# **GRADES 6-12 PROSE/POETRY**

# Young Southern Student Writers 2021

CREATED BY THE UTC ENGLISH DEPARTMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOUTHERN LIT ALLIANCE

# INTRODUCTION

It is an absolute pleasure to be a part of the Young Southern Student Writers contest, an annual celebration of the literary arts. From interacting with our region's outstanding teachers and facilitating judging at UT-Chattanooga to assembling this collection of winning submissions, the contest is one of my favorite parts of the academic year! The work we do with this contest is done with an eye towards promoting literacy and the creative energy of emerging writers. The submissions that follow demonstrate exceptionally strong writing while also providing a glimpse into the wild imagination of young minds. Thank you to this year's writers and their teachers. You've given me much to think about, enjoy, and appreciate.

Many thanks to Lynda Levan, the Executive Director of the Southern Lit Alliance. Lynda deserves our thanks for her generosity and support of our area's outstanding young writers. The partnership between the Southern Lit Alliance and the UTC English Department combine to promote and celebrate the region's literary arts. I am thankful for her collaboration in this contest.

I also want to thank the region's dedicated K-12 teachers who work tirelessly to instill the value of literature and creative writing in young hearts and minds. I am grateful for their efforts as they teach their students to enjoy the art and craft of writing. Without our elementary, middle grades, and high school English/Language Arts teachers along with parents and guardians, we would not have such fine work to celebrate here!

Thanks are also due to this year's contest judges. Every submission is read by a faculty member from the UTC English Department. Our faculty volunteer to serve in this capacity with pleasure. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear faculty sharing submissions that are especially funny, creative, or inspiring. It is another way we contribute to this wonderful city and region. I particularly appreciate the care with which my colleagues read each and every submission.

Finally, thank you to Alex Dowda, Kylie Mason, Keaton Quatro, and Maggie Thoni, four outstanding UTC undergraduate English majors. Alex, Kylie, Keaton, and Maggie worked tirelessly to facilitate judging, compile winning submissions, and create this year's digital booklet. They have spent countless hours managing the contest and have done so with patience, grace, and maturity. I am grateful for their hard work and commitment to this project.

Now, without further ado, I hope you'll read and enjoy!

Andrew D. McCarthy
UC Foundation Associate Professor
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
Chair, Young Southern Student Writers Contest

# **YSSW 2021**

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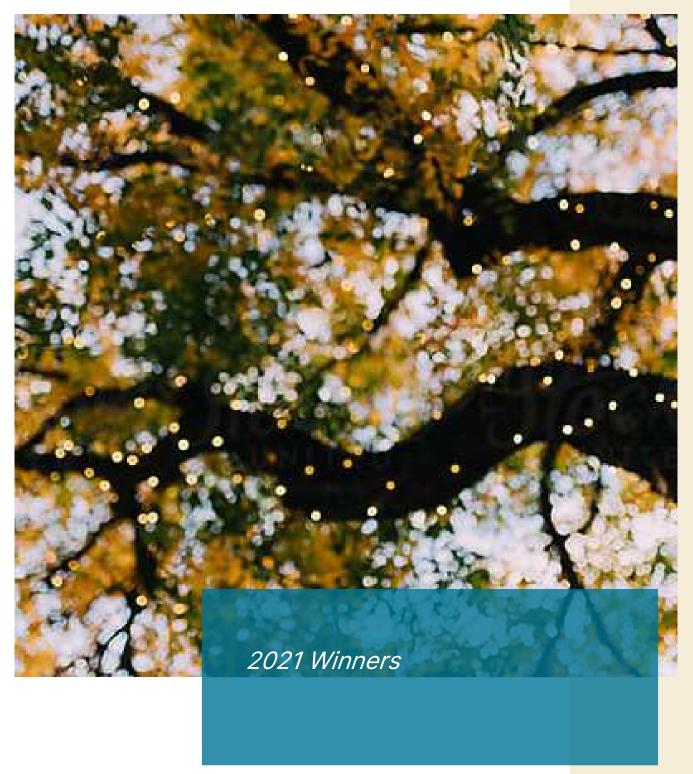
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# Sixth Grade Prose



# My Small Moment

I walk into a tall building with many excited kids, and it's filled with the smell of popcorn. Little boys' eyes locked on shiny posters of superheroes. My dad hands a man a plastic money card, and the man gives us a show ticket. We go to a candy-land stand filled with every assortment of candy I could imagine, from Twizzlers to gummy worms, all in a plastic case. I marveled at the case, but did not dare ask for the candy, in case of heart break. We buy artificially flavored buttery popcorn that was as yellow as lemons and a Welch's fruit snack with lemonade. Next, we step into a dark, cavernous room with scratchy maroon seats that feel like pinecones on your legs. I get excited as a magic window lights up another world, at first it was just an ad for a boring truck, it looked just as interesting as watching paint dry.

Finally! The time came for Princess Twilight Sparkles, the pony, to defeat Discord, the Serpent. My back came off the scratchy seat, and my eyes widened. I can't wait! I told myself. I felt like I was on a wild ride with thrills in front of me. My smile stretched from ear to ear. I turn my goofy smile toward my dad, expecting him to be ready for the roller-coaster of excitement. But what I found was him asleep! "Snore!" Breathed my dad quietly.

I now know that people have different preferences. I was surprised that my dad did not care about Princess Twilight Sparkles, and I could hardly believe that he liked the pickup truck commercial. I would have thought that everyone in the world liked what I liked, but it was clear that that is not true. I saw people going into movie rooms that did not look interesting at all, but they looked just as excited as I felt. Now I try to think about other people's differences and preferences so that I can understand other people a little better. I also learned a little about my Dad, he is selfless. He will do things that he hates so that I can laugh and so I can have fun. So, I want to do the same for him and I can do it for everyone else.

Adela Sewell, Grade 6
Baylor School
Regan Fazio

# The Middle Of Space

Journal entry: Day 283, my crew consisting of Jacob, Carl, and me are doing ok. We found an entire planet made of diamond in the middle of space, it seems to have been pelted by many asteroids. Our ship or, as we call it, the Spacewalker, has only 37% fuel left. We may need to slingshot ourselves with the magnetic field of the planet. Also, we've managed to only consume 40% of our food. We successfully landed on the planet. There are diamonds laying around on the ground that we might take home. We are searching for signs of life or anything other than diamonds. After looking around for an hour we found not much other than diamonds. As we climb back into the ship, we find that we forgot to turn off the ship. Panicked, we run around the planet desperately looking for fuel. Though we don't know if we will find any. After a few minutes we've found nothing. Then carl suggests we put diamonds in the fuel tank. We do it, and the ship only has 6% power left and it takes 5% just to get it off the ground. Surprisingly it works but it only gives 10% power. We hurry to slingshot around the planet and we do with 4% power left. We make it back to earth, Traumatized. But we did it, and we will never go on another space mission again.

Alex Burdett, Grade 6 Hixson Middle School John DeVore

Being New Again

I see the huge crowd cheering for the people in front of me. They come out of the glistening creek with the biggest smiles on their faces. Their personal stories were told on the big, loudspeaker as they come out of the clear, blue water and just so happy to be baptized. I look to my dad. "You excited?", he whispers to me. "Yes!" I reply, feeling my sandals dig into the hard ground like a shovel. Tugging on my black v- neck shirt, I feel my heart start to thump faster and faster like a drum. Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump. I look around the woods and see all the people from my church. The singers, my pastor, even some people I don't even know, but all connected by being here. I breathe in and breathe out. You can do this, Ashley. Just trust. Closing my eyes and just hearing the music make my heart feel relaxed again. As I open my eyes and see the line of people in front of me getting shorter and shorter, quickly glancing to see my family, and their comforting smiles facing me. I walk with my dad until we were at the edge of the lake. The people help my dad step into the lake, then they help me. I feel the icy cold-water rush into my clothes while I follow my dad into the creek.

I start thinking about everything that led up to me being here. I was sitting on the rough, square cut rugs when I was younger. Watching the lead instructor teach us new stories every week of how normal people were used to do so many great things, if they just had faith. By having faith and trusting in God to use them for whatever he has planned for them and promising to never leave them.

I look see my dad holding our pastor's hand as he goes under the water and backup. His face lighting up as the crowd cheers and claps for him. The sun reflecting off his clothes, glistening in the sunlight.

He reaches for my hand as he brings me to the center of the lake. Hearing the speaker tell my story and how lonely I was without Christ and feeling how much God loves us by sending his son to die for our sins. "Ashley, I now baptize you in the name of the son, the father, and the Holy Spirit," my dad proclaimed. I suddenly feel my body fall back into the water. Savoring the moment, I'm underneath. Feeling my old life go away and having this new coat of faith flow over me. The chilly water covering my body only to come back up. The sun in my face and hearing the cheering of the crowd clapping just for me. I did it. As I open my eyes, I beam. Stepping out of the lake. Proud, happy, and ready to do whatever God had planned for me and him never leaving my side.

Ashley Yim, Grade 6 Baylor School Regan Fazio

# A Siren's Call

I was walking through the snowy woods when I heard a loud sound. I turned around and saw a tiny... well... I never figured out where the voices were coming from, since there was no water around, but I did figure out what the voices belonged to. Sirens.

One winter day, I was walking in the woods, the snow crunching beneath my heavy boots, and a piercing sound filled my ears. It was a horrible screeching sound, but there was a mournful purity to it. I clamped my cold, numb hands over my ears, squinting around through the flurries of snow to try to locate where the noise was coming from. I decided that it was ringing louder in my right ear, and so I set off in that direction. No sooner had I gone a yard, the screeching stopped. I paused, listening for slight rustling in the fallen leaves of winter. Suddenly, there was another voice. This one was much more light, and I was drawn to it. It was melodic and sad, drawing me closer. My mind went blank as I drew closer to the voice, as it was drowning out everything else. The birds seemed to stop singing, and the sky turned gray. The trees that were full of frosty leaves stopped rustling. I closed my eyes, listening to the voice. The other voice joined in, making a beautiful duet. As the mystical melody played on, the scenery that surrounded me drowned out, and new scenery appeared.

I was on a canoe. There were thousands of eerie, green-blue lights that shown below the surface of the water. The lights began to get dimmer as the source of the light sank deeper into the water. Equally eerie voices filled my senses. They beckoned me to the water. I could feel the heaviness of my Body being taken away by the light voices that sang a mystical melody. I snapped back to attention as Two bold, red lights rose up, above the fading cyan green lights. I felt a sudden wave of anger as the soft lights faded away entirely. The red lights had taken them away from me! Shaking with anger, I dove into the freezing, icy water. I swam down, seeing a few of the cyan-green lights. I was determined to get to them. As I swam deeper into the dark abyss, two arms grabbed my wrists. I turned around angrily and saw the source of the two red lights. The creatures that had grabbed me were beautiful. There was a boy and a girl, both teens, like me. The girl had silky peach hair that glowed a bright shade of red in the sea. She had a small face, but her big black eyes were full of understanding and kindness. Her body was normal, while her lower half was sporting webbed feet. I looked at the boy. He looked like me--except he also had webbed feet. I tried to pull away from the merpeople, but their grip was too strong. The girl made a lovely noise with her voice, and the boy replied in a deeper rasp. They nodded in unison, and before I could do anything, they hummed together. I became limp. The creatures didn't look so threatening anymore, and I stopped struggling. I closed my eyes, and everything went black. I sunk down, deeper. Deeper. My arms and legs floated up above me as I sunk. Deeper. Deeper. I sank slowly, drifting down. Deeper. Deeper. Ribbons of light crossed across my relaxed face as the sunlight rippled down onto the ocean and was absorbed by the refreshingly cold water. Deeper. I sank onto the sandy floor of the ocean. A cloud of sand floated up and then settled back down as I lay there, no bubbles drifting up from my nose. I saw a soft face, swimming down, waves of bright red hair billowing behind it. As I lost my senses for the final time, the beautiful siren lifted me off of the sea floor.

Audrey Culler, Grade 6

Center for Creative Arts

Courtney Lucas

# A Ride Through the Mountains

I woke up and went straight to the house. We had gotten there yesterday. I heard birds chirping in the trees, elk running through the grass. It smelled like summer. I felt the wet grass on my toes, and I could see the misty mountains. I could not wait for later in the day! We were going to ride horses through the beautiful mountains and eat lunch at the top. After we ate breakfast, we went straight to get the horses. I was ecstatic, this was going to be the best day ever! I could not wait to get on a horse. It took what felt like hours to get the horses in the trailer. We finally got all of them in after a lot of pushing and pulling. By now I was so bored.

We went to the barn to get the horses all tacked up. It smelled like horses and tack all mixed together. My uncle Steve helped me with my horse whose name is Billy. We were getting some of his tack on. I was on him to get the feel of the horse. Then he basically said it's my way or the highway. He started bucking and struggling to get off his rope, that was tying him up on the trailer. He hates being tied up. I was so frightened. But I had no idea that he hated being tied up so...Why was the horse so upset. I thought. My uncle calmed him down and soon we were ready to leave.

I was so excited about actually riding a real horse. "What would it be like, would we see anything cool?" I had so many questions. We started up the mountain. It was as majestic as a queen. There were pink flowers, green grass, leaves on the trees, and a beautiful view. We could see everything. "This is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen" I thought. We got up a quarter of the hill and I got kind of scared, it was as bumpy as a rollercoaster. I rode up the hill in a gator instead of the horse for a while, and my cousin Henry got on my horse instead. When we got to about halfway up the mountain I got back on. I was thrilled to almost be at the top. We kept on ridding and we saw a lake down below us that looked like the lulu lemon symbol!

We got to the crest of the hill and there in front of us were adorable black cows clustered in a mountain meadow. They were so cute; I wanted to run and give one a big hug. We got the food out of the cooler in the gator. I had a turkey and cheese sandwich it was delicious. I was feeling adventurous, so I tried some venison jerky. We got the water out of our saddle packs and went exploring. We took a little hike down to a stream. We looked out across the valley and we could see farms, and a red silo. A river snaked back and forth through the valley. We could almost see our cousins farm through the misty trees!

On the way down, we went a little faster and I trotted. I got a little frightened, but I was determined not to get back in the gator. There were so many rocks and Gussie's horse kept on going astray. Our uncle took the lead. I tried to keep control of my horse and just looked ahead. We traveled back down the mountain the view slowly disappeared from sight. Back at the barn we brushed the horses and took off their tack and put them back in their stalls. After the long ride we were happy to cool off our feet in the clear, blue stream. We took a ride in the gator back to a big brown swing. We each took turns on it. This was a perfect way to end our mountain adventure.

Brinley Smith, Grade 6 Baylor School Regan Fazio

# The Scar of the Elements

# Prologue

The fire was everywhere, strengthened by the intense wind that swirled around. The sky was ashen gray and shadows were streaking across the sky. "ATTACK!" Yelled a voice, determined to slay the large, scaly creatures above. The chants of a hundred men started, soon to be turned to screams by the four Dragonborn siblings above. A burst of flame, a roar of the wind, a crack in the earth, and a splash of water combined into a shimmering beam of utter beauty and chaos that destroyed the village of Wellsburough in one fell swoop, leaving a young boy in the grass. That boy was scarred with more power than he would know for a long time. That boy was Amirus Xalough.

# **Actual Story**

"Stop! Thief!" I breathed heavily as the guards chased me down the street. "What's one lost loaf of bread worth here? I mean, sure it's uptown, but is it worth that much?" I quipped as I started to climb up the side of a dusty building. By the time those dimwits got up here, I'd be long gone. I jumped off the edge on the other side and ducked into an inn a few blocks away. I turned around and saw people staring at me, confused. Realization struck me. "Uptown. Need to stop forgetting." I muttered and walked out of the place. Since that's over, let me introduce myself. I'm Amirus. Amirus Xalough. I live in the wonderful kingdom of Kelsith, the "most wonderful kingdom in all of Etheria." Etheria is one of the three realms (the other two being the Underealm and the Asriel). In reality, it's a poverty-ridden kingdom that only focuses on pleasing the wealthy and important. It's divided into two parts by a humongous wall that we downtowners call, "The Wall." So unique, right? Uptown, where the rich people live (and where bread is overpriced), and downtown, where all the thieves (including me) and poor people live. I was raised by an elderly thief who I call Gramps. He was exploring the outer walls when he found me. I don't remember anything before that. Now, before we continue, I want to make something clear. I'm a thief, yes, but I only steal from the greedy. Since that's out of the way, let's continue my story.

I nabbed a few things on my way home. Some more bread, some fruit, and a block of cheese. I crossed The Wall and stopped by the orphanage to give them half of everything. When I walked into the old, rickety wooden building I call home, I heard moaning coming from Gramps' bedroom. "Gramp's? Gramp's, are you oka..." My heart dropped. "Gramps!" I stumbled over to the side of his bed. "Are you okay? No, that's a dumb question, of course you're not. Why are your veins black? What happened?" "Calm down," He mumbled, "And let me tell you what happened." "It was an assassin. He shot a strange dart at me that immediately took effect. I think it was," he gasped for breath, "Cobraberry."

My face immediately went white as snow. "Cobraberry?!" Cobraberry is the deadliest venom in the three realms. It will kill someone within an hour if they're already weakened. I took a deep breath and started to think. "Why would they want to kill you? I mean, your just an old thief whose bounty was removed thirty years ago!"

"There's something I need to tell you." Gramps moaned. "You're...you're..." he hacked up black gunk and then passed out.

"Gramps! Don't die on me now." I was pacing. "What do I do, what do I do?!" Then it hit me. "Mardora! If anybody will know a cure for Cobraberry, she will." I said as I rushed out the door.

The Scar of the Elements (cont.)

I practically shattered the old wooden door of Mardora's shack. The witch doctor slowly turned around and stared at me. "Now what was the for, deary?" She questioned.

"It's Gramps! There was an assassin with a poison dart and..." She walked up to me and slapped me across the face. That old lady could hit hard! She glared at me and said, "Amirus, calm your worrisome self down! Now tell me what happened again, and this time, don't talk so fast."

"So, you're telling me that he was hit with Cobraberry?" Mardora asked.

"Yes! And I don't know how to stop it from killing him!" I shouted back. I could tell Mardora was thinking hard.

"There is one way to save him," She proposed, "But it is very dangerous."

"Just tell me what to do. I don't care if it's dangerous." I frantically said.

"Fine. There is rumor of a magical herb, said to heal any poison or illness. It is only grown in one place as of now, and that's the royal castle."

Mardora and I spent the next few hours devising a plan. The next day, it was set into action. The guards escort some botanists to the forest every day to collect herbs and flowers to study. I planned on sneaking inside of one of the barrels going to the greenhouse. It was going exactly as planned so far. I was set down not too much later and peeked outside. I saw four guards standing at the corners of the small enclosure for the Cobraberry. I had to distract them. I found a small stone and threw it as hard as I could at a glass window, which easily shattered. All of the guards went to go investigate. I quickly but quietly ran over to the enclosure and snatched a berry, then knocked the guards out with a quick chop to the neck. I jumped out of the broken window and went back home. As soon as I got home, I sprinted to Gramps' bedside and shoved the berry in his mouth. I waited for what felt like forever. Suddenly, Gramps gasped for air. "Gramps!" I gasped. I wrapped my arms around him.

"It's good to be back." Gramps chuckled. "Now, let me finish what I was saying."

# Epilogue

"Did you kill him?" Asked a mysterious voice.

"No doubt. I used a Cobraberry dart. Nobody can get back up from that," replied the assassin.

"Good. Here is your payment."

The hooded figure casually dropped a bag of gold bars on the ground. "Now leave. I'm not in a good mood, and you don't want to know what happens when I'm not in a good mood," the cloaked man threatened.

Carter Williams, Grade 6 Hixson Middle School Lisa Todd

# With a Crew

It was 1953 when I was sailing with my crew we sang and drank. It was great. We all had quests for gold and our ship was the mighty eagle best ship in the sea. My old pal Edward was a great fellow. He talked a lot and was a bit annoying but his favorite spot to land and hang out was my shoulder, he flew around and said a lot of things almost as he mimicked us but we were friends since I was a little old pirate. My crew always had fun and sometimes we fought with other ships and sometimes with ourselves.

But one day, we found a cave and it was big. We found some gold but it wasn't so easy. It was dark and pretty cold. It was scary but how we were pirates we couldn't show that we were weak just in case there are others. We throated through the cave looking for signs of people and gold. But then we heard a "Crack" Marty step on a twig then we heard the marching of men coming from behind and from in front we had nowhere to go except into the dark. So Jamey had to be our distraction. He was a smart monkey he could twirl and do all sorts of things and one was fake so he pretended to be normal monkey and they believed him. He thought it was cute but we were scared We stared at their group then they ran off. So we walked again watching every single step then we found their ship in the cave and there was gold we stole it and we were about to get to our ship when we hear the cry of pirates they were screaming "they got our gold, GETEM!" Edward said in a bird voice" RuN!". Our crew ran and ran till we got to our ship but it was too late.

When we got to the ship they were already there they tied us all together and stole all the gold we had including our ship. They told us to get on the plank so we did but my crew said "No!" "The eagle is our ship and we stay with the things we own!" The captain of their crew said, "Well then we got talkers, put a rope in their mouths through them on the island!". We tried to loosen the ties so we could fight back but we couldn't.

On the island, Jack got lucky enough to land next to a sharp rock so he cut the rope and freed all of us. We only had rocks and wood so we made a camp. John got the coconuts, Jack got limber and Edward got the rats. We used the limber to make them small enough to use for fire and cooked the rats on the fire. The leftover logs I used to make a raft we used some empty plastic barrels we found and tied the logs and the barrels together to make the raft.

The next day we all ate and got ready to get on our raft and find our boat. We got to a place called the stranded swamp. They stared at us and their animals were different. They had weird eyes, some of them even had one eye. We entered a store to buy supplies. There was really weird stuff in there, there were cows, cow legs, eyes, and a lot of other things. The lady in there was pretty weird. She had an old apple on her desk and a rat was eating the apple. We found an old boat in the back very old that she gave to us for one silver coin. Now we can sail the seas with a normal boat. It might be old and not as great as the mighty eagle it was good enough to ride in.

The next day, we found an old boat older than the one we are riding. But we looked around the older boat and found a map that showed the things that a person wants and what a person needs. It's a great thing because we want our ship, the mighty eagle, which showed up on the map.

