I cry when I am sad.  
 I am a human being who makes mistakes.

I understand a lot of things.  
 I say, "listen to me!"  
 I dream about the future, what it holds for me.  
 I try to be good.  
 I hope for all to be equal and free.  
 I am a human being who makes mistakes.



Eva Shapiro, 7th grade

By Marina Wilkinson

**Forgiveness**

When I forgive, I feel like I'm a free, floating, white cloud, going wherever the wind takes me.

Forgiveness is like a bright, neon yellow circle in my heart. I take it with me wherever I go.

Forgiveness is a long, lazy river where love can flow and play in harmony with the water.

Forgive everyone, every place. Do not empty the heart of love nor forgiveness. Always forgive.

By Lauren Ellis

**I Am**

I am a girl who loves to swim and cares about animals.  
I wonder what will happen in my future.  
I hear the sound of the earth rotating on its axis.  
I see a group of chimpanzees hanging on the trees outside my bedroom window.  
I want to make a difference in the world.  
I am a girl who loves to swim and cares about animals.

I pretend that I win each race this swim season.  
I feel the velvety feathers of a ruby-throated hummingbird.  
I touch the vast vanilla clouds floating in the heavens.  
I worry about the agony of being stung by a jellyfish.  
I cry for the homeless children throughout the world.  
I am a girl who loves to swim and cares about animals.

I understand the cry of animals who need a home.  
I say that people around the world should be treated fairly.  
I dream of traveling through the vastness of space and exploring the moon.  
I try to be a loyal friend to all of my pals.  
I hope that the world will be at peace in my lifetime.  
I am a girl who loves to swim and cares about animals.

---

By Elana White

**I am**

I am  
the sound of trees  
dancing, swaying  
with the wind providing shade for the forest.  
the sun keeps me warm  
and the rain gives me nutrients for my graceful,  
lovely leaves of green and yellow

I am  
a snowflake  
falling, gliding  
to the vanilla-colored ground.  
children playing  
throwing snowballs, making snow people.  
the air is as fresh as watermelon  
with no black seeds.

I am  
a curious dolphin  
jumping, smiling  
through the shimmering water.  
the wind whips against my excited face  
making me feel like an eagle  
soaring  
over a mountain

I am like  
a pile of leaves  
going with the flow of nature  
moving, changing  
through life, dropping to the ground  
eventually becoming blossoms  
and soon  
ripe, juicy plums in the cycle of life.

By Hilary Marvin

**I Am**

I am a snowflake in the cool frosty blue sky. The breezes carry me near and far. I am swift like a cheetah running through the icy cold wind.

I am like a beautiful white horse running through vast plains. I go wherever I want to go, and as I run, I sparkle brilliantly like soft snow glistening in the sunlight.

I am the sound of a smooth pebble hitting a river's surface. Ripples begin to form and keep getting larger and larger and larger like a balloon being blown up. The sound echoes for miles.

I am a shadow following you down a dusty dirt road. I am the light at the end of the tunnel that goes for miles.

I am like a flower, blooming with greatness. Even the strongest winds can't blow me down, for I am strong like a cliff.

I am many great things.

By John Wagoner

**I am**

I am like a Maisura dinosaur, kind and loving.  
 I wonder why dogs live for fourteen years  
 I hear wolves howling in my ears  
 I see the Loch Ness Monster  
 I really want to speak to animals  
 I am like a Maisaura dinosaur, kind and loving.

I pretend to have every animal as a pet  
 I feel tingly inside  
 I touch a fluffy white cloud  
 I worry when endangered animals will become extinct  
 I cried when my rat died  
 I am like a Maisaura dinosaur, kind and loving.

I understand why I love dogs  
 I say animals should not be abused  
 I dream about becoming a paleontologist  
 I really try to draw better  
 I hope people try to save endangered animals  
 I am like a Maisaura dinosaur, kind and loving.

By Taylor Forster

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the sun giving light to the needy  
Forgiveness walks down the sunbeams radiating her love to the  
world

Grab on, take the train out of the room with no lights. The room  
of brick. The dark room with no forgiveness

Come live in a house of windows filled with light  
No dark handcuffs drag you and push you down  
But lift you up off the ground  
There you lay on a pink cloud  
There forgiveness lays too

Let go of your flashlight; nothing artificial should guide you  
Guide yourself, let your soul guide you, your heart, your freedom  
You can open any closet but never close a door of forgiveness

You can open any friendship but never let fear close forgiveness

Forgiveness is the love you share  
The way to be free

---

By Ariel Ermatinger

### I Am

I am a girl that loves to read and rollerblade  
I wonder why I love to look at the night sky and think  
I hear the clock ticking as time goes by  
I see kingdoms and castles in the clouds  
I want to see, touch, taste, smell, and hear the world  
I am a girl that loves to read and rollerblade.

I pretend that I am a spy  
I feel the weight of my worries in my stomach  
I touch the wind that flies through my fingers  
I worry about my little sister  
I cry for the things in the world that aren't fair  
I am a girl that loves to read and rollerblade.

I understand the frustration of not being able to do  
something others find easy  
I say everyone has rights  
I dream of flying  
I try to do my best in everything  
I hope I will do well in life  
I am a girl that loves to read and rollerblade.

By Natasha Edman

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the deep red rose  
that remains a stubborn bud until I forgive,  
and then sends out its fragrant fingers of friend-  
ship  
as it blooms with my first joyful emotions.

Forgiveness is like moonlight,  
rippling through the ebony air,  
yet hidden in holes of hate and dread.  
Only those who choose to  
can imprison their anger  
and ensnare forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the shining of the stars,  
always ready to blow away  
the dark fear and hate  
that arises at the jet-black night,  
almost too powerful to behold.

Forgiveness is a shy, timid child,  
who is very modest at first,  
but tell of its strong feeling of love  
when it cannot restrain emotions any longer.

Forgiveness is like the first ray  
of carressing sunlight  
after a cold Arctic winter.  
It is the golden eye  
of the sun shining brightly  
through the clouds.

When I think of forgiveness,  
I remember deep down  
inside my soul,  
and think of all my companions  
that care or cared for me.  
I will always forgive them,  
and commemorate  
all their forgiveness of me.

By Daniel Schwartz

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a heart being  
passed back and forth  
Forgiveness is a pink heart  
deep down in my soul  
Forgiveness is like a waterfall silently  
careening off a cliff  
Forgiveness lifts  
my head from a hunch  
Forgiveness is taking that  
sack of potatoes off my shoulders  
Forgiveness is something that  
will happen many times in my life  
Forgiveness is heavy to light  
Forgiveness is something  
everyone should go through.



J. D. Reiger, 7th grade

By Nick Sohn

### Joy

Joy is the beach on a hot summer day. The small waves of the lake quietly lapping on the golden sand. The water reflecting the cloudless sky. The sand warmer than a comforter in the morning and the water cool as deep shade under a tree.

Joy is spring brightening up the world from winter. Flowers blossoming, the world goes green, full of laughter and fun. Dew decorates the grass with small diamonds and animals wake up making the world restless again. Boring bees and hyper humming birds pollinating the restless world.

Joy is water, a mirror reflecting the sky's tears of clouds bringing life to our green planet.

Joy is my mother leading me up the mountain of success. My barrier from my disgusting brothers. My weapon against my fear and sorrow. My mother is my blanket of protection.



Jenna Philpott 7th grade

By Allely Albert

### Night

Night, she loves the dark and fears the day  
She sweeps into the room.  
She wears a dark blue velvet cape  
And has a pale, pale face.  
Her eyes are a cold steel gray.  
Night's long hair covers parts of her face.

Her friends are a black cat,  
A poor person in a sad, sad state.  
But the friend she sees most often  
Is the abandoned one,  
The one that is dying as we speak.

In the day, she dwells at the bottom of the sea.  
Night, she's usually alone.

By Danny DeCarlo

**Puffer fish**

I am a puffer fish laying in the ocean.  
 I am puffing, perfect, puffs of air as the ocean beats  
 against me like a thunder storm above the sea surface.  
 I am as light as the sun but the ocean covers my color.  
 My world is as dark as the other side of the moon.  
 The darkness makes it hard to find my food.  
 My stomach aches when I can't find my food .  
 The darkness makes me feel sorrow.  
 The sorrow turns into anger.  
 When I let my anger blow, my razor sharp spikes jab out  
 like sword out of its sheath.  
 When my spikes come out every animal is warned not to  
 come near.  
 But whoever touches my spikes is the unlucky one, for it  
 will die a long painful death.  
 My message to all you humans is when you go scuba  
 diving you  
 better watch out for me or I'll get you.

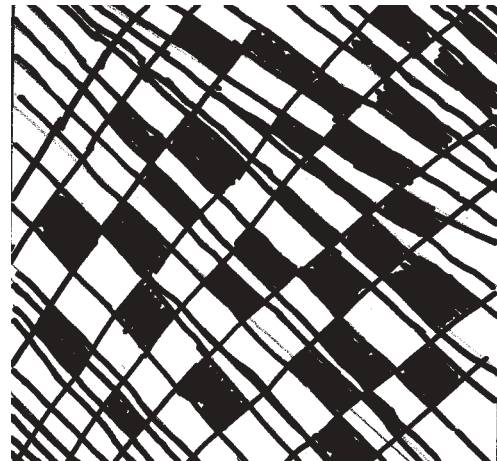
By Rebecca Murray

**Animal Wisdom**

I am a gray child.  
 I swim through the water.  
 I have been called little shark.  
 But I know that's not my name.  
 My friends say that I swim as fast as an arrow.  
 So I started calling myself Fast Arrow.

I whipped past the coral and past the kelp.  
 The water that rushed past me felt like the warm summer  
 air.  
 And as the air touched my fin, I realized that it felt so cold  
 that it began to feel like an icy  
 mountain had touched me.

I frolicked and played in the ocean's depths and occa-  
 sionally came up to see where  
 I was. I then went back down to the bottom of the ocean.



John Hamblett, 7th grade

By Sophie Sieck

### Joy

Joy is watching the snow fall in Tahoe with my family, drinking hot chocolate the steam spilling from the cup, letting the fire dry my boots.

Joy is walking outside feeling the sting of the fresh falling snow against my face while skiing down a hill following my dad.

Joy is going for a walk with my family, my brother and I running through the creek getting everything sopping wet, drenched down through our socks to our shoes.

Joy is winter, eating dinner by the fire soaking in the warmth billowing out.

Joy is being surrounded by people you love, sharing laughter, rejoicing peace and love and the gift of being alive.

---

By Jason Valenti

### Joy

Joy is penetrating power that comes from love

Joy can be used in many ways  
some good some bad

Joy is different for people all ages

Joy is like a sand dollar shifting in washing wet sand

and rolling in and out of the ocean

Sand dollars all have stars, all give joy

My marvelous mother's room  
is filled with joy the king-sized bed  
that I lay in and watch movies with  
my mom and dad

Spring is joy with the grass that  
feels like a bed with a  
fresh gorgeous green scent.

Joy is spring the kids laughing and  
playing in the dark blue  
lake.



Jeremy Ruskin, 7th grade

By Jessie Grossman



Jesse Rodrigues, 7th grade

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a shadow  
covering the light of joy

Forgiveness is not a child  
scared on a stormy night

Forgiveness is a ladder  
anger is a pit you fall into  
forgiveness is your way out

Forgiveness is a board game  
a game of chance  
will you forgive me?

---

By Jerica Renazco

### Lady Night

Lady night flows through the air  
Covering the sky with her long, black hair.

She hides behind the clouds, not being loud.  
Her friends are the stars and the moon.  
When the sun begins to set, she'll be there soon.

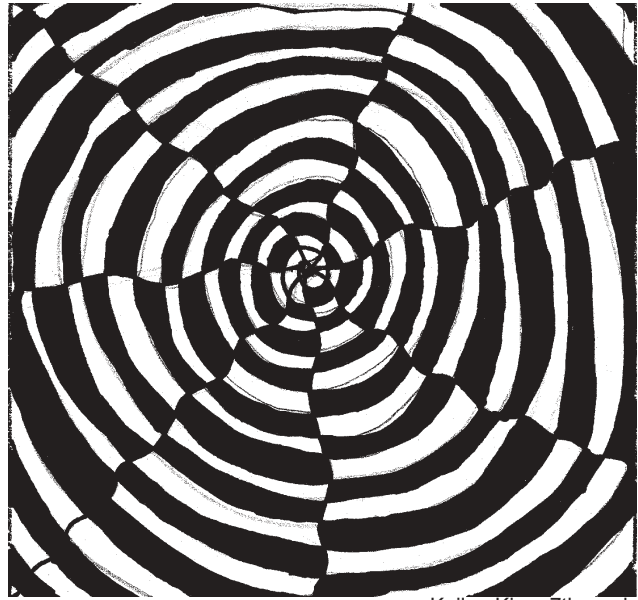


Katy Rosenberg, 7th grade

By Kahlil Gray

**Joy**

Joy is laughing with my cousins, nephews  
and friends  
Joy is what brings happiness.  
Joy is opening Christmas presents  
with my family.  
Joy is seeing people excited  
When buying a new car  
Or going to Disneyland.  
Joy is seeing Terrell Owens making his  
touchdown.  
Joy is what life is meant for.



Keilan King, 7th grade

---

By Lindsey Paskett

**JOY**

Joy is the palace of my tree house  
A safe and protective place to go  
when I am sad or glad

The yellow and purple pansies  
that grow around my tree

Joy is winter winds whirling through my hair  
Raindrops falling on my palm  
As the freshness of the winter shower comes  
to me

Joy is burying secrets into a book of blank  
pages

An open journal

Joy is sizzling sweet cookies

that was made with love by mom

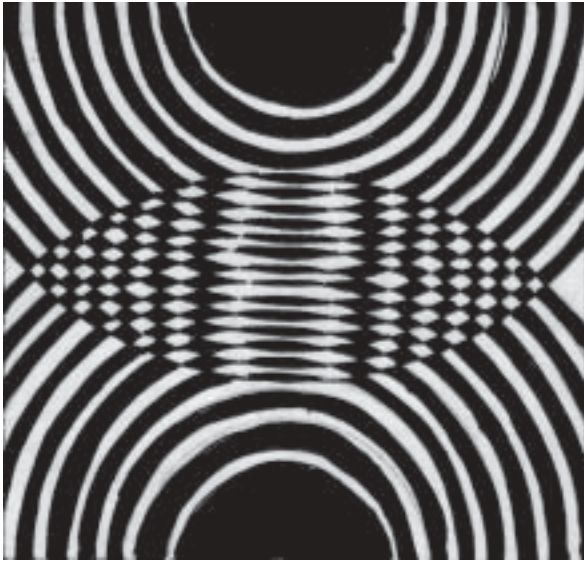
Recipe:  
10 cups of love

Joy is as warm as a hug

From someone who cares

Joy is as peaceful  
As winter's first frost  
A peace dove  
A branch of olives

Joy is inside of me



Lisa Mithun, 7th grade

By Andrew Latimer

### The Great Mystery Me

I am the closest star to the farthest planet,  
I whirl silently around the soft silky outer layer  
Of my neighbor, my sides grazing against it.  
I am a shooting star,  
Getting flung across the night sky.

