

**Teachers & Writers Collaborative**

**Spring 2018**

**T&W Collaborative Teaching Artist: Olaya Barr**

**NYU Education Associate: India Gonzalez**

**PS/IS 122Q Academy for the Intellectually Gifted**

**Principal: Anna Aprea**

**Assistant Principals: Alba Carlucci & Michael Pascarelli**

**6th-Grade ELA Teacher (Classes 506, 501, 509 & 504): Irene Pappas**

**To see your young author published in our magazine please visit  
[teachersandwritersmagazine.org](http://teachersandwritersmagazine.org).**

**TEACHERS & WRITERS COLLABORATIVE (T&W) partners with New York City schools and community-based organizations to offer dynamic creative writing programs led by professional writers. Since 1967, T&W has worked with more than 750,000 K-12 students and more than 25,000 teachers at schools throughout New York City; published more than 80 books and an online magazine about creative writing education; and provided free resources for students, teachers, and writers on our website ([www.twc.org](http://www.twc.org)).**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This residency was sponsored by New York City Department of Education, E.H.A. Foundation, and Teachers & Writers Collaborative (T&W).

T&W programs are made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

#### **T&W is also grateful for support from the following:**

Amazon.com, Aroha Philanthropies, Bay and Paul Foundations, Bydale Foundation, Cerimon Fund, Charles Lawrence Keith and Clara Miller Foundation, Con Edison, E.H.A. Foundation, Hans and Ruth Cahnmann Family Fund, ING Financial Services, Jerome Foundation, Kenneth Koch Literary Estate, Laura B. Vogler Foundation, Leonore Gordon PD Arts and Wellness on the Go Fund at Stonewall Community Foundation, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, New York Community Trust, Rizzoli, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Simon and Eve Colin Foundation, Solon E. Summerfield Foundation, Wells Fargo, William T. Grant Foundation, and friends of T&W.

A Teachers & Writers Collaborative Publication

Copyright © 2018

# Table of Contents

## **Introductions**

Olaya's Introduction ..... Pg. 4

India's Introduction ..... Pg. 5

## **Section I:**

Class 506 Student Writing ..... Pg. 6

## **Section II:**

Class 501 Student Writing ..... Pg. 32

## **Section III:**

Class 509 Student Writing ..... Pg. 66

## **Section IV:**

Class 504 Student Writing ..... Pg. 98

## **Closing Thoughts**

Final Goodbye ..... Pg. 129

Illustration Credits ..... Pg. 131

\*\*\*All classes are arranged in alphabetical order by last name\*\*\*

## Introductions

I feel immensely lucky to have spent this year working with the students at PS 122. These writers are diverse in the best of ways: their humor, personalities, backgrounds, and interests, and the ways in which they analyze and respond to texts, range magnificently. These students, however, are united by a desire to learn, an openness to share, and a drive to write.

When I'm looking at the students, discussing a text, going over a literary device, or explaining how this all relates to real life, what I see reflected back is an intense curiosity. I don't see passivity in these eyes, but a glint of understanding and questioning. What I admire most about these students and their writing is their ability to question and interpret writing assignments thoughtfully, vivaciously, intensely. Horror stories told through supermarket receipts, a coming of age saga told through a list of fleeting memories, a tale of love inspired by an 18th century poet or a rap about the addiction of video games... I am impressed no matter the text, and delighted to have spent my Fridays with such bright and creative 6th graders. I feel pride and admiration when I think about these students.

I have to thank Teachers & Writers for allowing us to be inventive with our lesson plan, Irene Pappas for being a supportive model teacher, India for being an inspiring co-teacher, and *drum roll please*: the beautiful students who worked so hard to push themselves and write something they feel proud of! I hope you continue to use your voice (and pen) to express your feelings and imagination!

-Olaya Barr

During this school year I have had the absolute pleasure of teaching, alongside Olaya, the intelligent and creative group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders at PS 122. I so enjoyed getting to know the students individually, having them excitedly share their work with us after class, and making jokes with them. I especially loved seeing a handful of them overcome their fears of public speaking by sharing their work in the classroom.

Of all the classes, I most enjoyed leading the lesson plans on unconventional form, blues poetry, and working with Olaya to teach the poetics of rap to the students. I would consider the unconventional forms lesson a break through class. I went through a text analysis with the students on a short story written as a series of voicemails. The enthusiasm of the classes, as we parsed apart the effects of the author writing in this form, and how form and content can work together to create a real world on the page, showed me just how gifted they were. When it got down to writing their own short stories in any unconventional form of their choosing, I was blown away by how expertly they were able to include the necessary elements of any good story in forms such as grocery lists, checks, and more. Later on in the year we moved onto our poetry unit, and I taught them the history of blues music in America and how it is related to blues poetry; I wanted these four classes to better understand the relationship between music and poetry. To see the students grasp the element of call & response within blues poetry and to listen to their poems showed me that they fully understood the poem as a song! To build on this notion of the musicality within poetry, Olaya and I had the classes listen to rap from all around the world. I loved how open-minded they were, how they were willing to accept rap as an academic topic, and the manner in which they utilized the poetic tools we had discussed in prior weeks and applied it to their own raps.

All of the lessons we taught the students were aimed at giving them the literary tools necessary to express themselves fully. It was all about aiding them in unleashing their creativity and showing them the importance of self-expression. It is my sincere hope that this powerful group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders feel they can walk away from our time spent with them knowing that their voices are important and cherished. I have grown attached to each individual in the classroom and will miss you all! I am excited for you all to flip through these pages and land on your work. I had the honor of editing classes 509 and 504, and I can say with confidence that what follows is work that is vivacious, captivating, clever, and full of personality. Never forget that you all have voices that need to be heard! I hope you all look back on this anthology years from now and realize the astonishing caliber of your writing and creativity, as I do now.

I would like to take this time to thank Teachers & Writers Collaborative for the opportunity to work with this lovely group of students, Irene Pappas for being a marvelous team player and top-notch teacher (I learned so much from watching you interact with the students!), Olaya for being a great co-teacher, Principal Aprea and the rest of the administration at PS 122, and lastly, the students for being so stellar!

Yours Truly,  
Miss India

# **Section I:**

# **Class 506**

**Sumaitaah Alam**

***I remember***

I remember my first time on an airplane on the way to the U.S. It was hot and sweaty but I loved it.  
I remember the taste of pumpkin pie riding up my throat as I threw up.  
I remember accidentally squeezing lemon juice into my eyes and being convinced I was going to go blind.  
I remember hot showers on cold days.  
I remember dropping a large slushie and crying about it.  
I remember how similar my dad looks to his dead mother. They look exactly alike without the white scarf she always had draped over her head.  
I remember getting lost in a busy mall for only a few minutes. I had already begun planning a life on the streets.  
I remember how good strawberries taste.

**Umme Anushka**

***Ode to rain***

Dearest Rain,  
You bring joy to the kids that take walks in your beauty  
You bring growth to the creatures that need you  
You bring peace to the world, refreshing the minds of people  
You make us calm and bring relaxation  
The whole world would be a desert without your presence  
You sugar coat the Earth with your mist  
You drip down with a gentle touch against my skin  
Your light soothing raindrops bring me comfort  
You make our Earth flourish  
We truly wouldn't have made it without you  
Oh dearest rain  
Thank you

***Haiku : The presence of rain***

Water pouring down  
Kids jumping in the puddles  
Soaked by the beauty

**Xavier Armas**

***Poem of Fortnite***

I'll play Fortnite, till midnight  
Playing with my friends, till the end  
We're #1, but we aren't done  
We got the skills, to pay the bills  
Using Black Knight, got in a sniper gunfight  
After grinding for hours, Omega is ours  
Got my 100th victory royale, should I try 101? I shall!

As I finish up my duos, cheeseman comes  
Throws a few grenades, and I get blasted off  
Falling off a mountain, to my death  
Cheeseman comes, he starts to laugh  
Got knocked down, while he tries to help  
Tries to fix his mistake, but too much fall damage taken  
We both die, got 2nd place  
Then my mom comes in  
Tells me to turn the Xbox off, it's 11 o'clock

***Haiku about a Duck***

There it was, in grass  
A common, small duck waddles  
enjoying the day

***Ode to Bananas***

You hang from the trees high above.  
With your bundle of friends.  
You and your yellow beauty surpasses all the other fruits.  
As your skin changes, you grow sweeter.  
Without you I wouldn't get enough potassium.  
The taste is unexplainable and your texture,  
Oh your texture is like a... I can't think of any words.  
Oh, what would I do without you?