With a Crew (Cont.)

We got onto our ship and road to where the map was leading us which is supposed to be the mighty eagle. We rode the seas as fast as we could and it was a glorious ride because of the map, the map was richer than gold because it shows where you want to go/what you want. We finally got to the mighty eagle. It was dark everyone but 3 were sleeping. So our crew slowly and quietly climbed up to get our ship back. We sword-fought them till they gave up so we threw them onto our old ship. While we were fighting them the rest of the crew got the sleeping people tied up and threw them onto the old boat. The crew cried" HOORAY!" But when they all thought it was over, they got attacked by the owners of the map. They screamed, "WE Want OUR MAP!" but Henry the captain didn't want to let it go because of what we could do with the map. So, we said "NO!" "You ocean-looking animals with all your lady and things around you left the map out and we grabbed it so it's ours NOW!"

"Ok I see you want to fight ay"

"Set sails Bois get the cannons ready!"

Cannons started firing, we attacked them by sword fighting and shooting our cannons, but they disappeared out of nowhere and were never seen again. We got on our boat and went to a dock and partied till we got tired. "But the pirates now know not to get gold from a weird-looking cave."

Diego Rodriguez, Grade 6 Hixson Middle School Lisa Todd

The Game

I slip on my headset and meet my team at the scrap yard. I see Edzzzzzy, our charger. I see Diemuffintime he is our archer. Then there is Arranthegamer the support. Then there is me Bebatty the leader. Since we don't have enough credits to buy a base we just hang out around the scrap yard but we make it work. I see this poster. I put up the micro league championship if we win this we get to move to the next league. "You guys ready? This is the year we win the championship." I say "yeah this year is the year!" says Edzzzzzzy "yeah we have been training if we don't win then we would at least come in a higher place than last year!" says Diemuffintime "wheres Arran?" I ask In my head I think he is probably stalling. "Haven't seen him all day," Edzzzzzy says and I believe him he is on like all day. I'm the kind of guy who gets up the earliest and off the earliest. "If Arran doesn't get on soon then he will have to skip training," "that doesn't sound like much but he is the worst player on the team." "Arran you're here finally bro you need to come train." I say "ok ok I'll come train chill!" as I watch Arran walk over here I see a red tint getting closer on the horizon then I realize it's the blinkers or at least that's what we call them. "Hide!" we've seen them before they destroyed half the things we built. If they think we left then they seem to destroy fewer things. I run and jump behind a big pile of scrap.

Emmett Owens, Grade 6 Hixson Middle School John DeVore

# If Only

Dust blows as I stand here. They say I'll recover. But I won't. I can't. I know that Maia once stood here, remembering Olivia, who is now part of the ground as much as the dirt is. But it's different now. Of course, losing Liv was difficult. It was the hardest for Oliver. She was his sister, after all. But she and Maia had been close, so Maia had tried never to forget her. But it's different now. Now it's Maia that's gone. Maia who's under my feet. Maia who we're trying hard to not forget. I can't get over that. I feel a hand on my shoulder. Automatically I reach for the daggers hidden in my combat boots, but when I turn around, it's only Oliver. "Thinking about Maia?" he asks. "Yes. But seriously, Olly, I've told you not to sneak up on me like that. One of these days I will impale you." My tone's light, but it gets heavier as I add, "and I can't afford to lose another one of you guys." "Y'know, I went through the same when Liv died. Just standing here, for hours at a time. But one day, Maia came up to me and said, 'Liv wouldn't want you to do this. She still lives in me, and I hear this little voice telling me that she needs you to go on, to not have the same fate as her.' That was the day we found out about her..." Olly waves his hand vaguely, trying to imply something that could be "magic" or "sight" or even "food processor." Actually, knowing Olly, the last one is more probable than the other two. "Gift," I finish for him. "No," he corrects with a twinkle in his eye. "Food processor." "Okay, Mr. Food Processor. I'm trying to professionally mope here, so if you would be kind enough to leave me to sulk in privacy, that'd be great," I tell him. Olly laughs and says, "I'll leave you to it, Mopey Queen." But as he leaves, the scene of Maia's demise plays in my head all over again. Please, I plead. Don't make me watch it again... But my desperate attempt to silence the memories comes to nothing as I find myself standing in that desolate plain for the fiftieth time, walking with Maia and Olly. Everything is serene, even peaceful. I can't bear to watch— I know what happens next. Clouds form in the sky as we talk, but there's no humidity in the air. I wish I could have noticed that, now. I could have gotten us away from that place before it was too late. But I didn't. The sane part of me tries to say, It's not your fault. You couldn't have noticed. But the other part—the stronger part—tells me, No. This is your fault. If only you had realized... Maia would still be here. And that voice was the one I listened to. Thunder booms, and we look up. I see Olly motion for us to find a place to rest before the rain comes. But it never does. I wish it had. If only the rain had come... We start to walk faster, but not fast enough. Especially with Maia, who has—had—never been an athletic girl. I can't get over the fact that she won't be "has," or "is" anymore. Only "had" and "was." She will never have anything. She will never be anything. Only ashes. Lightning strikes the dead plants rooted to the dry soil. Bone dry. Dry as Maia's bones. The plants catch aflame, fire licking the ground and spreading rapidly. We panic and start running. Oliver and I pick up speed, and Maia falls behind. Neither Olly nor I notice—until it's too late. Maia's screams pierce the air as the wildfire catches up to her. Realizing our mistake, Olly and I desperately run to help. But it's like slow motion. No action is quick enough. We sprint to her, but it's like we're stuck in water. Water. The one thing that could have saved her. If only the water had been there. We aren't fast enough. I'm so close to her. But as I reach out my arm... The fire consumes her body. Maia is gone. Forever. I can't stop thinking... if only. If only there had been rain. If only the sky was clear. If only there were no plants. If only she wasn't dead. I fall to my knees as sobs rack my body. Distantly I hear footsteps, even though the person is right next to me. I don't care if the person is an attacker. I might even be grateful. I would do almost anything to be with Maia again. The person puts a hand on my shoulder.

If Only (Cont.)

I look up through tears to see Olly. He gazes at me with solemn eyes, and then walks away again. Once he's gone, I stand up, staring into the setting sun. It isn't even her screams that haunt me. It's the silence, the silence in the moment after she left. The silence that will be here forever. The silence that left a gaping hole in my heart. Dust blows as I stand here. They say I'll recover. But I won't. I can't.

Eva O'Kelley, Grade 6 Baylor School Regan Fazio

# The MAP Organization

My life could have been different if I had not jumped on my bike on December 23, 2013...if I had not been stupid enough to get hurt.

There were men in black suits lifting me as if I weighed nothing and put me in the back of this big black truck.

I was bleeding furiously on the top left part of my head. I look at the badge the men wore. It said MAP.

The MAP people shove a chip into my wound and it hurt. It hurt so much I fell asleep.

That's when I woke up.

I stretch and get out of bed. It is finally Saturday. There is no school today, but I still wake up early.

My twin brother, Astro, is still sleeping. But, my parents are having a heated conversation downstairs.

"Why? Why do that to him? He's just a kid!" I hear my mom shout quietly at my dad.

Could they be talking about my brother? Me?

"Arlyn has to go NOW! You've seen what he does!" My dad shouts.

It is me they are talking about.

Both my parents notice me and grab me by my arms.

"Hey, bud! Turns out you're going to school today!" My dad says.

I decide not to fight with my arms. My dad is a professional wrestler. But no one said I couldn't use my words.

"What do you mean! I didn't do anything!"

I see a bus outside with my name on it. It looked nothing like the friendly big yellow school bus that picked me up for school every morning. But today seemed like it was not like every morning. The bus driver throws me in, obviously not caring about my physical health.

My brother, now awake, is watching me from our bedroom window, wide-eyed. But my parents pry him from it and start to yell at him.

Astro was like my little brother, he depended on me for everything even though we were twins. It tore me to see him handled like that.

There was no one else on the bus. That was a relief because I am always in cramped places.

At one point during the bus ride, the bus driver went at full speed.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING!" I scream at him.

He somehow continues and I try to hold something nearby. But then suddenly we both jerk forward and we're going at normal speed again.

It took a while to get there. Wherever I was going.

"What did my dad mean?" I whisper out loud. What did he mean by, "You've seen what he does"?

# The MAP Organization (Cont.)

The driver drops me off at a tall building that has thousands of kids of all ages. It looks like a prison.

I shove the door aside and some of the bolts creak. All the people look at me in shock.

"What?" I ask one kid who seems friendly.

"You're the...the... guy!" He says amazed, "I can't believe it!"

"He finally came! After all these years!" An old woman says crying.

Everyone is staring at me and crying when they see me. But eventually, a young man - maybe 18 - walks to me and tells me not to worry and to sit down.

"I'm so sorry but your brother is lost," He says to me.

"He's been gone for about 13 years," another girl says eavesdropping.

I practically yell, "What! I saw him less than 2 hours ago!"

"No, you...didn't," He says looking at another boy, "Hey, Harwin! Did the driver say anything about the... process?"

I didn't care about anything the boy said after that. I just walked calmly to a room that no one was in.

And I screamed.

I was so confused by everything that had happened today that I couldn't even properly scream.

How was I supposed to find my brother?

I found a notebook and tore a sheet of paper out.

I wrote on it putting:

M.y A.stronomical P.lan

MAP

I knew what my plan was immediately.

A girl ran into the room and everything she said after that made me believe that everything I've ever believed was untrue.

"You time traveled," she says panting.

"What do you mean? How could this have happened!" I was more confused than anyone could ever be in their entire lifetime.

"Here, everything that happens in the future, happens in the past. So your brother gets lost in the future...which causes him to be lost in the past. You created that, sir!" The girl says getting her breath back.

"No need to call me...sir," I say weirdly, noting that I am important in the future. "But, I'm still confused."

# The MAP Organization (Cont.)

"When you were born, you were in the past. When the MAP people gave you the chip, you went to the present.

And do you remember when the bus driver went fast?" She says as I nod. "That put you back in the past!"

"Well, anyway. I'm creating this plan! It's called MAP, I'm using it to find my-" I state before I got interrupted.

"Yes, si- Arlyn, we know!" She says rolling her eyes, "everything that happens in the past obviously happens in the future!"

Over the next few days, my plan formed.

I was going to shoot a tracker into space that would find my brother.

"That's crazy! It will never work!" Everyone said.

But the day my plan would fly, I was hopeful.

I tossed the circular-shaped object into the sky and I grabbed the other tracker device which would track the main one.

Instantly the main tracker was in space. But, something was wrong. It was making this rumbling sound. We laughed about it then. I did too. But a few days later...

That's when it exploded. And all human life was destroyed in a snap of a finger.

Or so I thought.

Khanishka Mote, Grade 6 Center for Creative Arts Courtney Lucas

# The Beep

I look around the half-lit hospital room, I feel tears welling up already. The dreary walls and mundane paintings do not help me swim out of my sorrows. Lots of stains on the windows, and the smell of antibacterial rub won't get me out of my troubles. "Get yourself together, I reply to my own thoughts subconsciously" I glance at the shiny ceiling above to try to suppress tears, like tiny spears the tears come to show my weakness. I look around to see a different version of my but not this fragile I think to myself. Her stoic grin and confidence have left her. I keep staring, as if maybe if I look long enough, she will get up and tell me everything is fine. Maybe even have the strength to get up and hug me.

Suddenly someone appeared in the doorway. Good morning! I try to mimic my mom's confident voice, but it comes out a feeble attempt. Alex, the nurse keeps walking in and acknowledges me with a simple head nod. His huge hair and John Lennon style glasses make him look almost comedic, but his lack of a grin ruins his funny guy persona. He continues reading the charts then leaves. I stare at where he was standing until I hear a loud long beep. Code Code, nurses are yelling. I try to move but I can't. I look at mom she looks so quiet. "Mom", I almost yell. Her eyes flutter open slowly, but still with a dazed look she asks, "What's wrong". I start to ball. I knew she wasn't the one who was dying nor even near death. I still could not shake the feeling I was losing her. I walk to the strange looking hospital bed to lean in for a hug but I quickly run into different wires. I stop myself quickly, and just kiss her head lightly and take my place watching over her. I sit six feet away and just watch her vital signs. All I can think about is how grateful I am she was not the one that beeped.

Finally, the sun has fully come up illuminating the dark hospital room. I still stare at my moms face, she Seems better in the warm honey light. Her eyes flutter open and her face brightened. "Matilda, how long was I Asleep?" She asks in a soft voice. "Almost ten hours," I reply. She begins to go on about how she had a weird dream, and I was crying while some one was coding on our floor. I wish it was a dream! oh god I must have freaked her out, I think to myself. Breakfast! The breakfast lady sauntered in with her pre-fed patient glow. "Are you two ladies ready for eggs and toast"! She said with such ferocity, she could be Oprah. Me and Mom exchange a look. "Jello" I mouth to her while the off brand Oprah finds our plates. She nods and I run down the hospital corridor to get our staple, hospital meal green jello. As I walk into our room and hand her our gourmet breakfast we both smile. "How are you this morning?" Mom says with a grin spreading through her face. "Amazing now that you are here with me!"

Matilda Joels, Grade 6 Baylor School Regan Fazio

# Winter Dream

I awoke to a loud caw from a bird not so far away. I looked around and realized I was not in my bed as I was when I fell asleep. Instead, I was in a snowy wonderland. And not in my pajamas either; I was decked out in full winter gear. I got up from the soft, snow covered ground and breathed in that sharp, cold air. In front of me was a beautiful frozen lake. That same bird that had woke me up was the only one around this quiet area. I had no idea where I was, but I wasn't too worried.

As I made my way to the lake's shore, a sudden distressed yell from behind made me jump. I turned around and a girl around my age came running over to me. She was panicked; almost as if she had seen a ghost.

I was confused, but before I could ask any more questions she grabbed my hand and ran to the lake. Carefully but quickly she walked on the ice. I could hear it cracking beneath our feet. I turned around and saw the snow begin to melt and the dead trees begin to grow bright green leaves. The air became warmer by the second, and the loud cracks of the ice got louder until I could feel the remaining ice bob on the lake. By the time we made it to the shore, we were both exhausted. It seems that the "spring" had stopped at the lake's shore where we were standing. I turned to the girl but she had already started to walk across the snow covered fields.

<sup>&</sup>quot;It... it's.. It's coming..." she panted.

<sup>&</sup>quot;What's coming?" I asked. I began to worry.

<sup>&</sup>quot;The spring!" she gasped. "It's swallowing everything up!"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Wait," I called, running over to her. "What's happening?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;The seasons are changing," she replied. "It's swallowing up all the snow and soon it'll swallow me up, too."

<sup>&</sup>quot;What do you mean?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Since I am a snow being, I cannot survive in the spring. I simply melt away as a snowflake does on your tongue. Sure, I will come back next winter, but I don't want to wait!"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Is there a way to stop the seasons changing?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;You ask a lot of questions," she laughed. "And I think so. My mother told me how when I was young. I can't remember exactly, but it has something to do with patience and acceptance."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Maybe the spring has to accept that winter wins?" I guessed.

Winter Dream (Cont.)

"Maybe. Let's gather some snow and thrust it at that terrible season." She began to gather a bunch of snow, and I did the same. We rolled it up into a ball and began to push it towards the springland. The huge ball was slow but our strength combined was enough to roll it over at the speed of a walking person. Many minutes later we made it to the lake's shoreline. We looked at each other.

"3..." the girl began. "2... 1..."

"Push!" I yelled. We used the remaining strength we had in our bodies to thrust the huge snowball onto the edge of the lake. Instead of the spring withering away, it lapped at our boots as we walked away, defeated.

I sat down. We were both exhausted and nowhere close to changing seasons. I thought about what the girl had said before realizing I did not know her name.

"Hey," I panted. "What's your name?"

"Rose." She looked at me. "You?"

"Ophelia." We shared a slight smile before going back to thinking of a plan. We sat there a while before Rose got up.

"I got it!" she exclaimed. "Maybe the winter needs to accept the spring!"

I stood up as well, this new idea giving me adrenaline. "I'll go over and get some grass and leaves. Then I'll lay them down in the snow." Rose nodded and sat down. I took off the winter gear and went over and began to gather leaves, grass, and the occasional flower. Once I had a pretty good handful of plants I walked over to the border. I put them down on the winter side and waited. They slowly withered away and became nothing but dead greenery. I sighed and walked over to my winter gear. As I was putting them on, it hit me. Rose had mentioned patience and acceptance.

Maybe all Rose had to do was accept that the seasons change and then wait for next winter. I turned around. I knew she wasn't going to like the solution, but it was worth a shot.

"Rose," I began. "I have another idea."

Winter Dream (Cont.)

"Great! I have a feeling this one will work. Third times the charm, right?" She jumped up from her spot on the snow.

"Well..." I said slowly.

"Well?" she prompted.

"Just..." I thought for a moment. "Just close your eyes." She closed her eyes. "Spin around 3 times." She spun. "Now hold onto my hand and walk with me." Rose gave me a quizzical look but stayed silent as we approached the border. "Acceptance and patience." I said. "You need to accept the spring."

"Wait... what?" She opened her eyes.

"You need to accept the season changes and be patient. Wait til the next winter."

"But..." Rose looked at me. "Alright." I beamed at her and gave an encouraging nod. She took a deep breath and stepped into the spring. In a moment she vanished, and I was left alone.

A wave of sleep began to over take my body, and I fell to the ground.

Beep! Beep! sang my alarm clock. I groaned and slammed my hand on the button.

I felt refreshed to wake up in the comfort of my bed instead of the snowy wonderland. Though I realized it had only been a dream, I felt it had changed me. A different mindset had formed while I was helping the dream girl. I got up and began to get ready for school. Per usual I walked down to the bus stop and saw a new girl. She looked vaguely familiar but I don't know where from. I came up to her. "Hi! I'm Ophelia, what's your name?" I stood beside her as the bus crawled up to us.

"Rose," she replied.

Molly Ogden, Grade 6

Hixson Middle School

John DeVore

The School Mystery

At my old school big ridge well the teaching was too good. Especially a teacher named Mr.Boston. He was a really good teacher and many many people got A's in his class. Hello, I'm Robinson, Olivia Robinson and I am a forensic scientist detective. I've been at the beat for years and have seen some pretty hairy things but this, this was bad. The suspect is a retired school teacher, Ronald Boston. I loved his class and would wait all day excitingly knowing i'd have his class and many students loved him too so how did he do it exactly? He was a science teacher and a social studies teacher so he must have many tricks up his sleeve. Well, he was known for his science experiments, older siblings having his class, and everyone loving him. Many people like my father call him Dr. B but how could he be a doctor? So we are going to big ridge elementary school to see if anyone will fess up about Ronald Boston. Here we have the principal mrs. Johnson. She has been a principal here for a couple of years and has files off of past teachers and teachers that work here now. We now have the files and it just looks like for 31 years he was the only male teacher/ worker in the school until Mr. Rocco Mansueto came to the school as a school counselor.

So now we go to his old teacher friends. First we go to Mrs. Butler. "So Mrs. Butler, you have known Mr. Boston the longest so you know how he teaches how does he do it?" I say.

- "Well, I know that he strictly teaches the students but only yells when he really needs too." she says.
- "Does he do anything anytime of the week to help their behavior?"
- "He takes the kids down to the science lab every Thursday and they do experiments."
- "Do you think that just helps their behavior so they can lead up to that activity every week?"
- "It certainly help him a lot"
- "Ok, thank you for your time Mrs. Butler"
- So, we collected a lot of important information from Mrs. Butler so let's go down to the lab and see if we can find some clues.
- So we are in the science lab and we see many many preserved animals in jars then we see a Skeleton! We see something by it! Its a piece of paper of the pea dna experiment.

The School Mystery (Cont.)

It says all the tips the tips he has to teaching. Here they are

- Keep them happy but don't give them everything
- Do science experiments every Thursday
- Make everything fun
- Be funny

Was that really it! We must go to his house. When we get there he is feeding the pigs.

"Hey Olivia!," Mr. Boston says.

"I have a question for you," I say.

"Is this really all you had to do to be such a great teacher?"

"Yup."

"What did you think I was magical or something?"

"No, not at all" I say with an awkward laugh.

"I have always loved my students and my students also love me. And they know not to

mess with me."

"Yeah."

"Well, it was great seeing you, I have a case in Mrs. Menne's class off of who stole the hampster."

"Bye, Olivia!"

So as you can see I was just amazed about how good of a teacher Mr. Boston was and got all caught up in it.

Mr. Boston is awesome and always will be.

Detective: Robinson, Olivia

Case: The school mystery Closed

Olivia Robinson, Grade 6

Hixson Middle School

John DeVore

# The Tree

The Tree is often referred to as the tree of life, as it is the oldest known being in the world. Many people believe that if you mix the sap from the tree and water together and drink it, you shall be blessed for as long as you live. But this seems to be a lie to a lot of people in the universe. You see, many people in this strange world think that the tree is just a tree, and nothing more. Nobody actually knows how long the Tree of Life has been on the mountain top. I suppose that is why most people think it is just a tree. How could there possibly be a tree that is over 4 billion years old? But it is just a belief, nothing else. That might be why the tree drove some people to insanity, trying to climb that mountain, cut open the tree to drink its sticky brown sap in a mixture of water for that one blessing. If there is a god above, I highly doubt that he would have made the tree stick around for so long just to drive humankind insane. Or maybe it is a warning or a symbol.

Maybe, just maybe, if that god above is truly real, he is warning us. Our greed and our thirst to always be on top of everything will be our fate. It could be a symbol that if we try to conquer everything we see, we will be our own death. Now, this is not meant to question your faith, your belief is your belief. I will tell the story of the tree now, in all of it's majestic beauty, it could suffer no pain, right? Though it may seem silly you should not underestimate this seemingly immortal being.

I am a tree, nothing more though it seems. But in all fairness how many other beings can say they have lived billions of years? None. For many years I have watched mankind drive themselves to madness. All because they always want something. Greed overpowers, hunger makes thieves. But who am I to judge when it was me who started all of this. When these humans first learned of me they were gathering stones out of the shallow golden creek that flows through the valley next to my mountain. I have been climbed, cut, picked, poked, and everything you can possibly think of. Don't you see? Humankind since the beginning of time have always had a thirst and hunger for power. They will never change. I am a tree. They don't know my story. They don't know how hard it is to live like this. The only movement I will ever feel is when the soft crisp wind on the mountain top gently sways through my leaves. I am just a tree. My pain, my sorrow, my hatred for what they did drove me insane, too. But what is this pain?