I am a white octopus, living in the blackest  
Depths of the ocean with my friends.  
I am a bird calling down from the tallest trees.

When you rub my lamp, I come out.  
Because I am a genie that will grant  
You three wishes and only three,  
Then return to my glistening golden lamp.

I am the little voice in the back of your head,  
Telling you when or what to do.  
When to say yes or when to say no.  
I am the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King  
Saying that all people are equal  
And should be treated the same.

By Maddy Boston

### The Great Mystery Voice Of Me

I am a crescent shaped planet  
with beautiful birds and crazy creatures upon my surface  
I am the highest planet alive  
I am an island of treasures

I am the sound of the crickets quietly chirping in the tall grass  
sending our songs out into the world  
chirping, chirping

I am the voice of young Ruby Bridges  
accepting the challenge of going to an all white school  
learning and laughing even though she is the only one who  
looks as she does

I am the secrets of the stingrays  
who glide slowly across the sandy bottoms of the ocean  
waving their wings and moving their tails

I am the voice of all living things  
I am the great mystery voice of me

By Oliver Rosenbloom

### The Mystery Me

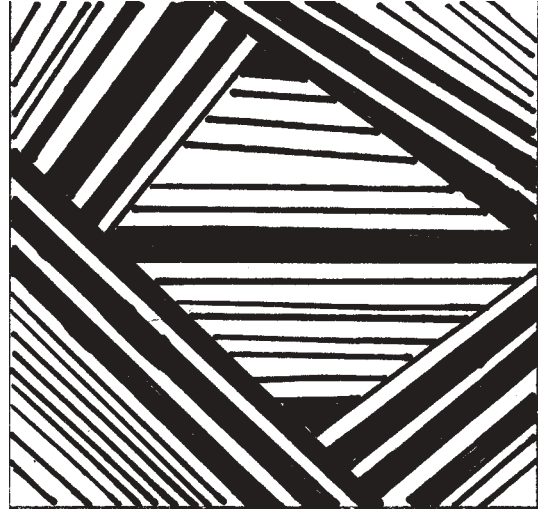
I am the bald eagle  
The symbol of America  
Soaring through the silent sky  
Flying gracefully  
Catching my prey

I am the undiscovered planet  
In the farthest reach of the galaxy  
My fiery red core can be seen from  
A distance

Many moons, all sparkling, orbit me  
Many shooting stars pass my beautiful,  
Glittering surface

I am the voice of the world saying,  
“Live in peace,  
Be one with each other  
Live life in harmony.”

I am whatever I want to be.



Marcus Caldwell, 7th grade

By Eddie P. Geyer

### The Puppy

So playful, so

F  
R  
E  
E.

He trots through fields  
Without a care in the world  
Or a collar on his back.  
UNRESTRAINED.

His eyes, flashing with animation,  
Sparkle as he rolls in the soft grass  
Barking with joy.  
BLISSFUL.

His golden fur shines  
His heart engulfed in happiness,  
As he looks up at the blue sky.  
RADIANT.

When tired, he naps  
Curling his tiny legs under his stomach  
His breaths soft against the grass.  
PLACID.

The Puppy, so  
Content, so  
F  
R  
E  
E.

By Matt Phillips

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is courage to fight the black hovering shadow cloaked with fear and blunt blank prejudice of the past.

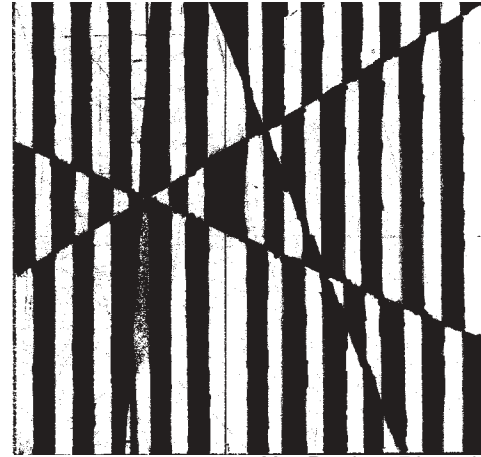
To forgive is to have the light blue, mostly rounded to glow in pure perfection. Illuminating all with a gentle radiance that clears the skies of clouds, the dusty chalkboard, my grimy glasses cleansed to expose a new world.

It is the coal miner washing his mind of the blackness of memories exposing a diamond.

Like sleeping after being sleepless; forgiveness is acknowledgement.

It is my hand patting someone's back, throwing away the crumpled paper, ripped and spilled on, with arguments and feuds exchanging it for a new sheet...

A second chance...



Max Ramirez, 7th grade

By Lauren Baum

### Forgiveness

Four eyes, glasses four eyes  
 everyone teased me  
 tears dropped down my cheeks  
 like a small waterfall  
 my circle for forgiveness shrank  
 my bright yellow forgiveness  
 turned into a gloomy gray sorrow

Sometimes forgiving is like swimming against a current  
 it's rough, hard, almost unbeatable  
 if you're strong in your heart  
 you can swim to shore

Forgiveness is watching the dolphins play  
 no matter if anyone gets hurt  
 they will always forgive, they have no secrets  
 A powerful gift to always forgive

Forgiveness feels like ice cream on a hot day  
 it feels very good so just forgive  
 feel good about yourself

By Cara Trombadore

**Mrs. Night**

Her face is smudged  
With Age  
And Wrinkles.  
Her long, bony fingers  
Are old and worn  
From all the knitting  
She does each day.  
And her back is eternally  
Hunched over  
Because she is always bending over  
To feed her scruffy black cat  
That she calls Star.  
Her cane is a gnarled  
Piece of wood  
And all she wants is  
Company.



Stephanie Haughton, 7th grade

---

By Josh Feldman

**Joy**

Joy is like the white pearly snow in winter.  
Glowing under the bright flashy sun.  
First rain, then snow falling to the ground like trees trem-  
bling under the fierce chain saw.

Joy is like my friends.  
Always someone I can go to for help.  
Looking out for me.  
Caring like a gardener growing fresh tomatoes.  
Reminding me that I should always keep trying tremen-  
dously at everything I do.

Joy is my mom.  
Loving me deeply.  
Connecting to what I have to say.  
Talking to her makes me feel safe and calm.  
Enlightening my ego she fills my heart with love.

Joy is the love and caring in everyone's heart, always  
burning like the eternal flame.

By Tonihya Vaughn

### Joy

Joy is the ice cream man going, crazy and handing out free ice cream.

Joy is the love you get from your family.

Joy is the sparkling diamond hill covered in snow.

Joy is like Thanksgiving. I can sink my teeth into it.

Joy is ripping wrapping paper off of presents on Christmas morning.

Joy is the smell of hot chocolate on a cold Sunday morning.

Joy is the sparkling water the bubbles like hot cider

Joy is a good thing, that doesn't come very often.

Joy is the love that I feel for my family.

Joy is how I feel inside.

Joy is the wonderful friendship that I have.

By Stefan Ultsch

### Mosquito

Small unseen itchy  
I fly, I suck your  
blood

power of small wings  
I annoy you in the night  
I buzz in your ear.

In the morning you itch  
I am happy with my meal, your blood

I am the mosquito!



Laurel Engbretson, 7th grade

By Eric Andrews

### **The Great Mystery Me**

I am a crawdad in a pond  
I am fiery red  
I also try to avoid being eaten by big bass

I am the voice of Rosa Parks  
I tell people not to make me get up  
Because white people want to sit down  
I want to make a nice new nation  
Where there is no discrimination

I am an elf  
I have small beady black eyes  
I am an evil elf and like turning  
Bunnies and squirrels into stone  
With a snap of my fingers

I am a tweety bird  
I am always running away from

That evil puddy cat  
I talk funny, I am bright yellow

I am the mouse in the wall  
I always slyly sneak around the house  
I creep out of cracks and steal stinky cheese

I am my imagination and my imagination is  
me,  
That's how I made this poem.

---

By Olivia Blackstone

### **The Great Mystery Me**

I am a bright shining star,  
I shoot through the pitch black sky,  
I move silently through the never ending universe,  
I am gloriously gleaming.

I am a great golden eagle,  
I soar above mountains and valleys and I feel so  
free.

I am a rainbow trout,  
My scales glisten in the sunlight,  
I swim through the creek in search of my food,  
I gracefully glide back to my home.

I am a daring dragon,  
I soar above the deep blue sky,  
I am enchanting,  
I make your dreams come true.

I am the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
His words set an eternal flame around the  
earth.

I am the words, the dreams  
And the hopes of everyone in the world.

By Hannah Whittemore

**The Great Mystery Me**

Nash Larson, 7th grade

I am the bright sun colored dragon red, orange,  
Yellow glistening in the moonlight waiting  
I wait for challenge, courage and confidence.

I am the giant emerald green sea turtle,  
soaring through the big, beautiful baby blue sea.  
I travel wherever I please. I trust my home,  
My life, the water to guide me.

I am the crushing of waves, angry at the world's  
wicked deeds. I cry for the sea, the wind.  
I cry for nature.

I am the Japanese Crane. I give hope, I cure,  
And I am the beauty of Japan. My snow white  
wings flap like the beating of the drums of war.

I am the voice of the wind whispering in your ear,  
whispering: We Are One

By Alex Bigrass-Masse

**The Great Mystery Me**

I am the moon light.  
Reaching the highest mountains, the lowest valleys.  
Tiny twinkling stars and big bold planets surround me.  
The eyes and heart of everyone watching me, sustain  
me.

I am a dragon, living in a dark black cave.  
My fiery ruby red breath always saves me.  
Glistening green, outstanding orange, make my beauty  
Confident, determined that's my personality  
I am magic power, sharing with all.

I am a whale, living in the still, silent sea  
Although beautiful and entertaining, I am lonely, very  
lonely  
The king of the ocean, ruling all  
Keeping all of the earth's secrets.

I am a dragonfly, gliding gracefully above  
a wide open field  
Lovely as a jewel, silent as a mouse  
I'm as simple as a sheet of paper  
But as complicated as the human mind.

I have a voice, a voice of wisdom.  
I yell, I whisper  
I say, "I am a Voice."

By Think Le

### The Great Mystery Me

I am the farthest star burning brightly.  
Around me other stars are burning , too.  
People see me shimmering  
The flame of four colors.

I am the whale swimming swiftly through the ocean.  
The great blue giant of the sea.  
Inside me, I hold the history of the world.

I am a fire racing through the forest  
Leaving a field of charred trees behind.  
Glistening, growing faster than the flowers.

I am the snow, sometimes wet  
Sometimes frozen.  
Every year I fall from the sky  
And blanket the Earth with a solid white layer.

---

By Connor Zelinsky

### The Great Mystery, Me

I am a planet  
A planet as small as drifting dust  
As big as the sun  
The planet of light  
And the planet of darkness.

I am a tree  
A tree as big as a brilliant building  
The tree of smiles and laughs  
The tree of life.

I am a river  
A rushing rippling river  
As blue as the ocean  
Flowing down a mountain that touches the sky.

I am a sun  
Burning bright in the deep dark space  
Yellow as a sunset.



Sara Solli, 7th grade

I am a centaur  
A centaur white as snow  
Running as fast as light  
Fast as a blur.

By Lauren Freeman

**The Rose**

In the garden of the sun  
the roses stand alone  
in both beauty and in spirit  
with a fire all their own.

Petals are unfurling,  
the rose curtsies to the sky  
its perfume tempts the noses  
of the people walking by.

the wilder rose is not as tame  
with its branches tangled madly,  
if left alone without a care  
it might behave quite badly.

for if neglect is all it finds  
when the opposite is needed  
the wild rose can act drastically  
with walls that can't be weeded.

The two sides of the roses  
are different as can be  
and the true form of these flowers  
might not be what you see.

Some people recall roses  
only from their thorns  
just as others find the the smell  
but both make up the roses' form.

Judge not the rose by the encounter  
as it varies day to day,  
sometimes a sweetly smelling thing  
sometimes the thorns do seek to prey.

Yet if you ask me what I think  
of this stubborn flower,  
I'd probably say to look inside  
to find the inner power.

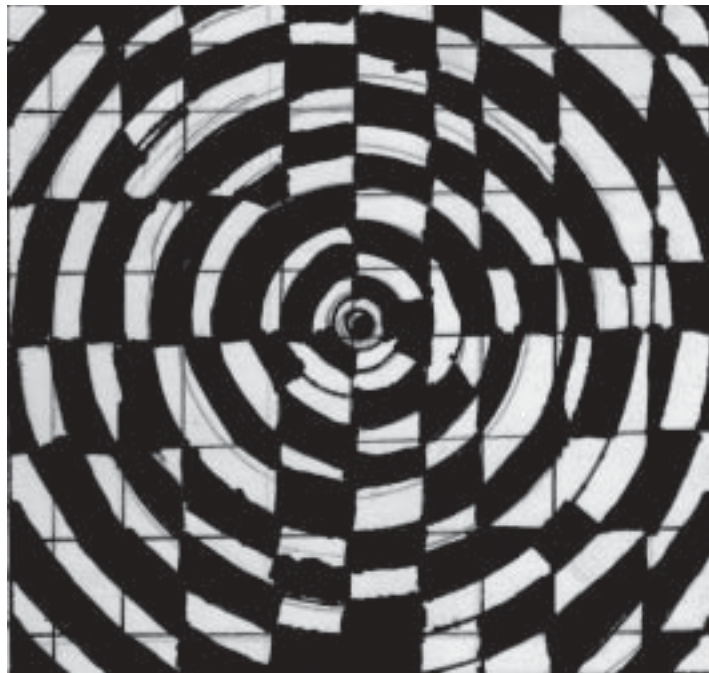
By Jake Orlick

**Voices That Matter**

It doesn't matter if you're  
small or tall  
and it doesn't matter if you're  
fat or skinny  
all that matters is if you have  
something to share.

It doesn't matter if you're  
old or if you're young  
and it doesn't matter if you have  
a certain shirt or shoe  
all that matters is you.

It doesn't matter if you're  
white or black  
and it doesn't matter if you're  
rich or poor  
the only thing that matters  
is your voice.



Rachel Bartel, 7th grade

By Aoife Duffy

### Lime Green

I was green  
not just green like grass,  
or like that bit of pine,  
but bright green...  
Lime Green

That lime green with a dash of yellow,  
happy and unique  
not just another dull sheep,  
but the shepherd bouncing merrily  
up the hill playing  
her lime green pan pipes

That lime green that tries to be everyone's  
friend  
that's sometimes self-conscious,  
but in the end it's being who it is...  
Genuinely

That lime green that's a social shade.  
That's a mix of calm,  
dark green and a rambunctious yellow.  
The exact ingredients for the recipe  
of my personality.

Years, months, days and  
minutes go by  
sometimes the lime green in me comes out  
strongly,  
and on other occasions it fades away,  
but no matter what I do  
where I go  
or what I say,  
it's always there.