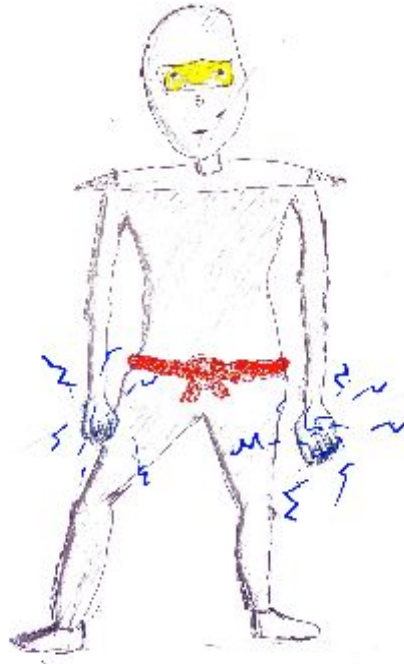




## **Khondker Ayat**

### ***Moving***

Sleeping, alarm  
Overslept, speeding  
Tickets and tolls  
Slipups, throw ups  
Towels, tissues  
Time, traffic  
Seconds to minutes  
Minutes to hours  
Bingo and bongos  
Maps, lost  
GPS and U-turns  
Banging and screaming,  
Frustration and anger,  
Tears and tantrums,  
Parking, new home,  
Clean, fix  
Couches, beds, tables  
Banging and shaking,  
New neighbors, new school,  
Moving truck.  
One thing,  
Welcome mat.



### ***An I Remember Poem...***

I remember my third birthday, getting a broken alarm clock and a NDS.  
I remember my mother waking me on my first day of school, wondering why it had to be so early  
I remember being told in Pre-k that I talked too much.  
I remember how some people used to tell me that I was short, but they were hypocrites.  
I remember my cousin making a video for his YouTube, I watched him behind his seat.  
I remember in first grade getting my first full grade on a test. Before, it was a few points behind.  
I remember when someone copied off my work and I was crying way too much.  
I remember being afraid of my second-grade teacher, translating her name meant White Mad.  
She was hardly ever mad.  
I remember taking my first state test, it was simpler than expected.  
I remember

*Croinkeys, an exercise on creating character*

In the Zoo of Alden for Mystical Creatures there are the most magical and dangerous weapons. It has this name because all the animals there are very dangerous and endangered.

One day, the last mating pair in the world of a magical species called croinkeys, Adam and his wife Diana, were being tortured at the zoo. These creatures were treated very, very poorly. If you want to know what a croinkekey looks like, you have to understand that they are very peculiar creatures. They look like chinchillas with dove wings, razor sharp teeth, and acid tipped striped horns on the top of their heads. Their main diet is starch but all they got at Alden was nails. One day they smelled the strong stench of starch so they melted their cages with their horns and flew toward the stench. They landed at a newly opened five star Italian restaurant. They flew into the pasta that a blind chef was wrapping with aluminum foil to give to a man so he could return to his one-room apartment. When the man took his box of pasta, his fate was forever entwined with these mischievous little creatures.

Talen Benziger

*The Blues Poem*

*It was a dark room*

*It was a scary room*

*Nevertheless, I took a step in, maybe to my doom*

*I looked around, and I heard a noise, to my surprise*

*Then, all of a sudden the lights turned on and everyone yelled, "Surprise!"*

*It was a party and everyone was wearing ties*

*I looked over my shoulder and saw a clown*

*Boy, I hate clowns*

*I then realized that he was here for my party*

*But he started to sharpen a knife*

*I thought that he was just going to cut the cake with the knife*

*Then, sadly I realized there was no cake*

*The End*

**Steve Braho**

***Short Story Challenge*** (words/phrases required: *running away, maniac, Laundromat*)

There I was going to the Laundromat. I started distracting people and annoying them. I would always do the most random stuff and get in trouble for doing them. Just this moment, I got the chance to steal someone's clothes. As I started running away from the Laundromat the woman I had stolen clothes from said "Come back here, you maniac!" I didn't even consider stopping. Instead, I continued running, fear of being caught. After running for a while I realized that the police were following me, but that still didn't make me stop. "VRRM" you could hear the police car chasing me, making sharp turns to catch me. "Oh my gosh, am I gonna make it?" I thought. The sirens were roaring towards letting me know there is no escaping. I finally couldn't run anymore. The fact that I was so tired and the police were in their vehicles ready to catch me, made escaping impossible. At last I was arrested and forced to return back everything I had stolen. The police said to me, "You maniac, all this trouble will put you in jail for years." I also had to pay a lot of fines. The good thing is that I learned a lesson. Never steal people's clothes in the Laundromat. I finally got released after being in jail for two years. Ever since I came out of jail everybody started calling me "The Maniac". This had totally changed my perspective of life and made me realize that stealing isn't the solution to anything. Ever since that day, I haven't got in trouble for doing anything bad!

***Ode to Ice Cream***

Every day  
I want to eat you  
Full of sprinkles  
As sweet as honey  
Full of cream  
How yummy you are  
to eat...  
So refreshing  
So tasty  
Melting in my mouth

### ***I Remember***

I remember when I used to call my beautiful dear aunt, my mom.  
I remember when my singing voice was actually beautiful, and I did not have voice cracks.  
I remember when I used to be called cute, when I was young because I did not have acne.  
I remember playing and being addicted to Barbie dolls and wearing my cousin's dress.  
I remember seeing my mom cry in pain because of the loss of her dad.  
I remember being pathetic and crying because of not having a pencil on the 1st day of school.  
I remember trying to save a dying chick by giving it water, and planning to make it a little grave.  
I remember when teachers in my old school back in India allowed corporal punishment.  
I remember being lost in a Toys 'R' Us store and panicking because my mom would scream at me when she found me.  
I remember when I used to watch Curious George every day after school in 3rd grade.  
I remember being punished with a sandal for breaking my neighbor's vase...an expensive one.  
I remember the bullying my brother had to go through in his boarding school.  
I remember weeping when I saw my brother hurt and the problems he faced.  
I remember crying because of leaving my family in India behind, to come here.  
I remember hearing stories about a girl who had a half-snake body, this really terrified me.  
I remember the old Jigmey.....

### ***Rap to My Old Friends***

My friends, they're nice and encouraging, they support me and love me, and talk to me when I'm lonely.  
My friends, showing off their phones, and all their clothes.  
My friends, think it's fine that they rant all the time.  
My friends, they ignore me when I speak, and they push the limits to the peak.  
My friends, talking over me, about me, and not to me.  
My friends, accusing me for the things I see.  
My friends, targeting me, and threatening me, and teasing me.  
My  
friends,  
smoke all the time,  
Steal money, and lie  
dont care about life,  
my friends.  
My friends, my friends.....my fiends.

Chantal Guthrie

### *Flash Fiction: She Wasn't Very Scary*

She wasn't very scary. She always visited the shop, like it was her duty, sworn on her mama. Her hair was a cotton ball.

She wasn't very scary. That is, until she stared at you. There was something off-putting about her round eyes. It wasn't how round they were. They were like the darkest of dark chocolates, bitter. She always looked like she knew something you didn't.

She wasn't very scary. Then you looked at her smile. It was a happy grimace. Her front teeth had a gap between them, as thin as her patience on a good day. She usually rode a bicycle. And she was usually nice. Today was... off.

She was suddenly very scary as she stormed into the shop. Her hair was crimson and her demeanor transformed. Her sunny smirk disappeared like doves in the wind. Her round eyes were somehow sharp and angular and dangerous, like a broken plant pot. She said "I need xyz and I would like abc please." She wasn't usually very scary, but today she was. I got her her groceries.

She still wasn't very scary, although her bicycle was gone. A pink Lamborghini sat in its place, making that face cars make. The girl found a source of sugar to sweeten her bitter heart.

### *Ode to Tears*

Sometimes glad. Sometimes sick. Sometimes mad. Sometimes sad.  
Sad sometimes. Mad sometimes. Sick sometimes. Glad sometimes.

**EW™**

Thirst traps are gross  
(please)  
and  
(don't)  
Dumb I don't want that  
(scar me)  
on  
(for life)  
my timeline stays pure

Have  
Some  
Dignity  
For  
The  
Love  
Of  
God

Or  
Any  
Poor  
Soul  
Who  
Follows  
You

Why  
Do  
You  
Expose  
Your  
self  
For  
Views?