My branches are stiff, my leaves have fallen, I am alone. The creek was my only friend, but she is long gone now due to the constant shifting and hacking of the people in the cave below. She used to sing me a song, this beautiful song that danced through the air ever so gently. But I could hear it. If only she was here, creek, I miss you. How I wish I could hear your lovely song just one more time. The air is crisp and cold and I wish I could move to have something to hold.

I wake up to the sound of a gentle song, It fills the air around me, and automatically I know who it is. It is the creek. But I can't see her, my roots have shifted and I now look over the valley below. She is behind me. I try with all my might just to see her one last time. "Creek!" I call out but there is no answer. I shake my branches, twist my trunk but it's just no use. I can't see her. The song dies off in the wind.

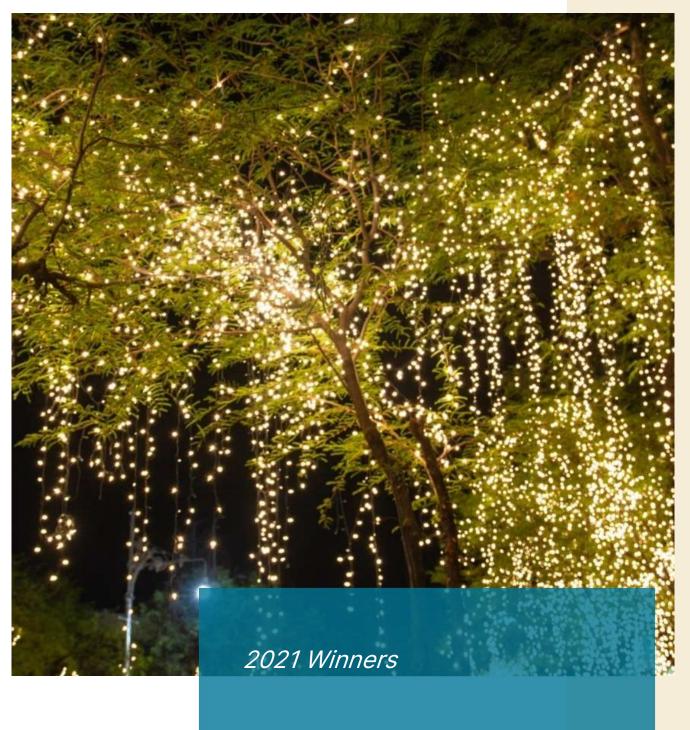
I am completely still when they come up the rickety old bridge connected from my mountain to my sister mountain. I do not talk, I do not shiver, I don't even flinch when that tiny cold hand touches my lowest branch. I just sit there motionless, doing nothing, thinking nothing, wishing nothing. Nothing at all. I had my chance to see the creek again, and I couldn't do it. It took all my strength and I only twisted a little bit. I am broke inside.

The little hand stays on my branch, and moves around me, it lets go and I hear the girl's parents pull her away to the lookover in front of me. The girl has Brown braided hair, and when she turns around I see that she has fair skin and olive green eyes. The girl looks to be around the age of three. She lets go of her mothers hand and comes toward me once again. She gets closer, and closer, and closer. Then I feel her hug my trunk, her velvet jacket rubbing against my bark. In an odd way, it is calming to me. "Olivia!" her father calls, that's her name.

It is a few years before Olivia comes back again. It looks like she has grown out of her small size, as now she looks around seven. I remember her immediately, and I feel a warm welcoming sensation when she comes up to me. Her parents are not with her, I wonder why. I am getting so much older, and I can no longer move at all. Olivia grabs one of my branches and climbs up, when she gets to the highest branch she sits. Suddenly, she starts singing the creeks song.

Sophia Mao, Grade 6
Hixson Middle School
Lisa. Todd

# Seventh Grade Prose



My Name Essay

For a while, I've always wondered what the name Ava meant, but until recently I looked up the meaning of my name. From what I researched Ava means "Life/Living One" in Hebrew and "Blooming" or "Birdlike" in Latin. The meaning behind does fit me in some way. What I think they mean about "birdlike" is free, as in being an adventurous and a graceful human. In some ways I can be graceful. But not most of the time, I'm clumsy. I like the meaning behind my name it's very pretty.

Although I love the meaning behind my name, I strongly dislike my name. The name Ava sounds like walking on rocks with no shoes on. It hurts to hear my name being said, when someone says my name, it sounds like someone dragging their nails along a chalkboard. My name is like trying not to fall asleep in a boring class. It is a very boring name to me.

The story of how I got my name is a little strange but it's perfect in its own little way. My mom and dad was at my brother's baseball game. As my mom and dad was watching his game, they happened to be thinking about names for me. Then my mom suddenly thought of the name Ava, so my dad and her agreed to name me Ava. I love this story because it's so random. It's funny how they came up with my name at my brother's baseball game.

My zodiac sign is Scorpio. The zodiac Scorpio starts October 23<sup>rd</sup> through November 21<sup>st</sup>. I happen to be born on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, so I fall under the zodiac Scorpio! The characteristics for Scorpio are determined, brave, loyal, honest, ambitious, jealousy, secretive, and resentful. I actually have all those characteristics. The characteristics that I have the most of is loyalty, ambitious, jealousy, and resentful. I am a very loyal person to anyone who I respect, I am very ambitious when it comes to certain things. For example, when it comes to hard tasks, I am determined to be successful when I finish them. I can get very jealous over things, and I can be very resentful. Now I should work on coming not as jealous and resentful but it's kind of hard when I'm getting treated not fairly.

My name is a pretty name, but I just dislike it a lot, I wish I was named Bonnie because that name sounds calming and peaceful to me. It reminds of sitting in a cozy house reading your favorite book while it is raining outside, and that sounds very peaceful to me and so does the name Bonnie, so when you add those two things together it equals perfection.

Ava Raber, Grade 7

**Baylor School** 

Suzanne Collins

My Name

My name is Braylee, a rare name. A name that only a few others own. Others say it's beautiful and uncommon, but I say it's strange. Some say my name sounds like walking through a grassy field on a warm summer day. I've never been able to see beauty in my name. When I think about my name, I think about a strange, rare experience.

My name has no meaning, literally. I was named after my two aunts, Marylee and Raven. The combination resulted in my original name, Raylee. My parents soon made the last-minute decision of adding a "B" to the front of it. My middle name was chosen from my dad. His name is Jordan. Mine is also Jordyn but spelled with a "Y".

Many people love my name and say that it sounds like a beautiful French word that slips off of your tongue easily. To me, hearing my name sounds like nails scraping a chalkboard. If I was given the chance to take my name, I would. My whole life I have lived with nicknames and hearing "Braylee" often makes me feel like I'm in trouble. I often hesitate to say my own name because of the way it comes out of my mouth.

As a Pisces, according to astrology, I am very creative, emotional, and more reserved. Astrology is often accurate, and this was one of those times. I love anything that calls for the use of creativity. I'm also very emotional and sensitive when it comes to many things. According to the Year of the Rat, I am thrifty, stubborn, kind, easy-going, and very direct. All of these also apply to me.

I've never felt connected to my own name. It's as if every time I envision it, it doesn't suit me. Ever since I was little, I wanted to change my name. I've always had nicknames. I have gone by "B.", "B.J.", "Bray", "Bray J", and the list could go on. If there was any name I could have, it would be "Bee". I decided on that name because I most often go by the letter "B". Coming up with names has never been my forte, especially my own name.

Braylee Newell, Grade 7
Baylor School
Henry Blue

My Name

To the internet, my name means 'God will increase,' a phrase that I cannot quite figure out. I might find the meaning as I mature, but I like wondering. It gives me freedom to live without being rushed to fulfill my name or live up to it. My name is a giant fishbowl, and I am a tiny goldfish. I will grow to fill it.

A name suited for empresses, a name suited for outlaws, a name passed on from two men who fought and fought for any kind of life at all. If my family's history is made of ropes, I am a single knot. My name holds two strong ropes together and I hope my knot is strong enough.

My first name, Josephine, comes from a man who lived with ten siblings, who slept in a drawer as a baby to save money, who fought locusts who tried to gnaw away at his livelihood, his life, and his family apart. My middle name, Sun, is from a man who escaped North Korea as an eleven-year-old, whose family he might never see again-if they are alive. A man who stole leather shoes off dead soldiers just so his feet wouldn't get frostbite, a man whose life many cannot even understand without thinking of it as a movie.

According to the Chinese calendar, I am a fire pig. I am supposed to be hot-tempered and loyal, honest and ambitious, determined and preserving. When I hear these words there is a pressure rushing me to live up to them, so I simply think of myself as bacon-because I can only go up from there.

When others call me, my name sounds like 'go see,' luring me to adventure and exploration. My name is from my grandfathers, Josephine from my dad's dad and Sun from my mom's dad. My name is like two old men swapping stories, each trying to out-do the other.

I like that my name has many sides. I could go as Josey, after Outlaw Josey Wales, and be the free-spirited, wild horse of a person, or Josephine as an empress like Josephine Bonaparte who emanates strength and dignity. As a fighter and survivor, I would go as Sun, a power with the strength to smash stars together. I love all of my given names because each one shows a different aspect of my personality.

Josey Bankston, Grade 7
Baylor School
Henry Blue

# Untitled

Did you know that a long time ago, the sky was green? It was not a bright green that would hurt your eyes. No, it was a beautiful emerald green that everyone loved. Today it is different. Today you look up and see blue. Not a special, beautiful blue, just a plain ordinary blue. If you had seen the beautiful green, you would be devastated at how the sky has changed.

I know this because my great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother saw it. In fact, her twin brother was the one who changed the sky to the blue it is today. Now I will tell you the story that has been passed down the generations in my family. This is the story about why the sky is blue.

It all started with three islands and a town. The people of the town lived on one of the islands. The island was becoming extremely overpopulated, so the leaders of the town were trying to decide who would live on and own the other two islands. The islands were tremendously different. One was full of life, lovely and lush, and the other was just ordinary. It was surviving, but it certainly was not thriving.

George and Julie, twins, with blond hair and green eyes, were the one who had the idea of a competition. They both had brilliant minds, and they always jumped at a chance to compete with each other. So that is how they came up with the solution, which was a competition. But this would be no ordinary competition. This competition would be to reach the sky, which no one had ever done before.

They proposed the idea to the leaders of the island, and the leaders agreed and made some rules. First, someone from the island was supposed to supervise them when they were building the machines. Second, the competition would be competitive but it had to be kept friendly. Third, they only had one year to build their machines. Last, they could not look at each other's machines until the end of the competition.

They gave George and Julie one month to come up with their ideas and to get their supplies. Julie immediately set to work. She planned for the first two weeks of the month, and then got all of her supplies ready in the final two weeks. George, on the other hand, did not like to work hard, even though he was competitive. So he thought to himself that he had plenty of time to plan and get his supplies, and he didn't need to rush like his sister. So he spent the month relaxing, and soon lost track of the time.

The morning that the competition would start dawned clear and bright. George got up not knowing it was the competition starting day, and walked out of his house and stretched. "Good morning", called one of the citizens of the town. "Good morning", George replied. "A nice day for the competition to begin isn't it", said the citizen. "The competition", George yelled. "That's in two weeks!" "No," said the citizen, "it starts today", as she slowly backed away from him. George quickly dressed in his nicest clothes, which were not very nice, because he had not taken time to buy some nice ones for the competition, and hurried to the town square, where the competition had already begun.

Julie, of course, had come early to the town square. She had prepared a speech to tell the citizens of the island and now she practiced it. She wore a beautiful green dress that she had bought especially for the occasion, that matched the sky and her eyes perfectly. She looked around for her brother, but he was nowhere to be seen. The town square soon began to fill up with people, but still he did not arrive. Soon, it was full, and one of the leaders walked up to a high stage with a podium on top, and two chairs to the side

"Welcome everyone! Today we will start a competition for the first machine to the sky!" The crowd cheered and the leader smiled and cheered with them, and then said, "First, we have.....Miss Julie!" Julie waved to the crowd and walked to the podium, and sat down on the first seat. "Next we have..... Mr. George!" The crowd applauded, but George did not appear. Soon, silence spread across the crowd as everyone wondered where George was. "Alright," said the leader," um, we'll just have Miss Julie give her speech!"

Untitled (Cont.)

Julie walked up to the podium. "Hello everyone! I would like to give a big shout out to our leaders, because without them, this competition would just be an idea in our heads. Also, I would like to give a big thank you to everyone on this island for letting us build our machines here. It will be loud, and it will be long, but I believe that both George and I will build successful machines to the sky!"

The crowd went wild, and Julie smiled and waved as she walked back to her seat. As she sat down, George appeared from backstage and hurried to his seat. She gave him a questioning look, but he just glanced away and shook his head. The leader noticed that he had arrived and said," And for our next speech, we have Mr. George!" The crowd politely clapped, but they did not do it as enthusiastically as they had done for Julie.

George walked up to the podium and swallowed nervously. "Um.... Thank you, uh, for letting me, uh do this competition. I, uh, I hope I'll win." This time the crowd did not applaud at all. It was obvious who they liked better between George and Julie. The leader walked back up to the podium as George walked back to his seat, and said, "Well thank you George and Julie for the speeches and for participating! Now, let the contest begin!"

In the first few weeks of the competition, both of the twins worked hard. But after two months of working, George decided that he had had enough with working hard, and it was time to take a long, nice break. Besides there was still another ten months ahead that he could do work in. Julie, of course, worked diligently, and her machine soon began to take form. It looked like it would work. Her machine was like a giant fan that sucked air in at the top and pushed it out at the bottom, and the force of the air at the bottom would push the machine into the air.

Days, then weeks, then months went by, until there was only one month left until the end of the competition, when both machines had to be ready. George only had the beginning of his machine done, and Julie was very close to finishing hers. George became resentful of Julie, and would not talk to her at all. He began thinking of a plan to sabotage her machine so that it wouldn't work when the competition ended.

One night, after everyone was in bed, he snuck into the building where she was constructing her machine. The machine was beautiful, and had green fireworks painted on the side that would match the sky when it reached it. He stepped inside the machine and began pressing different buttons. Then, he poured a blue watery mix into a part of the engine so that when it reached the sky, it would explode. After that, he made sure everything was just like he had found it, and left the building.

A few days later, the leaders called him to a meeting. They told him that they had been observing him, and that they had found that his attitude was not friendly towards his sister, and she had been worrying about him. He quickly began to realize how evil he had become, and apologized to the leaders and his sister.

That night, he snuck back to the same building to fix what he had done to sabotage Julie's machine. He snuck inside, and began to push buttons again, like he had before, to open the engine and take the blue mix out. But what he didn't know is that Julie had switched the buttons around slightly, so he began to push the wrong buttons. He hit a red button and the machine turned on, and if you didn't know, the machine was extremely loud, and it immediately woke everyone in the town up. The machine then began to go up. It crashed through the ceiling of the building and quickly rose towards the sky. Julie sprinted out of her house and yelled," George! Please press the green button! The green button!" But George could not hear her over the roar of the machine and pressed the red button again, which caused the mix he had made to burst out of the machine.

Untitled (Cont.)

It spread everywhere throughout the sky and soon began to turn the sky blue. George watched what he had done in horror as the machine reached the top of the sky. Then the machine exploded. "George!No!" Julie screamed as it exploded. The machine's pieces began to fall and everyone in the town had to evacuate and get on a boat. Julie watched sadly as the pieces of the machine crashed into the islands.

They found George a few hours later, on an emergency lifeboat Julie had put inside the machine. George had made it out right before the machine had exploded. The citizens of the town were on the boats for three months until they found land, but even then, they still mourned, for their beloved emerald green sky had vanished forever, and they would only see a blue sky for the rest of their days.

Kate Tucker, Grade 7
Silverdale Baptist Academy
Beth Taylor

My Name

Vacation abroad. Interesting yet subtle. My name is a dusty book sitting on the shelves of an old English library. My name is like a brick road in France. I have two names that are said together so much they feel like one. Madeline Claire. Madeline for *elevated*, *great*, *magnificent*, and Claire for *clear or bright*. I have not yet proven myself to be *elevated*, *great*, *or magnificent* with what I have done so far because I have only lived through 13 years of life. I hope that I can fulfill the stature of my name's meaning when I become just as old as those old books and brick street.

When I would ask my mom why she gave me such a long name, she would always tell me that she would write down names before she went to bed to see if they were pretty together. She just wanted a unique name for the unique person that I would be. Madeline Claire stuck. I go by many names. It depends on when you knew me, and how you knew me. My brothers call me Claire because during one year in preschool that is what I was called. My preschool teachers know me as Madeline. My dance teachers know me as MC, unless you are the director, Ms. Vancura, who knows me as my full name. My grandparents know me as Claire Bear. My signal friends know me as an elementary aged MC, and my Baylor friends know me as a more mature, middle school aged Madeline Claire. Last but not least, the cafeteria monitor from fourth and fifth grade knows me as Maddie who likes to bake cookies.

When others say my name for the first time, it sounds like a rough breeze in an oak forest. A touch of uncertainty. I am curious to see how they will say my name. I guess since I am a Leo, I should really care about how they say my name because I am supposed to want all the attention and care about what people think. I honestly don't care which version of my name people call me because they are all mine. I love my name. I think it suits me.

Madeline Claire Stefaniuk, Grade 7
Baylor School
Henry Blue

# Untitled

It all started on April 28, my first day of high school. My name is Maeve and I'm a freshman at Hilling High School.

"Good morning, Maeve," Ms. Crawford says delightfully as I walk through the art room door. On that note, Ms. Crawford is a breathtaking artist. While she was a senior, she received a scholarship to go to a very nice college for her creations. I aspire to be like her one day, I love making art.

I nodded and smiled as I proceeded to walk in the classroom. At that moment, I see my best friend, Teagan, at an empty table. Let me introduce Teagan, he's a very sporty guy, he does a total of four sports; football, lacrosse, basketball, and baseball. You may be wondering how me, an artist, is friends with a sporty guy. That's a question I'm not sure the answer to.

"What's up, Maeve!" Teagan shouts welcomingly, giving me a fist bump.

"Not much, what about you?" I reply, pulling the wooden chair out from the table.

He grinned as if I already knew the answer, and I did.

"Let me guess, you won a championship for some sport?" I asked, setting down my backpack like a ton of bricks.

"Yes," he laughed. I wasn't surprised.

"Hello, class! What a beautiful morning it is on this fine day, isn't it?" Ms. Crawford said, getting ready to prepare for her lesson.

"Today we are going to draw a thing or an item that you would wish for if money didn't exist. See, this thing can be anything you want it to be." she announced pacing the room.

"It could be a pool or a new pair of shoes.. Use your imagination to draw this "thing".

I immediately knew what I wanted. My birthday was tomorrow, the problem is my family really struggles with money, but I really want a husky dog. I get pretty lonely myself because I am an only child with no pets, nor a phone. Although, I prayed for some way that I could possibly get a dog.

I open my pencil pouch, excited to draw the husky that I wish for. Digging through it, I soon realized that I have no pencil to be found.

"Psst, Teagan. Do you have a spare pencil?" I whisper. He shook his head and pointed over my shoulder to a girl who I've never seen before. She had curly red hair and she had pencils of every color and size laid out on her desk.

"Hey, excuse me?" I say quietly, tapping on her shoulder.

She turned around slowly, looking at me very carefully.

"Sorry to bother you but may I have a pencil?" I ask.

Without a verbal response, she picked up a silver pencil and handed it to me with a suspicious look.

"Thanks, I guess.." I said, frowning. Something about her was very skeptical. I turned back around to my paper and started to sketch my dog. I made a white husky with bright blue eyes and fairly small. Surprisingly, it was a very good pencil.

## Untitled (Cont.)

About an hour later, the bell rang and the class flooded out the room to lunch. I put away my art binder and held the pencil. I almost didn't want to give it back. She already had enough, right?

"Hey, Teagan! Wait up." I say, shoving the pencil in my bag. We talked for a bit about our drawings, while we were both impressed with our progress. After that, we both started departing our own ways to go to our own lunch tables. I still wonder who that girl was.

"Wake up, Maeve. It's your special day!" I hear a voice say as I wake up the next morning. I flutter my eyes open to see my mom standing beside my bed. It took me a moment to realize that today was my birthday, the day I turn fifteen.

"Hurry and get up before you have to get ready for school, we have a surprise for you." she says walking out of my room.

I wasn't sure what it could be, usually every year I get a new jacket or something, it was never really considered a "surprise".

I trudged out of my room and turned the corner into the living room in utter shock. At my feet was a small white husky with bright blue eyes, the exact dog I drew yesterday in class. I was so confused yet so happy but didn't know how to show it just yet.

"Mom, this is great but I'm just confused." I say standing there with eyes as large as golf balls. She looked concerned as if she felt I was disappointed.

"I'm gonna get ready to go to school, I have to do something," I said grabbing my stuff and running out the front door like a bolt of lightning. I burst through the front door of Hilling High School seeing Teagan at the front doors.

"Teagan! Is that you?" I shout, running towards him.

"Maeve, dude! Where have you been? You're 20 minutes late!" he declares with distress.

"Okay, listen. I know I'm gonna sound crazy." I said. I was prepared to be laughed at by him.

"I'm pretty sure that pencil that girl gave me is magic. Okay, I know, it sounds super unrealistic but it's true. Yesterday, I drew a husky, right? This morning the same dog was in my house as a birthday present from my mom.

Teagan's concerned face soon turned into a smile. Shortly, it turned into a laugh.

"Maeve, no. I think that's just a coincidence." he was laughing so hard that his face was bright red.

I stood there, embarrassed. I already had a feeling this was coming.

"No, it's not. I will prove it too." I turned right around and headed back home without saying bye.

When I got back home, I flung open the door and rushed to my room. I bolted to my backpack and looked through my bag, trying to find the said, "magic pencil".

Untitled (Cont.)