---

The fierce wind  
Swoops and dives  
Even the great oak bows.  
By Catherine Raney

The firefly  
Flicks its eyelashes  
In the autumn breeze.  
By Moriah Agoustari

The waterfalls  
Spring happily  
Under a deep ocean.  
By James Kieckhefer

Coldness of the air  
Fades into the clear blue sky  
Like magic  
By Alex Bigrass

The blade of grass  
Holds a single shining jewel  
a dew drop.

By Julia Black

The bamboo  
Leans over to greet the flowers,  
"Hello."

By Ella Quittner

A snowy egret  
Sinking its feet in the marsh  
Still as a statue.

By Sophia Carmen

Melted snow  
Drips from the willow tree  
As spring approaches.

By Maddy Boston

---

The green grass  
With morning dew  
On their backs.

By Spencer Russell

The dog trots  
Through a field  
Soundlessly.

By Think Le

The brown leaf  
Waits for a gust  
Of strong wind.

By Matt Curtis

Four -leaf clover  
In the grass  
Are you lucky?

By Luke Eitelbuss

Fireflies in the night  
Lighting the way  
To Spring.

By Connor Zelinsky

## Fictional Essays



Jenna Philpott, 7th grade

By Alicia M. Blöse

### First Day of 6th Grade?

The horrible rumors I have heard about sixth grade, from being smashed in the doors by eighth graders to getting a ton of homework! Yup, it pretty much sounded like I was going to be tortured for the next three years.

I was in the car heading towards Middle School; it was my first day of school. I pondered as I twisted my hair whether or not Middle School would be fun. Not more than a few months ago I had celebrated graduation. I then realized that I would never sit in Mrs. Tanguay's quiet, comfortable room again or play a fun game of kick ball. I never thought that soon I would be at the bottom of the school. It felt like I was starting kindergarten all over again. Surprised, I felt the car lurch to a stop and my mother said, "Have a great first day of school, honey?" The words echoed through my head, school.....school.

Bright bold green letters stated the words I had been dreading all summer long, Mill Valley Middle School. I remember my fun summer which was now just another memory in the back of my brain. I got out of the car and looked around at my surroundings.

The basketball courts seemed abandoned, as though no one dared to even step near them. The nets on the basketball hoops gently swayed back and forth in the wind. Seagulls lined the gutters of the roof and evilly eyed me. My hair softly swatted my back, as I took my first two steps onto the campus. The sound of tractors rumbled as they ripped apart the sixth grade area.

I casually walked over to the tinted doors where I would soon enter Middle School! I paused to decide whether or not I should open the doors. Riing, the first bell rang and before I could take a step, a storm of students sent me flying through the doors. I stumbled to keep my balance as backpacks smashed into me every which way. When the crowd died out, I quickly scampered up the tall stairs where my first class was.

I glanced down at my schedule as I entered a room, (also known as the pod) filled with lockers. People chattered busily as they nervously entered their classes. Friends waved their hands as they found their once lost friends from last year.

My eyes skimmed the scattered backpacks thrown across the rug floor. The bulletin boards were empty waiting for the day they would have the sparkling projects once again pinned to them. I finally dragged my eyes from the new surroundings and found my way to Mrs. Pompanin's room. As I tip toed into her room, I quietly found my seat. My curious eyes scanned the room as I found some familiar faces.

"Good morning class!" Mrs. Pompanin bellowed.

"Good morning?" the class replied. I don't know what it was but Mrs. Pompanin had a way of drawing her students' attention. Maybe it was the enthusiasm in her voice, I wondered. Mrs. Pompanin had short blonde hair and a kind caring face that washed away all my bad thoughts. She smiled sweetly and gave us a summary of what we would be up to this year in her class.

I had just started to feel comfortable when all of a sudden, Riing, the first bell rang. I shoved my belonging into my backpack and was off. After all my four classes, plus recess, lunch finally came. I rounded up all my friends and we walked through the hall while getting thrown from one crowd to another like a game of pingpong. When we finally got outside, the golden apricot sun unforgivingly glared down at us and we rushed over to the snack bar line, where we would receive our food. Finally we finished satisfying our moaning stomachs that we had over filled with delicious foods.

Beep! Beep! I awoke startled to the sound of Nikita's alarm clock.

"Nikita, Nikita, I just had the oddest dream?" I whispered, as I rolled over in my sleeping bag to face Nikita.

"Me too?" she replied. I told Nikita of the dream about school and she next told me hers. They were exactly the same, ahhhhh! This was really weird. It was only July thirteenth and we had a lot of time until school, but just the thought of school sent goose bumps down my back. It stumped Nikita and me to think we had the same dream, but in the end we decided it was just a coincidence.

By Ariel Berman

### A Fractured Fairy Tale: Snow White

Once upon a time there was a princess named Snow White, and she was very beautiful. Her skin was as fair as snow, her cheeks as rosy as red blood, and she had hair and eyes as black as ebony. However, her mother died when she was born. When little Snow White was a year old, her father, the King, married me. Now, I know all the stories say I was an “evil and vain queen,” and I tried to kill Snow White, but that’s not the way it happened. Actually, you’d agree that the whole thing was her fault in the first place if you knew the real story.

Snow White was a very beautiful child, and the King loved her more than anything else in the world. He spent the entire day with her, playing and talking and even watching her when she slept. In fact, he spent so much time with her that he barely spoke to me. At first, I thought it was just because she was very young, and I’d heard that parents often hover over their children until they’re about two years old. But as the years went by, Snow White grew more and more beautiful and the King spent less and less time with me. I might add that Snow White also grew more and more dim-witted by the day. On the rare occasion that the King paid any attention to me, that annoying girl would burst into the room and he would immediately focus on her. I became so upset that I would look into my magic mirror (which gave helpful advice about clothing and hairstyles) and say:

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall,  
Am I the most lovely of all?”  
But the mirror would answer:  
“Queen, thou art Sweet and kind,  
But Snow White will always  
Be first in her father’s mind”

Eventually, I accepted the fact that she would always be more important than I, and to teach myself a lesson for being so jealous of Snow White, I planned a picnic in the woods just for the two of us. As soon as we got there, she announced, “I’m going to go pick daisies and weave them into crowns!” And off she went. I must admit, I began to get a little worried about her when she hadn’t returned after about an hour. I searched throughout the forest for her, but couldn’t find her. Finally, I returned to the castle, thinking bitterly to myself, “She probably forgot all about me and went home.” But she wasn’t there.

With Snow White gone, I figured the King would at least pay attention to me now. But no, he just moped around the palace all day, thinking about her, and spending even less time with me than he did before! Every time I tried to talk to him, something would remind him of “little Snow White” and he would storm out of the room. I can’t believe he blamed me for all this. Hey! It wasn’t my fault she was so foolish as to go wandering off by herself. I told you that she was dim-witted.

As I was wandering through the castle contemplating my dilemma, I overheard someone mention a girl lost in the woods. I crept closer to the sound, seeing a merchant and a dwarf carrying on a conversation about a beautiful but annoying girl who was currently living in a house with him and his six other brothers. Apparently, the dwarves came home to find her sleeping in one of their beds. She insisted on staying with them, trying to cook their meals and clean the house without any success, being unused to any kind of hard work. The dwarves got so tired of her that they were glad to go to work each day. That’s probably why they would sing, “Heigh Ho, Heigh Ho! It’s off to work we go!”

After a while, the dwarf left and I followed him home. Sure enough, there was Snow White. I rushed home, for I had suddenly come up with a plan to make the King dislike Snow White so much that he would forget about her. Then I would get the attention I deserved. We could live happily together as King and Queen should. I know a little magic, and I created an apple that would make whoever ate it become ugly. I thought that if Snow White wasn’t so beautiful anymore, that and the fact that she was pretty unintelligent would make the King favor me and appreciate my intelligence and wit. I disguised myself as an old lady and hurried back to the pretty little house where Snow White and the seven dwarves lived. I knocked on the door, and said, “My dear, I have a present for you. This

is a delicious apple, big and red and shiny.” Snow White was spoiled and foolish, so she opened the door without a thought and thanked me for the apple. I pretended to leave, then came back and looked through the window to see if my magic apple worked.

Well, it worked all right, but not the way it was supposed to! As soon as she took a bite, she fell to the floor in a deep sleep. At first I thought that she was dead. If the King found out about this it would be the end of me, too! I would probably be banished to some far off island, but that is material for another fairy tale. But no, she wasn't dead. As it turned out, the apple reacted badly with all of the beauty medication she was taking. You didn't think she was that beautiful naturally, did you? Now, the standard routine with sleeping spells is that a person's true love has to kiss them and then they'll wake up. Since Snow White was so beautiful, of course all the princes wanted to marry her. So it was simple to find one who was visiting nearby and persuade him to come kiss her. Snow White woke up, and instantly fell in love with the prince who “rescued” her. When the dwarves came back from work and found out what had happened, they all cheered (She thought they were happy for her, but the truth is, they were glad she was leaving). We all trekked back to the castle, Snow White insisting on the Prince carrying her, of course.

The King was overjoyed to see his daughter again, and even happier when he found out she was going to marry the prince of a very powerful country. After she left for the Prince's country, the King finally stopped thinking about her and started paying attention to me! So I guess you could say that we all lived “happily ever after.” Snow White was happy with her Prince Charming, and I was happy with Snow White gone!

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By Becky Caroli

### **Birds Born of Flame**

The fire had been a bad one. A seething mass of clouds still hovered over the smoldering land. The lightning strikes which had started the inferno had long since subsided, the pelting rain had subdued. It was bound to be a gloomy month. Misty drizzles dampened spirits, while the fire the preceding night had razed people's homes. The road was blocked, the fire having decimated trees, leaving an impassible trail of carnage in its path. People's moods hung as low as the clouds. Their tears of rage and despair mingled with the ever falling rain.

Lyonel stared dejectedly at the blackened ground. He waded through the rubble and debris that had once been their small town's inn. The fires were long since out, but no one had been scavenging through the ruins. Everyone was still in shock.

It was four years before the brothers split up and went adventuring. It was four years before things changed. Roland, after helping fight the blaze, slumped down in one of the inn's chairs, the only thing he could sit in since it was the only thing left standing, aside from the fireplace.

“Phew, I almost thought it was sunrise, that blaze was so bright,” he remarked to his brother. “All that smoke could've killed a dragon!”

Lyonel half turned to face Roland, “Roland, I've been thinking. Why are we still hanging around this place? I mean, any relations we've had here have packed up and moved off. The fire destroyed the mill, so now we have no work. Maybe it's our turn to leave.”

Roland stared gaping at his brother, “Leave, like, move away, forever!”

“Well maybe not forever, but, what's wrong with that?”

Roland stammered, “We've lived here for all of our lives. It's all we know!”

Lyonel smacked his fist into his palm, “Exactly, it's time to branch out!”

“I don't know...”

Lyonel sighed in exasperation, “Oh you little bird. Your safe little egg shell's cracked. It's time for you to spread your wings and fly, but you cower in your nest. Must I push you out myself? Will a plummet from your familiar branch get you to take flight?”

“Uh, Lyonel, we don't live in a tree, but if you want me to fly, I can give it a try! Maybe I can jump off something high.”

Lyonel checked another sigh.

By Avra Friedman and Beth Leuin

Dear Ms. Ruby Bridges,

Our names are Beth Leuin and Avra Friedman. We are both eleven years old and go to Mill Valley Middle School. We are writing just to let you know that we are astounded at the difference you have made in the world and that you made it as a young child. It was really brave of you to risk your life and go through all those hardships just to fight for what you believe in. You have really made a difference in the world by helping people realize that they should stand up for what they believe in and not judge people by the color of their skin. It has affected our lives by telling us to never give up and stand strong for what you believe in. We'll never think of someone different in a bad way again because of what you did.

It must have been really intimidating to have to go through the big mob that were against integration every day. I bet the scariest person in the crowd was the lady who threatened to poison you. It was really great that you had Ms. Henry and your parents to support you through this awful experience.

What was the hardest part for you? Did you have a role model, and if so, who? Did you have any friends who were white that you suddenly could not be friends with because of your skin color?

There are a lot of very important people that made a big difference in the world as kids. We are doing a report on kids that changed the world and we think that you are one of them. It is not only grown ups who can make a difference. You've influenced many people's lives including ours. If you have a spare moment, please feel free to write back because we would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Avra Friedman and Beth Leuin

By Oliver Rosenboom

Dear Critic's Choice,

How long has it been since you've reviewed a great and lively book on your t.v. show? The books that you have been reviewing have made your ratings fall like drops of rain. I have a book to suggest to you that will make your ratings soar like a bird. The book that I'm giving you to review is Return Of The King by JRR Tolkien. This book is a heroic tale that is full of action, plot twists, incredible description and even a drop of romance.

Return Of The King is a magical fantasy book. One event that would make your eyes pop out is when Frodo (a normal hobbit who was given the incredibly tough task of destroying the one ring that brings immense power to its bearer) has to make a very tough decision. Should he destroy the one ring that he has been carrying for what seemed like ages, bringing peace to all of middle-earth? Or should he keep the ring for himself and take all the power and evil that comes with it? Will Frodo give in to his greed for power, or will he restore peace, love and joy to all of middle-earth? You may be surprised by his decision!

Return Of The King is the third part of the Lord Of The Rings series. It is similar to the Star Wars movies and books. The Return Of The King does not take place in space, but it has many action scenes like Star Wars. Both books contain classic struggles of Good vs. Evil. Also, both books have amazing plots and unpredictable turns. If you like Star Wars or any books like it, you would love Return Of The King.

I think that this book can be enjoyed by anybody. People who like adventure will especially love this book because it contains excellent battle scenes. Girls may not love the battles or violence, but who doesn't like an amazing and unpredictable `storyline?

You may be thinking that this book contains too much violence. Well, if you hate violence, it's o.k. This book is filled with plots twists and the violence happens for a reason. The marvelous storyline leads up to the battles. The battles are ferocious, but the incredible twists and turns of the book make the violence bearable.

You can trust me because I have read many books, and I am NOT an easy critic. I don't love every book I read, so it is very rare when I read a book that I love. If you don't trust me, you can ask any of the millions of people who have read this classic. This book was made about fifty years ago, and it's so popular that they are still publishing this book in the new millennium! Plus, they are now making movies of the whole series. On a scale from 1 to 10, I give this book a 10. If you want your ratings to fly high, then all you have to do is review this book, The Lord Of The Rings.

Sincerely,  
Oliver Rosenbloom

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By Sonny Roberts

Dear Critic's Choice,

Do you want a book that will make your ratings go up so fast, it would make a high flying comet sweat? Then I've got the book for you. The book you've got to review is, The Wind In The Willows by Kenneth Grahame. This book is a creative and adventurous book that jumps from character to character. I couldn't put this book down. This was true especially when Toad moved from hobby to hobby, from canoe to houseboat, or from horse carriage to his favorite cars. He keeps on buying and crashing his cars, and squandering his inherited wealth. His concerned friends finally decide to imprison Toad in his own house, but Toad tricks Rat into letting him leave his room. Toad escapes out of his window, where more adventures await him.