You  
May  
Say  
Idgaf  
But I  
Say I  
Am  
Unfollowing

*BLUES POETRY*

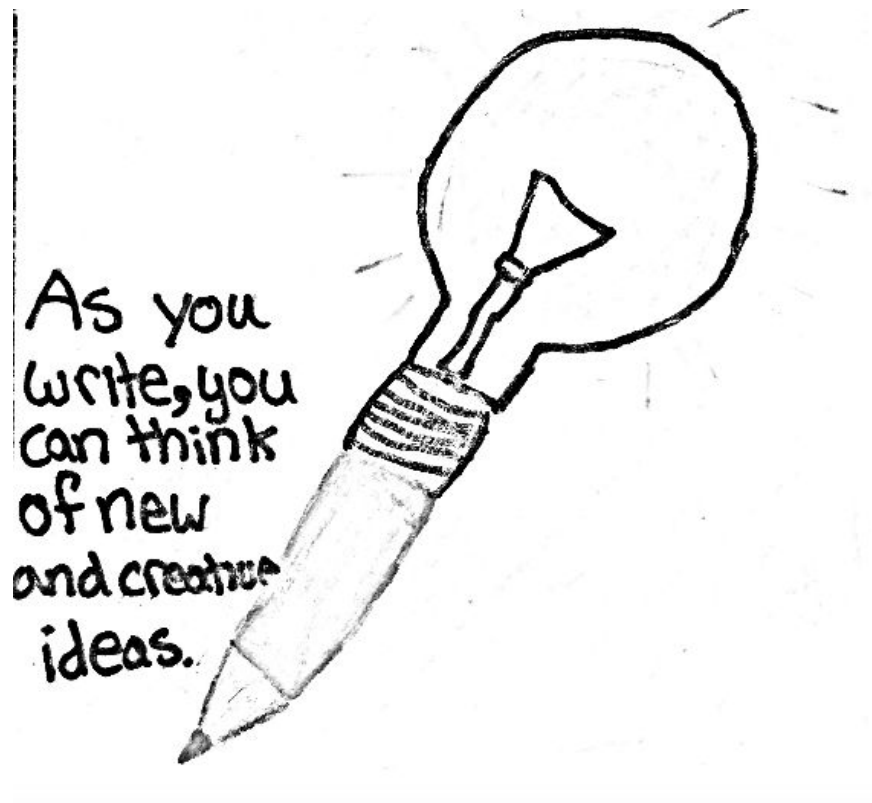
I AM GOLD  
I AM GOLD  
I LOVE THE FEELING THAT I'M BOLD

THERE ONCE WAS A DOG  
THERE ONCE WAS A DOG  
AND HIS NAME WAS BOG

I LOVED HIM VERY MUCH  
I LOVED HIM VERY MUCH  
ALTHOUGH HE WAS SUCH A KLUTZ

*I REMEMBER*

I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME SEEING MY PARENTS IN THE BABY HOUSE  
I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME ON A PLANE LEAVING MY COUNTRY  
I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME IN AMERICA  
I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME IN MY HOME IN JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY  
I REMEMBER THE STRUGGLE I HAD WALKING UP AND DOWN THE STAIRS BUT STILL I TRIED  
AS HARD AS I COULD  
I REMEMBER WHEN MY FERRET CAME UP TO ME AND GAVE ME A LOOK THAT SAID HE WAS DYING, HE  
DIED THE NEXT DAY



**Madison Hernandez**

***Flash Fiction***

Five minutes ago, I was “sleeping” at home. All I wanted to do was return home. I was running away. I was breaking free. The first place I can remember was where I was born—subway car nine thousand two hundred thirty six.

For the record, I’m not a human. I’m a puppy. Now, don’t ask me how I know words and everything else. My abusive owner, Mag, found me eight years ago at the Times Square subway station. I was lying down in a corner and a kind girl picked me up and said, “You’re mine. I’m going to name you... Bella”. I truly believed it. I was wrong, though. She was so nice until her mother’s death. I can see why. Her mother was the nicest woman ever. I was scared for my life after she started hitting me. I knew I needed to get out of her reach.

I ran to the depot on my tiny legs, snuck onto the train tracks and saw it. Subway car 9236. I snuck onto the train and the memory rushed to my brain. The thought of this memory made me sniffle. I thought to myself, “*Now this is my true home.*”

**Andrew Kokolakis**

***An Ode to Goldfish***

You will fall if not kept moist.  
Your shining star scales stay unvoiced.  
Your beautiful scales reflect light.  
The plants around you may be blight,  
but you always seem alright.  
Your simple presence makes people cheer.  
But you will one day make them shed a tear.  
For you do not live very long.  
It makes people sing a sad, sad song.  
Your traffic cone scales turn upside down,  
and people begin to frown.  
Your body loses all life,  
but at least you did not fall on a fish knife.

**Eren Kutun**

***Ode to Sports***

Sports are fun  
And they make you  
stronger  
If you want to run  
They make you run longer  
The more sports you do  
The stronger you’ll be  
The stronger you are  
The more you’ll carry  
So leave your phones  
And exit your homes  
Exercise is calling  
So go and start balling



***Rap***

Leaving my school,  
Feeling so cool.  
Just got fired,  
need to be rehired.  
I need a job or,  
at least a place to rob.  
Calling my friend on the phone,  
feeling so lone,  
gotta pay some of my loans.  
Playing some Fortnite,  
during the midnight.  
Using one of my favorite skins the “Black Knight”.  
Just got in a big gun fight.  
I just won,  
This happens a ton.  
I am going to play some more,  
even though my hands are very sore  
I’m getting very tired,  
feels like I’m getting wired.  
Gotta go to sleep,  
The next morning I will leap,  
or maybe even weep.

Gulam Monawarah

***Selection of Haiku***

*Our Night*

Under the night sky  
A starry night just for us  
Fate has come calling

*Rivers*

Never can stay still  
The river always flows  
Can go on and on

*Happiness*

Wide smile on your face  
The feeling is amazing  
The feeling is true

**Ream Nassar**

***STOP IT!!! a blues poem***

Oh! Stop it. You're making so much sound.  
You're howling so loud and making so much sound.  
I said stop it! It sounds like there are 20 hounds.

I said stop it. I've been working all day long.  
Can I get some peace and quiet? I've been working all day long.  
Can you at least make it so it sounds like a song?

Oh be quiet, I said it!  
Please! Please! Be quiet, I finally screamed it!  
My ears will need a first aid kit.  
How are you only one hound!!  
Will you ever stop?

***Enlightened***

The sun shining through the thick trees  
Letting the flowers be enlightened  
And hoping for them to look as beautiful as ever

***Eye***

I looked him dead in the eye  
Don't you dare, it said  
I need to, I said, with tears flowing like a river  
It'll be for the best  
Please don't, he said  
The eyes didn't let me see anything after that

***Haiku: Nighttime***

Ink splattered the sky  
Forests decline in light and warmth  
Dots of light peeking

***Ode: Clouds***

Against the blue  
Sometimes  
Overflowing  
But others  
A faint wisp  
Like one  
Held a dandelion  
With one breath  
Blew it across the sky  
White as an angel's robe  
Reach for it  
But once in your grasp  
Nothing but air



**Brandon Ou**

***Poetry Rap***

Anica angered Abrashmi  
Abrashmi angered Anica

Brandon bought balloons  
Balloons bought Brandon

Chantal caught cats  
Cats caught Chantal

Demir dodges dodgeballs  
Dodgeballs dodge Demir

Eleanor eats eggs  
Eggs eat Eleanor

Farhan fanned Fayaiz  
Fayaiz fanned Farhan

Gulam gets good grades  
Good grades get Gulam

Harrison has hats  
Hats have Harrison

Ishraq idles with Ioanna  
Ioanna idles with Ishraq

Johanna jinxes Justin  
Justin jinxes Johanna

Kalina kisses Kit Kats  
Kit Kats kiss Kalina

## ***Ode to My Power***

**It was a place.**

**It was a man as strong as a wave.**

**You felt the pain because he punched you as hard as he can**

**But you said, "I can win."**

**And you just fainted because you were out of breath**

**But you stood up and tried it again even though he came close to you and told you that you couldn't do it, but you didn't really care since he was a loser because he only wanted fame but not.**

Abrashmi Rafique

*Ode to Pineapples*

Your needle dress armor  
And spiky hat  
Your tough shell  
With a sweet inside

You rise from the ground  
New and fresh  
Your sun-like skin  
And grass-like hair

Sweet like honey  
But sour like lemons  
Refreshing on hot days  
And the summer time  
Or an island by the sea

Your sweet fluorescent aura  
And dewy fresh juice  
Butter-like core

*A/N: I don't even like pineapples that much*

Miro Rothman

*Politics*

*Pence is like over-salted bacon  
Trump is like a turkey on steroids  
Nelson Mandela was the opposite*

*Trump Blues Rap*

*I wanna go up to Donald Trump, and say, "Why you gotta be such a grump?"  
His wig is so bad, birds call it home, I guess he really, really needs a comb  
You know about his wife and how he fought her, she's easily young enough to be his daughter  
Have you seen his terrible spray tan? Seriously, he must of used up 85 cans*

***The Intricate Board Game of Life, an exercise on consonance and repetition***

Roll the dice  
See what you get  
Move the spaces  
See where you land  
Roll a double  
And go again!  
But what do you land on?!  
Your worst birthday? First Christmas?  
Too many events  
in your timeline  
that are all in  
the Intricate Board Game of Life  
Next player goes  
Roll the dice  
Again you go  
Where do you land?  
I don't want to know  
Single player,  
Double player,  
Even 30 can play  
But we all have to play it  
at some point  
Memories, dreams, experiences, feelings, sins  
all are on the  
Intricate Board Game  
of Life

***The Past and Its Innocence, The Present and its Troubles, a personal story***

I remember when my brother and I used to fly our dad's drones in the park.  
I remember my fifth-grade teacher teasing me by hitting me with a pencil when I made a simple mistake in math.  
I remember flipping through photo albums, thinking, "I ate mangos?"