Once I finally found it, I had the greatest idea that would prove it and be a great outcome for me and my mom. I outlined a drawing of my mom and I standing in front of a bigger house, a new car, holding money, and wearing big smiles. This had to work, I need it to do me justice again. Praying, I threw the drawing in my bag and waited for the next day to come, just laying in bed with my new husky. I decided to name him "Wish".

I open my eyes again to a new day, like yesterday, my mom is standing before me again with a big smile and tears in her eyes.

"Maeve! You will not believe what happened. We are saved from every debt!"

My heart dropped, there was no way it worked.

"So, the lottery results came out today and I had the winning ticket!" she said, celebrating.

My jaw dropped. It worked, it *actually* worked. At this point, I couldn't believe it, I had to rub it in Teagan's face to show him that I was right.

I ran to Teagan's house and told him the news, like anyone would be, he was happy as well.

"Maeve, I'm so glad for you and your mom but.. It actually worked. You were right about the pencil? It's actually magic?" He asked, smiling.

I nodded with a smile also on his face. Neither of us could believe it.

At that moment, I decided to make a very impulsive decision.

"Here, thanks for being a good friend." I said, handing him the pencil. His jaw dropped the same as mine did when my mom broke the news earlier.

"Thank you so much, I will definitely need this and I will give it to others too." He thanked me. Days later, Maeve was recognized for her art and received a scholarship to the same college Ms. Crawford was honored with.

Ever since that day, the whole town of Hillington passed around the same magic pencil. They wished for whatever they wanted for many months. Still, to this very day, nobody knows who that curly, redheaded girl was who gave Maeve that "magic pencil".

Natalie Webb, Grade 7

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Beth Taylor

#### Untitled

Once upon a time there lived a mountain named Everest. Everest was so large that he lived in both Nepal and China, and he was king over it all. He was the largest mountain in all of Asia, making him king over everything he looked down on. Everest was a very proud and boastful mountain because nothing in the world could ever be taller than he was. No other mountain in the Himalayas or in the world could ever beat him. In fact nothing and no one would ever be taller than Everest! He loved to watch the people in the cities and towns below him. He often would often gaze at the grand plains and plateaus of China and the beautiful, rocky, snow filled land of Nepal. He believed he ruled the greatest land in all the world and that he was king over It all. He often boasted to the neighboring mountains about his reign and how he was the greatest king on the planet, and no one could ever be greater!

One day Everest noticed a bright light on his back. It was warm and glowed a bright yellow. Everest had never seen anything like it. He was so high up that he was almost always covered by snow or clouds. Everest looked around him and below him but couldn't tell where this strange light was coming from. Finally, Everest looked above him and there sat a large, bright, glowing ball of fire. It felt so wrong to Everest to look above him. He had never looked up because he was the tallest mountain in all of Asia. How could this be? Everest thought, that ball of fire is much taller than me and is so bright and powerful, how am I supposed to be the greatest king on earth with that sitting right above me?

"Who is this ball of fire who dares challenge my throne?" Everest shouted.

The ball of fire looked down at Everest with a puzzled look on its face. "My name is Sun and I am not challenging anyone's throne." He called down.

"I am king Everest!" He called back up a bit annoyed. "I am king over all the land of Asia for nothing is taller than I, but you dared to look down upon me today and challenge my rule!"

"Mr. Everest I'm not trying to overthrow any rule because you are not a king." Sun said.

"How dare you insult me! I am the greatest king there is! I am the largest mountain in the Himalayas making me the king of it all! No one is greater than me," Everest said outraged. If he was a volcano he would be spewing out smoke and on the verge of eruption.

"I don't think that's how it works." Sun said almost laughing at the mountain's way of thinking. "You are a mountain, you do not rule the people or animals below you. You are also not the largest in Asia because I am much larger than you are."

This sent Everest over the edge. He was so infuriated that he shook violently in frustration. This caused rocks to fall off him and the land beneath him to move and crack open. He shook so violently that the tectonic plates under the ground began to move and collide into each other. The pressure from the plates caused Everest to move upward toward the sky and grow a few inches taller. This startled Everest and even Sun was shocked by his sudden growth.

Everest smiled and said, "you just wait Sun, I will grow taller and taller until I become the greatest king once again by growing even taller than you!"

"Everest I am 93 million miles taller than you are. You will never be taller than me," Sun said, a bit annoyed that their conversation was still going on.

Suddenly Everest noticed that Sun was becoming shorter. It looked like he was getting closer and closer to the ground. Everest gave a victorious laugh.

Untitled (Cont.)

"It seems I have already reclaimed my rule! Your short reign has ended now that you continue to shrink below me!" Everest said triumphantly.

Soon Sun was completely gone and the sky became dark. Tired from his day of arguing, Everest closed his eyes and started to drift off to sleep.

Everest woke up with a bright light in his face. It was Sun! He was shocked that Sun had returned to his spot above him. Everest was so furious that he began to shake again causing him to grow slightly, but never enough. Once again Sun would shrink down towards the ground and when Everest woke up the next morning, he was above him all over again. Months passed, years, even centuries passed, and nothing changed. Everest refused to surrender to the fact that Sun was greater than he was and continues to grow in pursuit of becoming taller that Sun. However, every year no matter how much he grows, Sun is still taller. To this day it is said that Mount Everest grows just a little taller every year and now you know why.

Rachel Baker, Grade 7
Silverdale Baptist Academy
Beth Taylor

Eighth Grade Prose



#### EIGHTH GRADE PROSE

## An Influential Reflection and Memory of Life

A person's legacy does not define them, but it makes up a small part of who they are and who they wanted to become. Legacies reflect on one's contributions to society and the influence that is left on others. We have to show a continual sense of honor and respect for a legacy to pursue and achieve its longevity. Passion, commitment, and leadership are three key elements that help set good examples for future generations. The life we live is called the human experience. As humans, we want to be remembered for our contributions and leadership demonstrated throughout our life. The hardships and challenges that we may face daily but learn to overcome signify hope verses the reality of life. The way we overcome these rough patches in life can provide a sense of hope for future generations.

In Naomi Shihab Nye's "Going Where I'm Coming From," Nye got rejected at her new school by the head priest because of her ethnicity. Her father spoke out against the stipulation rule by stating, "But in case you didn't know, there is a stipulation in the educational books of this city that says no student may be rejected solely on the basis of ethnic background, and if you don't accept her, we will alert the proper authorities." Nye's father showed leadership by standing up for his daughter, and he wanted his daughter to be treated equally despite her ethnicity. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for equality as well.

As Americans, we want to be remembered for our American legacy and how it had an impact on our country. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a great example of someone who wanted their American legacy to be remembered not only by the people alive in his time but by the generations to come. He wanted change even though he knew change would most likely not happen until he was gone. Not only did he fight for equality, but he wanted justice especially for victims who were being convicted for their innocence. In relation to the human experience, we still face the challenges of equality and justice today. His famous "I Have a Dream" speech was given on August 28, 1963. In his "I Have a Dream" speech, repetition and parallelism are present. "I have a dream" is repeatedly stated throughout the speech, and it demonstrates how passionate and committed he is to making a change. Dr. King was very aware of other people's opinions on him, but he was still determined to help put back together the broken pieces of our country. When he was at the Birmingham Jail and he received a letter from the clergymen, he reacted so calmly compared to the clergymen's reaction to his response. Dr. King demonstrated his calmness by replying back stating, "But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statements in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms." His composure demonstrates his hopefulness in the world's conformity.

Your legacy represents your life and reputation. Not receiving credit for your contributions misconceives the true definition of a legacy. There were and still are some people who weren't given any credit for their contributions. In "The First Americans," the Indians felt degraded and felt like they weren't being given credit for their accomplishments. They felt that school textbooks misinterpreted the Indians life by not recognizing how much of a positive impact the Indians actually had on others. The Indians show their frustration by stating, "We ask this, Chief, to keep sacred memory of our people." All the Indians wanted was to be remembered for the good they contributed.

#### **EIGHTH GRADE PROSE**

An Influential Reflection and Memory of Life (Cont,)

Prejudice plays a role in relation to the human experience. In humanity, we tend to judge others based on their external appearance. We may use someone's ethnicity, lifestyle, or childhood experience as a weapon to find something to convict them for. In *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose, a teenage boy is accused of the murder of his father. This trial was sent to the jury, and most of the jurors automatically thought that the boy was guilty. They based their decisions off of the boy's past, his childhood, and his family relationships without really knowing anything else about him. Juror 8 and Juror 11 were the two most reasonable jurors on the trial. Juror 8 would put himself in the boy's place showing his empathy. Juror 8 was also well aware of the biased opinions on him, yet he still provided reasons for his own opinion by addressing, "I'm not trying to change your mind. It's just that we're talking about somebody's life here." Juror 8 had a lot of courage, and he showed very strong leadership. Juror 11 was more of a peacemaker. He wanted to settle disputes and wanted change for the better. His logistic skills were helpful on trial, and he only wanted the truth. He shows that by stating, "Facts may be colored by the personalities of the people who present them." He used his voice in a way very few people would.

The power of prejudice has negatively impacted many people, and one of the big questions is "How can a person use his or her voice to be influential?" This connects back to Martin Luther King, Jr. He wanted to use his voice for change and for the better. During his time alive, the things that were said by him have been carried out through generations, and what he fought for in his life, is what we are still fighting for in ours. The words that we say and the things that we do can influence others. What we want to be remembered by, depends on who we want to become, why we want to become it, and how that will impact the lives of others.

Lovest Hogstrom, Grade 8 Chattanooga Christian School Brittany Crawford

## Ninth Grade Prose



#### NINTH GRADE PROSE

The Monolith

"BREAKING NEWS! In the year 2020, it was a weird year that went down. In Utah a monolith has been spotted it is metal, square shaped, tall figure," Said the news reporter in shock. I wonder what that monolith actually is, and what does it mean. I have so many questions I thought to myself. My name is Jackson DeFriese and my dad, Robbie DeFriese and my mom, Cara DeFriese. "What do you think that is?" I questioned my parents. "I don't know," They both said trying to think of ideas of what it could be. "Why don't we go see what it is," My mom said in curiosity. "I would love to go see what it actually is," I responded. We packed our bags and we set off for an amazing adventure, as we stopped many times at gas stations we finally had made it to Utah. "Where do you think this thing could be?" I questioned but got no response. I was wondering what my mom and dad where looking at because they were staring at something in the distance. It was very dry and hot in this Utah desert, and I still trying to figure out what my parents were looking at until I looked into the distance. "It's there, IT'S RIGHT THERE," I yelled. My parents didn't say anything, as they started to walk towards it they kept on ignoring me. I didn't know what to do, and I was freaking out, I was scared, and I was wondering what was going through my parents head at this point. "Mom, dad?" I questioned while freaking out, but I got no response. My parents at this point were at the monolith staring at this big structure, then they starting speaking in a language I've never heard of before, "hadbatuage Yayyyayayhabreak," They both yelled in sequence. As they were finished with that sentence a huge light flashed, and they were gone and so was the monolith. 'What happened?" I cried out, breaking down in tears. "Breaking News, the monolith has disappeared that was found in the Utah desert. The parents of a 14-year-old boy have also disappeared at the site, if you have seen them call this number 324-5335 MISSING," I wake up, and I didn't know where or who I was.

Jack DeFriese, Grade 9 Central High School Kelsay Cate

## Tenth Grade Prose



#### Trouble

I was trouble. Always in it, never out of it. My mom would look at the phone, just waiting. Without fail, the call would come. "Angelina bit someone again." "Angelina put a kid in a headlock during recess, and is suspended for a few days." All sorts of things I did. I don't know how my mom (and my principal for that matter) put up with me.

"I never had this much trouble with her sisters." My mom would say to me. To my dad. To the lady checking us out at the grocery store, who was asking why I wasn't at school.

And I tried so hard to do everything right. But there I was again, sitting in the principal's office.

Third Grade. My mom dropped me off one day and told me to please be good. I assured her I would be. I was on my best behavior all day. If stupid Hannah Landen hadn't have cut in front of me in the long lunch line. If she would've just gone to the back of the line when I had asked her to. If only there hadn't been a teacher behind us, I wouldn't have gotten in trouble for pushing her down. I mean, who cuts in front of someone on pizza day, anyway?

Mrs. Parker helped Hannah up when she fell. She gave me that cruel, cruel look, and I knew. I knew I was about to get in trouble. Can you blame me? Little miss perfect Hannah Landen. The girl who never got yelled at. Or sent to the principal's office, even when she deserved it the most. I was fed up, and a little hungry. Mrs. Parker motioned for me to follow her, and I did. For a little while.

As soon as we got out of the cafeteria, I threw myself down. "Please Mrs. Parker!" I cried. "Please don't take me!" Maybe some other time she would've been gracious and given me a warning. But apparently, I had been misbehaving all day. Supposedly pouring my water out on someone's head during recess. But Riley Poe deserved it, screaming at me not to climb up the slide. That hellion.

I cried until I thought I was going to throw up. I refused to walk. She had my arm, dragging me through the halls. My shirt was riding up, and my arm became stiff as she dragged me through the long corridor, down near the exit. I looked at the door, my only source of hope. I stared in awe at my silver lining. I couldn't believe my luck. Freedom was calling and I made a split-second decision. I yanked my way out of her firm grasp and acted like I was going to walk now. My mom had already been called. This was my only escape.

I knew that my only way out was through this exit door—because any second now my mom would be arriving, face as red as a cherry pie.

Sprinting as fast as my little legs would go, I ran out into oncoming traffic. I felt like I was invisible. Like all anyone could see was a pink blur. I took a quick peek behind me and saw that all the short, stout office ladies were waddling, trying to catch up with me. Finally, I had reached the field. I took a second to catch my breath, and before I knew what was going on, I was the ball in the touchdown zone. Heaps of teachers, my P.E. coach, and even my mom were coming at me in all directions. The plump office ladies were closing in. I knew I had messed up this time. Why did I always do this?

The car ride home was too quiet. My mom turned the wrong way. "Mom, where are we going?" No response. We turned on a road that I'd never been on.

"Mom?" This was the end for me. I saw the building from a distance. My stomach dropped. I dragged my feet when I stepped out of the car, but my mom helped me by grabbing my arm and dragging me.

Trouble (Cont.)

We were at the front door, and I stopped dead in my tracks, petrified. There were intimidating men in uniforms, and they all looked at me when my mom pushed me through the door.

"Wait here..." were the first words my mom spoke to me all afternoon. I sat down in the lobby, my eyes wide as saucers. My mom went and spoke to the policeman, and he started the walk over to me. I braced myself. The man sat down next to me and started talking. I spent the whole time staring at his Ringgold Police Department badge, trying to distract myself from the fact that I was definitely going to jail.

When he was all finished, my mom escorted me out and we got in the car. "I'm not going to jail?" The knot in my stomach untwisted itself.

"Not this time." My mom responded, and looked at me for a sign of terror.

I don't remember what the man said, but I do remember that I scarcely got in trouble in the next week following my intervention. The lecture when I got home was almost worse than my police visit. I was trouble.

Angelina Lane, Grade 10

Boyd Buchanan School

Temple Davis

Juan's Cello, Camille's Dress, My Rental Viola

The most embarrassing day of my life was just as bad as it already sounds. Sixth grade. We were all weird and awkward during that time. I was in the band class during elementary school and all my friends were in orchestra, so of course, I had to copy my friends and join orchestra the next year. So, when I went into the orchestra class on the very first day of sixth grade, I was the only one who was a noob as they called it. This turned out to be kind of embarrassing itself when the teacher asked, "Who has never played an orchestra instrument before?" and I was the only shy sixth grader to slowly raise my hand. But you were probably thinking this was it, no. In the second month of the school year, it was time for picture day in orchestra class and we had to wear all black. I wanted so badly to wear a dress rather than pants and a shirt like the boys, but I didn't have one. So, I borrowed one from my best friend Camille who was very protective and particular about her clothing. It took a battle to borrow her black dress, but with reassurance, she finally let me. So, the very day of pictures, I woke up feeling absolutely awful when everything was supposed to go as planned. I begged my mom to let me stay home, but she never once said yes when I asked her that question because I always used that as an excuse. But this time, I wasn't kidding. She sent me to school with some medicine and water. Throughout the day, I could not bear the pain. I wanted to go straight home after orchestra pictures, but it happened to be the last class of the day (6th period), so I was already going to leave after. I somehow managed to fight through the day. Once sixth period came along, I was completely worn out and done. I was done. My stomach hurt so bad, I was tired, and I had enough. I was so anxiously waiting to get the pictures over with and go home. It took what felt like 2 hours to finally start the picture taking. When we all got aligned in our rows and formation, outside with all our instruments ready, I couldn't keep my mind off my stomach quezing. Because I was overthinking, everything felt so much longer than it actually was. I trudged up the step to be in the back row as I watched everyone take their sweet time to get in their spot. The violins, violas, basses, and lastly the cellos. Once the last person got in their spot, Juan with the cello, all the pain in my stomach came up. It all happened so fast. Picture day-ruined. Juan's cello, my rental viola, Camille's dress.

Brooklyn Davis, Grade 10 Boyd Buchanan School Temple Davis

## Pandemic Development

This pandemic has changed everybody and everything. We got half the classes we had last year. I've matured. And it also made it clear that people act like your friends when they're really not. My grade has improved since last year, and I'm proud of myself. I've noticed that it only improved because Iwas worried about my problems instead of helping others with theirs and Ithink it was beneficial to me and my grades. My experience of my first year of high school, it wasn't like it was in movies, and I'm proud cause that would have been stressful. The work was a little bit hard at first, but then I got a hold of it, maintained it a little. But I think my main struggle is the quizzes. I've never been good with those. I feel like I'm not well with them because I'm stressed and overthinking it and that may be my problem. That's probably why my grades drop the way they do currently. But Ihave a better feeling that I'm going to do so well in my 11th grade year. So, what I'm getting so far from typing this is that my grades are based on my maturity, the more mature Iam and the more I do the work the better my grades are? I don't know, but we'll find out soon.

Devonje Jordan, Grade 10 Central High School Kelsay Cate

#### Bottom of the Ocean

She presses her feet into the earth, feeling each blade of grass between her toes and the padding of dirt beneath her. Closing her eyes as she breathes in the salty air hinted with sunscreen and sand. The warm breeze caresses her face and carries her hair behind her, seeming to blow away every worry that she previously had with it. With each step that she takes, she ascends higher to the top of the cliff that overlooks a vast, never ending sea of blue. The only place on Earth where she can feel calm and safe.

When she reaches the top, she runs her hand along the wall made of cobblestone that barely stands anymore. She smiles, because just like the cobblestone wall, she was falling apart too. Placing both of her hands on the wall, she leans over to look below. She knows that the old crumbling wall is the only thing protecting her from falling thousands of feet below, but she doesn't give it a second thought and she puts more of her weight into the wall so that she can lean farther over the edge. She laughs, many people have warned her that the wall is not strong enough to hold too much weight and that it cannot be trusted. She ignores their warnings. The wall has always protected her and has never crumbled under her hands. Closing her eyes once more, the wall takes advantage of her most vulnerable moment. When she isn't even thinking about what could happen. The wall knew that she trusted it but it crumbled anyway. As she fell off of the edge, she didn't understand what was happening. How could it break? She froze, watching the rocks of the cliff fly past her view faster than she could focus on just one of them and before she knew it, her back slammed into the once beautiful sea. She tried to take a breath but every time she got close, another wave crashed over her head. Wave after wave after wave. It never stopped it just kept coming. She couldn't scream, her voice was silenced by the water slowly filling her lungs. No one noticed her, she looked like everyone else. They didn't realize that she wasn't swimming, but drowning. After fighting for so long, she finally gave in. Letting her body go limp as she floated down to the bottom. The farther she descended, the colder it was. A blanket of darkness wrapped around her, blocking her vision. She could no longer see the surface, everything was dark and cold.

After what felt like eternity, she was finally dragged out of the monster that she once thought was so beautiful. No longer was the smell of salt calming, it stung her nose and eyes like thousands of needles piercing her skin over and over again. Yes, she was out of the ocean and on the surface once again, but she still felt as if she was drowning on the inside. She feels ruined and embarrassed. How can she be so terrified of something that she once enjoyed so much. No one else sees her. They act as if everything is the same. Her family makes her take trips to the beach because they believe that if she "faces her fear," that she will overcome it. When she was finally brave enough to dip her toes in the water, everything rushed back over her like a wave of memories, feeling like she was being sucked back into what she had just climbed out of. She can't escape it. The feeling of drowning follows her like a shadow everywhere she goes. She is constantly being told that she is making too big of a deal out of it and that it was easily preventable. "It's your fault." "You know that wall is dangerous." "We warned you." She knew that all of this was true. She was warned, they weren't lying. That's what hurt her the most. She doesn't understand why she couldn't save herself. She felt like an idiot because she trusted something that was broken and now her life is ruined because of it. Nothing will ever be the same again. She doesn't have anywhere or anyone to turn to. Nothing helps. She wonders what would've happened if she wasn't dragged out of the water. She sometimes even gets angry at the people for saving her. If she wasn't pulled out, everything would be over. She wouldn't have to deal with anything anymore. At least, at the bottom of the sea, in the cold and in the darkness, she was worry free. It was quiet. For the first time in her life she was calm. Really and truly calm. But nothing ever goes her way, she had to of been dragged out and forced to live the rest of her life wishing every day to be back at the bottom of the ocean.

Emerald Howe, Grade 10 Boyd Buchanan High School Temple Davis

#### Mom

I stirred in the darkness of my room wanting my mother's safe hold around me. My mother's warmth is like your favorite sweater during the winter you can't live without. She keeps the cold out and closes the heat in with the comfort she gives me. The way she wraps me with her arms close and her soothing words that calm me. Her curly hair falls the way waves ruffle in the ocean during a storm. The smell of the beach blows when the wind brushes against her skin. Her smile brings back the times of her singing me to sleep.

My favorite show was Barney when I was younger. She would sing "Mr. Sunshine" to me in moments like this and that's all it would take to knock me out. Her calming, caring, sweet voice sent me to sleep when nothing else could. She's always been by my side prepared for the best and worst. Every storm that would come she would fight it with me. When around her I feel like I could conquer the world. Through her own strength, she strengthens me.

Meg Clayton, Grade 10

Boyd Buchanan School

Temple Davis

## A Day In 2020

Every day now, spent in agony as I am drained by hours in front of a screen. A million voices coming through at once as the sounds of the classrooms blur together. One which I am not part of. Neglected and forgotten, I work on my own. Teaching myself. Still forced to sit through every agonizing, draining minute of the noise.