This book rivals The Wizard of Oz, which is one of the most famous books. The adventures that the characters go on make you want to tag along to find out what new characters are coming. The variety of the pictures that fill your mind are amazing and funny, in The Wizard Of Oz and The Wind In The Willows.

In my opinion, most people from ages 4 to 4,000 years old would like this book. It is for someone who likes having fun, because you have to have a good sense of humor to understand the story. The Wind In The Willows has a creativity that shifts for your delight.

Some people may think that the idea of animals being in the place of humans is silly, but when you read this book, you sort of forget that they are animals. Other times it may get dragging, but as soon as you're about to put down the book, it gets better.

You can trust me when I say that your ratings will go sky high. I love books, and my whole family read it, and they thought The Wind In The Willows was the best. You won't be sorry if you choose to review The Wind In The Willows on your t.v. show, Critic's Choice.

Sincerely,  
Sonny Roberts

By Dylan Dullea

### The Haunted House

I skittered around the school Halloween party, trying to get away from my mom.

“Go on, Dylan . You’ll love it. You’ll enjoy the haunted house.”

“Yeah, right,” I retorted. I probably wouldn’t be afraid of the actual horrors of the haunted house, but the fifth graders were the real horror in my kindergarten mind. The big boys were huge and they swore, dressed in pants three-fourths of the way down and skate boarding shirts. The big girls giggled and said ‘like’ a lot. They dressed in tiny shirts and worshipped Paul Frank. EEEK! “Fine.” I said reluctantly. I just wanted to get it over with. Mom always won arguments. (She still does...)

I stepped out of the well lit multi-purpose room. I casually popped a gummy worm into my mouth. I almost choked. A kid in a ghoul costume smiled at me. “Happy Halloweeeen!” he moaned.

I crept around him. The exaggerated ‘e’ in HallowEEen always irked me.

“Gee,” I thought. I stood in line and peered around me. I saw 1 twelve Screams, five Spidermen, two Batmen, and fifteen Devils. I also saw a bogeyman. What? It was huge! “No, No, NO! It’s a tree.” The bogeymen were drooling! “No! Dropping leaves! ARRGH,” my brain stormed.

The loudspeaker boomed out “Purple People Eater.” I could live happily without that noise. The air smelled like dead leaves. Of course, I was tromping on them. The whole situation tasted like plastic. WAIT! That’s my fake vampire teeth! It was my turn to go in the haunted house.

A fifth grade boy reached for my ticket. I timidly held mine out. He swiped it and said, “Thanks, dude. You’ll love the house.” He was the most positive fifth grader I’d seen in my life. I walked slowly into the house. I accidentally stepped on a mat.

Happy Halloweeeee! It went. That ‘e’ again. I saw something move, then, a rubber spider dropped in my face.

“Boo,” a tired fifth grader said lamely.

Then I heard two girls talking. “This is like-so like-boring”

“Yeah,” another girl said. “I like-so like-agree.” I walked through the house and saw the girls. One of them saw me. “Like-boo,” she said.

The rest of the house was uneventful, except the time I hid behind a flap of black plastic and scared the daylights out of a bunch of kids. I walked out laughing. I showed them. They weren’t scary! Ha-ha-ha! I’ve never been scared of a haunted house since.

By Josh Benshaul

### My Name To Learn

I like my name Josh but I’m not always so fond of it. Sometimes I wish my name were Derek, not Joshua or Josh. To me Derek is a cool name. Don’t ask me why; it just is. The meaning of my last name, Benshaul, is Son Of Soul. Soul was a great king of Israel. My family surname was not always Benshaul. My great grandfather entered Israel as Dove Frank and had his last name changed to Benshaul, because he wanted to have a Hebrew name from the Bible.

My first name is a common name nowadays. I like having a common name because I get to meet otherpeople with the same first name as me. I don’t know the meaning of my first name but I know Joshua was a big leader. In the history of Israel, he was the the right hand of Moses when he was leading them from Egypt across the desert to freedom. If I could decide what the name Josh meant, it would be Strong in mind. This is because I think it’s Important to be strong in mind.

I can’t think of many famous people who have my name but one is Josh Hartnett, the actor. When I close my eyes and think of a color, nothing comes to mind but black, a mysterious color. Josh is a simple name that is easy to spell and easy to remember. Without names our world would be in confusion.

By Logan Begneaud

## THE BEACH

When I was five years old, I loved to make sand castles. Let me tell you about one day when I was creating a lot of sand castles.

The sun was melting my back as my dad was covering my small body with sunscreen. I was at the beach with my dad and my brother Dylan. Dylan was a cute little seven year old with sandy blonde hair that was half way down his neck. He had this small but loud voice that you would always replay in your mind after he says something. His freckles marched across his nose in an adorable way.

There was a huge barbecue, the beach was crowded and my nose could smell the food from a mile away. I was building a lot of sand castles and I had to keep on jogging to the water to get more and more wet sand sand. I could hear the soft and mellow waves as they slowly crept up onto the beach!

My dad would look over towards me to make sure I was safe. It was low tide and the birds were everywhere just like any hot day at the beach. My ears were about to burst because of all the noise.

I took a break from my sand castles and charged up to the blankets to eat. I could hear the music pounding in my ears as people were swaying side to side in a fast motion. Then there was me sitting on a blanket eating my food in a pink neon swim suit.

After we ate my dad told us that we were going to leave in about fifteen-twenty minutes, so I darted down to the water to get more wet sand. Sand was kicking up from the back of my feet. I just had to make more sand castles.

As I was coming up from the water I saw someone who looked like my dad. I sprinted toward him. When he turned around I was so scared when I saw it wasn't him!! I was terrified! I gazed in every direction hoping to see someone I knew, but there was no one in sight. I fell to the ground and got sand in my eyes! Tears were pouring from my eyes as if they were a faucet turned on full blast. Finding me rolled up in a ball, a lady with sandy blonde hair came and picked me up to bring me to the Coast Guard. Her sweet voice asked me if I was lost, but I couldn't speak.

My dad was back at the barbecue and was telling my brother to rinse off and telling me that we were leaving. When my brother went down to the water I wasn't there. He sprinted back to my dad and told him I was gone.

My dad looked around but he couldn't find me either. He bolted to the beach house to see if I was there. I wasn't! In the meanwhile, my brother was with our friend Jane and he said, "If God took my sister, I hope he didn't drown her. I hope she swam happily out to sea with the dolphins." Jane poured into tears.

My dad, who had been looking at the beach house, went down to the beach and started running. He progressed down the side of the beach when he felt like he was going the wrong way. He ran down the beach towards me, but he was looking downward because I was little. Since the lady was carrying me, he couldn't see me.

He kept on running and looking down the beach when at one moment he saw a Coast Guard up ahead. He stopped to ask the guy if he had seen a small little girl with short curly brown hair, and then he saw me. There I was sitting high up in the passenger side with sand and tears all over my face.

My face was crying and smiling at the same time. My dad grabbed me into his arms and squeezed me. No one could ever imagine how happy I was that day! I will never ever forget being curled up in a ball thinking I would never see my dad, mom or brother again.

By Max Witt

The enormous ziggurat towers like a mountain above the horizon. I approach the gates to the great city of Ur. The guard asks me what I have come to the city to do. I reply, "I have come to trade my timber for livestock." The guard hollers from his post, "The king desires to have some timber. Go to his temple at the center of the city." I pass through the gate and into the city.

My name is Noah. I am a trader traveling to the city of Ur to trade Timber for livestock. It is my first time to the city of Ur.

Many sweating workers are hauling a statue with the head of a man, the body of a lion, and the wings of a bird. The heat burns my face like fire burns a stick. My tongue is sandpaper on my parched mouth. I stop at a stand selling fruit. I purchase an orange. I pop a section after section of orange into my mouth. The orange's sweet and sour juices fill my mouth while I chew its watery pieces.

I hear the squeaking of cart wheels and the cries of a slave being whipped. I smell the sweat of the workers hauling immense statues.

I come to the foot of the temple and leave my cart on the street. I enter the temple and tell the king, "I have come to trade some timber for livestock." The king replies, "I will give you twenty goats and thirty sheep for your timber." He tells his servant, "Get this man his sheep and goats and get someone to unload the cart." He turns to me and says, "Meet the guard in the fields and he will have your sheep." I leave the king and go outside to my empty cart.

I approach the fields and pass the slaves' houses and notice the difference between the houses of the city and these. I look at the large canal system and think about how much work went into constructing the canals. I receive my herds and leave the servant. I enjoyed coming to the city and I will come again.

By Kelly Varian

### Silver Pat

The tangerine sun blazes in the pale spring sky. A cool breeze swims through the lush trees that line the sidewalk sending dew that lounged on the the sleek leaves diving to the ground.

The cluttered streets of San Francisco buzz with laughter and excitement as a swarm of people scamper over to the busiest street corner of the wharf. There a circle of impatient fans thickens around Pat, the most mysterious man, no woman. Well I don't know if Pat's a Patrick or Patty, for now simply Pat. He's the most mysterious person in the entire city, if not country.

Even the playful seagulls seemed to gather. Their clan accumulating greatly, and quite quickly I should add. They came to watch this individual taking a break from the usual afternoon of provoking those at the cafe. All in a flawless row they sat, chests out and beaks squawking, or as weird as it may seem, chuckling. Yes, chuckling at the crowd that began to form before them.

A maroon top hat with a golden feather bobs along about the sea of hair. A dark mask lays on Pat's face leaving only a set of clear green eyes visible. A dancing spark of wildness dashes through those bright watery eyes as he glares toward me. But deep in Pat's eyes there is something more, loneliness. For it is not easy being the most mysterious person alive, not at all.

All spray painted silver he moves quickly and sharply. Each of these robot-like movements are perfectly matched with a whizzing sort of sound. A small streak of cream colored skin appears as a dribble of sweat tumbles along the long slender arm washing away the silver paint. Out on the streets since dawn Pat lets out a sigh knowing that the audience will stay there, on the street corner expecting a show far past dusk.

No one really knows Pat, no, not really but just by looking at this mystery man or woman you have to wonder: Who really is that under the mask? Who? It could be anyone, anyone you know, or have ever met; it could be anyone at all. It could be the person you know best, the person you know everything about. They could be out there, right now dancing to their heart's desire.

Do you know them, the real them? Maybe Pat is not as lonely as I thought.

By Michael Rodriguez

### Michael the Towhead

Both my parents decided to name me Michael, a name they both agreed was right. My dad wanted to name me after him and his dad which would be Rafael. My mom had no problem naming me Rafael as long it wasn't my first name.

Seven or eight years before my parents got married, they played Ouija. My mom already knew what she was going to name me as a first child. If I was a boy, I'd be named Michael. If I was a girl, my name would be Jeniffer. When my parents played Ouija my mom asked, "What would the name be of our first child?" The board said, "Michael".

Seven or eight years later when my parents got married they forgot about the game. They named me Michael because they were already having credit problems with my grandparents on my dad's side. My mom's initials are "A.R." and my grandma's initials are "A.R." also. My dad's initials are "R.R." and my grandfather's initials are "R.R." too. That's why they didn't name me Rafael Rodriguez.

A few years later when I was three she remembered the Ouija board game and how it had said "Michael" and she thought it was freaky that happened. When they were naming me they forgot about the game.

My full name is Michael Rafael Rodriguez. I'm positive that my name is Hebrew (at least that's what the name book says). My name means who is like an arched angel. Even though my name is Michael I have very odd nicknames. They are Bum, Magoo, Michael (MISH-I-L), Munchkin and Tumus. Bum and Magoo came out at random. Michael (MISH-I-L) is German, I think. Munchkin I got in the 3rd grade from my friend's dad. Tumus was given to me in the 4th grade from The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe.

I went to Mexico when I was six. While I was there people kept trying to touch my hair because Mexicans believed that touching or having blond hair is good luck.

I lie and say I don't like my name. I like my name because, I don't think you can rearrange my name to spell anything mean or stupid. I don't like my name because it's a popular name to have. During breaks people would say Michael and I'd think they're talking to me. I'd turn and they'd run by me and meet up with someone else. That's really annoying now because last year almost no one was named Michael from 3rd-5th grade.

I don't care that Michael Jordan, Michael Jackson, Michael Douglas, Michael Angelo, or Mike Tyson are named the same first name as mine. Since I've never met any of them in person I can't say that it bothers me to have the same name.

If someone younger than me was named Michael Rodriguez and was rich and famous, it would bother me because they stole my name and became rich and famous off of it.

The word towhead means to have blond hair. My parents had never heard that name before until I started to grow hair.

By Sofie Soorenko

## Mirror, Mirror

Once upon a time, many years ago, there lived a horrid looking queen. Actually the prince almost died of shock when his father explained to him that she was going to be his queen. On the other hand, Queen Crude almost died of excitement when she found out she was marrying Prince Pearl (He was very handsome!)

The prince (Almost king), had a very beautiful, maid that worked for him. Before Prince Pearl's father announced he would be marrying Queen Crude, the prince and the maid were having a secret romance. He didn't tell his father, because the king didn't approve of lower class marriages. Prince Pearl and Winter White would be in trouble if anyone found out about their late night walks among the towering redwoods, or the midnight dances under the shining stars. Before the rooster wakes up the maids for work, and the golden sun has yet to creep over the mountain tops and sail over the small village. However, there was one, and only one person who knew about these magical nights. That was the best soldier in the palace... Pete. Pete was Winter White's best friend. He never tells anyone anything they aren't supposed to know!

A couple of days after the wedding between Queen Crude and Prince Pearl, the prince past away. It was a very tragic day, for most of the townspeople and the entire palace. Well anyway the queen had still been getting wedding gifts, and one day a present arrived. After many minutes of unwrapping the mystery gift, She showed the all the maids and servants. They all oohed and, and ahhed, for Queen Crude had gotten a gorgeous mirror. It was bigger than a big screen television. The mirror had decorative gold trimming, like a giant wave. No one knew it had a disease and that the mirror could talk!

The servants hung it next to the door to the dining hall. No one knew why the Queen wanted it there, but that was her favorite room in all of the palace. She spends most of her time sneaking nibbles of cookies and gobbles of cakes made for the up coming balls and state dinners.

One morning Queen Crude was walking into the dining hall for her early morning meal around 10:00 a.m. She stopped in front of the mirror and said, "Mirror, Mirror on near the dining hall, who is the prettiest of them all?" A couple of seconds went by and the queen almost left to eat when she heard, "Well, actually the maid with the beautiful strawberry blond ringlets and a pale face. I think Winter White, she is very-" The mirror didn't have time to finish the sentence, when Queen Crude butted in, "What did you just say to me?" The mirror immediately changed its mind. "Sorry, you are definitely the most beautiful in the palace, maybe even all of our small village." That's exactly what I thought," the queen crudely stated.