I remember a barbeque during the weekend with my best friend. I got very wet from water balloons.  
I remember playing a game with my dad and brother on the bed. My dad made a good dragon.  
I remember waking up to my cat Silver meowing.  
Now I wake up to my kitten Oreo purring.  
I also remember waking up early to look for Silver.  
I remember bungee jumping and roller coasters and rock climbing during my birthday.  
I remember my first toy, the rainbow bunny. I still have it to this day.  
I remember getting dirty and sneezing a lot when my mom and I planted flowers for spring.  
I remember growing older and realizing why people expected so much of me.  
I remember losing someone in our family only to find him again, scared and dirty, but alive and able to hug again.

## **Arjon Sheikh**

### ***Haiku***

Each and everything.  
So beautiful around me.  
Nothing makes me sad.

### ***Ode***

You are so cheesy,  
The flat unlike a party hat,  
A one so flavorful, never let me down,  
Never let me down,  
So golden.  
So lovable,  
So happily,  
Taking you in.



*Ninja Bob, an exercise on character*

Hi my name is Ninja Bob and I live under my taco shop in a secret hideout. I am a reasonably tall, skinny seventh grader with brown hair and electric blue eyes. My taco shop is the best place in the whole world. It always has the amazing smell of bacon and fresh herbs (I grow them). For some reason nobody questions why I own my own taco shop. I love cooking tacos, eating tacos, and doing ninja stuff (NOT thingz with an "s"). Anyone who knows me very well would describe me as sneaky, smart, quick, silent, and the best cook. I totally love... TACOS! Fish tacos, chicken tacos, bacon tacos, octopus and chorizo tacos (yes that is a real thing), ALL TACOS! I guess I love them so much because my whole family has a history of being great taco chefs. I have also have used them to lure my worst enemy because he hates tacos and whenever he sees them he must destroy them (he has a bad taste. I really, really, really, hate Ninja Robert (he's a rip-off of me) and moldy tacos. I use to be a normal Bob. But one fateful day a strange individual (he later told me his name was Ninja Master Kevin) came to my shop and said he never tasted such good tacos. He told me he could teach me how to be a ninja, which I was interested in because it could help my cooking. By the end of the hard training sessions I realized that I could also help my city with my ninja skills so I decided to. In the future I am most likely making/eating tacos or doing ninja stuff. I like to think of myself as the second best ninja (second to Ninja Master Kevin of course) and the best taco chef. Unfortunately, most people think of me only as that guy who runs the best taco shop in town. Someone is approaching the shop so I have to go. Bye!

*Apache, an exercise on character*

Once there was a boy who was born as "Tom Boopie." After Tom's parents died in the military to enemy fighter planes, he decided to change his identity to one of an Apache Helicopter, a fighter plane's worst enemy. He also legally changed his name to Apache. After running away from social services eight times, Apache began work in a take-out Chinese food place (his favorite food genre) to earn enough money to pay someone (on the black market) to surgically install metal rotary blades, cannons, and missiles on his 16-year-old frame. Apache hates heliphobes (people who can't accept him as a helicopter) and all airplanes. His close group of friends (all attack helicopters) describe him as "the leader, merciless, angry, and mean," and see him as the future ruler of the known universe. When Apache matures into an adult helicopter, he wants to be the ruler of the known universe to avenge his parents' death and burn airplanes everywhere.

**Emily Singh**

***20 or 30 Years Into the Future, a story told in unconventional form***

Hi. It's me.

*It has been a while since I contacted my friend. Well, to be exact, I have not contacted her since she gave me her number. I must have forgot it. She was a very nice and a supportive friend. She was always there for me, in school of course.*

Who are you?!!!

What

It's Emily

Seriously

Who's Emily?

Bye

Wait

I was in P.S 122Q

*How does she not know me!! I get that it has been awhile but to her I am truly forgotten. Have I disappeared from the world? Have I really been that invisible to them in all those years? Have I really been that bad of a friend that I am invisible? How does she not remember our meet up at Astoria Park? These times that we played tag all day? I'll still try, I won't stop until she realizes.*

Calling.....

Leave a message after the tone. Hello. Remember your elementary to middle school class? Well I was there. It's Emily. Press \* to record again.

\*Hi there. It's Emily, a girl from PS122Q. I was in your class for over 7 years. Press \* to record again.

\*Hello. It is Emily. I was in your class for 7 years. I know that you don't remember me but please call me back. Press \* to record again.

\* Hello. It's Emily, I was once in school with you and this is the number that you gave me. Call me back at this number. Bye. Press 1 to end message. 1.

***The Surprise, a personal essay***

It was a normal day at school...

Stressful and tiring...

My mom had told me there was a surprise on my desk waiting for me...

I didn't know what it was and I was trying to guess... what is it, food? Did she get me a salad?...

Oh how much I loved salad... what about my favorite Greek meal, moussaka, did she get me that?

I was stuck...I had no clue what she got me and it was bugging me for the rest of the day.

When I walked in I took my shoes off and saw a container of Swedish fish on my desk... I was so excited... my favorite candy!

When I walked up to the container to get a handful of candy I saw a paper underneath

On the top left corner it said "Expedia" and underneath it, it said "Paris"

I got so excited and my eyes filled with tears

I couldn't help but start bawling

Going to Paris was always my dream..... my dream came true

I hugged my mom with tears rolling down my face and onto her shoulder

That night, I was lying in bed thinking about what Paris would be like...would it be crowded, would it be dead silent, would it be the most beautiful thing I have ever seen? I dreamed about it all night and thought about it all day.

### ***I Remember***

*I Remember my first words “Mom” and “cow”  
I Remember my first home run to left field.  
I Remember my first rabbit named “Thumper”  
I Remember my first plane ride to Mexico, lots of sand and little tiny towns.  
I Remember my first bike ride and falling ever so many times.  
I Remember when my friends knew my real name for the first time  
I Remember my first broken bone—my wrist.  
I Remember my first swimming session in L.I.C HS  
I Remember my first time at Jones Beach  
I Remember when I got my first iPod and listened to Centuries  
I Remember my first goldfish named “Macaroni”  
I Remember my first time at a real Mets game with lots of popcorn and crowd screaming, “Let’s go Mets!”  
I Remember the first time I played the trumpet  
I remember my first day of school came to my teacher with flowers and chocolate*

### ***Ode to Winter***

*Oh Winter how cold you are  
Ever so hard to drive a car.  
Ground is so white,  
So hard to fly a kite.  
The beautiful snow reflects the light,  
Into the sky ever so white.  
Ice skaters ready in the rink,  
Some are afraid the ice might shrink.  
Oh Winter why so short,  
Until we get back to wearing a short sleeve shirt.*

*I Remember Goldfish on the Living Room Table*

I always loved the aquarium. Every time I went, I was thrilled to see a new fish, like a blue tang or a clownfish, and was hyped to see the sharks.

I thought it was impossible for all those animals to live together in one area. Of all the animals I saw in the aquarium and the zoo, the animal I loved most can only be found in a pet store. Sharks, snakes, alligators, and jellyfish were all fascinating, but I always loved goldfish. There was almost always a goldfish or betta fish in the on the kitchen counter or living room table. And I was always there watching it.

It was never fun when a goldfish died, especially for my parents. Since goldfish are not the most expensive fish, I would often get a new goldfish soon after the last died. So at age 6, I was more than happy to replace Lucky, the goldfish I got from the festival that lasted 2 weeks.

My father never never had an issue with spending money; he had no problem spending 100 dollars on a single pair of pants. He also has a tendency of buying unnecessary items, for “decoration.” He would almost always come home with plants from the store.

As my father came home from the pet store, I was hoping for a betta fish, they were always graceful. But that was not the case when he returned. To my surprise, he had bought me a lot of goldfish. I thought “a lot” of goldfish would be around five or six. I was already excited, but was shocked to find that he had bought around a hundred goldfish.

We didn’t have a tank to put them in, so they were put in a large cylinder vase on the living room table. I would spend most of my time in the living room from that point on, staring at the fish. The fish swam in circles, and staring at them made my mind go numb. I ignored my mother arguing with my father about his spending choices as I watched the fish with awe.

There were so many goldfish that it was hard to take care of them all. I felt as if I could only sit and watch as my life began to blur away. The fish acted as a TV, mesmerizing, making me feel as peaceful as I could ever be.

**Justin Wang**

*story told in unconventional form*

***The Pain of a Pen,***

*a short and skinny poem*

I am sorry for  
using your pen.

It was really cool and  
worked really nice.

But I broke it somehow.

I hope you can deal with  
the loss of your really nice pen.

But, hey, nothing lost, nothing gained  
for me.

I stole it, so I really don't care.

I hope you don't take offense to that.

***Diary Entry***

*Entry 56, Sept. 21, 21xx*

How I remember my brother. He was the cutest thing. But his time came too soon. He was only 10 when he died. He was rolling around in the grass, waiting for our parents to come home. But some type of disease got him. The doctors didn't know how to stop it. All it brought was immense pain. And in the end, it ended up infecting everyone.