They said this year would be better than last year. It could not be worse. I have no energy left for the work I need to do. It is used up for sitting through the classes.

A million voices, yet I can not hear. A million words, but I can not understand. A million classes, a million assignments, and yet I am not learning. Nothing will stick. Doing my best to teach myself and scrape through. Wondering if it would be better to quit and teach myself everything. Maybe then I will learn something. Maybe then I will have enough energy to make even the simple things stick.

But I can't. If I do I lose the one chance I have of being able to see all of my friends again. I can't. I have no contact with many of them. Texting is too hard. I see no one. Very few text or call. It is ok. I am used to it. I have always been one of the friends that gets treated like God: Nobody reaches out until they need something I can give them. Otherwise, I am alone. Except for a select few who do their best to talk when they can. Others it is just the same problem I have and texting has become much harder. I do not blame them.

But I am tired of being alone. Tired of getting better interacting with animals than people. Tired of this virus. This year. I want 2021 to come. Or to go back to 2019 even if it was awful. I want to shut my computer on school and just sleep. Sleep and rest and relax. Wake me up when it's 2021.

I don't know how many days it's been. I don't really care either. Now I have just accepted that this is a day. Every day is a day. I don't care about the next one. Or the one before. It's just today. I don't really have much to do anymore. School takes up most of my time and my energy, draining it away and leaving me empty. A battery that can't be recharged.

There was a time when everything held its breath. Preparing to release it at the time the world would go back to normal. All the talk of war, deaths, muder hornets, the virus. All of it would cease. The world would be normal again and I would be free.

I held my breath in this time too. Just stopped breathing and waited. But the days didn't stop and soon blurred into one. I was alone. At home and alone. Far away from everyone I knew. Far away from my friends. On a little island surrounded by fences. On a little island even in my home.

One day everything just let go. Everything just let out their breath. Just barely. Breathing in whispers. Barely enough to feel the air. Breathing breath that was silent. Breath that was stale, but breath that gave you life and calm like breathing underwater in a dream. There is barely any air coming into my lungs. Just enough to keep the days going. Just a day. And every breath I take is stale and compressed. Like it's been squeezed from a bottle.

I do not remember what all happened. There is so much more than covered on the news. The election is here and soon there will be chaos. Soon. No matter who wins. No matter who loses. Wars and riots will break out. Fires will start, gunshots will be heard, voices will scream and yell.

A Day In 2020 (Cont.)

What happened to the place I was so glad to live in as a child? One that was calm and diverse. Had many different places to visit and not too many dangers in the wild. When did it turn into this? A place where people will say anything for attention, or to just get some random stranger in trouble. Where people are seemingly losing common sense by the day, and a new murder is spoke of each week.

Take me back to 2019, take me to 2021. I don't care when, I just want this year to end.

Miranda Renfro, Grade 10 Boyd Buchanan School Temple Davis

#### Untitled

New York, New York. The Big Apple. The Concrete Jungle where dreams are made of. My favorite place. The city lights. The diversity. The Brooklyn accents. The breakfast sandwiches. The dollar slice. The off duty models and celebrities. The place that feels like home. People from the south say they could never live there. It's too big or the people are too rude or you have to walk everywhere. Or even because it's "dirty." Like c'mon. Have you seen Soddy Daisy? Kidding, (kinda) but I don't see it that way at all. Sure you might get yelled at for j-walking or moving too slow, but you will never be judged for your race, sexuality, ethnicity, size, etc. Maybe for your southern accent though. But you better not make fun of their thick Brooklyn accents! That's also where my dad's side lives. They're Puerto Rican. Also crazy. But for some reason it's a breath of fresh air for me. My favorite Titi(aunt) is Jasmine. She calls herself a gangster hippie. I honestly don't think there's a better way to explain her than that. Another favorite is Grandma Effie. I could probably write an entire book about that woman. She named her oldest son Alfredo... Everytime I visit she tells me I'm too skinny and prepares me enough food to fill an entire cookie sheet. For one meal. Don't forget the large cup of Pepsi on the side. NOT COKE. Everyone is welcome in her tiny apartment. She opens the door, gives you a big hug, a kiss, and hands you a mango lollipop drenched in Tagin. The second you walk in you are overwhelmed with love and the smell all the spices. So yeah, New York is what feels like home.

Nina Ortiz, Grade 10

Boyd Buchanan School

Temple Davis

### Thursday

Everyone forgets about Thursday. Thursday is a good day. Outshone by the weekend. But that doesn't mean Thursday is a bad day. Thursday is still a good day, it isn't Monday but it isn't Saturday. It's a day all on its own. It's an okay day, not bad, not good. Thursday is like the middle kid. Not good but not bad. And forgotten about a lot. I am a Thursday. Born on a Thursday on the Thursdays of all months, November, and the middle kid. Great. I wonder what fate had in store for me. Not as rebellious as my older sister, but not as crazy and carefree like my younger brother. I was always a quiet kid. I had an embarrassing habit to suck my thumb, my parents thought something was wrong with me, so they tried to bribe my speech out with a dog. My sister was always in the spotlight, but not always for good reasons. My little brother was like the trophy son my dad had always wanted. But I was just me and for a long time I didn't understand why they got all the attention. For a while I didn't like being the middle child, I thought my parents didn't love me as equally as my other siblings. But I soon found that out to be wrong. My parents just needed time to straighten out my siblings. Afterall, I was a perfect child. Joshua was still young, a young boy growing fast like a weed. And a sister who didn't like to do her work. I came to like being a Thursday, I liked my island. I like being able to do my own thing without worrying that I am setting a bad example for my younger siblings like my sister. I like not having all the pressure on me being the youngest living in my sibling's shadow. Like my brother. I never outshone my siblings, not bad grades not good grades. Not mean but not always nice. Not bad but not the star athlete everyone wanted me to be. These things used to make me feel less than my siblings but it's just who I am. I like who I am even though I might happen to be a Thursday.

Reagan Sanders, Grade 10

Boyd Buchanan School

Temple Davis

The Cave

The leaves squished under our feet, as my dad, the guide, and I hiked towards the cave. All three of us were dressed in crinkly clothes, with tall boots, and as we traveled through the forest, the movement of our limbs made a soft crunching noise. Moss and lichen covered the trees around us, and the forest was filled with a patchwork of light and shade. Birds flitting about in the treetops, and rodents rustling in the bushes permeated the otherwise silent woods. As we arrived at the cave opening, a trickle of water could be heard, and a slim stream was visible, leading down, deep into the darkness. The mouth of the cave was covered in slick grey mud, a cool wind trickled from it, as if someone had placed a fan just out of sight. As I stepped in, my face immediately felt damp and clammy like I had walked into an invisible rainforest. As I flicked on my headlamp, the walls of the cave glistened in response, every surface looked liquid, like the rocks were melting and could let loose a glob of stone at any moment. As I traveled further into the cave, the mud underfoot grew deeper, and the occasional drip of frigid water slipped down the back of my neck. The noises of my dad and the guide walking just ahead were accompanied by melodic drips of water from all directions.

As we continued, the terrain became more inclined, until we arrived at a particularly steep and muddy slope. I slid down this incline, in the most controlled fall I could manage, but I still plopped into mud at the base. At the base I could see that this was a sort of shoreline, it tapered out to an expanse of murky water, and slick boulders outlined the pool. I waded into the pool, the bottom deepened, and ghostly shapes could be seen at the bottom. At first, I assumed these were white rocks, but then I saw a few begin to move as I neared them. Then their fins and whiskers became clear, they were huge white Catfish. They milled around our legs until we would step just a bit too close, then they glided away, bellies brushing against the grey bottom. The water became clearer as we continued through the pool, the only disturbances were the small puffs of silt from our boots, and the ripples of the Catfish.

When we reached the muddy bank, the cave opened up a bit, revealing layers of rocks creating a collection of natural shelves and plateaus. We stopped to rest at this spot, and as I scanned the rock formations, I saw a few blurry forms fastened to the underside of the shelves. At first, they looked like little bulbs of moss, but as I got a bit closer, I saw that they were bats. I had never seen a bat in person before, and I was surprised by just how small they were. Tightly gripping onto the undersides of the rock, their wings wrapped around them snuggly, and their tiny muzzles tucked into their chest fur, they looked soft and fragile. I could have held one in a single palm with room to spare. I looked up at the illuminated shelves and saw more bats latched along the bottom. They seemed undisturbed by our presence or headlamps, completely still with their eyes hidden by fur. They were nothing like what I imagined a bat to be, so much more like little winged mice or kittens than anything gross or ugly; to this day, I still don't understand why so many people dislike them.

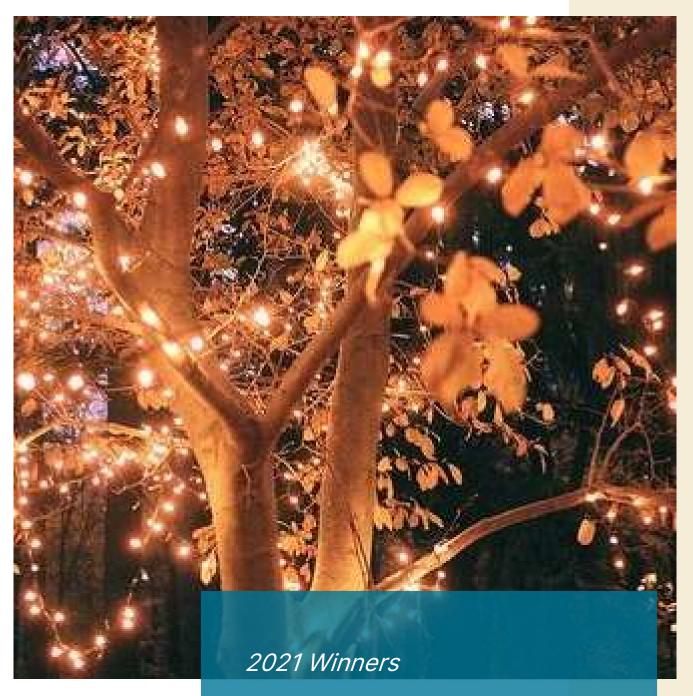
We rested a bit longer, then continued on, across rocky ground. The cave felt a bit less chilly as we traveled further from the water, and the chorus of drips became more distant. It became more of a tunnel, with lower ceilings, and only the occasional off spur. There was a short debate on which exit we should take, we could either turn back and scramble up the slick slope, or continue straight ahead, down the narrowing tunnel. We decided to continue straight. Yet, as we walked ahead the mud began to reappear, much thicker and more gelatinous than what we had seen before. The ceiling continued lowering, and a thin slice of daylight could be seen ahead.

The Cave (Cont.)

At a certain point, we were forced to continue on all fours, to keep from scraping our heads on the ceiling. This is when I first began to feel cramped in the cave. I was laying flat on the floor, commando crawling, with the mud's surface smeared from my collarbones to my toe tips, struggling to keep my head up while still moving forward. Yet, the cave continued to become shallower. With the sliver of daylight still several yards ahead, I pulled off my backpack and began to drag it by my side, just to continue inching forward. Those few minutes of crawling felt so long, and several times I came to protrusions of the ceiling that forced me to change course. The whole experience would have been tolerable if it weren't for the mud taking up two-thirds of the height in the tunnel. I had a few moments where I really felt like I might just suffocate in there, when my lips could only barely reach above the mud for air, and when my backpack would get caught on a hidden rock. It felt like forever, but clearly, I did make it out. I clawed through the gap behind my dad and the guide, blinded by the sunlight that met me. As I sat on the leaf-padded ground, and turned to pull my backpack out behind me, and my eyes slowly adjusted to the sun. I was tired, and cold, and didn't know how I felt, but this was an adventure, and everyone should remember to have those.

Tori Carina Miller, Grade 10 Homeschool Lisa M. Fox

## Eleventh Grade Prose



#### Untitled

I slipped, slid, and stumbled through the woods, trying my best to keep up with her. She'd always been much faster than me, but the woods furthered the challenge of beating her, placing bushes and thorns all around to hinder my speed. As I scrambled to get back up, my mind started taking me back to the beginning of all this; It was supposed to be a simple bet; She would stop bugging me over my secret if I could just beat her in a race. I should've known not to accept, given I've never been able to beat her, but I just wanted the questions to end,

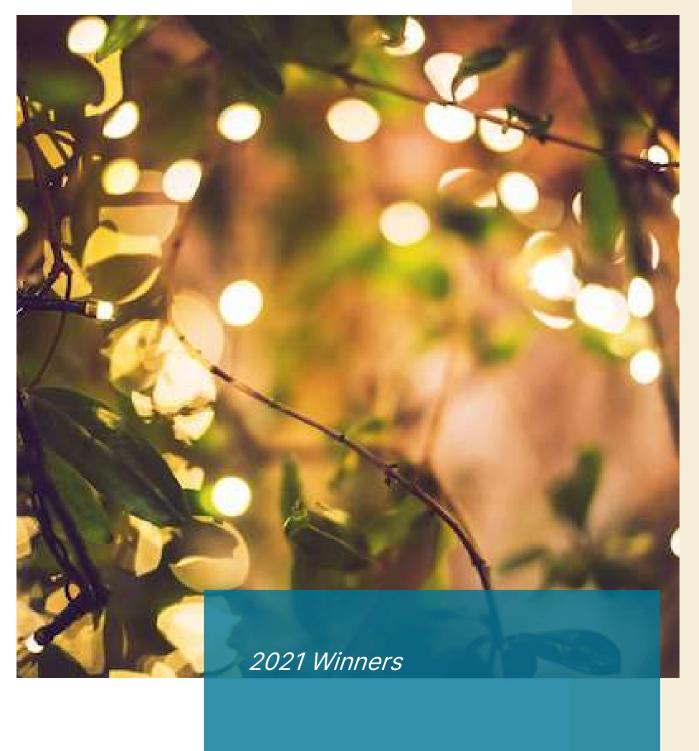
"What's she look like, what's her name, is she in our grade? Oh, is it Sarah, maybe Ann? How about-" It was all too overwhelming for me, but Maria knows how to get what she wants out of me, even when I try my hardest to stay quiet, but that's just how she's always been, the energetic and cheerful jock to my shy and subdued nerd. Busting through a bush, I start to think back on our very first race. The first day of Kindergarten started out relatively normal. During recess, the teachers decided that we needed to learn about teamwork through a relay race. Maria and I were both the last on our teams to run, and with the head start she got from her teammate, my fate was sealed as soon as she got handed the baton. Afterward, she came up to me while I was snivelling in the corner and challenged another race, one that was a bit more fair; Unsurprisingly, I still lost, but ever since that day we've been inseparable; And so, here I am, covered with sweat and bruises as I rush to protect my secret from the person it's about. Why did I accept this race, am I just that desperate to spill my guts about something I've had for so long? It's nerve-wracking to think about telling her, but maybe, deep down, that's exactly what I wanted. In a race, you push forward to your destination, but you can't just rush the entire time; Listen to your body and pace yourself so you can make it to the end in one piece. A runner's mentality is a very important factor in their performance, and I have to make sure I have a good one. She seems to be about 30 feet ahead of me as I gradually slow down. I quickly take my water bottle out, swig down a couple sips of water, put it back in my bag. I stand completely still for a few moments. Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale. Thinking on everything, I start to pick up speed once again. By the time I arrive, she's been waiting for me for a while. "I win again!" She chuckles mischievously, "Now, you gotta let me know who she is, I've been dying thinking about it the whole time!" Even after reaching the destination, I still hadn't crossed my finish line. I steady myself, getting ready for the final stretch. The moment moves in slow motion, even though the words leave me relatively quickly. I started this marathon the day I met her, and I finish it today.. "It's always been you." I cross the finish line.

Syd Taylor, Grade 11

Signal Mountain Middle High School

Amanda Pettit-Shaheen

## Twelfth Grade Prose



#### TWELFTH GRADE PROSE

#### I Am What I Am

I am what I am.

What does that mean? What am I? Do I know what I am? Will I ever know what I am?

I am full of questions, inquisitive. I am an over-thinker, unable to decide, making something out to be more than it should be. I am a procrastinator, currently procrastinating on this paper. I don't know what I am.

I am going to start off simple. I am Amelia, more specifically Amelia Rae Wills. I am from Amelia Island, the first three letters of my mom's name, the family name that has been passed down from many generations that will end with me. This is who I am. But I am much more than that.

I am what I am.

I am where I've been. I am a Floridian. I am born. I am taking my first steps, saying my first word. Tottering along my grandpa's side while he works on old cars. I am sitting on the kitchen counter eating noodles. I am building sandcastles on the beach. I am cheering on my dad as he races a go-cart around a track, falling asleep to the hum of the engine.

I am what I am.

I am a North Carolinian. I am going to my first day of school, crying my eyes out. I am making my first friend. I am falling in love with learning, never able to get enough. I am living a decade, becoming double digits. I am doing front flips on the trampoline, hitting tennis balls over the net, swimming in my first race. I am warm summer mornings at summer camp, cold winter nights next to the fireplace. I am learning the value of friendship, losing friends and gaining new ones.

I am what I am.

I am a Tennessean. I am experiencing the biggest change in my life. I am meeting new people, going to a new school. I am learning the value of hard work. I am finding my passions. I am spending my summers teaching little kids how to swim. I am up at midnight crying over an essay. I am a teenager, moody, always tired. I am finding who I want to be, what I want to be.

I am what I am.

I am the daughter of two people who were once in love. I am the daughter of two people who have put me before themselves, gave up everything for me to have the best future possible. I am the daughter of a mother who has taught me to think for myself, that I can do anything I put my mind to. I am the daughter of a father who built his way up through hard work, who doesn't let my gender stop me from doing anything.

I am what I am.

I am a daughter. I am a student. I am an athlete. I am a best friend.

I am shaped by the people around me, I mold myself. I am strong. I am independent. I am smart. I am kind. I am trustworthy. I am unstoppable. I am the best version of myself that I can be.

## TWELFTH GRADE PROSE

I	Am	What	I	Am	(Cont.)	
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I am what I am.

I am going to do great things. But I am still trying to figure what I am. I will always be figuring out what I am. And most importantly, I am who I want to be.

I am what I am, and I don't want to be anyone else but what I am.

Amelia Wills, Grade 12

Signal Mountain Middle High School

Amanda Pettit-Shaheen

#### TWELFTH GRADE PROSE

#### I Am What I Am

I am what I am. I am the girl who likes to talk. A lot. I speak without thinking. The second a thought crosses my mind, it escapes my lips, released into the infinite void of the universe. I am what I am. Loud, unapologetic, outspoken. I trust in the value of my words, the dime for my thoughts, the significance of my every action. I am what I am. Fallible. Reckless. Stubborn. I recognize that my growth is just beginning, that I need to learn to control my temper, control my energy, control my excitement. I am what I am. Willing to stand, speak, seek opportunity, equality, justice. Yet I'm equally willing to fall, cry, release. I'm the girl in class who has the most controversial thing to say but the same girl who will be the first to shed tears in a sad movie.

I am what I am. I feel. I feel with every fiber of my being. I feel emotions intensely and without constraint. I feel the hardships of others with detail as if the hardship was piercing my own heart. I am what I am. I write. The deepest insecurities of my life become visible in the black, smearing ink of a single, college-ruled piece of paper. The crowded streets of my mind file into a single line of order as my fingers scratch symbols onto a blank canvas. I am what I am. I try to organize the chaos of life in forms that bring clarity. I make to-do lists. I make schedules. I make calendars. I have sticky-notes littering my bedroom and bathroom wall, visual reminders of my goals, my aspirations, my accomplishments.

I am what I am. I am sun showers. Indecisive. A rare phenomenon. Occurring when winds associated with a rain storm blow water droplets to an area without clouds, the droplets of my past infiltrate my sunny outlook. I am constantly joyful, sprinkled with moments of disappointment, frustration, stress. I am both a flame and a snowflake. I burn intensely, licking flames of icy skies and muted sunsets. I often need to be douched with cold water, calming my disposition and bringing me back to stability. But I am also fragile, appreciating the silence surrounding the white sheet. I am intricate, with sharp turns and ornate detailing.

I am what I am. I am a people-person. I sit in silence and observe the activity of individuals around me, interpreting and inquiring the daily occurrences and relationships of their life. I find easy pleasure in striking up a conversation with a complete stranger. I am what I am. I am an advocate for the notion that there is something to learn from everyone. Taking movie recommendations from a man I met at the airport to sharing my personal experiences with an opposing senator, I believe that fate brings individuals together, that each conversation, each dialogue further shapes my identity.

I am what I am. I am Korean. I am an immigrant. I am a high school student. I am a female. I am an activist. I am a debate student. I am an actor. I am a writer. I am a journalist. I am a teenager. I am everything that the world labels me, judging my appearance, passions, interests, hobbies. A multitude of identities. I am not one label, one stereotype, one identity but a miscellaneous combination of the all-of-the-aboves. I am ambitious, I try everything and experience everything in life. Because I am also my past, present, and future. So I am what I am. I am who I am. And I am what I am meant to be.

Yoonie Yang, Grade 12 Signal Mountain Middle/High School Amanda Pettit-Shaheen

# Sixth Grade Poetry



## Coldness

The wind brushes off my cold legs.

The creek flows with a quick current.

Coldness is here.

The leaves fall with a quick rush.

The trees grow bare.

Coldness is here.

Children are calling for cocoa.

The frost is still on the grass.

Coldness is here.

The town is empty with a rush of chill.

The fireplace is warming young faces.

Coldness is here.

Adriana Rogers, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

## **Dancing Horses**

The horses sure love to prace
I think they'll be great at dance
My cousin Lu rode the great dancer Chance
Then caught the great flu of dance
But all through town the flu from Chance spread
Now everyone just wants to dance dance

Alexis Smith, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mrs. Lisa Todd

#### The Forest

I saw

a dry, dead log

at the base of a dark green bush

filled with vibrant red berries.

Yellow butterflies

flitted around beautiful pink and purple flowers

in tall grass.

A bubbling creek curved and twisted like a snake

a little ahead of me.

Baby birds chirped in their nests

that sat high in the branches

of healthy trees.