The mirror incident bothered Queen Crude quite a bit; she got very angry with Winter White. "How could anyone be prettier than the queen?" she thought, maybe if she didn't exist I would be the prettiest. "Hmmmmm..."

The queen thought about this for a couple of weeks. How would she kill Winter White? What would she say happened to her, who would do it? After many long hours of labor into her plan she finally got it. The best soldier in the palace should do it; then he could deal with the gory equipment! The next day Queen Crude went up to Pete and told him the plan. "No way, Winter White is my friend, not enemy!" Pete explained.

"Well she is MY enemy, so DO IT!!!" The queen said to change his mind, "Ok, OK, but only if you give me a big raise!!!! I am losing my best friend here!"

The next month the date came that Pete was to take Winter White on an outing into the woods. This was a very difficult task for Pete to perform; no one murdered his/her best friend. Finally tea time came, and it was time to go on a stroll in the forest. They talked about all sorts of topics, work, the queen, and mostly the mirror. Pete almost forgot what he was doing out there. When they got to Winter White's favorite spot in the woods, Pete was very nervous; he couldn't do it! So he told Winter White what Queen Crude had told him to do, but he added a little detail... RUN!!!! Winter White did just that. She ran for hours, across parts of the forest she had never been before. Finally she stopped at a little cute cottage. It had a thatched roof, and looked really comfy. It looked like a perfect place to

stop and rest. She knocked on the wooden door three times. “Knock, Knock, Knock.” A tiny dwarf opened the door hesitantly. He had a plain red wizard’s cap on, khaki pants, and a royal blue t-shirt. His face was cute and chubby.

There wasn’t only one dwarf, there were seven! A whole house of dwarves is very rare to see in the middle of the Enchanted Forest, or anywhere as a matter of fact!

That night at dinner Winter White met all the dwarves. There was, Happy, Snappy, Groovy, Smoothie, Fruity, Droopy and Cocky. Winter White was very pleased to have a good meal.

Winter White stayed with all seven dwarfs for three years until she thought she ought to take a journey back to the palace with her friends, the dwarves. This time, they packed all the things they needed, because unlike last time Winter White traveled, she knew where she was going. She really wanted to see what had happened to all of her friends at the palace over the years, especially Pete. She knew he would be happy to see her, but disappointed that she had disobeyed him.

The next day, the eight of them were off. All of them were so excited, especially Groovy who had never been to a real palace before, and he hoped it would be something he would never forget. When Winter White and the dwarves got to the palace they walked over the folding bridge to where Pete used to work... but not anymore. There were new men there now. But luckily, she knew the password and got in. Right after they got into the palace Winter White walked right into the throne room, and saw Pete. He was a joker! He always hated the old joker Marcus. Pete said he would never become a joker, but times have changed.

Immediately when Winter White walked into the room, Pete looked up and halted, just stared at her. A couple seconds later after everyone in the room had recognized her and said hi, Pete unfroze, and shot over to Winter White. He looked so glad to see her face, but also disappointed that she disobeyed him. They walked into the joker’s room where they talked for hours, and sometimes they laughed, cried and stayed calm. Then Pete told Winter White the big news. Queen Crude was sick... very sick, so sick she was about to pass away any second now. This should have been a sad time for everyone, but it wasn’t; they all hated the queen!

All the dwarves and Winter White stayed for a week before Queen Crude died. At her funeral they announced Pete as the new King of the country! Everyone was happy, especially Winter White for the next night, she would become queen!

By Moriah Agoustari

### Real Life

Some people would like to never get hurt or heartbroken. They never want to fall off their bike or break a bone. These people do not want a real life. A real life is full of pleasures and hard times. I learned this lesson throughout the book, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. To me this is the main theme of this book. I think she shows pleasures and hard times in many different and distinct ways.

Lois Lowry shows Jonas' experiences with hard times in different ways throughout the book, but it is usually shown through the memories *The Giver* transmits to Jonas. An example of this is on pages 119-120: "But the noise continued all around: the cries of the wounded men, the cries begging for water and for Mother and for death. Horses lying on the ground shrieked, raised their heads, and stabbed randomly toward the sky with their hooves. From the distance, Jonas could hear the thud of cannons. Overwhelmed by pain, he lay there in a fearsome stench for hours, listening to the men and animals die, and learned what welfare meant." This quote was very powerful to me and definitely showed a hard time in which many people were hurt. But sometimes you must have warfare in life because some people can't control their anger towards someone or something, or a group wants to win land for a specific country. I think you believe this land you are standing on is important, but it was won in battle.

Another example of a hardship is when Jonas felt hunger after running away to find help elsewhere. Being hungry is very uncomfortable, especially when you cannot possibly get something to eat. Jonas had nothing for himself, and to make it worse he had to care for Gabe too. Plus it was winter so he could not find berries or make a tool to hunt with. Jonas also felt small and hurtful things like sunburns. It was still hard for Jonas, and every one of these things would be extremely hard for me.

In all these hard times, Jonas feels pleasures too. An example from the book is on pages 80-81: "Now he becomes aware of an entirely new sensation: pin pricks? No, because they were soft and without pain. Tiny, cold, feather like feelings peppered his body and face.. He put out his tongue again, and caught one of the dots of cold upon it. It disappeared from his awareness instantly; but he caught another and another. The sensation made him smile." In this quote he discovers snow. I love snow just as much as Jonas does. I can believe that he had such a reaction and he never ever had seen anything like it.

I think the best thing Jonas saw was Christmas on page 123: "While Jonas watched, the people began one by one to untie the ribbons on the packages, to unwrap the bright papers, open the boxes and reveal toys and clothing and books. There were cries of delight. They hugged each other."

"The small child went and sat on the lap of the old woman, and she rocked him and rubbed her cheek against his." This memory shows him love, warmth, family and the concept of grandparents. Every one of these things are equally important as the other. Jonas never knew joy until then. What would you do if you had never experienced it?

This theme of pleasures and hardships of life is definitely most important. Not that love, freedom and courage are not, but these things stand in that category. As Jonas receives these memories he learns how to live a good, but real life. I think this would be what *The Giver* was trying to get Jonas to do. I would feel very lucky actually to be the receiver of memory. No matter how much it hurt, I would want to know the truth, and see what I was meant to see.

Jonas did the right thing; he ran away. He could not live in that prison. In this "elsewhere" that Jonas set out to find, I'm positive he will find many pleasures and hard times, and when he gets there he will live a real life.

By Rebecca Goldman

### Sindbad, the Eighth Voyage

Sindbad sat in his armchair, pondering his last travels. He shuddered at the thought of where he had last been, glanced about the room to see if he was being watched, and then swore out loud never to travel again.

\* \* \*

(Two years later)

Rain pounded miserably on the roofs threatening to smash the single-paned glass windows. Every lawn and every flowerbed was ruined by the drenching rain. Sindbad stared blankly at the window, not being able to see outside for the water sliding continually down the thin glass like a very steep waterslide. He began dozing slightly, drifting off, lulled by the constant pitter-patter of rain on concrete and roofs mingled with the crackle-pop of the fire blazing pleasantly in the fireplace. His entire body collapsed as he plummeted into a strange dream: he, Sindbad, was Muhammad, and Allah was talking to him. Allah said to Muhammad-Sindbad, 'Prophet, you must journey on a great voyage. You are missing out in life. Go now, Muhammad...' his voice became distant as his image flickered and vanished. Then the scene swirled profusely and his vision became clouded with a mass of mixed colors. The shapes of Muhammad-Sindbad and his surroundings became strange as they changed into something extremely different from what they formerly were.

Suddenly, he was Sindbad again and he was back in his own time period. Sindbad was slightly surprised at what he saw, and apparently, he had just traveled several days ahead in time. He seemed to be traveling down Mainstreet; he was following someone and appeared to be having trouble keeping up. The someone he was following disappeared behind a group of travelers with bags, and when their last pack had cleared away there appeared to be nothing there but an empty alleyway. By instinct, Sindbad entered the alley at a run, hoping to catch up with the figure. He rounded the corner and saw the figure leaving a shop (the shop where people usually sell their goods before journeying). He then saw the figure mounting a ship. Once again, Sindbad's vision became foggy and swirled. Everything went black and he woke with a start.

\* \* \*

It took a second for Sindbad to regain his senses, but as soon as he had, he realized that what had awakened him was the booming thunder rattling the feeble windows. He sat there for a moment, pondering the dream he had just witnessed. He wasn't sure what it meant, but he knew one thing: he needed rest. With great effort, Sindbad heaved himself out of the armchair and lumbered down the hallway toward his bedroom.

Exactly one week later, Sindbad sat peacefully on a park bench watching a ship pulling into the harbor as the family of each crew-member crowded around the dock. He suddenly found himself longing to take a voyage. He sold all his things, bought a ship, and hired a crew and set sail immediately.

Not long into the journey, the weather was beautiful and the waters as smooth as glass. The air was still and the sky clean; this, however, was not the idea of a perfect day to Sindbad and Company because they were unable to move in such flat conditions. The captain cried out in despair and his voice rang out on the open water like the boom of an eerie bell tolling out a death warning, "We're in the Doldrums! We'll never move again! We must have reached the end of our lives!"

The entire crew panicked, some were so terrified that they leapt overboard without even thinking twice about the fact that there was no land within sight-range. Nearly the whole crew had vanished overboard, and a few thick people seemed to think that climbing up the mast and blowing into the sails would make the boat move again.

On the tenth day of being stuck in the Doldrums, circumstances changed dramatically. Wind howled. Waves soared. As if by magic, the sun flashed brightly for less than a second and the bright blue sky changed dramatically into a deep black grey. The sun vanished and a harsh fog engulfed the air about the sea. Rain poured like bullets from a gun. With the force of this weather-change, Sindbad's ship leapt from the icy waters and was on its way.

The ship with had moved considerably since the day the great storm had started. Now that the storm had passed, they had a clear view of what was going on around them besides rain and wind. "Sindbad, land! Just there! On the horizon!" called the man on lookout. "At last!" Sindbad roared, then heaved a great sigh of relief.

\* \* \*

The earth felt good between Sindbad's toes. It was a strange island that they had come to, but all the same, it was land, not sea, and seemed to be plentiful enough. Sindbad and Company (or what's left of it) found food and shelter and settled in.

Apart from the animals that roamed it, the island seemed normal. The animals were very strange indeed, each one was half one animal and half another. For example, there was one with the head, shoulders, and front paws of a cat, and the rest of the creature was that of a pig, complete with a curly tail. In addition to the strange creatures, another thing that bothered Sindbad was that the day after their arrival, the ship they had come on vanished, and every morning he awoke to find one or more of his comrades missing.

When Sindbad had only two companions left, he decided that together they should solve this mystery. When evening came, they lay down like they usually did, but instead of sleeping, they watched the night closing in about them. From behind the trees strange shadows evolved. These shadowy figures left the protection of the trees and emerged into the moonlight. It was the strange creatures. A cat-pig, a crab-horse, a cow-fly, and a fish-dog were closing in on them. One of Sindbad's comrades screamed, but before he could finish opening his mouth, the scream was strangled and he lay limp in the claws of the swift-moving crab-horse. The cow-fly seized Sindbad's last companion and was gone with the slightest flick of a wing-tip.

The mystery was solved, but how to fix the problem, Sindbad didn't know. For many nights, Sindbad lay in fear for his life; he had tried moving his bed to a tree, where he was less vulnerable, but he knew that if the creatures were smart enough to keep their love of eating humans a secret, they were smart enough to figure out that the reason they had no food at the moment was because their dinner had solved the mystery of their secret.

Sindbad kept a constant eye on the sea for signs of ships. He recognized that his life depended on getting off the Island of Man-Eating Creatures, and every evening he prayed that that opportunity would come.

One day, when Sindbad was gazing at sea, a sail appeared on the horizon, and it was moving quite quickly towards him. When it got near enough that he was sure they would be able to see him, he climbed a tall oak and stood in its upper branches yelling and waving his arms. The ship pulled into a natural cove and several men filed off the ship and onto the shore. They had a brief conversation about his experience and offered him some goods from their ship. The items the sailors offered looked strangely familiar to Sindbad. He asked the sailors where they had come about them and they told him, "Some guy named Sindbad abandoned them a year ago before he left on a journey—" but the sailor never finished his sorry tale, because Sindbad interrupted him.

"Sindbad, you say? I'm Sindbad! I demand that you return my things to me at once!"

So Sindbad sailed back to his homeland with the sailors and when he arrived home, he solemnly vowed never to journey again.

\* \* \*

By Gus Sandage

## Heroes

### Chapter One

One day it had to happen. The legend comes to a starting point and that's what I am here to tell you about, the day the Heroes were born.

"Whaaaaa Whaaaa" The four mothers tried to hush their babies but it just couldn't be...NO, NO, NO! Not that birth. Would it be easier if I just phrased it as, "the day they got their powers!" Now let's try this again.

It was a nice sunny spring day at Sunny Middle School. The shouts of laughter filled the hallways and pods. The teachers said encouraging things to the students as they walked through the school doors... NOT! Are you kidding? It was the middle of the winter, and we were at MVMS. The lockers smelled and the teachers drooped in to the classroom, hoping to get at least a little more out of the kids than they could their coffee.

But our story is not about the teachers, it's about three students. Ok, I lied. It's about four students, but one I don't count as a student. I just count him as a kid who is in school for the heck of it. And that student is Gus, our main character, along with his friends; Rich, Michael, Matt and their trusty pet Chris. (He's not actually a pet but I need some way to get back at him for almost giving me a heart attack.) Now let's get back to the story.

The bell rang. School had started, and all but four students made their way to the pods. These four students just happened to be making their way to the bathrooms.

"Why in the world did you bring us here?" Rich asked Gus.

"I got to go," Gus replied.

"What! You went five times before class," scolded Michael. "You need help this time?" Now that definitely deserved a punch in the stomach, but for some strange reason Gus didn't.

"Actually I'm here to give you guys a choice. Either you come with me to the science lab and mix formulas, and take the chance that it would blow up leaving us with super powers. Or you could go back to class and learn about as much as a brick." They all quickly agreed with Gus, and with that, four students snuck to the science lab, which in this case was around a corner.

Now what happened next is unknown to me, but the next thing I knew a BOOM interrupted all the classes and it had come from the science lab.

Rich found himself tumbling out of the bright green science lab and up the short flight of stairs. He didn't know what had happened, but he did know that if he didn't get out everyone would blame him like they always did when Gus got in trouble. But to his amazement he was flying instead of running like usual. "Wow" He thought, "Maybe Gus was right. Maybe we did gain super powers by mixing those crazy potions together. Well if we did gain super powers we should still meet at our usual spot." And with that he sped off. He stopped abruptly. "Wait we do not have a meeting spot," he said to himself "Oh well." he said to himself and sped off to the library.

It seemed everybody had the idea to go to the library. So once there, Rich got to see everybody's powers.

Rich- Flying  
Matt- Speed  
Michael- Invisible  
Chris- Changeling  
Gus- Fire/ice

And with that they were the...the...the, forget the name, they just went off to save the school.