*Entry 70 May. 26, 22xx*

It turns out that the virus turns people into zombies. They can't feel pain or do anything. They are really hard to kill too. They like to bang their heads into anything that gets in their way, including walls, and other zombies. They also smell like...plums, with the zombies saying "RawR".

*Entry 87 Dec. 21, 22xx*

I found another group of survivors, they can help me try to defeat those monsters out there. But alas, there are only so many weapons to use, and the world will be doomed, as there is no one to lead the world, as they are all dead, and the walls of the city are falling, so there isn't much time to waste rebuilding. It's a rathe

*Entry 101 Apr. 20, 2269*

It's too late to do anything now. The world is doomed, those zombies are way too tough. Now I got nothing to do, with this old age on my hands. I could barely even write this. The next world will come soon.

***Blues Poetry***

My back is aching, my shoulders are dying.  
Oh, my back is aching and my shoulders are dyin'.  
My backpack made me run crying.

My legs are tired and weak.  
Ugh, my legs are tired and weak.  
The flights of stairs will make me wanna shriek!

My backpack will break soon.  
Oh, my backpack will break soon.  
The books in my backpack will be as big as a sand dune.

***I Remember***

I remember the moment I turned eleven years old.  
I remember keeping my first red envelopes of American money for Chinese New Year.  
I remember my first sip of lemon flavored Arizona on a hot spring day at CVS. It was sunny and I was burning and my friend gave me a little bit of hers.  
I remember my 5th-grade graduation where we sang a song, "True Colors."  
I remember trembling and crying in fear from the pain in my fractured arm.  
I remember the drama that went on in the school that I got a "fresh new start in."  
I remember blood all over my feet.

# **Section II:**

# **Class 501**



*The Dinner Table, an exercise on the five senses*

Well, on Eid-ul-fitr, an Islamic holiday, my dad's side of the family and I feast like no other family. During breakfast, the gang of uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents, second cousins, third uncles, anyone you can imagine, comes to my house; for lunch, we all go to my Uncle Sadeque's house; and for dinner, to my Uncle Sayeed's house. During dinner, it's complete chaos. It's as wild as the night before Black Friday. We stick our hands in the what seems like thousands of bowls of rice, chicken, fish, and salad there are. Since we have the largest family right after the Kardashians, we eat in intervals. If you're a kid, you eat first, which is by far the most chaotic of all the intervals. Once all the little monsters get in their seats, they smell all the chicken, rice, fish, curry, mashed potatoes, veggies, and salad, and their voices explode. They yell, "COME HERE!!!" or "GIVE ME THAT!!!" to their parents. Once everyone gets their food, we start eating with our hands, of course. It feels like gooey playdough mixed with oatmeal in my hands. After the kids finish, the men of the family sit at the table. We're like a traditional 50s family—first the kids, then the men, then the elderly, and lastly, the women. The hostess will keep telling everyone at the table, "Come on, take more!" The people at the table will obviously respond with, "No thank you, I'm full" Then the elderly take their seats at the messy thing we call a table. They'll start off with some regular rice and fish but then work their way to salad, saucy chicken, spicy vegetables, and anything else there is on the table. The night soon ends after everyone complains about how much weight they've gained.

*I Remember, a personal essay*

I remember my first time getting pushed on one of those dirty public swings by my grandfather.

I remember being chased by my mother because I refused to eat her soggy rice.

I remember drinking ice-cold lemonade for the first time when I was four sitting on my brand new swing.

I remember running away and slamming the door on my uncle on my second birthday when he wanted to wish me a happy birthday just because I was scared of that big sociopathic smile of his.

I remember how much my cousin and I used to physically fight. I miss the laughs it brought us.

I remember shopping to find the perfect dress for my fifth grade graduation.

I remember dancing the night away at the best graduation after party in our miniature cafeteria.

I remember walking into this school and awaiting the fun times I'd be having.

**Nabeeha Anis**

***Books, a possessive poem***

I have all sorts of books.

Comic books, young adult books, adult books, picture books, nonfiction books, realistic fiction books, fiction books, romance books, mystery books, children books, adventure books, action books, horror books, science fiction books, health books, textbooks, workbooks, math books, notebooks, poetry books, books about people, animal books, fantasy books, cookbooks, science books, history books, flying books, old books, new books, dirty books, clean books, big books, small books, and so many other books I cannot even remember.

***Ode to Fire***

As the color of brown,  
flares its nostrils,  
light forms  
making beads of exhaust  
trickle down my forehead.  
It keeps me warm,  
so I don't freeze to death.  
I wander around the woods  
and when I come back,  
it is gone.  
Only ashes  
remain.



## *Personal Essay*

After she left, the looks just kept on coming. Pitiful looks, sad looks, dirty looks, sorrowful looks, scared looks, confused looks, annoyed looks, angry looks, judgmental looks, looks filled with envy, looks possessed by the devil, looks that smelled like smoke, looks that felt like they were choking you, looks that shout, looks that laugh at you, looks that are bitter, and even joyful looks. The looks went on and on, until we started to get used to them. People asking why she didn't come to the party, disappointed in her. Why? Who knows? We'll just keep getting these looks until one day, we'll just be... forgotten.

## *I Remember...*

I remember taking a shower and the curtain fell on me.

I remember seeing my dad cry the first time in my life.

I remember my favorite doll.

I remember not being able to go on a trip to a race because I didn't have sneakers on.

I remember living in Jamaica.

I remember going to Canada, getting wet at Niagara Falls.

I remember playing with the hose in Bangladesh, the air already damp.

I remember seeing my sister in Manhattan after she moved.

**Sam Benson**

***Ode to a Baseball***

In the dark of night  
You rest upon the grass,  
Becoming moist,  
And dusted in dew.  
No feelings inside,  
Just a raw white hide.  
In the morning you're lifted,  
Battered and twisted,  
Swerving and curving in the air.  
When your seams meet leather,  
You would like nothing better  
Than to rest on the ground once more.

***I Remember, a personal story***

I remember sitting in the cold, dark Citi Field stands, as the Mets tried to come back from an astounding margin. Everyone around me sat slouched back in their seats, trying to escape the reality of the game. Many people filed out of the stadium, hoping to get out quickly and avoid traffic. Occasionally, a fan of the opposing team would smile gleefully and clap when their team got a hit. It was already the seventh inning, and there was almost no hope left for a late-inning comeback. Three Mets came up to bat that inning, and all three of them went down swinging. The same thing happened in the eighth inning.

By the ninth inning, the seats were practically empty. Despite this, the first player up to bat hit a double. As if on cue, the next batter hit another double to shorten the margin to one run. The next two batters struck out, and at this point, I had lost all hope. The once appetizing smell of hot dogs now gave me a nauseous feeling in my stomach. But when the remaining crowd began to cheer, I shot up in my seat to see a man on first. With an expression of determination, his face curled up in thought, the Mets' biggest hitter stepped up to the plate. He took the first two pitches. When the last pitch came, I remember hearing a resounding crack as the baseball flew out of the ballpark, sealing up a Mets win. The opposing team could not do anything to win now. I remember how excited I was at the result. I was practically flying. This was the first game I had been to a game where my favorite team won.

***Personal Poem***

My brother and I  
were playing  
tag at the park.  
He was only  
three years old.  
Then he  
tripped and fell.  
Bang scratch.  
Multiple people  
ripped. Bang  
scratch crack  
and fell onto  
his leg.  
He cried for  
an hour.  
We brought  
im to the  
hospital.

They said  
“His leg is  
Not Broken  
But it is  
Seriously  
Injured .”  
He got a cast.  
A lot of my family and  
his friends signed it .  
This made him smile.  
He could only  
Crawl.  
It made me cry  
sometimes thinking  
about his leg and  
I feel like I could  
have helped him.  
Then he  
Finally got it Off.  
Thank God that his  
Leg didn't  
Break.

**Otto Cline**

***A Noise, a jazz poem***

Yesterday I wrote  
Another song  
Yes I wrote  
Another song  
So dry a drought  
Dragged on so long

No words fit  
Expressed emotion  
No words there  
Expressed emotion  
I came up with  
The dulllest notion

No instrument  
Flowed a tune  
Yes, no instrument  
Flowed a tune  
A noise, a sound  
To give up soon

***Bakin' Makin' Pancakes***

*(a rap poem)*

Bakin' makin' pancakes  
Makin' bakin' pancakes  
Bakin' no more corn flakes  
Makin' bakin' pancakes  
Make it like it's high stakes  
Somethin' everybody make  
Bake it till your hands ache  
Bakin' makin' pancakes  
Cereals are all fakes  
Makin' Bakin' Pancakes

***Metal Grate, a personal poem***

I asked to ride around outside  
On a crisp cool afternoon  
To ride around the park  
I'd promise we'd be back soon  
So I rode along the park  
Wind in my face  
Going very fast  
As if it were a race  
I didn't see the metal grate  
About to curse me with it's hate

Now a feeling  
Head over heels  
Only few know how it feels  
Now I'm lying  
On the ground  
Family gathers all around  
My sleek blue *Razor*  
On the floor  
I still feel it  
My head is sore

***Job of Honor, a rap poem***

Highlighter  
Songwriter  
Job-all-nighter  
It's what you want  
To be  
Paper bag  
Computer lag  
Just ask me  
You could be a  
Marathoner  
Tag-a-longer  
Even an  
Employee-of-honor  
Now it's up to you  
There's also  
A mow-a-lawner  
In case you  
Want that kind of honor

### ***Personal Story***

I remember when I was asleep in Pre-K and I would pretend I was sleeping the teachers would walk around I would hide next to a column I imagined like I was a super cool spy rolling around. They would walk around I could hear them walking step by step hearing the wood creak I would try not to breathe loudly but I don't know why I would try to be sneaky they could obviously see that I was missing from my bed so then they would say a funny word like *bonk* or *poopie* then I would laugh then I would get caught.