A warm breeze brushed my face

and brought a sickening, sweet smell,

that was so strong,

I could taste it.

I leaned against a jagged rock

covered in light green moss,

feeling every crack

and crevice

on its

imperfect surface.

I could see

a berry bush

filled with red berries

in the distance.

Soon enough I could smell

the tantalizing aroma

of the berries.

A sweet berry

was placed on my tongue.

Mosquitoes buzzed continuously

as birds sang

interrupting each other

to be heard.

I picked up a stick

and felt its rough edges on my skin, and I threw it at the valley ahead of me,

but I heard no splash.

I saw a sleek, black crow

moving its head back and forth,

while cawing.

It sat

on the edge

of a mushroom covered log.

A sea of

red, yellow, and orange leaves

surrounded me.

I jumped onto a sturdy rock

in the midst of swirling water.

Then dipping my toes

into the cold but clear water,

I felt like I would be pulled away

like a leaf.

Something slapped my face

leaving a stinging pain.

It whistles in the bare tree branches

and stirs up

the sea of leaves.

It also brings

the smell of pine.

Checking to see

if my mouth was bleeding I only tasted the pumpkin pie I had earlier.

The sea of leaves

is slowly rotting,

it's beauty

gone forever.

Tree branches

reaching out like claws

snag my shirt

and leave scratches.

All is quiet

except for a

occasional throaty caw

coming from the cloudy sky.

The wind screamed in my ear

and slapped the bare branches of the trees.

The rock that I had once sat on

was now as cold as ice.

Looking at the fast moving water,

I decided against

dipping my toes in it.

Then slowly taking in

the gloom around me

it reminded me of

death.

The gloom around me

reminded me of

death

forever.

## Ananya Chakraborty, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mrs. Regan Fazio

## This little tree

This little tree,
He stands up in the hot and the cold
He stands up in storms
But he never gives up
He gives you oxygen
He gives you shade
He gives you branches to climb
But you still continue to cut him down

## Caitlyn Kernea, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mr. John DeVore

## The Village by the Creek

Flowing water rushes by me, drowning out the sound of the chirping forest around me. The stones smoother than butter. The sweet scent of flowers fill my senses to the brim. Fresh perennial herbs sprout around me and fill the air with their spicy taste. The water clearer than glass, colder than ice chills me to the bone. The sorrows of over 500 people lay around me.

The blazing sun
stares me down,
while the grass
sways with the wind.
The dirt hardened from the rays of the sun.
The water that lays near me
has receded since last time.
Yet
it is still as clear
and cool as melted ice.
The stones the perfect oval,
quarts embedded in them,
lying underneath
the ever rushing water.
The leaves rustling

The orange and tangy leaves twirl and spin in the wind as they cascade down to the soft dirt.
Having freshly rained, pollen was now in the air.
I go over to the water that runs beside me, and dip my toe in.
The water is cold and I retreat back to my blanket.
I then try again

The wind constantly calling me

as I focus.

to stay forever.

and leap from boulder to boulder balancing as I go.
I finish the stunt within my mother's arms.

The icy claw of the water grabbed me as I plunged my foot in. The current swift, making the stones smooth and cold even on the inside. The ice hardened ground penetrated my overcoat as I sat.
The bare trees dancing in the harsh, icy wind, reminding me that there was nothing nothing but dormant plants and other death for miles. The water was harboring fish and other animals at the bottom that refused to reveal themselves. I have never felt so so alone.

Down by the village, everything is quiet except for the soft rush of the water flowing by.

## Carlos Baleeiro, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mrs. Regan Fazio

## The Porch

In winter I sit on the porch.

I look at my mittens with nothing but white.

Frozen I sit still watching the snow fall making more layers of white.

The hot chocolate in my frozen hands warms my body.

In spring I sit on my porch

I look at the animals roaming my yard.

My obnoxious dog barks until she has no more sound left in her.

The leaves are growing back on the naked trees

flowers bloom with colors of spring

In summer the sun beats on my body heat rays so hot.

I can feel it burn my neck.

Watermelon juice drips down my face.

I take a huge bite of the red and green fruit.

It tastes great.

The cold water makes this hot day feel perfect

In fall the leaves drop onto the damp and lonely ground.

Now they are deprived of they're color.

The sound of the wind blows so hard I can't hear myself think.

The cold day is gloomy with rain falling down onto my bench.

My porch is my escape from the fight and my vacation where I can stay. This porch truly is the best of all.

## Cohen Chavda, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Ms. Suzanne Collins

## War

War is victory through animosity, deceiving, perceiving the world,
Shaping and molding, like clay, hiding and classifying the deaths and sacrifices of others
No one seeing the blood spilled, innocents killed, ripped away from those who love the most.
Ideals not meeting, throwing away ethical treatment
Those fighting for their land, not getting aid, as the world is in dismay
Fighting other wars, wealthy countries wasting lives
Deception without exception, no one speaking out, no one about.
War is destruction, stomping over innocent people.
War is victory through animosity.

# Elijah Blankenship, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

Soon there will be a new vaccine to get rid of our pain and sorrow So we don't have to fear about tomorrow It's no longer a world outbreak

Emberlee Taylor, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

# COVID-19

In December 2019, soon makes us start quarantine.

The virus started to take over our earth.

Goodbye beautiful skies
and chirping birds.

In a hurry, we stocked on family needs.

I thought, "Oh!

Online school will be a breeze."

All of a sudden,
I really missed my friends.
Was that the last time to see
them before the world will end?

All school stuff home, crowded like crazy. Not going to lie, this just made me go crazy!

So super stressful, put in sweat and tears. THIS WILL LAST FOR A MILLION YEARS!

> All I wanted to do was play, thinking about how long at home I had to stay.

Reading with no peace, working- no silence.
Students and teachers on virtual screens!

Finally! Summer Break! A long, boring Summer Break.

Next thing you know, everyone's wearing masks! I can't believe I'm still attempting this task.

> Back to school starts. Starts 6th grade. Oh please, please end! You terrible plague.

Odd setups, plexiglass, social distancing, and again, more masks!

So many rules, lots of cleaning.

And in chapel,
we can't do the singing.

As I write, we're almost on Thanksgiving Break. Ok, really, just GIVE me a break.

For this upcoming holiday, all I have to say is cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents too. I guess I'll see you on our Zoom.

Gianna Giaccone, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

## Farewell, Earthfare

Earthfare, you're closing.
You make me so sad.
Your chicken's the best and your
Beef makes me glad.
I love all your products.
They all taste so good.
Your steak is the best
And my Dad cooks it good.
Sometimes I wish that
I still could come in.
I'd bang on the door
Just so you'd let me in.
Security, security!
I'll just give in.
Every night I dream
That you would come back.
Earthfare, you're closing.
You make me so sad.

# Jaxon Ford, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mrs. Lisa Todd

## Summer

I see the blazing sun glaring back at me.
The sound of my gears clicking prepares me.
Rushing down that long hill, the wind hitting the sides of my face.
I don't think of anything but Then as my brakes activate
I can smell the burning rubber, skidding.
Sometimes I will fall, sometimes, I won't.
It's a chance you have to take.

# JJ Connor, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mrs. Regan Fazio

My breath makes a small cloud in front of my face on a winter's evening.

The comforting smell of hot chocolate sneaking its way through the small cracks in the kitchen door.

I feel the cold metal on my hands as I sit down on the bench.

Vibrant flowers are blooming all around me.

Beautiful butterflies are fluttering around the garden.

The lawnmower roars like a lion, shortly followed by the smell of freshly cut grass.

Laughs and screams of delight fill the air.

The warm summer sun glaring down at me as I make my way outside.

The hot brick stings on the bottoms of my bare feet.

The sweet taste of honeysuckle still lingering in my mouth.

A warm breeze swiftly travels across my legs.

The comforting sound of dry leaves crumpling underneath my feet fills the air.

Small creatures scurry across the cool brick preparing for hibernation.

As Thanksgiving nears more often the smell of pumpkin pie and other baked goods fill the air.

The small garden always calm, is like an outdoor home.

Cold or hot, it is always a safe place for me.

Seasons change, but no matter the time the magical feeling never leaves.

## Katherine Pipes, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Ms. Suzanne Collins

the hat

There was a boy, The boy had a hat that he loved. The Hat was as fuzzy as a big fat bear. But one day a cat with a rat in his mouth( and the rat had a combat toy in his mouth) climbed in the hat While the boy was having a chit-chat with his friend matt the bratt A big bat pick up the hat that had a cat that had a rat that had a combat toy in the mouth of a rat. When the boy looked back, Pratt (matt the bratt brother) started to laugh. The hat was never found again.

Lamari Ware, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mrs. Lisa Todd

## black lives matter

Everyone is the same but people treat
Us different because we
Have chocolate faces
Raise fist high
Raise your voice where everyone can hear
"Black lives matter"
Not every white person is racist
Deep rotten in ur brain till the day
Of your birth
Don't wait someone to act man u go first
Cuz that's the only way we'll see peace on earth
"I cant breath"
Amen

# Leslie Taylor, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mrs. Lisa Todd

#### Down the Hill

I smell the crisp air.

The tan grass tickles my feat.

I sit in a world of reds,

Yellows,

And greens.

Trees wave lazily in the distance.

Enjoying the autumn breeze.

chilly wind crawls up my spine as well as a thought,

How lazy I am compared to the birds, and creatures.

Hard at work preparing for winter.

lying here.

Dreaming.

Not contributing the beauty of this world but sucking it up.

To feel freedom away from people.

Only sitting 100 feet away from my house.

Embraced with the shalem of the natural world.

Siting down on a blanket I shiver.

Sucking up the warmth of a hot cup of coffee.

A desolate sight in front of me.

the feeling of holidays have passed.

only a faint feeling of coldness remains in many heavy hearts.

Down the hill where I rest only dead trees, and cardinals remain.

from what used to be.

All creatures have left to escape the heavy loom over this place.

Empty promises whisper through the wind.

reminding us of are lost resolutions.

chilling us till we give in to...

winters gloominess.

Rising I stretch burrowing my feet into the new soil.

Geese fly overhead signaling prosperity is coming.

Squirrels emerge from there hiding spots chattering to their old friends.

A young fawn awkwardly walks with her mother exploring the newly born world

for the first time.

Oh how I wish to feel new again refreshed.

not weighed down from monotonous days.

To learn the virtues of the world again.

finding good in the coldest places.

How I lust for the Golden sweet experiences...

from years past.

Laughter fills the warm air.

even with no people in sight besides me.

A fox jumps in a field of wild flowers.

nose twitching.

trying to grasp all the smells before him.

My spirits and hair have lightened with the new season.

Hot sun puts a faint glow on the Earth.

The Sweet taste of honeysuckle spreads through my body.

The world is now sewn with warmth by the light hand of mother nature.

The lively sense that comes with every breeze has lifted up the most angry of creatures. everything is where it is supposed to be.

Matilda Joels, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mrs. Regan Fazio

# Droplet

Though light is reaching out at her She's stuck in the deep, deep dark. Through ups and downs she has no joy, No sense of laughter nor smile And even though she tries her best, She struggles to be lifted She felt so sad and hurt so much Until one rainy morn When a droplet hit her nose And she laughed it all away.

Molly Ogden, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mr. John DeVore

# I Don't Want to Write a Poem

I don't want to write a poem.
I don't know what to say.
I don't want to write a poem,
on any given day.

I want to go home, but I am writing a poem. I want to go fishing, but I am writing a poem. I want to go roam, but I am writing a poem. I am wishing that I wasn't, writing a poem.

I want to go to be done, but I'm in too deep.
I've gotten so far, I just want to leap.
I changed my mind, I have to admit.
I kind of like writing a poem!

Noah Fernandes, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

Her Tears Of Rain
Her tears the rain
She sobs the thunder
She cries from heartbreak
On those down under

Her tears the rain
Her hair the clouds
No one understands her tears and cries of pain
No matter how loud

With eyes that shine bright
She illuminates the night with rays of light
Leaving a soft blue gaze
Washing over the mountains in a haze

For days on end, she'd sit there and cry
Because what she once recognized was not the same
She'd cry until her tears went dry
Though she was unable to recognize they're name

Though in her sadness she longed for hope She recognized she would never be heard Everything she said always seemed to be slurred She watched the world on her downward slope

She sobs all night,
Slowly losing her resolve,
Inch by inch the hope and love she used to know starts to dissolve

Raelynn Kennedy, Sixth Grade

Center for Creative Arts

Ms. Courtney Lucas

# The Train to Warsaw

The air was thin and frigid, Papa had on his uniform and his suitcase very rigid.

Tears dropping from mother's eyes, the skies were fading dark. When the train hit the rails, There were a lot of sparks. Of Course, they weren't are allies From another country, Why were they killing people with Stars on their hearts. Papa's boots reflected off the little beam of light. The man with a Greenish Brown Uniform said aloud, "All aboard To Warsaw" Papa turned to Mother and kissed her on her forehead. Papa had the look of dread, Papa walked amble to the train. And next thing you know Papa is waving from A rusty train window.

# Ryder Hullender, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

## Spain

Like history coming to life. Surviving wars, dynasties, and dictatorship

Stretching from the Bay of Biscay to the Strait of Gibraltar And from the North Atlantic to the Mediterranean Sea

Across the Iberian Peninsula.

From the running of the bulls in Pamplona, To the cat-eared hill in Alicante.

It is the land of Flamenco, bulls, and Paella. Its dances and spices fill the peninsula.

The old motherland that knew how to follow The blue of the sea and the guide of the sun.

# Samuel Villalba, Sixth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

## Winter

It's been spring, summer, and fall;
Yes it's been them all,
But wait we need one more,
Winter is here. Hooray! Hooray!

There are Christmas trees in every window,
And lights on every house,
Snowmen in each person's yard,
And about a billion Christmas cards.

Bells are ringing, Kids are screaming, Cookies in everyone's oven And carolers at each door.

Don't stop, we want more!

More trees,

More lights,

More snowmen,

More Christmas cards

More bells,

More cookies,

More carolers.

This is winter, Fun but chaotic, This is winter, And I love it!

Sarah Jane Inman, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

# I Don't Know How to Write a Poem

I don't know how to write a poem,
But this is what I've got.
What is rhyme? What is rhythm?
What even is repetition?
How do I write a narrative poem?
How do I write a limerick?
Onomatopoeia is the use of words,
But I've never heard of that kind of word.
I think i just wrote a poem, but of course, I don't know.
If I did I hope it was ok, for my first ever poem known!

Sophie Callison, Sixth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mrs. Lauren Burnette

YOU WILL WRITE US DOWN IN HISTORY FOR OUR GREATNESS.

BULLETS DON'T HAVE NAMES ON THEM

BUT ALL DO THE SAME THING

That ghettofied, That dramatized

That brotherhood, That divided hood

BUT SOME MIXED TO MAKE GRAY

BLACK MEN HEAR THE SIREN,

THEY COVER THEIR EARS AND RUN

THIS IS A BLACK FAMILY AND WE WILL RISE.

THE SAME

IT'S HARD TO LIVE WITH A PAIN ON YOUR BACK

TRYING TO SHAKE THE REALITY OF THE KILLING

BUT PEOPLE LEAVE THIS LAND EVERY DAY,

BUT NOT IN NATURAL WAYS

GOTTA LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER BECAUSE BULLETS DON'T HAVE NAMES

BUT ALL DO THE SAME THING,

WE ARE ALL THE SAME PEOPLE, WE EAT THE SAME

TALK THE SAME, EVEN WALK THE SAME,

AND BLEED THE SAME BLOOD,

BUT THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND I IS COLOR

## Taliyah Williams, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mr. John DeVore

2020 Election Poem:

It's been a race all year.

All have wanted to hear.

Who would lead?

Who would concede?

January 20th is drawing near.

But we shouldn't fear.
We'll get a new President.

Maybe it will set a new precedent. No matter what, we will be,

The Home of the Brave and the Land of the Free!

# Tiphani Threats-Masters, Sixth Grade

Hixson Middle School

Mrs. Lisa Todd

## The Falls Spring

As I trek down the steep narrow path

gazing down at the edge.

While I smell

calm flowers

swishing side to side.

I feel a sharp thorn

prick my leg.

As we approach

our destination

I see a hallow dome

of hard rock and stone

formed by Mother Nature

as glimmering

like crystal shards

fall from above

my body is

at peace

I smell the flowers

painting the forest.

Like the fall leaves.

I leap into the creek

feeling the

cold water.

As if it were the winter frost

sinking to my skin.

With the crashing shards

hitting the creek below

thundering.

As this reminds me

of the summer and

the water is warm

This is Ozone falls.

Fall

The cold air flew

Past my skin

Shaking cold

But at peace

While running down

Crashing through the

Leaves my body is

Calm

I almost fall in

The cold water.

Shaking off

The leaves on my

Pants this is

The Falls
Winter
As we trek through
the thick fall
leaves.
We sprint through
racing each other
down.
We are doing what kids do.
As the leaves
scratch our legs.
We hear the crashing falls not as
loud though.

Soon we arrive and see the fall are not as active we smell

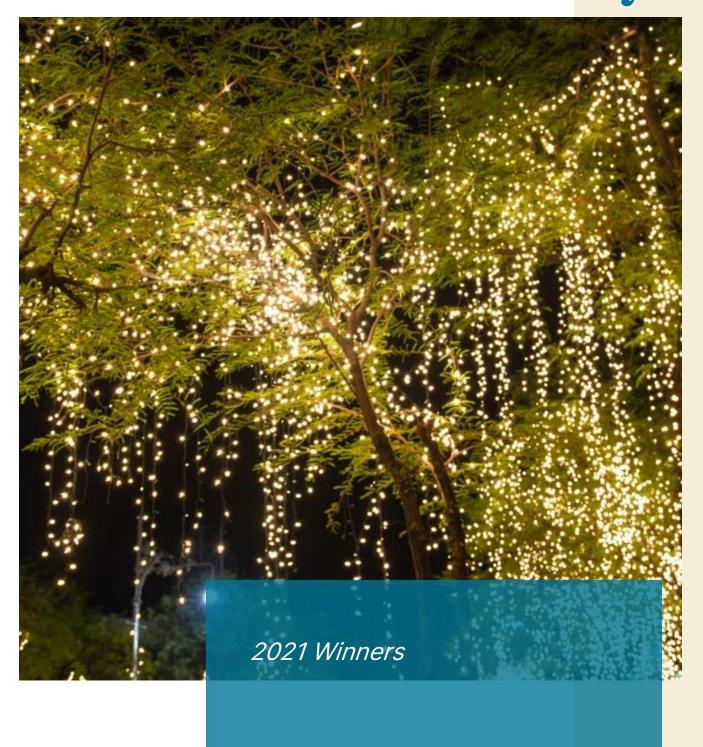
evergreen.

# Will Mayberry, Sixth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mrs. Regan Fazio

# Seventh Grade Poetry



In a speechless room,
With cold chapped walls,
A frigid lifeless body lay,
The departed body of a once joyful soul had been left,
The lifeless body was picked up by a limb,
And brought out into the open for all to see,
The once lifeless body jumped up,
And started to jult around and laugh,
The soul was joyful just until it started to fade,
The warm cheery smile rotted into a frown,
Her lively almond eyes turned worn, and murky,
The mood had fallen into a never ending despair,
Her feet started to let out and she plunged into the soil,
As she hit,
She closed her murky, tired eyes,
And went to bed.

# Aidan Curley, Seventh Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet

Mrs. Sarah Andrews

The Hunt
As you wait, quietly, not moving at all.
Waiting for the opportune moment.
To take the shot.
As your finger moves to the trigger.
You wait.
You hear a leaf crunch.
You wait.
As you wait your heart starts pumping and the adrenaline starts rushing. He stands broadside.
And you take the shot.
Maverick Fugate, Seventh Grade
Normal Park Museum Magnet
Mrs. Sarah Andrews

R ambunctious I ntrospective L ively

E xciting Y oung

S hy at first H elpful

E nergetic
P atient some times

A gainst evil

R ad

D istracted

# Riley Shepard, Seventh Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

## Flaring Nazis

Boom! A large gun shot was just heard.

The stinging the ringing of the pain in my ear made it unbearable to touch.

It felt like a constant bumblebee stinging my ear.

Boom!

A big bomb has been heard.

Debris went through my leg.

The aching pain of the debris stuck in my chest was terrifying

All I could feel was endless pain, when I moved an inch.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Nazis came knocking on the door furiously.

I feared coming to the door.

But I couldn't since I was up in the attic.

I was terrified that the people that were keeping me safe will get killed

Since they were keeping me up in the attic.

I suddenly went out of the attic to see what was happening.

But I was dearly mistaken since the Nazis have seen me walking down the steps.

I knew it was my time to go so I turned myself in so I could get killed more quickly, rather than getting suffered by a painful bullet, even though the debris in my leg was still aching with pain.

Soon I will be non-existent in this world.

But I only knew one thing, this was not the life that I wanted to live.

This was not the life that I was planning to live.

So I say farewell to the people that have been keeping me safe, well, alive.

The people that tried the best they could to give me a life that I wanted to live, a life that I once planned.

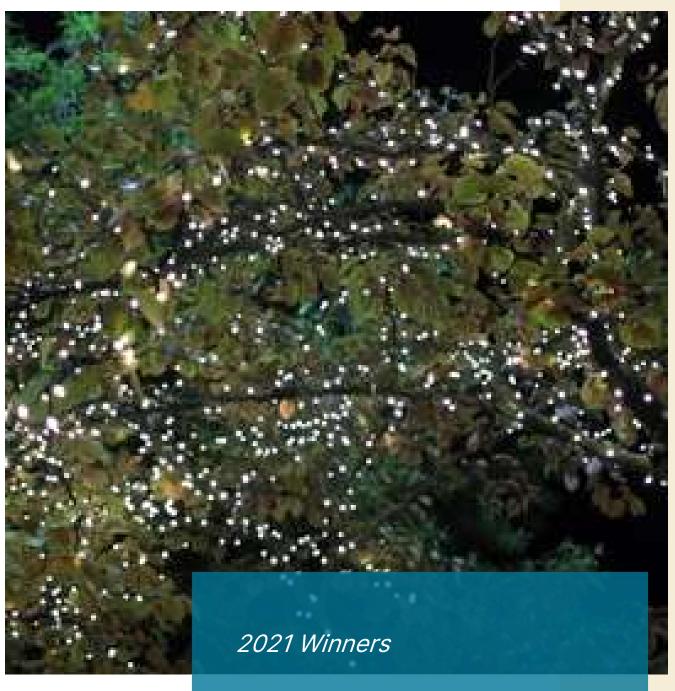
But it wasn't enough for the flaming bullets of the Nazis.