## Chapter Two

“Ha, ha, ha” The kids in Mrs. Tom’s class all laughed as Will fell to the floor. Will wanted to yell and to hit to kill, but his body wouldn’t listen. Instead it ran, ran out of the room and then out of the school. He raced through alleys and up streets that he had only dreamed of going to. He did not know where his body was taking him and really didn’t care. So he ran until he couldn’t run any more. After he used a couple of minutes to catch his breath. The thought occurred to him he did not know where he was.

“I don’t know where I am” he said out loud to himself. Then for no apparent reason he looked up. “Oh!” He gasped loudly and ran forward into the place that was labeled.

*Very creepy machine factory.*

At their secret hide out (the library,) Rich, Michael, Matt and Chris. Were all practicing their skills. Matt was rushing around the huge room in super speed; Rich was trying to catch Chris who was being a good little butterfly. Michael was disappearing and reappearing, trying to control his powers. But compared to what Gus had to control, that was nothing. Not only was Gus skin made out of volcanic lava on one side of his body and ice on the other. But also he could not control his powers like the others could. But the main reason he was so sad was because he could not change back into the brown-haired brown-eyed boy he once was. Not that he really wanted to change back though, but everything he touched either froze or burnt to ashes. So he had to hover about.

They all stopped at the sound of a phone ringing. Rich glanced at the others and then at the phone. Since no one else grabbed it he did. “Hello,” he said into the phone.

“Is this the justice gang of the school?” The voice answered.

“Why yes, here to save the school and...”

“Shut up and listen. This is a crises, there is a cyborg and it’s destroying the 6th grade pod, hurry.” Rich heard the click as the person on the other line hung up. He turned around to tell the others, but they had already whisked down the hall.

By the time he got there all of the other super heroes were knocked out, except for Gus, who was sneaking up behind the robot. And just about to slam his fist through the robot and melt him. But then the tables turned and the robot turned and smashed Gus down and Gus turned and fell.

“NO” Rich yelled. Then Rich saw something that no one else saw. The robot was a half human and that half human was Will.

“Will?” he asked.

“Yes, I just could not take your teasing so die,” Will said, aiming a fireball at Rich.

Rich looked around the room like any normal person would but then he remembered he wasn’t normal, and he turned to face Will. “No!” Rich said and gave Will a punch he didn’t wake up from.

## Chapter Three

“What?” my friend Michael said flabbergasted.

“You have to be with an adult to enter the corn maze,” The teenager who called herself a ticket taker repeated.

“Uh... well, yeah, ok,” I said and made it as clear as daylight that we were ticked off. But as teenagers are, she just made a stuck up face and said, “There’s a line you know!” And shoed us away.

“Well that was weird and well... weird. I mean, I seriously do not remember that.” I tried to reassure my friend as we walked away towards another part of the maze. I saw a map lying on the hay-covered ground. I picked it up and shoved it deep into my pocket thinking nothing of it.

“Well we could use our powers to sneak in,” Michael suggested.

“No, too dangerous people could discover us.” I reminded him. “And if we do try to use our powers we can’t,” I said continuing to lecture him.

“Why?”

“Because in our last fight against the evil cyborg, we used up all our power.”

“Yeah, I remember.”

“ But you were knocked out the whole fight. Somehow even though only Rich and I fought, you, Matt and Chris all lost your energy, too. The energy we lost was the energy that enables our powers. At least now I can touch the ground without burning or freezing it. Now all we have left is super strength. But do not go sulking around, because I found out that there are different levels of strength, and that if we push our strength high enough we can become really powerful.”

“ But how?” Michael said.

“ You’ll find out soon enough.”

Rich, Matt and Chris just happened to be at that same corn maze that same day. (They had snuck in.) “ The flame will consume you,” Matt was saying at that moment.

“ Yeah whatever.” Rich was regretting that he had torn up the map.

But as for Chris he was trying to get his power back.

“ Please,” he prayed to the gods of power. “Let me have my power back. Even a little sign would be good.” Suddenly out of nowhere a bright light appeared, and turned Chris into a giant pile of doo-doo.

“ Darn,” he cursed.

#### Another Part of The Hay Field.

“ Well at least we were able to sneak in,” said Michael.

“ Yeah, Bu....”

“Ah man.” Michael’s voice interrupted me.

“What?” I cried out in panic.

“ I stepped in dog doo,” he replied.

“ Gosh Michael,” I said and turned to go.

“ Wait, don’t go!”

“What, who said that?”

“ It was I, Chris.” And with that the piece of doo rose up and formed Chris .  
Michael fainted. I threw up.

Rich and Matt turned the bend that they thought led out. But when they rounded the corner, instead of the laughter and smell of hay they thought they would find , they heard a robotic voice : “Rich, I was expecting you. ”

“ What, how..”

Laughing like maniacs, Chris, Michael and I rounded a corner to what we expected to be out. But what we found stopped us in our tracks.

“ Help! Gus, Michael and Chris help!”

As my friends powered up at Matt’s cry for help, I stood and watched blood stricken. As they attacked the big hunk of metal I still stood and watched. As they failed I stood and watched. Finally as it kidnapped Rich and his screams turned into long mournful moans my friends approached.

“ What was that thing? Why didn’t you help?” they asked.

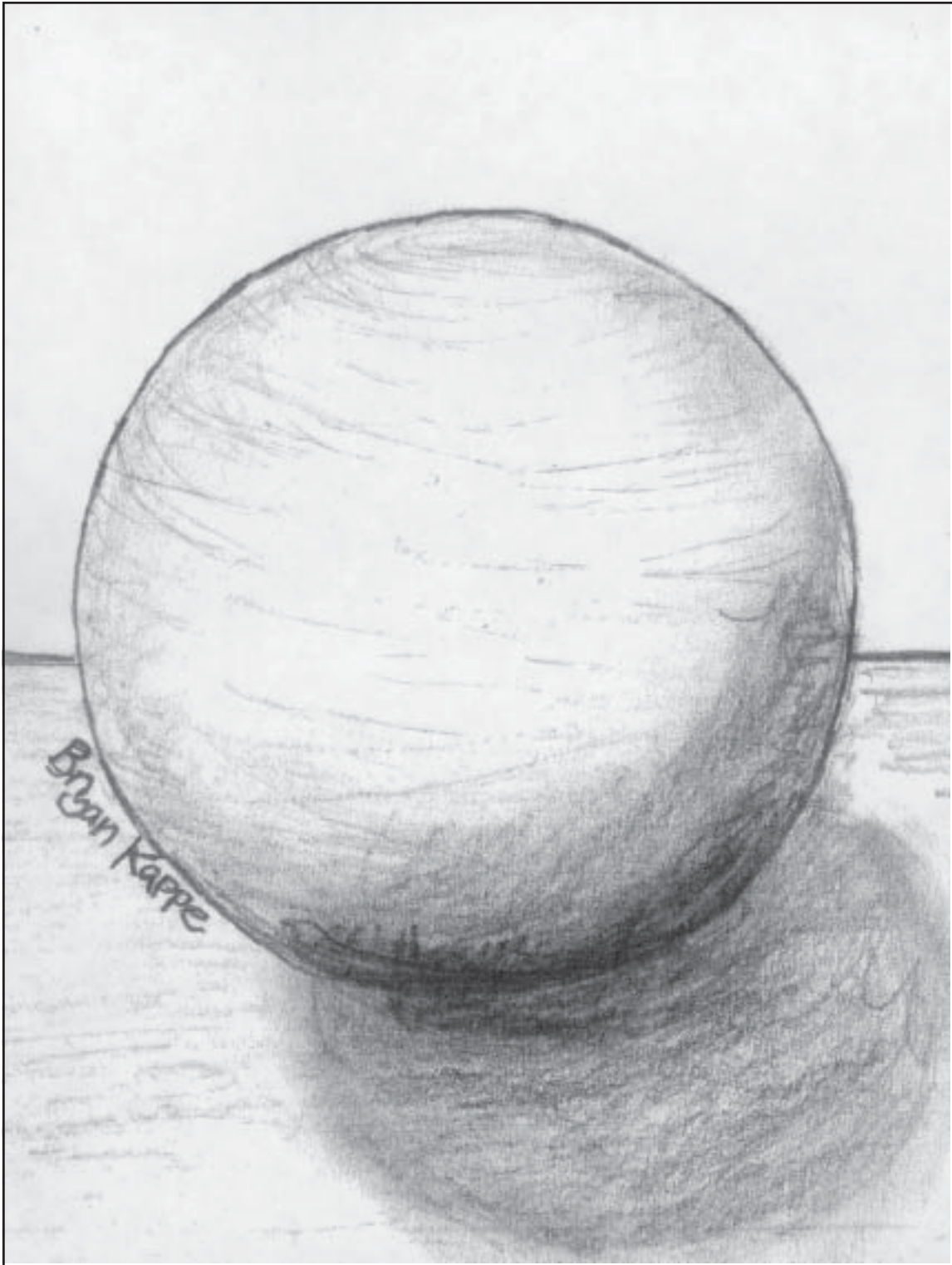
“ All I know is that I saw Rich destroy him,” I replied. “ And now its up to us to do just that.”

To be continued.....