### ***My Rap***

*Sit up and listen I riff on the rhythm the sickest musician the slickest magician.  
Sits and then zips into different positions.  
I'm not the most vicious of villain.  
I'm simply making vanilla thrilling.  
I'm not into chillin but if you were given the gift of intuition then keep me within your peripheral vision.  
Cause I'm the jittery disposition  
Im a nervous guy that prefers to hide im terrible shy and I don't know why.*

### ***Blues Poem: My Brother***

*I will not lose you again  
At such a young age  
I will not lose you again  
You should've grown to at least the age of ten*

*You had a smile like the moon  
It was beautiful  
You had a smile like the moon  
Too amazing to look at but it was  
Cute when you sang a little tune.*

*Your life was more  
A special one  
Your life was more  
But your life should not have been a lore.*

**Insaf Dahha**

### ***Child, a personal story***

I remember when I was an only child.  
It was just my mom, my dad, and me.  
I wouldn't say I was a lonely child.  
I liked it when it was just me.  
I certainly was an imaginative child.  
I believed I would grow up to be a dancer.  
Leaping and twirling on a stage with a big tutu around my waist.  
I remember when I could be a free child  
Without writing assignments and homework to pin me down.  
I remember crying to my mom because I wanted to stay a child  
As I saw the world grow old around me.  
My friends were moving away, the local park was being removed,  
And there was nothing I could do.  
I remember being told I was no longer going to be an only child.  
Should I alienate this new creature  
Or should I cherish it?  
With whatever common sense my four-year-old brain had  
I decided to cherish the new child, until my parents sat me down to tell me  
That the new child wouldn't be coming home.  
And so that was that  
I was back to being an only, and now lonely, child.

### ***Something About You***

There is something about you I will never get.  
It is a mystery to me that I just couldn't forget.  
I haven't been able to confront you yet.  
But if you don't mind telling me, how come you never get upset?

Now don't get me wrong, it's a gift of course.  
The fact that you never seem to feel remorse.  
Always walking around with a smile on your face,  
With the happiness of someone who had just won a race.

So how are you able to recover so fast  
From your sadness and anger that doesn't seem to last.  
And how are you able to smile so long,  
Like there's nothing in your life that could possibly go wrong.

Mom, I really do wonder how you manage for so long,  
Because a trail of happiness and kindness seems to follow you along.  
But now I understand, I *really* do.  
That the anger can't come out when there is so much love inside of you.



*Ode to Your Socks*

Your socks  
Are so very fuzzy  
And they are such a bright pink,  
I hate pink.  
But your socks are the perfect pink,  
Like a sunset at the perfect moment,  
right before the sun is gone.  
They are so warm,  
I assume,  
They are so long  
I bet they would reach my knees  
They are so very warm.  
I may have borrowed them,  
By borrowed I mean they are now mine.  
They are so warm.  
They wrap my feet in fuzzy fluff  
On a cold winter day I wake up,  
And my toesies are toasty warm  
I am so lucky to have them.  
Socks:  
You bring me joy.  
You are so bright and warm.  
    I hope you fit forever,  
        So every day,  
            When I get home  
                I can put them on  
                    And be delighted  
                        By your snuggly embrace.  
                            When I am sick  
                                And tired  
                                    You make me happy,  
  and keep me warm.  
  I love how you encase my feet,  
  In your warmth.  
  I love you.  
  socks

## Anis Djerdjare

### *Eid Al Adha*

I think that the best holiday I have ever experienced is Eid Al Adha, and in particular, the one that has just passed on September 1, 2017. On this occasion, my mother made a very special dish made of lamb, spices, and vegetables. There were also sides of potatoes, traditional soup called chourba, and cow liver. I couldn't resist, and I bet that you, too, would just want to stuff your stomach with the food. It smelled awesome and delectable, it felt so soft, smooth, and good in my mouth. Eid Al Adha isn't just about meals and food, it is very social. Of course, if my family was to throw a big meal, the number one thing everyone does is invite friends and family. We held a feast, and well my dad's friends, my dad, and I went outside to talk. We had some type of fun. Even us kids stayed up until midnight, talking outside of our house. The backyard was deserted, thus giving us the whole thing to ourselves. We also did religious matters such as praying. Obviously, we said farewell and hoped to see each other again. Through this holiday I've learned that being with friends and family is the best thing ever. I also learned that this food that I ate is the best I have ever eaten (and if you eaten this, you will agree with me). The last lesson of this holiday is that if I were to relive this moment I would make sure to cherish it, and make sure the memory stays clear for the rest of this life.

### *Writing Challenge*

Setting: Library, Theme: Overcoming a fear. Character: Endangered species

We are in the 39th century AD. Nobody was enjoying life ever since this mad scientist created robots with the aim of destroying humans. Whoever fought and spoke up was exiled to a library. Why a library? I don't know. Ever since the robots rose to power and became absolute dictators, they figured they should make a library an equivalent to a prison. Again, I'm running for my life, so I am just going to tell you the ideas. It is probably because the government told us that books are dangerous. We haven't seen a book since 2018, so we have developed a *phobia* for books. This is because the government told us that they were dangerous.

"AAAAHHHH," I yelled after being caught by these robotic monsters. I was thrown brutally after being beaten up. This is a sad life. Then, I was in a "book place," or library, and that was the only thing I was afraid of. I fought myself and finally got over my phobia after, well... a long time. But I eventually read how to defeat these things. TAKE AWAY THE POWER! From a power plant, no duh! I went on this tough and tumultuous ride, after my beautiful and simple plan, walk out the door of the library! I got to this plant, flipped the switch, and all the robots powered down, just by reading. With this amazing accomplishment, I was voted president. And I tell you, it's good to be in charge.

### *Rap/Rhythm Exercise*

Blue, just blue  
Some don't have a clue  
It is the slew of my belongings

The thing goes *ping*  
It was a gun  
This isn't a pun

***Looney Lasagna, a story in recipe form***

- 2 cups of human blood (preferably Lila's)
- 2 packs of dried skin (again, Lila's)
- 1 teaspoon of dandruff (Lila's hair is too **perfect** to have dandruff)
- 1 pinch of ear (Everyone **thinks** Lila's ears are too **perfect** to pinch)

Step 1

- Preheat oven to 250°F.

Step 2

- Put down ½ a pack of dried skin as a base.

Step 3

- Spread ½ cup of human blood for flavor.

Step 4

- Repeat steps 2 and 3 until out of ingredients.

Step 5

- Bake for 2-3 hours until skin is burnt.

***Mac n' Cheese Mayhem***

- 1 pack of small bones (preferably Lila's **weak** but perfectly **white** bones.)
- 1 cup of grated skin (obviously Lila's **perfectly moisturized** skin)
- 1 teaspoon of dried grated skin ( for a crusty top provided by Lila's **perfect** skin)
- 1 teaspoon of dandruff (we can't use Lila's because her hair is too **flawless**.)

Step 1

- Put 8 quarts of water in a pot and boil on high.

Step 2

- Put 1 cup of bones and cook for 10 minutes.

Step 3

- Drain bones and put in bowl.

Step 4

- Add grated skin, dandruff and dried grated skin.

***Free verse on sensory detail***

The constant sound  
Like a bullet  
Piercing through  
Every second passing by  
The pain becomes more and more  
Unbearable  
As you try and finish  
The constant click

***Food***

Food  
My lord and Savior  
You never get bored  
You might hoard  
But it always loves you  
Food

**Naufa Fahmida**

***Ducks, a story in unconventional form***

Wednesday

Stephanie: Hey, do you know the homework?

Joey: Oh yeah, Page 74; questions 5-9

Stephanie: Wow, u don't use abbreviations

Joey: Well sometimes

Stephanie: Anyways thanks

~Three hours later~

Joey: hey

Stephanie: sup

Joey: I was wondering if

Joey: u wanted to go 2 the park with the cute little lake

Stephanie: wow, u used abbreviations and sure

Joey: I asked my other friends but they said they were busy

Stephanie: when are we going

Joey: oh Friday afternoon

Stephanie: ... Sorry I can't go

Joey: why not?