## Taylor Combs, Seventh Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet

Mrs. Sarah Andrews

# Eighth Grade Poetry



# The Ageless Sentry

It was Tuesday, as I recall.

The weather was cold, unreasonably cold.

I closed the wide oak doors leading into the library. My grandmother shuffled in behind me.

Her green glasses fogged over, protesting the sudden leap from the cold winter air.

Inside, flecks of dust spun, twisting and toppling in their eternal ballet.

They came to a stop,

momentarily shimmering in the sunbeams that cascaded down from the windows.

In an instant they resumed the dance.

The room was filled with the odor only books can produce,

the smell of time itself.

There was a hubbub of noise.

Clerks worked behind desks, stamping books, writing logs, and going about business as usual.

Toddlers ran among the shelves, unaware of you sitting above.

Yes, you.

You, keeper of knowledge, an ageless sentry, guardian of worlds.

You called to me and I answered.

I left my grandmother and walked over to the shelf, towering above.

I clutched you in my hands, your cover smooth against my skin.

I marched towards my grandmother with the confidence only youth can provoke.

After I presented my treasure to my grandmother, she added the book to the pile she selected.

Then, she whisked out the magical key to it all:

a sea foam blue card printed on paper.

At the age of six, this card seemed magical.

It was a gateway to worlds unknown, and I longed to travel.

She presented this to the man behind the front desk.

After an excruciating minute of typing, he finally pulled up our card on the cream-colored computer.

I shifted my legs uncomfortably, staring at the large desktop computer, completely transfixed.

Once our dues were accounted for, we walked towards the exit, I clutched you tightly.

You called to me,

that night of the terrible storm.

The rain fell like stones against my windowpane.

Thunder called with the voices of a vengeful god.

Unable to sleep I immersed myself in your pages, ravenously devouring every detail.

You were a steadfast lighthouse, and I a lost sailor.

I took you in, grasping, clasping,

asking for the slimmest sliver of inspiration,

and you returned this tenfold.

Though the storm raged on outdoors, I was far from home.

You carried me away, to worlds of strange magic.

I traveled down whimsical paths, meeting travelers along the long and winding road.

We grew close, you and I.

You led, I followed. This was the way our game was played.

I must have spent 10,000 years locked between your pages.

I saw wonders beyond belief, dined with kings, and climbed to the peak of the tallest mountain.

Until, at once,

it was over.

The rain continued overhead.

Years later I return to you, old friend.

I've changed much in that time.

Other books have shaped me and changed me, but none more than you.

I realize now what I realized that night: I must create.

You showed me the tapestries skilled wordsmiths can craft.

I know that I must try to give back what you have given me.

I wish only to inspire others with the passion you ignited.

My resolve burns like the coals of a raging fire.

I picture it clearly in my mind;

pages being turned, and a young child returning a worn copy of a book bound in green.

My name is embossed in yellow on the front, but it matters not.

Yes, what matters most is the spark in that child's eye.

The little glint of fiery passion, in their eyes as they move to seek another book.

They are called anew, no longer the same.

My book, my very soul, will sit there, dormant,

one more keeper of knowledge, and guardian of worlds.

Another ageless sentry.

# Benjamin Daniel, Eighth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mr. Henry Blue

## Fall

Fall leaves and fall breeze
Different colors of leaves
Brown, yellow, orange, and red
Pumpkins and fall apples
Caramel apples and pumpkin spice lattes
Crisp air and fall weather
Football and candy
Squirrels harvesting nuts for winter
Hedgehogs hiding in leaves
Warm apple cider
Oh how I love fall!

# Elizabeth Kiswani, Eighth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelly George

Life of A Slave

Chained together, starvation remained.
Disease kept its quiet as it killed silently.
While the pain of sadness grew violently.
Days grew longer while hope grew shorter.
Missing the family you once knew.

Wanting to escape, but knowing you'll never get the chance. Hoping you won't perish, so you can see you children dance.

Dance to the soft song of the Lord, hoping he will guide you home. Home where you will be at peace. Hoping the intolerable pain won't increase.

Emma Feinauer, Eighth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mr. Jason Williams

#### Eraser

An ordinary pink eraser sits on my desk here to remind me it's ok if I'm not always as good as the rest. My eraser has a squishy, reliable, and rubbery feel, but that's not entirely what seals the deal. It's their wonderful ability to take away my mistakes and make them disappear as if they were vicious snakes. A wondrous power that cannot be applied to anything but paper.

An eraser is great but that's all that you got it could be so much more or so I thought but an eraser is stuck racing across a chalkboard. What if there was an eraser that could erase any mishap? If you had a mistake that could not be undone my pencil eraser could have easily won. I would erase erase and erase and send any mistake straight into space.

My eraser is unbreakable and dear to my heart, but unfortunately, it's time to part. It's vinyl smell, uncontrollable shape, and plastic material are all edged into my memories. If any mistake that I ever made could just be simply "erased" I believe the person I am would just be replaced. If we do not remember our mistakes erasing them would be a waste. This is because we are human if we do not remember the mistakes we make we cannot learn from them.

Although my ideal eraser would be magic, I find the truth unfortunately tragic.

Kramer Weidlich, Eighth Grade

**Baylor School** 

Mr. Henry Blue

A gold ray of daylight that fell from the sky And was planted in the cool, damp earth.

And slowly developed into a little flower.

It pushed its way to the surface with all its might. Then it caught its first glimpse of the sun.

The bright and wondrous sun's light.

And sang a special song.

Sang of the sunlight.

Sang of the sky.

Sang of the clouds as they drifted by.

The joyful, jolly, jovial dandelion.

Celebrated the beauty of life.

All the time its song did ring.

And with it all the earth did sing.

For a few brief days you could hear its tune. Feel the warmth of its presence in an undeniable way. It was always there and forever it would stay. But it grew weary and old.

Its sunshiny tint turned snow white.

And it was blown away by the wind.

With a whoosh it was all gone.

But its memory lived on.

Until when sprouted from the ground,

Dandelions all around!

And pushed their way to the surface with all their might. Then caught their first glimpse of the sun.

The bright and wondrous sun's light.

# Lilly Folkins, Eighth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mr. Jason Williams

## Aruba

Pswoosh, waves crash upon the rocks!

A gentle breeze greets you like an old friend
To distant deserts I travel
The trail rocky like gravel
The sun watches over the docks

The adventure never comes to an end
The lighthouse guides you to your destination
A long time ago the Dutch started their colonization
It's at the beginning of the alphabet
How grand the sunset

It's my home away from home Palmtrees are everywhere like garden gnomes

You will never feel alone When you're at your home away from home

Noah Mejia, Eighth Grade

Chattanooga Christian School

Mrs. Christy Piersant

# EIGHTH GRADE POETRY

# The Red Wall

My dear Lady Liberty, How do you feel, seeing such disgrace?

The horrifying scene That now feels routine?

Are you disgusted, That now, Your meaning is rusted

Are you saddened, By all that has happened?

Are you in shock? Could you sense death's knock?

Are you disappointed by this Red Wall?

The same wall Who swore they held you dear, but make you feel like shedding a tear.

# Olivia Blevins, Eighth Grade

Chattanooga Christian School

Mrs. Brittany Crawford

### **EIGHTH GRADE POETRY**

"Symphony of Abode"

Tap, tap
Cadenced rap as fan revolves
Crackle of leaves from open window
Like crashing cymbals caring to be involved.

The air itself expectantly quivers Perhaps not unlike a viola or cello The pencil of writer scratches along page A flute; clear, high, with echo.

A car races past, low tones rumbling It could almost be a broad French horn Door slams with a mighty crash A mellow note by trumpet bourn.

Each familiar sound found within a home Is its own instrument, new and unique An orchestra from chaotic din Which is just learning to speak.

# Sarah Beth Underwood, Eighth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mr. Jason Williams

# EIGHTH GRADE POETRY

# Onyx

We have a goat named Onyx He's the leanest, but not the meanest,

He likes our donkey named Enos Because he's the sweetest

Thinks he's shiny but can be A little whiney, he's one of thirteen,

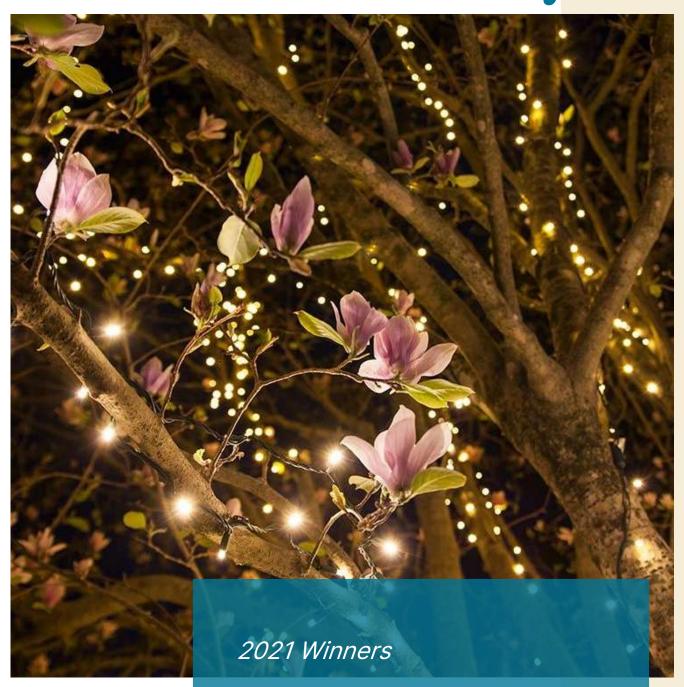
But dare not be mean or too polite, For he might bite.

Sherman Smith, Eighth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

# Ninth Grade Poetry



Glerk the Friendly Ogre

There's a legend of old, about a big, ugly ogre named Glerk.

He lived in a damp, cold cave all by himself, because everyone thought he was a gross, mean jerk.

His face was chubby and misshapen with yellow, slimy teeth and big, bulging eyes.

His hair was long and dirty and reached up to the skies.

For he was over eight feet tall and wore scraps for clothes.

He was filthy all over and mud caked his fingers and toes.

Glerk wished that he didn't have to look this way.

But, he knew if he tried to leave his cave, he would be sent away to the land of decay.

He had tried it before, to leave his eternal dwelling place,

But was banished and dropped into a miserable region, landing flat on his face.

It took him many years and many tries to get back home.

But, he finally did it with the help of a magical gnome.

For a wizard had cursed him a long time ago,

He would forever have to live in this cave with nothing but woes.

Glerk didn't need food or drink, but he did have a want more than any item.

He wanted a friend, but knew that even if someone came, he would only frighten.

So, Glerk spent his long days in his lowly cave,

Until one day a little girl showed up skipping on the pave.

She saw Glerk and he started to weep for he knew she would soon speed back through the brush.

But, to his surprise, the girl walked up to him, gave his leg a hug, and he felt his heart gush.

The girl wasn't afraid and told him to come with her.

Not caring about the curse anymore, Glerk followed with his eyes a blur.

They walked out of the cave and he waited to be banished,

But the forest was calm and still, he had not vanished!

The loving little girl led him to town, and all the people embraced the ogre, Glerk.

They were kind to him and no more saw him as a jerk.

The girl had broken the curse and allowed Glerk to have his dream,

He finally had a friend and his face was lit with a joyous beam.

Ava Turner, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

### **Shoot for the Stars**

They say shoot for the moon and if you miss, you'll land among the stars I think we should shoot for the stars in the first place
We often take them for granted, and never realize the wonder they truly are
They create their own glow in the black darkness of night,
The moon just projects the sun's light as its own
We often block out stars with our own street lights, not fully appreciating their beauty
The stars are like snowflakes, all completely unique and different from each other
Stars die in a supernova, creating beauty even in their destruction
They leave behind remnants that give birth to new stars, continuing their legacy
We all should learn a little something from the stars

Brayden Kinlaw, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mr. Will Dragoo

### **Unbelieved Miseries**

Deep in the cold, gruesome Wild is where the monsters lurk.

If you're unlucky enough, you'll come across one in the dark.

If you dismiss this warning with the simple phrase, "Monsters don't exist" I shall remind you of a second simple phrase, "Dead men tell no tales."

At this very moment, a beast sleeps soundlessly in the Wild. His large chest rises and falls in beat with his lonely heart, his scales shimmer in the gentle moonlight, his nostrils flare. The broad appendages protruding from his back flap subconsciously, stretching against the tight and narrow cavern walls they're trapped within.

Dirt scraped from the ceiling falls upon his nose, waking him with a start. His hooked nose twitches in frustration, and he's careful to keep his large head lowered, for his cave is not accommodating to his size. He heaves a great sigh, attempting and failing to flex his claws. Ahead of him is the mouth of his cave, from which pours in cheerful sunlight.

This is a dragon, in case you were wondering, and he has a name (though he's never told me). He cannot remember how many years he's been in this cave, I don't believe a being can conceive such a number of days. Going back to my previous statement, and after seeing this creature in his lonesomeness, I shall reword my claim from before this saddening sight: perhaps the reason you have yet to see a monster, is because they are just as afraid of us, as we are of them.

# Brooklynn Pearson, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

## TV

While books of education are far better for the brain
Watching actors on a screen does more to entertain
The wide variety of options for whatever mood I'm in
Never an issue when finding a new show to binge
Sitting on the couch with a drink or snack in hand
I find myself not moving from that spot I chose to land
When the show has ended, the next one begins the count
Challenging my wise decision to get up and move about
Now that I took too long to decide what to do
The next one rolls on so my self-control I shoo
With every wrong decision comes a consequence of price
My eyes unfortunately paid up as they stung until sufficed

# Chloe Creekmore, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

What Can You Do When You're Stuck In Glue

Once upon a time in a small town that's quite, quite far away In a group of people who enjoyed their lives by living from day to day No one thought that quite a predicament would cause a town to crumple But yet it started out in their small, small town known by the name of Rumple On one fateful day that started normal and with nothing that was new It all started out with an elementary student known by all as Mary Sue She was not known as the brightest nor as the strongest nor as a menace But from out of the innocent Mary chaos would ensue While working on a simple third grade project she did something out of the blue And on this fateful hour Mary drank the Elmer's glue It would only be a minute after that she ran out of luck As she tried to get out of her chair she realized she was stuck The first one to try and help her up was no other than her teacher Mrs. Rose But as she went to grab her hand she abruptly stopped and froze All the students had a laugh and created an uproar But little did they know that they would all be stuck right to the floor People then started to panic and some others tried in vein But nobody expected to be affected by the Elmer cow's reign The town that had a population of three hundred and twenty-one Had never thought in a million years that their town would soon be done After people finally came to help nobody used up any might They didn't do a thing but board it up and say goodnight And so that concludes our little story of a town that was doused with glue You may be wondering how in the world this could apply to you Even though this is a silly tale it's crucial that you think That no matter what you must accept that glue is not a drink

Eli Minor, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Trapped In The Fog
Like a thick heavy blanket
Blank empty mist
Surrounded by white
Is our ignorance bliss?
A broken world covered There's nothing we miss Just cover your problems
Forget they exist
A world of confusion
Concealed by the mist

Elise Collis, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Mr. Will Dragoo

# Fishing

Under the water Wanting to be found

Creatures live
They wait for the bait to be thrown

When I am at the water Everything is right

The animals of the waves invite me I wait with patience

The fish consider my offer They strike and are captured by confusion

I pull them out from under the blue And set them free

To see them again tomorrow

Isaac Heard, Ninth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

# Roses are Red

roses are red violets are blue I have a cummings that will roll coal all over you rolling down 58 throw her in 3rd cop behind me look bad then almost hit a curb pull up to a light that straight pipe stays whistling stomped on the gas then that turbo stays glisting

# Landen Poythress, Ninth Grade

Central High School

Ms. Kelsay Cate

# **Extreme Ironing**

Ironing high into the sky and ironing low as far down as we can go.

This ironic hobby is not a joke, it's extremely extreme.

Climbing the highest mountain, swimming underneath the seven seas.

Our goal is simple and super duper awesome.

To iron a tee or a skirt. To iron some pants or even a shirt.

Yes I mean iron, like in the laundry room but in a way we add our own kaboom.

In a car or on a plane you might think we're mentally insane

We're not insane it's a piece of art and to do these stunts you'd have to be very smart Nothing is stopping us from doing what we love, ironing while skydiving from above All we have to do is take the picture and our ironing will be written into scripture So now the day comes to a close and tomorrow we will iron clothes.

Noah Randle, Ninth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

# The Patriarch's Treasure

Sitting in an ancient rocking chair that creaks like an old barn door, the patriarch stares with unmoving gaze into the blazing fire on the stony hearth. His hair white with the snowfalls of fourscore and ten winters, his beard flowing like an alpine waterfall. He thinks of the years that by him have flown and reflects on the memories of long gone adventures. O, that we could peer into that clear-sighted mind! What lessons could be learned! What advice could be heard! All of these waiting to be discovered, like gold to be found by the miner, In the mind of the patriarch

# Zachary Ramont, Ninth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

Tenth Grade Poetry



### The Path

Moss grows between the stones

Smoothed from years of wear.

Galloping children, who dance along it with great fervor

Wary Adults, making sure they know where each foot is placed.

It bends and curves,

Taking its occupant on a scenic route of all mother nature has to offer

It gets no thank you, no second glance from a passerby

After all, wouldn't you rather look at the dipping tree branches filled with color?

And the soft delicate petals of the flowers that grow beside it?

But it looks for no appreciation, it doesn't really like the attention.

For it knows in its heart of hearts that it will still be there long after the trees have lost their color

Long after the flowers have shed their petals and drooped in the cold

It knows its place well

And it is content to continue its life of bends and curves

But always leading exactly where you need.

# Abby Fisk, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Sarah Johnson

# The Beauty of a Forest Stranger

The beauty of him in all is hard to grasp
The sunlight beams through his leaves
The birds sing hymns as they perch on his wooden wings
He reaches higher than the heavens
His roots dig deep into the earth, giving him life
To the animals of nature, he is shelter and nourishment
To man, he is pure artistry
His delicacy is priceless
His handsomeness leaves me utterly astounded
As I sit underneath him, his shade hides me from the blistering heat
And as I retire from his forest home,
He waves to me, goodbye, till a new day comes
And we meet again.

# Annabelle Goff, Tenth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

"Since You Were Three"

Little children, the first boy I knew Age of three, and on cloud nine. I thought I had met my best friend.

Known you since we were three, Growing up together, Playing together, Laughing together.

Eight years later Our bond is stronger than ever. Only to be broken, By others making fun Of the relationship we have.

Known you since you were three. Growing up together, Playing together, Laughing together,

To think I thought I would never lose you Only for fate to prove me wrong.
Ten years wasted, due to my blindness
That all ended in heartbreak.

Known you since you are three. Going up together, Playing together, Laughing together.

I thought I knew you since you were three. Only to see that I was wrong all along.

Campbell Baughman, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Sarah Johnson

Paper Monster
The stack of papers sat on my desk
Staring at me with chilling eyes
I could feel its claws around me
About to steal its prize

I had not done my homework I had pushed it off 'til now Until I heard its gristly growl As it was rising to a prowl

The stacked papers started to grow Forming legs and arms
Then started coming after me!
"Don't do me any harm!"

The monster bared its teeth And roared a ferocious roar I finally said, "Okay, fine." Then it went onto the floor

I picked up the papers
Got my pencil and pen
Then started to do my homework
And never saw him again.

Chloe Rice, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

Memories in Flames

Memory is a fire
beautiful and surreal
But can be painful to feel
Memories are a blaze
Warm to your soul
But deadly, uncontrolled
Memories are a campfire
Beautiful while they last
But leave only a fraction when they passed
Memory is a spark
Could be danger
But if contained, nothing major

Jordan Ray, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

### **MASKED**

"I envy the dead"
Such a powerful statement with detrimental results

But if the dead were to hear such nonsense as this It would greatly be detested

Because to be dead is not better than to be living Anytime there is a minor inconvenience

A disruptive statement like this flashes like a notification on the screen of our minds The weight of isolation is so overbearing that it crushes happiness and grinds it into anger and division

In times like this it is easy to allow SICKNESS to reach its arms into our minds Slowly and surely pulling us farther and farther apart

From family, from friends, from everyone Everyone and everything is held... at a distance

Everything closes, mental and physical We look to death as an escape when in fact, without salvation, it is an end

This VIRUS takes and takes regardless of social status, skin color, and finances Why don't we do the same?

We should take pride and ignorance, and replace them with kindness and compassion Marching towards the goal of *taking* off the MASKS

So that then no one will feel "envy for the dead"

Kyah Miller, Tenth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

# The Birdsong of The Wind

As I sit in my chair I listen to the soothing song of the wind I close my eyes as I'm kept company by its tune The soft chimes play the lyrics of where it's been Traveling From the Smoky Mountains to the beaches of Cancun. I could only sit in my chair and wish to hear more. As I open my eyes to look for signs of its soft song The sweet breeze whispers in my ear its memories of before. Reminiscing on its old melody of a lifelong.

I finally stood from my old rickety chair as its breath died down. I watched the metal chimes as they came to an end. Smiling to myself knowing it's moving on to the next town. Knowing someone else will be able to hear the birdsong of the wind.

Leila Babb, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Taryn Humphries

# The Angel

The bitter, cold breeze comes forth against the grass,

The roses sway, dancing in the wind.

The water from the fountain pouring endlessly at a mass,

But the duchess knelt into the surface wishing the quarter to end.

Every day a pain, another part of her forced life in royalty,

She wept for hours as the grass caught her tears.

While she walks with the king in boldness and loyalty,

Now staining the surface with representation of fears.

"My light, my guide, my guardian angel,

Why must the life I live be so dreadful."

She spoke to the heavens in a voice so gentle,

Her tearstained face too heavy for a mind so youthful.

The duchess would sigh, her heart heavy in fears,

Then a rustle in the bushes from a man of the same young age.

"I've seen the ways you struggle through the years,

Come along with me and together we'll engage."