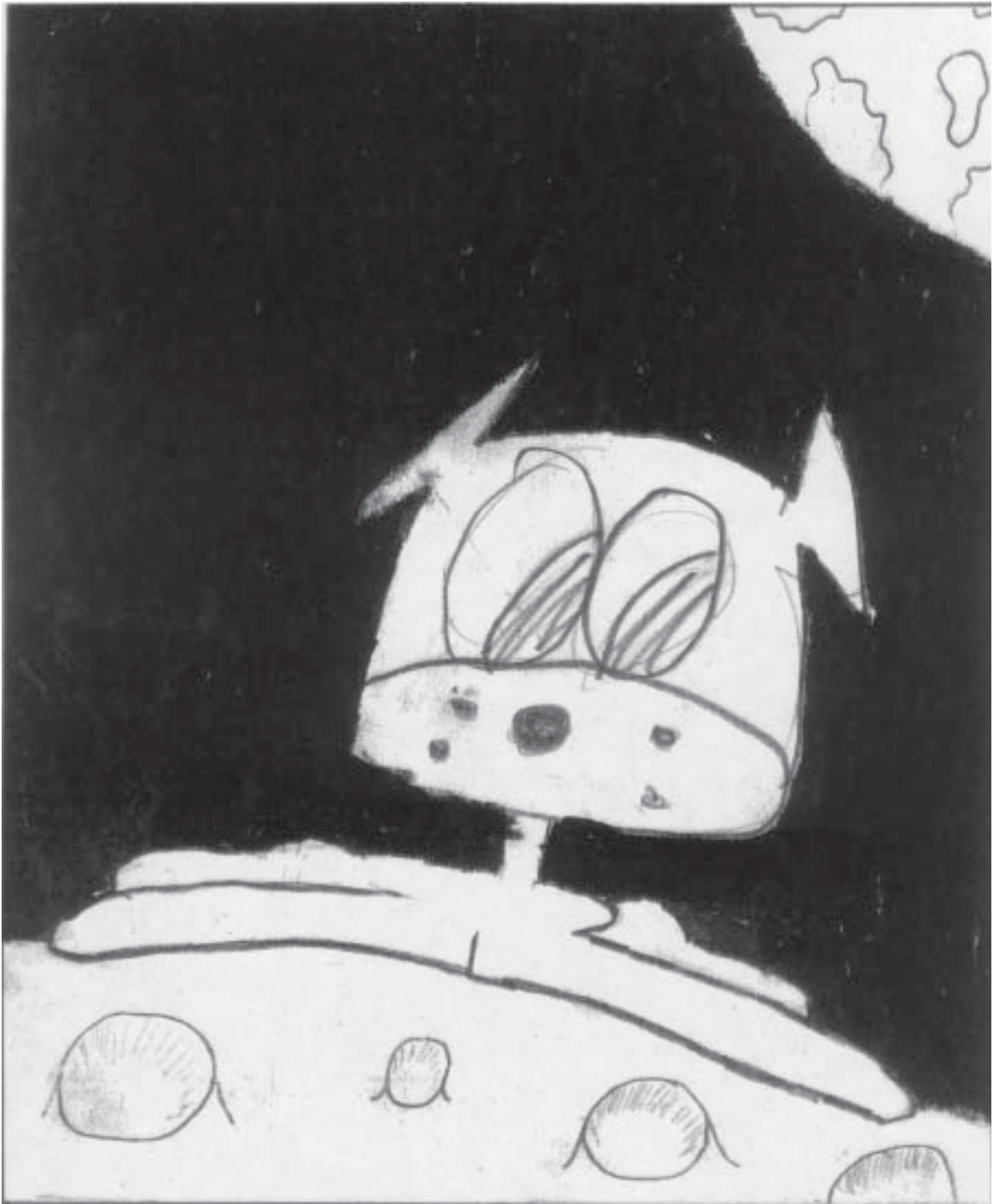
## Original Student Artwork



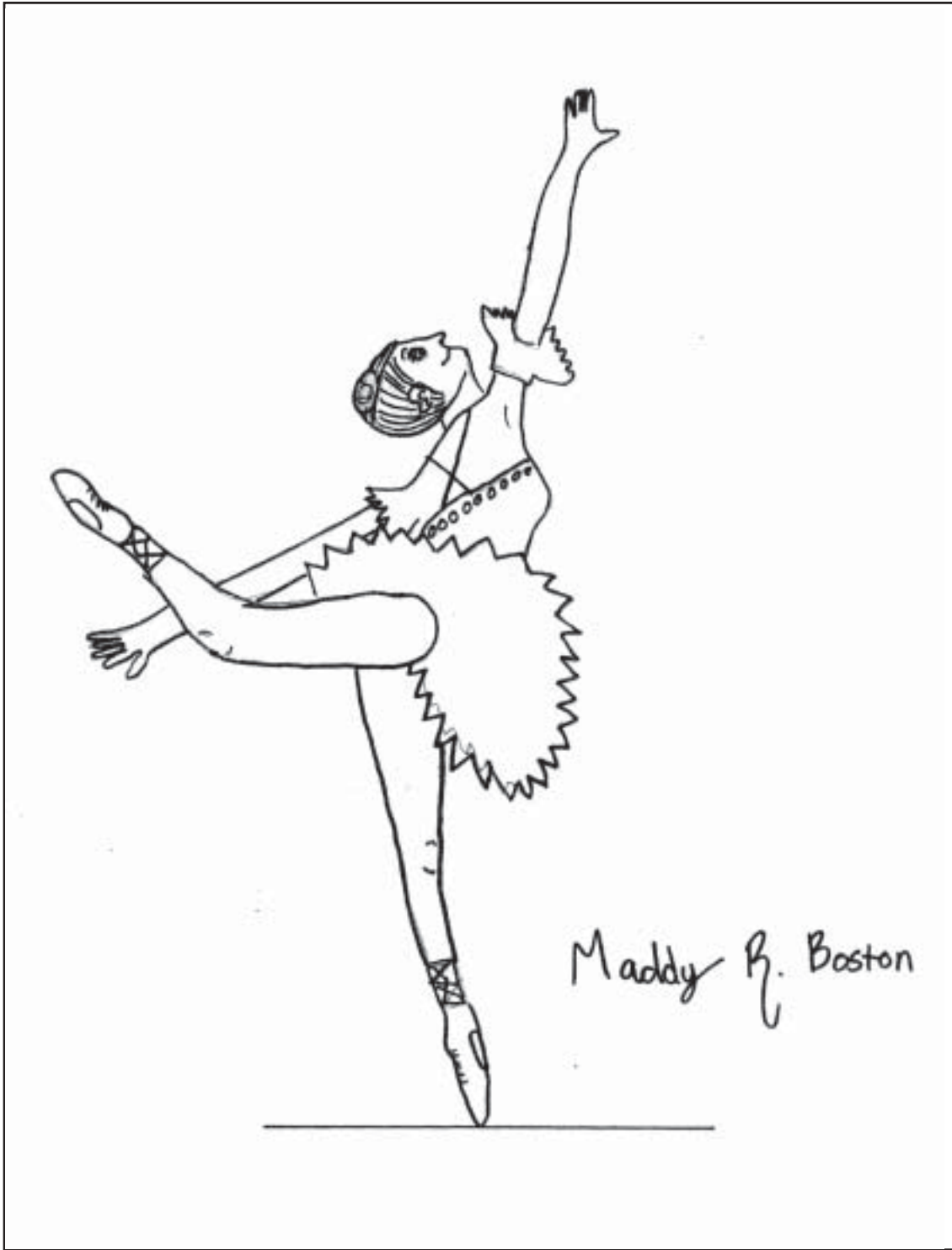
Danielle Frieberg, 7th grade



Bryan Kappe, 7th grade



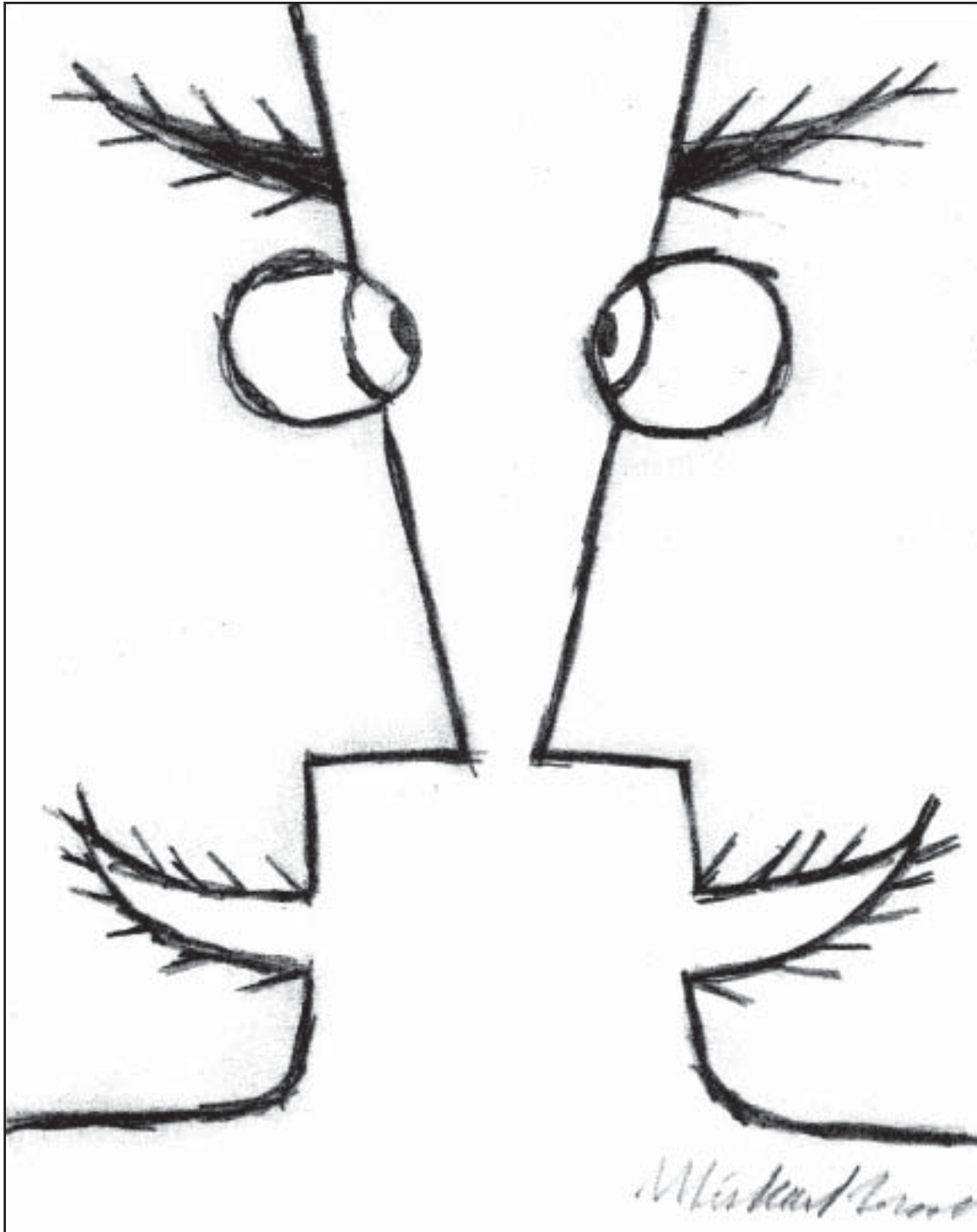
Erin McCauley, 7th grade



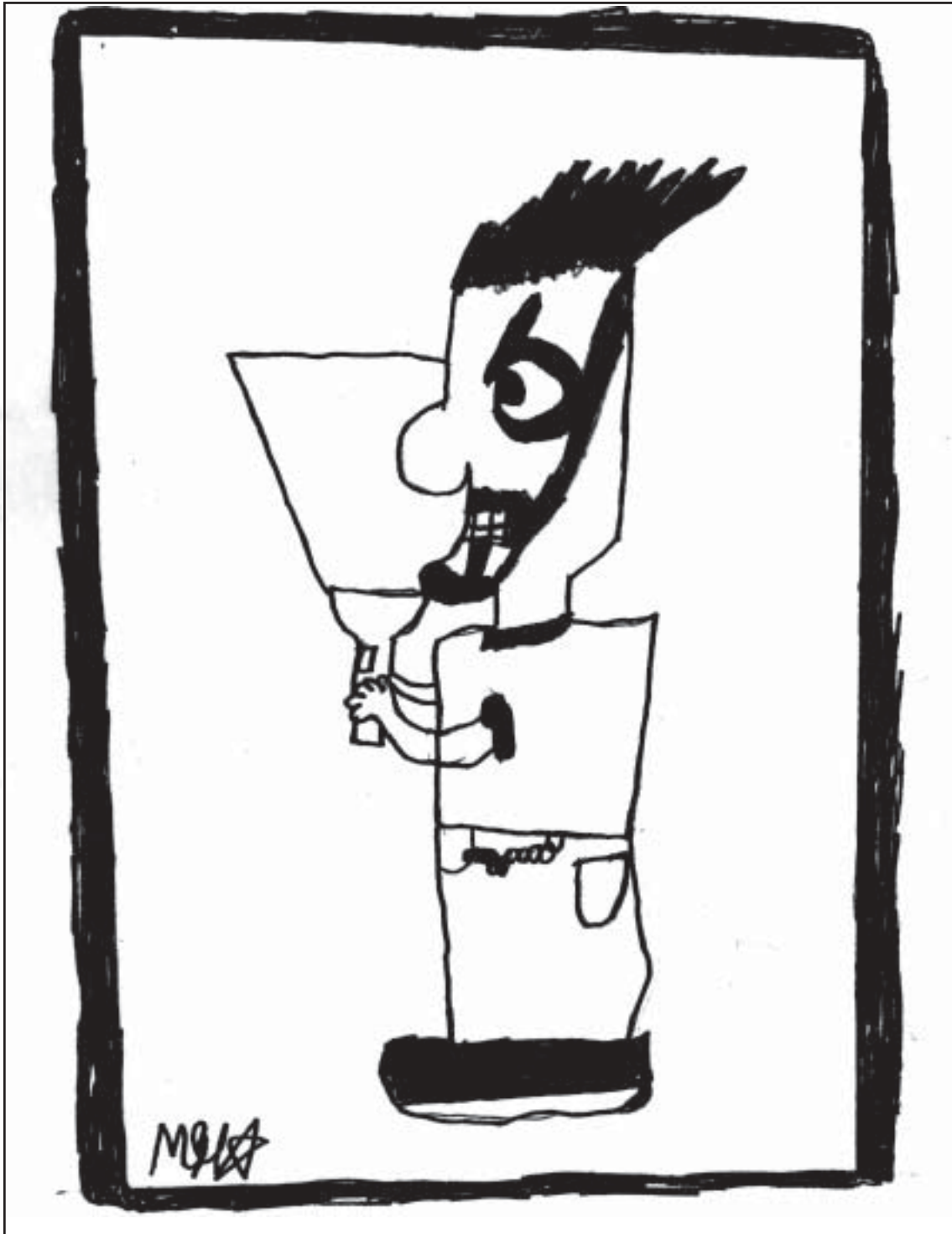
Maddy Boston, 6th grade



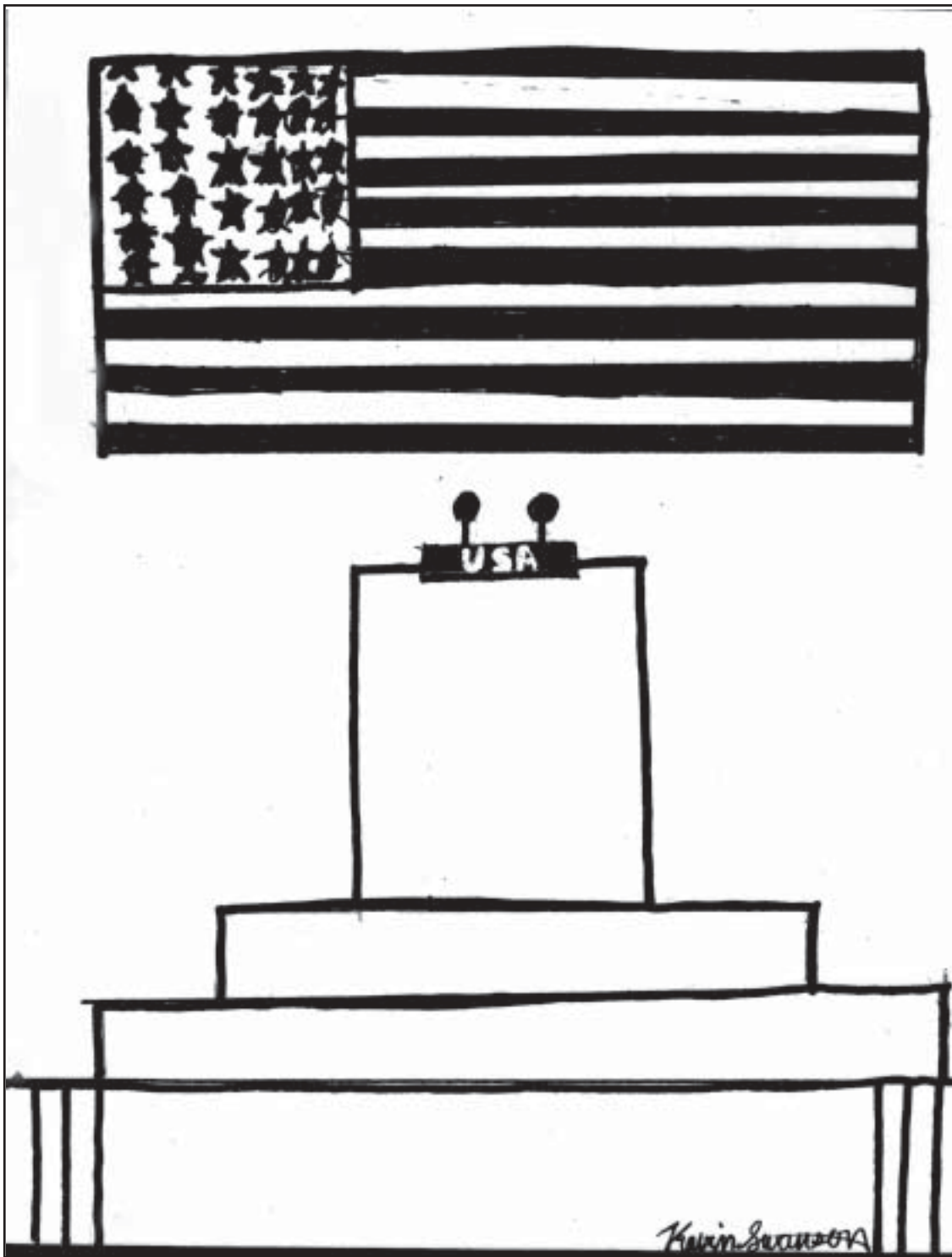
Carter Rudnick, 7th grade



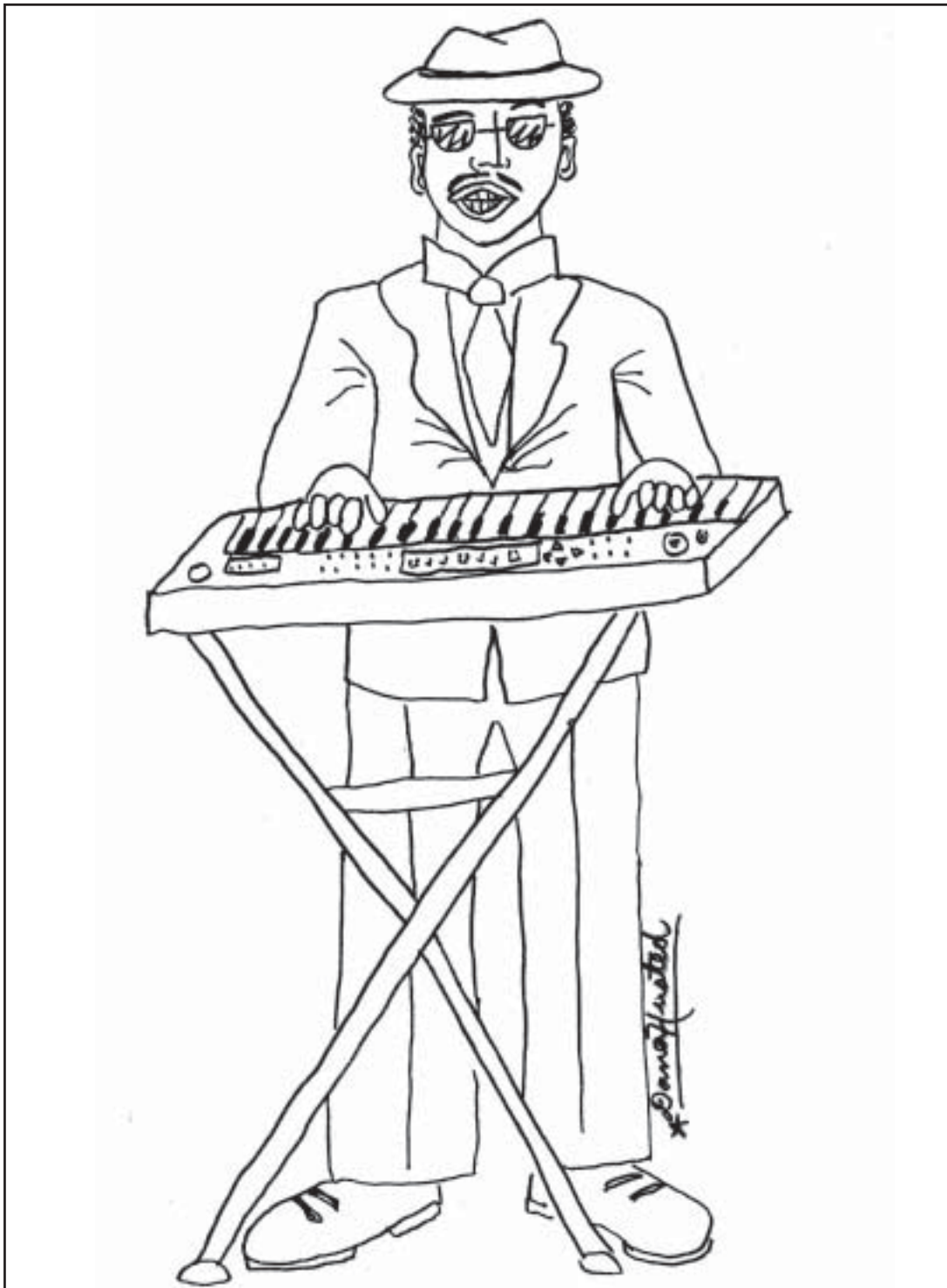
Michael Larsen, 7th grade



Marshall Hamilton, 7th grade



Kevin Swanson, 7th grade



Dana Husted, 7th grade



Natalie Johnson, 6th grade



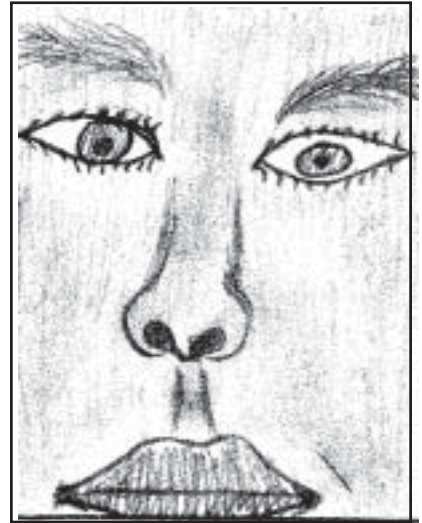
Eve Jones, 7th grade



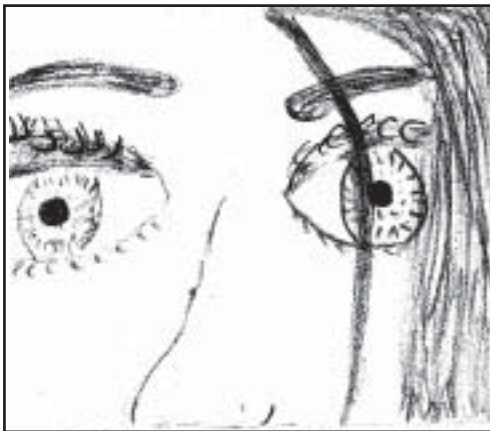
Audrey Tommassini, 7th grade



Kelly Witwicki, 6th grade



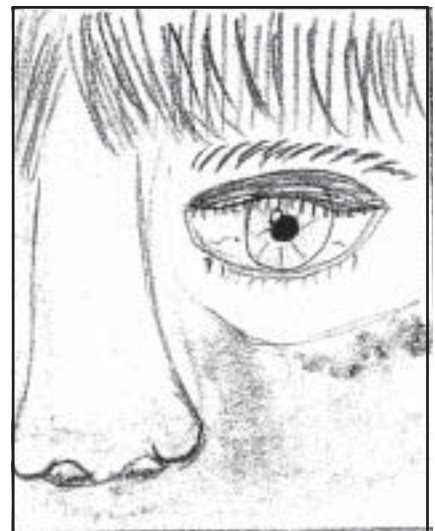
Rafi Nur, 6th grade



Erin Mahoney, 6th grade



Morgan Thompson, 6th grade

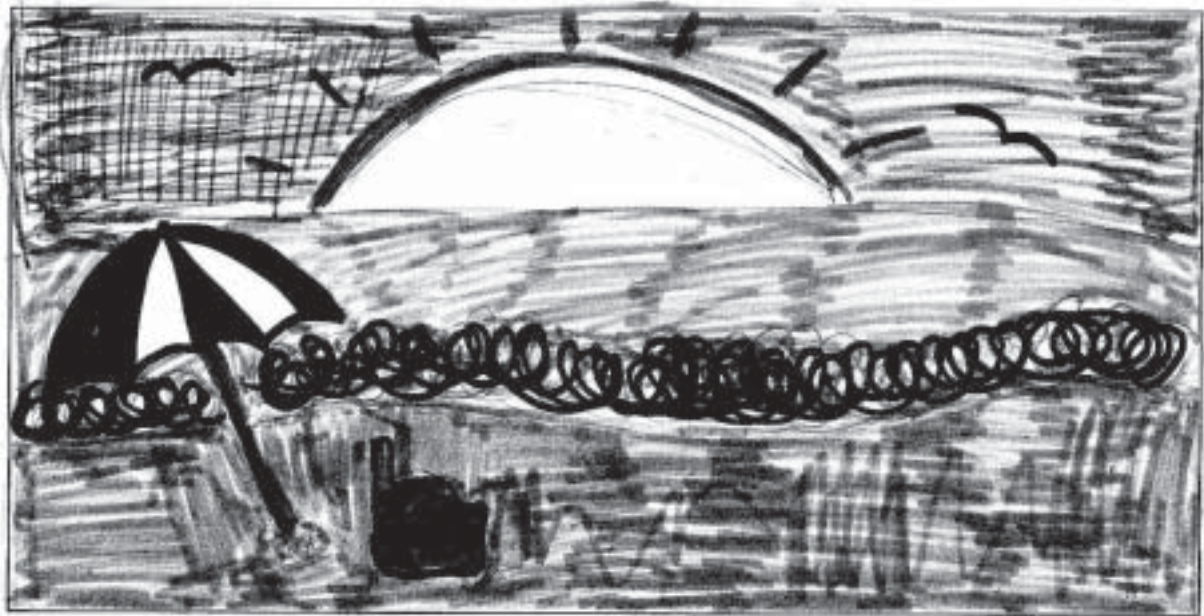


Stefanie Rockers, 6th grade

## Original Spanish Postcards



Sara Solli, 7th grade



Querida María,  
 ¡Hola! Cómo estás? Yo y mi familia  
 fuimos a Puerto Rico. Fuimos a un balneario.  
 El tiempo es muy bueno. Anorita, yo estoy  
 en la playa. Tomo el sol y nado en el mar.  
 Llevo much por las vacaciones. Llevo crema  
 protectora, traje de baño, las gafas de sol, y  
 mi toalla playera. En el balneario, fui a  
 plancha de vela, tabla hawaiana, y el esquí  
 acuatico. Nadé en la piscina también. Mi  
 actividad favorita es tabla hawaiana.  
 Hace sol y mucho calor en Puerto Rico.  
 Vamos a regresar mañana. ¡Adios!  
 -Jenny



María  
300 Locust  
Spain

Jenny Bradshaw, 8th grade



Querida Claire,  
Estoy en Cancun, México. Es muy bonito. Estoy con mi amiga, Danielle y su familia. La semana pasada salimos de Mill Valley y fuimos a Cancun, México. La semana pasada nadé, bucé, practiqué el surfing, el esquí acuático y la plancha de vela. No me gusta practicar la plancha de vela. Anteayer tomé el sol. Estoy muy morena. Anteayer jugué tenis en la cancha de tenis. Estoy en la piscina. Nado con Danielle, y es divertido. Hoy voy a ir de compras. Compré una camisa y una falda. A noche sentaremos en la playa y miramos la playa y el mar. Es muy bonito. Me gusta mucho Cancun, México. Hace buen tiempo es soleado y claro. Me gusta mucho México. Te quiero mucho,  