Stephanie: I have a date friday afternoon

Joey: oh its ok have fun

~different text~

Joey: Ugh i totally blew it

Ben: she said no

Joey: she said yes

Joey: but she has a date that day

Ben: Dont worry maybe u still got a chance

~another text~

Ben: See you in 2 days

Stephanie: u too

~Saturday afternoon~

Joey: SERIOUSLY DUDE

Joey: you knew i liked her

Ben: oh u saw the post. Whatever, she wouldn't want to go with a duck freak & **crazy lover**

~saturday night~

TV- " Ben Loski found dead..... Last thing found was a toy duck and a love note to Stephanie Charles to romanticize while watching ducks."

Stephanie: Im so sorry, i know he was ur friend

Joey: thanks ! "So, Want to go to the park to feed ducks"! \*Message not sent\*

**Anthony Garcia**

***I Remember***

I remember life when it was glitter and sprinkles  
I remember when I was important  
I remember being the center of attention  
I remember hearing my name fade away  
I remember when I fell down and couldn't get up  
I remember kids with smiles on their face  
I remember I was one of them  
I remember having no limit  
I remember those days when rainbows turned into storms  
I remember this life  
I remember nothing but words  
I remember what the Earth is  
I remember when I could  
I remember life

**Max Gurnett**

***I Love This Beautiful World***

The trees consume the Earth  
The waters moving slow,  
The sun, giving birth,  
Watching plants grow,  
That is why I love this beautiful world,  
It is home, to the human race,  
made its mark, in this empty place  
Our culture, society  
Inventions, and technology  
make this place,  
a beautiful world  
Inhabited by wondrous creatures  
Yellow, orange, and blue,  
Green ones too,  
Frolicking  
in this beautiful world.

**Sardar Jaman**

### ***Personal Essay***

I remember the day my father was in a rush to go outside. He forgot his phone behind. His phone was small, with a tiny crack on the right edge.

I was about four or five at the time. I was bored, so I decided to play around with my father's phone. I took two pictures of myself and the pictures turned out to be a swirl.

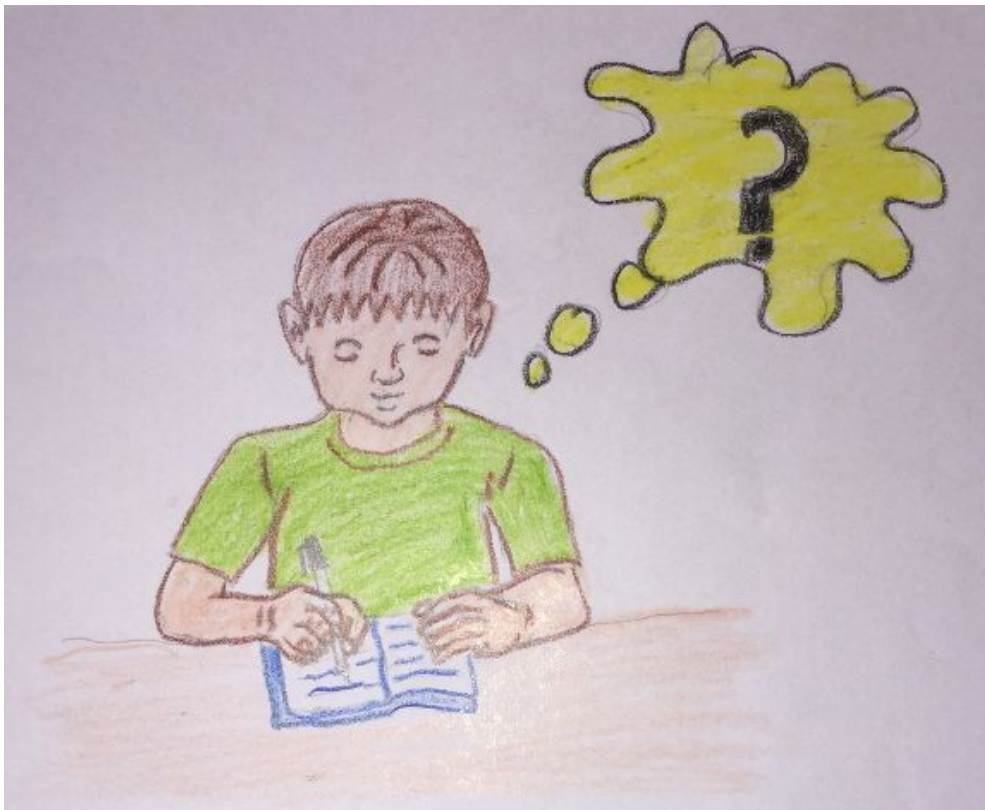
I wanted to know what would happen if my father's phone made contact with the water. I rushed to the bathroom and immediately threw the phone in the toilet. Then, the phone turned off.

At that moment, I realized that I broke my father's phone. I closed the bathroom door and pretended to draw.

When my father came home, he started looking for his phone. He couldn't find it.

Later, when my father went into the bathroom, he found his phone at the bottom of the toilet. He knew that I had put it there, but he asked me if I did it. I said "I don't know" and I walked away slowly to the kitchen.

I felt bad and later admitted that I had thrown it in the toilet. Luckily, I did not get in trouble because I had admitted it.





### *3DS, a personal essay*

It was 2011 when I got my first gaming console: the Nintendo 3DS. It was the first thing I owned that I could truly say was mine and mine alone. All of my toys were either hand-me-downs or shared with my brothers. For example, I had to share all the *Pokemon* games we had with my brothers. And they weren't happy when I wanted to play. (Probably because I would always delete the save.)

Luckily for me, my brother had a 3DS as well. So I played with it and beat most of the games I got for it without any interruption from him. I dropped it one day and a crack appeared on the case. (At least it didn't shatter instantly!) All was well and good. Then came a fateful day that I can still vividly remember...

I was playing with the console when it displayed that it was running out of battery. No big deal, right? I just plugged it in to charge it. But when I plugged it in, it showed that it wasn't charging. So my seven-year-old brain is like, *Well, it's probably the charger acting out. I'll just plug it in with my brother's charger.* I plug the 3DS into my brother's charger. It still doesn't work.

At this point, I'm freaking out. I show it to my mom, dad, and brothers, and they all say that the battery is broken, or something is wrong with it. It eventually runs out of battery and I'm upset, of course. I decided to find a replacement. That didn't take long.

I began to use the computer more. This was a temporary solution: before long, I got bored. I began to yearn for a new 3DS.

On my eighth birthday, one appeared! I played it like I had with my older 3DS. I was so happy! I was going to protect it as best as possible- and then one of the shoulder buttons jammed, making some of the games virtually unplayable or unbeatable. Again, it was time for a new 3DS. But it would be quite a while until that would happen.

Fast forward to today, and I'm glad to say my new 3DS hasn't failed me. That's probably because I don't play it much. Now I have a Switch, so that's replaced the 3DS('s). Whenever I rarely get bored, I wonder: how different would my life have been if I never broke that 3DS?

I hope I never find the answer to that question.

But through this ordeal, I guess I learned one thing: how to find replacements.



### *Trying Something New...*

There was this girl named Lucy. She was this bratty, sassy, selfish, irresponsible little maniac. But you have to know she was eleven years old. she had two older sisters Lisa, the eldest, and Lesly, the middle child. The only thing Lucy lives to do is complain. "The food is too salty!" Complain. "I wanted a donut, not cereal!" Complain. That could have gone on for hours and hours. But the most annoying thing about her in the past was that she cries A LOT! Lisa and Lesly went on vacation for a good two weeks to have fun in Florida. They went to tan eat and explore their food and so on. While Lucy had to stay home The first day went smooth and it was good. Three days past... Lucy's mom started to feel sick. When they went to the doctor to check up on her, the doctor stated that her mom had a terrible flu. They took Lucy's mom to cure her from the flu. While that happened, Lucy's dad worked so she was home alone for five hours. She went to check on her Lucy's mom said with a weak voice " Lucy when you get home do the laundry I will send a text with the directions. So, even though she did not want to she did the laundry. She went to the Laundromat with all the laundry she struggled a bit but she got the hang of it and started to like it and enjoyed it. After that day... Lucy felt good because she accomplished something and she felt very proud of herself. So this is the story of this little maniac trying something new.

### *Ode to Ice Cream*

Oh my  
You fill the room with joy  
When you arrive  
We scoop you up  
And  
We eat you  
You are so cold and hard  
Sometimes  
You are soft, too  
But you melt  
And when you  
Melt  
You always make me  
Sad

You will never have the same  
One  
But one of them  
Will  
Always be  
My  
One and only  
Classic vanilla.