The man offers a rose to the small, fragile child,

Which she accepts, and looks up with a smile.

Her heart would shift from heavy to gold,

It physically showed as her face would light up in his presence.

She took his hand with a gentle grasp, hands frozen from the cold,

And he would take her off the ground, into the light of iridescence.

A heart of pain shifted to a heart of love,

By a simple act from an angel above.

# Marli L. Herron, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Taryn Humphries

# The Almost Day

Yesterday was a great day,

Sun shining,

Clouds few and far between

But then came today

Oh, today was downright grey

Dark colors and large black clouds littered the sky

And I almost had a good day

I almost had a good night's sleep

I almost had a decent rest

I almost woke up on time,

But slept over, just like most

We almost made it to school on time

We almost had time to explain

We almost made it to first period,

But didn't get an early morning train

"You almost missed the party,

You almost failed your test."

This is what the Principal told me,

But then again, he is just almost smart enough to fail me anyway

With a smile on my face,

And a chuckle on my face,

I decided that I almost had a bad day,

I almost decided not to go out

But thankfully I did,

Because I almost missed out

An almost day is a bad day, but at least I've learned,

That being an almost day doesn't have to be mourned

# Nathan Steffey, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Taryn Humphries

# A Long Walk on a Beautiful Trail

The sun glistens through the tree canopy onto the nature trail.
Surrounded by an immense forest of bright colored leaves.

One boy sitting and the other standing on the moss covered rock along the extensive and rock covered creekside.

Below is a small waterfall formed from fallen rocks.
The water trickles from rock to rock into the flowing stream beneath.

Ryan McGhee, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

The Path

Walking down the grey path
Leaves falling all around like soft rain
Orange leaves covering the ground like an ocean
The ground wet and muddy from another day
Dead leaves all around
Spots of mud like craters
The cold air filling my body past me
The wind blowing back my hair
Smells of rosemary as we walk in the garden
A pink flower blooming out of place

Sam Tedford, Tenth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

# An Ode To My Future

My future is an unfulfilled fantasy With idealized peaks and inevitable valleys I will labor endlessly and serendipity will be on my side And my dream will give way to reality

A house on top of a hill
Or a studio in the city
Somewhere without cold and responsibilities
By myself or maybe with you
With clandestine adventures and lingering stares

A green kitchen And gentle voices to awaken A life with no need for escape

A friend not a follower A lover not a boyfriend A family not relatives

For I've eaten grapes of wrath and poison apples And faced calamity and cruelty And insurmountable fears Along with snakes, spiders, and hurled stones

I've learned that honest words are superior to nice ones, That luck comes with fairness, And that I am not for everyone and everyone is not for me In every day, in every way, I become my future

# Savannah Harold, Tenth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

### Rain

She was like the sweet honey to my soul.

Laughter and remembrance flooding my mind.

Kate was her name but to me she was mom.

Mommy, momma, mother, mum, best friend too.

Drip Drip, one by one the wet drops fall fast. From my eyes, down my cheeks, to the cold floor. Drip Drip, a memory, cloud darkened sky. Trailing off, healing wounds, beautiful rain.

Raging questions come to mind. Why her? Why? In my head a million things. Boom. Boom. Boom. Smiles, fun, giggles, all gone forever now. Gasping and wading, drowning in my tears.

Drip Drip, one by one the wet drops fall fast. From my eyes, down my cheeks, to the cold floor. Drip Drip, a memory, cloud darkened sky. Trailing off, healing wounds, beautiful rain.

Sophia Craig, Tenth Grade

Boyd Buchanan School

Ms. Temple Davis

# **Proximity of Death**

If you were torn by the death of a stranger As much as the death of your neighbor You'd be stressed, depressed, alone

If you were cold to the death of a neighbor As much as the death of a stranger You'd be harassed, aggressed, alone

Your neighbor is someone's stranger Your stranger is someone's neighbor They are loved the same

Love thy neighbor, you'll love their stranger Love thy stranger, you'll love their neighbor Their worth is the same

Tori Carina Miller, Tenth Grade

Homeschool

Mrs. Lisa M. Fox

# The rose that grows in the dark

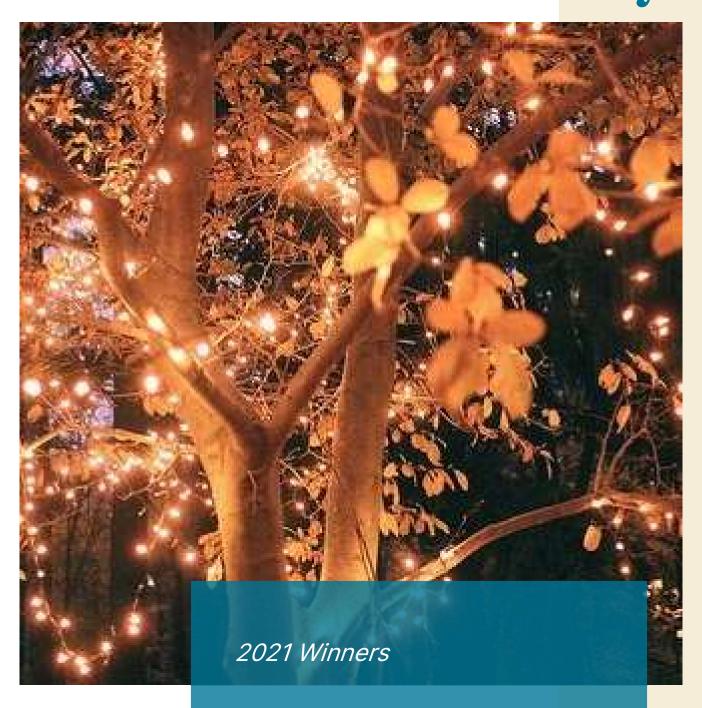
Cold I lay yet standing in the darkness
Holding my breath as my red face falls
Falling over myself while my body holds me
Red tears fall; my people leave me
Wind blows me down but like grass I rise
But also like grass I die
Time comes and goes
Rain screams and sings
But like the sun I rise
That is my fate
The destined days to come
For I am just a rose
I guess it's time to die.

Tyler Patillo, Tenth Grade

Central High School

Ms. Kelsay Cate

# Eleventh Grade Poetry



Moonless Nights

The very night is tired

I know

It's in the air

So still, so still

Then a light touch

Of cool silk winding around me

Shivering with the pure nerve of stark solitude

It's cold.

There is no moon.

The invisible sound of water
Distant, crashing, luring
Softly, loudly
In its soft, shallow splashes
I feel the life around me
above, below, beside
So eerily tangible
I shudder.
There is no moon.

Silence gets louder when you can't see it And night has its own dissonance Creatures crying A rhythmic cacophony Mournful, lonely A whistling trill like an old toy train Distant, and closer than my own skin The night's ghost orchestra There is no moon. The sky above feels so far away Dim and murky Barely hinting at some spectral, starry glow Tall figures stare over jagged noses Swaying, aloof So, so dark Over tiny, bright, white fairy flowers dancing, shaking Sleeping, waking. There is no moon.

Glinting dew winks on the grass
Each twisted root bows
As the atmosphere pulses
Deep, steady, under the earth
Through and through, I feel its heartbeat
Louder, Louder! Softer.

So heavy, so light
Terrifying, but truer than any day
The sun may return
But this will be here
When the night is dreaming
There is no moon.

Anna Collis, Eleventh Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

# From Day to Night

The leaves whistle in the wind,
The sun beats down on the field like heat in an oven onto food,
The birds sing their melody for no one to hear;
The fish swimming in the creek with no end destination in mind,
The beauty of God so often over looked,
From the grass to the tree tops,
All in between God worked masterpiecesThe moon is on the rise
Stars start to appear all throughout the sky,
The birds have stopped the singing for the night,
The fish settled down for the time being,
The leaves still whistle
From day to night,

Cam Mullins, Eleventh Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Kyndall Squires

God's work is a sight.

# A Place of Restoration

The crisp breeze blows, as I breathe in the fresh air.
The fall leaves beneath me crunch, as I step across the forest floor.

I stand isolated and alone, for here I feel complete. I stay here for hours, for here I find myself

The world around me is changing, and tries to take my identity. but, the forest before me is constant, and begins to restore my soul.

In society I feel worthless, But in nature I find my purpose.

Carolyn Henley, Eleventh Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

I don't exactly know what I'm going to do or what the significance of me doing anything at all is.

I am inevitably to become a gear in a falsely gratifying system.

I'll be stuck between two other gears, my past and my future.

I'll turn with them and age, no oil to ease my labor.

I'll exhaust and corrode and stop then start again.

Or perhaps not.

It is an inevitability I despise, but I can think of no ideal to which I prefer over it.

I want to cling to the familiarity

I know life only as a continuous motion

Should it be the motion of an unoiled gear or that of a dancing woman?

Dare I ask to stop and stand where I may?

Will it choke the gears and have me removed from the system in whole?

Surely I'll be thrown to a pile of the defected

My very structure melted down for reuse at best

Why do I dread being a defective gear?

Life is motion

If I stop, am I alive?

Though I think of that dancing woman who does not wish to stop

I think she manages to enjoy herself

Her joints do not ache

Unlike the gear of my own efforts

Her satisfaction encases her so that she may move forever

The reward of motion appears as a smile on her face,

A grace in her movement,

A shine in her hair

Do I envy her? I'm unsure

I want to dance, I want to learn to dance

I admire her

I'm bursting at the seams with hope!

I nearly have the nerve to-!

Well-

I don't exactly know what I'm going to do...

Or what the significance of me doing anything at all is.

# Cierra Billings, Eleventh Grade

Ooltewah High School

Ms. Kylie Taylor

# A Summary of 2020

Two thousand twenty is near its end, And, even as these words are penned, I gaze behind at the rough, rocky path That the world has traveled and its foul aftermath.

Riots of racial origin have wracked The country with violence. Those absolved are attacked. Talk of no longer funding the police Threatens the nation's serenity and peace.

Election day will be a national bump.
Who should we pick? Biden or Trump?
Their debate has left many straddling the fence.
(And some still wonder between Harris and Pence).

The paradise of this country is the Caribbean Sea, But bad weather has ruined its tranquility. Many hurricanes have ravaged the sea and the coast, Bringing death to some and destruction to most.

The greatest trial has left the whole country stalled. It's a dreaded virus (COVID, it's called). Masks must be worn everywhere you go, And the economy has suffered many hard blows.

Despite all these trials and those ahead, We Christians don't have to be crippled by dread. We know God will fill our cup to the brim And protect us if we follow Him.

Isaiah Dixon, Eleventh Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

Ivy

The dark green color of the vines and ivy Extending from the corpse of a tree This sinister plant looks as if the life was sucked out of it Left cold and expressionless The shades of verde grow darker as it recedes past the treeline The snake-like vines tangle in and out of an old fence The further it goes, the more tangled and twisted it gets Almost like a mind, deeply deranged by its own thoughts Who really knows how far it goes Each vine reaches as most as it can for heaven But it never has enough strength to reach It instead, hides in the shade, confused Almost like a mind, deeply deranged by its own thoughts I hate the secrets it holds I hate the evil and wickedness it possesses It feels as if the vines here grow down further than we know Almost like a mind, deeply deranged by its own thoughts

Jesse Williams, Eleventh Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

# Meaning of Loneliness

All alone in the dead of night, a man with his face covered by the shadows walks along under the dark filled sky.

The only thing admitting light was the light post which he soon leaned against.

His face, still unclear which made my mind flourish with fearful thoughts.

Yet, the concept of him was so intriguing.

Assumptions would say he is gloomy but he sat alone peacefully for hours.

I soon drew the courage to walk through the mushy grass to talk to him.

I sat right next to him and said "Why do you sit alone and hide your identity?"

With a raspy voice he replies "I'm not alone"

Unsteadily I replied "well who else is here?"

He says "This is where I left my family; I choose to believe they are here with me."

Unsure of his identity I was late to reply

He starts to mumble "Never stop fighting for the people that left you in the dark"

Lexi Fouts, Eleventh Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

## The Axeman of New Orleans

there once was a man, his cold heart silent yet his soul singing, with a passion for jazz and love of ragtime, that littered his wake no good a man was he, question if he were at all a man that is, here say, rumor had it, you know rumor said he was no man at all, a demon in disguise was he he said so too in a note, a demon he was, he wrote a warning

a spirit of darkness, dark soul was he, born from the pits of fire fiery madness he took with him, down to New Orleans a night once ago surprising one like you, here and now who's not heard the tale that began so long ago, still rings true and clear as the swing in each pub round a corner, and each home who cherishes life killer of six was he, or so they say, that is those other six who lived, spared many a dozen did he all if they bid his warning, jazz played all night a' long that tense evening in the city, he was a madman they say not a one knows now

if he was, no one'll figure, so long ago it was no one was youth enough to live so long, still pity those souls he took those who lost their lives to an ax, an ax sent from the devil, they say but no, no each ax was never his own, each was rather another's anothers' he used to torment, torment those poor ones then even now the legend rings to strike fear, each night even now on that fateful day, he passed over our city bode a warning beforehand, said he was a beast only tamed by the bop of swing in New Orleans, each night still to this day each night on tonight

we Orleanians still play, still play those taming blues the blues that washed over, washed over that madman's fiery soul his soul was alight with demon fire, the demon of vengeance, of judgment inciting murder and sin he does, still today, I think a whisper in the ear of the tormented, a threat he uses to deal them their cards a cheat he is, nothing more than that, a scandal and a dark-hearted one no, he's no heart at all, no more after serving the devil for so long goes by so many names he does, The Spirit of Solitude, The Avenger a fallen angel he was or so they say, how a fiend so dark could have gone up a humble one such as I wouldn't know

just know, boy, listen close, if you ever hear that whisper, that chill you run, right then and there, you hear, lest The Executioner catch you rumor has it his victims always hear, they hear him on the wind, an echo 'oh, look, look now, the reaper' he says, 'the reaper's here now at the door' if you ever hear them words, son, I tell you, run and never look back he's taken too many souls now, each lingering in his shadow

as One themself, lost forever, alone they'll be now to the end trapped in a void, cold and dark, all alone, don't let him get you, son, don't let him there he is, now, boy, there now, you'd best run, run now, lad forget me, my boy, too late it is

go, go now before he catches you, he'll catch you as he has me run and don't return to New Orleans

Llyra Bryson, Eleventh Grade

Central High School

Ms. Kelsay Cate

"Please"

Someone please buy my truck
I put it on craigslist but still no luck
Its pretty and a shiny red
I just wanna sell it and get that bread
It honestly looks pretty fire
And the other day I bought it a new spare tire.
If I kept it, it could still be a blast.
But I'd rather sell it and buy something fast.
Its made it all the way to 200k
And I think, it sadly might be here to stay.

Mateo Rivera, Eleventh Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

Gloomy Room
Breathe in, breath out, ahh
The sun rises with a blaze from behind the mountains
She hangs shining ever so brightly
Her loving glow gently awakens the earth and all about it
The birds sing their sweet songs
And the grasshoppers go about jump, jumping and hop, hopping
Warm smiling all around as I walk about in my town
I hope this never ends

The kind wind quietly kisses my skin, waking me up from this dream I open my eyes only to find the numbing darkness that I call, reality
So much going on, but only through a measly screen
I am trapped here in my empty room with nothing but a chilling silence
How long will this last I ask, but with no response
Another day I assume, sitting here in my gloom

Again the sun will shine
And the birds will sing
And the grasshoppers will jump
And walking without a mask will not be a sin
But I will be waiting here, in my gloomy room

Megan Moser, Eleventh Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Joy Fisk

There's a demon sitting behind your door Teeth bared, with long claws clicking on the floor This place isn't new, neither's your fear The shaking grows harder, the monster draws near

Each foot step brings worry You start to hurry It needs to be done, To shine like the sun

You tried to be good during your time Tried so hard, polished off all the grime But every inspection, no matter how well They sent you further and further through hell

You just need more time, that's all, right? Skipping meals, no breaks, working during the night But time here is faster, the clock hand strikes out The piles grow larger, you're riddled with doubt

You'd try to flee to another plane But the demon can track all in its domain And even when light begins to shine through The monster comes back to discipline you

A couple of angels sometimes drop in The only pleasure for all us men But where the demon chooses to play The angels can easily be locked away

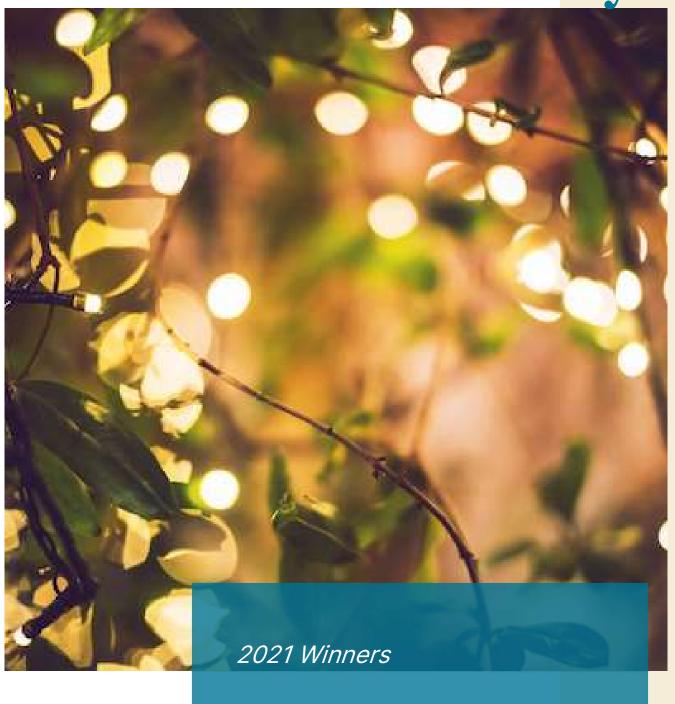
A prisoner's duty is never done It's been so long since I've seen the sun I look up and see all the tools on my shelf, And I think "If this wasn't hell I'd kill myself."

Syd Taylor, Eleventh Grade

Signal Mountain Middle High School

Mrs. Amanda Pettit-Shaheen

Twelfth Grade Poetry



# Cherry The Chicken My Best Pet

Cherry the chicken was the perfect pet-We met before she cracked open her sack.
As a chick she was quick-- fast like a jet,
A sassy little thing who gave us flack.
But as she grew bigger, so did her heart,
She was talkative and loved to cuddle.
She loved to go shop and sit in a cart,
On rainy days, we'd splash in a puddle.
Cherry was pretty and properly plump,
She was the greatest chicken on this earth.
No stream I'd not cross, no bridge I'd not jump,
For she changed my life from her splendid birth.
Though I loved Cherry right down to her core,
Unluckily, I love fried chicken more.

# Andrew Duong, Twelfth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Taryn Humphries

Breath (Parody of Time by Gaho)

It disappears like a whirlwind Happy things, sad things, and the unknown tomorrow Another breath is passing, and it won't ever come again I'm following the flow of the wind

Breathe,
Breathe in until it hurts
Let your breath out till you feel there's nothing inside

That breath, who can see through it?
All the happy things, sad things, and the unknown future Who can understand it?
It disappears like a whirlwind
Not giving enough time for me to catch it
Another breath, that breath disappears

When that last breath comes We will wither like a flower silently blooming Every day, the lively breath gets thrown away

I can't avoid it but I can't see it
Breathing brings life that it suffocates me
Even as time flows right now
Even as I'm asleep
Like burned up ash
Each breath, each sigh is disappearing

Painful memories Arise like goosebumps

That precious life passes by I thought all of those times Would last forever

When my breathing stops Will time stop too?

I try blocking it but it won't stop
Breathing brings life that it suffocates me
Even as times flows right now
Even as I'm asleep
Like burned up ash
Another breath, that breath disappears

Edi Choi, Twelfth Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Ms. Shelley George

## Rose-Colored Glasses

After taking off your rose-colored glasses You begin to realize how often you once confused Anger with kindness; Shouting with a cheering.

After taking off your rose-colored glasses You begin to realize how much the world Has lost its color. You realize how dark night can seem.

But you don't want to face reality;
You don't want to realize how many are struggling
To feed their children on minimum wage,
And how many people's "safe haven" is anything but safe.
You realize how lonely some people are,
And the demons they face every day.

When you take off those glasses, Those rose-colored glasses you've become so used to, Everything begins to change, Down to the way you treat yourself.

But maybe you didn't take off your glasses, Maybe you grew up.

# Elizabeth McGuire, Twelfth Grade

Central High School

Ms. Kelsay Cate

The Sluggard and the Inner Critic

Rotten, gold, and so-so people None are like the one I am No one's got a life like me See, please I know it's not the worst But I'll be the first to show you where it hurts

Now, I will dawdle like everyone else I'll sit and procrastinate like you but wait I may be a sluggard sometimes but no It's not as fun when what you hate Is watching your skills just wither and wilt

At the bench, black and white A piano, see, all strings and keys I think of what to do with these It's been so long I've sat still while The senseless sluggard had the wheel

A sluggard is my self-made label But only sitting on this bench For now another is at this table The inner critic, a silent cynic "Not enough" it makes me sick

Tomorrow I'll look back on them The team of two, an evil crew Who choked my fire with dirt and dew And see I just got overwhelmed So listen up you slug and scoffer: Next time fiends, I've got the helm

Grace Barber, Twelfth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Taryn Humphries

## Where I'm From

I am from tall mountains, from cold winters to hot dry summers.

I am from dry prairie grass and the hard ground caked by the sun.

I am from the douglas fir that tower over everything, they cover the ground below with thousands of their cones and needles.

I am from the wind blowing through the firs and the squawking of hawks.

I am from log splitters and the mamming of my brother's hand.

From the dripping of blood to suggesting super glue will fix it.

I'm from forest fires that blanket the valley in thick smoke to large blizzards that make it impossible to see.

I'm from watching world war two in color on repeat to playing halo combat evolved with my brother for hours.

I'm from the countless hours spent wandering forests and fields.

I am from the deep snow which trapped my snowmobile to hot summers which burned everything. I'm from the large deer that would pass through our yard and how they would not care if I was there. I am from the horses getting out every week and my brother and I have to rangle them up.

I am from the nights that seemed to last forever to the burning days that seemed to only last seconds.

Venn Doxey, Twelfth Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Ms. Taryn Humphries