Hannah

Claire Mullen

13 501

Mill Valley CA 94941

Hannah Shore, 8th grade



Querida Amiga,  
 Llegué al balneario en México.  
 Mi hermana vivó en Cancún. Fui  
 a la casa de mi hermana por  
 la semana. Mi hermana es  
 Chelsea. Chelsea es muy bonita  
 y alta. Tiene dieciseis años. En  
 el balneario hay una piscina. La  
 playa es muy bonita! La arena  
 es mucho calor y el mar es bast-  
 ante frío. Hay mucho activid-  
 ades en el mar y la playa! Adios!



Lía Martínez  
 555 Playa St.  
 Cancún, México  
 2238

Querida Veronica!  
Yo estoy en Nerja España! Yo estoy en una casa en la playa. Hace bien tiempo. Hace sol y viento, no nubes. La playa es muy bonita. El mar es tranquilo, con olas pequeñas. Muchas personas están a la playa. Yo nadé en el mar, tomé el sol, jugué voleibol, bucéé, surfeé, y surfeé de viento. Mi familia es muy buena. Mis abuelos son muy simpáticos y mis tios son divertidos. Yo regreso a mi casa en una semana, hablo con tu mañana. Adios!

el 25 de junio

♡ Lucy


P.s. Yo compré un regalo para ti! Las tiendas son muy fantásticas!



Lucy Rosenbloom, 8th grade



Querido Sean,  
 Mi familia fue a Tailandia el verano pasado. Fue divertido. Mi madre es de Tailandia. Fuimos a un balneario con mi abuela. Mi abuela es muy generosa. Al balneario nadamos. También, bebemos jugo de naranja, jugo de piña y limonada. Tomamos el sol también. La clima hace calor y es muy húmeda. El tiempo es magnífica. Mis tíos y tías son simpáticos y mis primos y primas son muy divertidos.  
 ¡Hasta Luego!  
 Mark



Sean Nisam

335 Carrera Dr.

Mill Valley, CA

Mark Davey, 8th grade



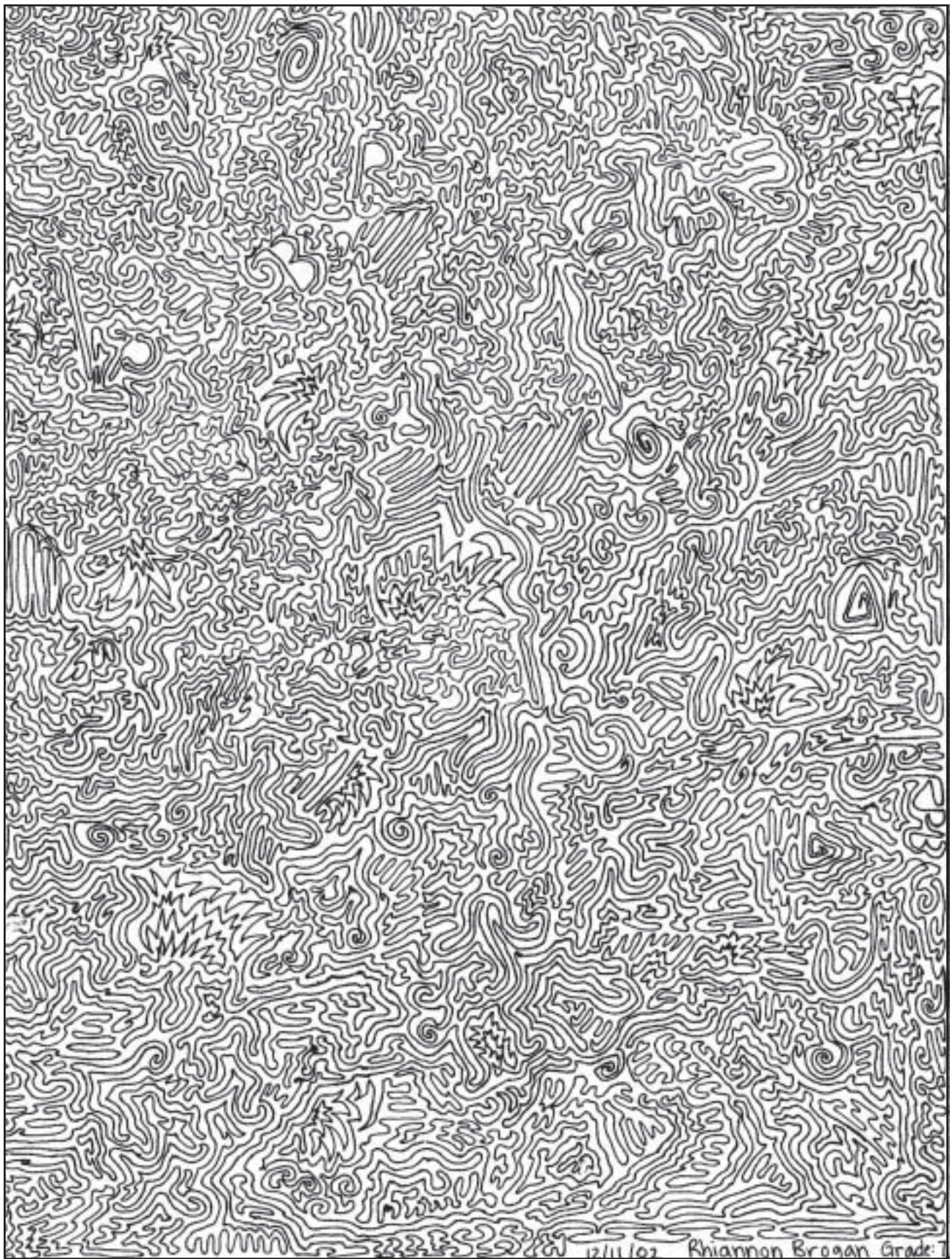
Querida Zanny ,  
Llegamos a Acapulco, México  
anteayer. Me gusta mucho Acapulco  
México. ¡El verano es eterno, hace  
color! El tiempo es muy despejado.  
Es necesario usar una crema protectora.  
¡Me gusta el mar porque hace calor!  
Mis primos, mi padre y yo fuimos  
a Acapulco, México. ¡Mis primos y  
mi padre son muy simpáticos y  
cómicos! Las vacaciones fueron muy  
buenas.  
— Wesley Worrel

Zanny Regas  
740 Bradford St.  
Pasadena, CA

Wesley Worrel, 8th grade

The support of the  
Mill Valley Middle  
School  
PTSA  
made this magazine  
possible.

THANK YOU!!!



Rhiannon Brogan, 7th grade