**Faizunnesa Mahzabin**

***Homework, a personal essay***

Every single day it had to be done. I hated it, what kindergartener wants to write out their name five whole times? Sure, it was easy for someone with a short name like Amy. With the first and last name, they would have to write out fifteen letters. But, I had to write out FIFTY in total. That's like writing a fifty-page essay for a kindergartener! After thirty letters I was exhausted. I couldn't take any more of this hand-breaking work. Did the teachers want to work us to death? I gave up; this was way too much work for a kindergartener. The next day the teacher, Ms. Viera went around to check our homework. No one else had left it unfinished. But, they had short, simple names that the teacher actually knew how to pronounce. Ms. Viera wasn't the nicest teacher. I knew I had been doomed. I was forced to finish that homework on top of the one I already had today. I ended up writing my name SEVEN times. Eventually accepted that I had to write out my name five times every day and people would continue to pronounce it wrong. I knew that doing all that work would eventually pay off.

***Haiku***

It was pouring down.  
It was like the sky crying.  
But, the tears went away.

***Ode to Spaghetti***

The worms on the Earth stand still, hiding under the clumps of dirt.  
They wonder what will happen to them.  
Little do they know that their fate lies in the hands of the four legged monster.  
When the monster comes, there will be no escape.  
They will be trapped within the prison bars: the monster's legs.  
They are dropped in to the pit miles deep.  
They think they are safe within the walls.  
But, they do not know of the square white soldiers.  
They are crushed by the soldiers, but they still have some life left in them.  
They assume all the pain is gone, but there is more.  
They are pushed by the pink dragon into the abyss of acid where their lives end.  
But, now they have a new purpose.

## *The Bad Case of Autocorrect*

2:11 P.M. Anna: Hey Lisa!  
2:11 P.M. Lisa: Hey! What are you doing?  
2:11 P.M. Anna: I'm eating my foot.  
2:12 P.M. Lisa: Are you out of your mind? Why are you eating your foot?  
2:12 P.M. Anna: OMG! I meant my food! That was autocorrect.  
2:12 P.M. Lisa: Oh.  
2:12 P.M. Anna: So....what are you doing?  
2:13 P.M. Lisa: Just finishing up my homework.  
2:13 P.M. Lisa: I was wondering if we should meet each other at the mall today.  
2:14 P.M. Anna: Don't you have homework to meet?  
2:14 P.M. Lisa: ?  
2:14 P.M. Anna: I meant complete.  
2:15 P.M. Lisa: Oh... well... yeah.  
2:15 P.M. Anna: So finish your homework and then we'll mock.  
2:15 P.M. Anna: Talk\*  
2:16 P.M. Anna: Wow! Autocorrect fakes me.  
2:16 P.M. Lisa: LOL!  
2:16 P.M. Anna: I meant hates.  
2:43 P.M. Lisa: Done! I finished my homework!  
2:45 P.M. Anna: Cool. Let's meet at the mall at 3:00 P.M. today, okay?  
2:45 P.M. Lisa: Okay.  
2:53 P.M. Anna: Where is the bus?!  
2:56 P.M. Lisa: I'm already at the mall.  
2:56 P.M. Anna: YOU'RE ALREADY AT THE STALL?!  
2:56 P.M. Anna: Mall\*  
2:57 P.M. Lisa: I think you need to give your phone a steak.  
2:57 P.M. Lisa: I meant a break.  
2:58 P.M. Anna: AHHHH! IT'S SHEDDING TO LOU!  
2:58 P.M. Anna: I meant it's spreading to you.  
2:59 P.M. Lisa: I'm going to turn my phone off for a bit. Fly!  
2:59 P.M. Lisa: OMG! I meant bye!  
2:59 P.M. Anna: Cry!  
3:00 P.M. Anna: I'm not even going to try this time.

## *The Turtle*

I reminisce about the times back in nursery school, when the days were unbearably hot and in my imaginative preschool mind, I thought that I was in the middle of the Sahara Desert. My friends and I were outside searching for a cool place to eat our lunch when we all saw the giant turtle slide. To an average person it would just look like a slide, but to us it was our Valhalla.

For the rest of the school year, we would eat our sandwiches under the turtle, as if it were a little tent protecting us from the scorching sun. We thought that we were so cool. Sometimes we stood on the turtle's back and called ourselves the Kings of Turtlelandium. We always played pretend there. Once, one of our friends knelt before us and asked for advice, since we were the wisest in the land. Every time someone said that we were the great elders, we always fell down in laughter.

In addition, we always won at hide-and-seek, because we were the only ones that knew that the turtle was hollow inside. Once, we hid for so long that our teacher had to come out to find us. Since we did not want anyone to see us, we had to sneak behind our teacher, run into a nearby bush and pretend that we were hiding there in order to prevent others from knowing our super secret hiding spot.

Once, when we were bored, we went to the turtle, like every other day. However, on this particular day, we created something that was better than anything we had made during arts and crafts. One of my friends brought a twig and started to tap on the turtle. Then I started to tap on the inside of the turtle as if I were playing the bongo drums and that was when we created our turtle song. Every day under the turtle, we would hum our beautiful masterpiece.

At the end of the school year, we realized we would never see the turtle again. I remember running towards the turtle and hugging its leg wishing I could stay with it forever. Ever since nursery school, the turtle has been my favorite animal.

I remember a turtle light green.

I remember the slide in between.

I remember my friends and I yearning for shade.

I remember the turtle's belly and the shade that it gave.

I remember the joy we had when we found the turtle.

I remember sitting with them talking and eating sandwiches.

I remember this being our favorite place and our hiding place.

I remember hugging the beast.

I remember the thing that meant so much to me.

***THE TEARS IN YOUR EYES, a free write***

YOUR BLUE EYES, CRYING CRYSTALS  
I BEGIN TO DIVE.  
I CATCH EACH BLUE CRYSTAL,  
TO MAKE YOUR EYES DRY.  
EACH AND EVERY CRYSTAL AS BLUE AS THE SKY.  
I GRAB EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM SO YOU DON'T FLOOD THE HOUSE.  
I SEE THIS LOOK IN YOUR EYE.  
AS IT BEGINS TO CHANGE TO THE COLOR OF BLOOD, AS YOU BEGIN TO CRY BLOOD FROM RUNNING OUT OF TEARS.

***DEATH STRIKES AGAIN, a BLUES POEM***

SO MUCH TO DO.  
I COULD NOT REST.  
SO MUCH TO DO.  
I COULD NOT REST.  
SO MANY TASKS.  
I WISH I SLEPT.  
  
GETTING READY TO GO SOMEWHERE.  
A PLACE THAT MAKES ME DESPAIR.  
GETTING READY TO GO SOMEWHERE.  
A PLACE THAT MAKES ME DESPAIR.  
WITH THE SICK AND THE ILL.  
TO SAY GOODBYE BEFORE THEY GO SOMEWHERE.

HOLDING ONTO LIFE.  
I SEE THEM IN PAIN.  
HOLDING ONTO LIFE.  
I SEE THEM IN PAIN.  
IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE.  
AS I WATCH DEATH REIGN.

## ***Ode to a Classic***

Two days, blade,  
You will be sharp again.  
The father of my  
    life,  
    owned you,  
    for one score,  
and will bring you  
    everywhere.  
    I wonder,  
    when you will  
    belong to me?  
All these games  
    we played, you  
dancing in between  
    my fingers,  
    clinging to the wall.  
You are a classic blade, and soon you will be mine.  
    See you.

## ***Cheese***

I have lots of cheeses. I have, blue cheese, smelly cheese, mac and cheese, rotten cheese, stale cheese, buttery cheese, big cheese, small cheese, trapping cheese, red cheese, blue cheese, one cheese, two cheese, cheese in a hat, cheese in a box, cheese with an angel, cheese from the devil, cheese from the pizzeria, lively cheese, deathly cheese, dirty cheese, squeaky cheese, international cheese, toy cheese, and so many other cheeses I can't remember, it's cheesy.

## *A Day of My Life*

January 23, 2018

Dear Diary,

Another regular day in the life of me. First things first, my name is Happy. My life is rubbish, literally. It's ironic, I know. I just want to commit suicide, but the food here in this manor is eximious. Everyday of my life, I've been forced to eat rats. They are quite delicious once you get used to it. They taste like heaven. These creatures called human beans are horrid but they do make a good dinner. *You might be wondering, "How can you eat human beans.* This is what I do: I lure the human beans with *the sound of a baby crying.* When they come near, I strike with my trusty blade. I call her *Happy Death.* Please be advised, I eat them raw. You might be thinking, *Why do you eat them raw when you can cook them with fire.* I don't know how to make fire, *If I did know how to make fire, the beans will find me.* Whenever I eat *human beans,* I experience an emotion called happiness. ^-^ Whenever I talk to a human bean, they run away screaming. What do I look like, a monster? I experience an emotion called sadness. Water escapes from my eyes. (-;) Through these tears, I can see the sun rising. Time to sleep. Goodbyeel! \*sniffs

### ***Personal Poem: I Remember...***

I remember me as a baby  
 Taking my first steps in the garden  
 I remember me laughing  
 As I rode my father's back  
 I remember eating a mango  
 Nectar dripping down my chubby face  
 I remember running away from Gramma  
 Playing a game  
 I remember my mum giving me a bath  
 In a basin  
 I remember hiding and chewing on sandals.  
 Thinking I'm so sneaky  
 I remember my mum and dad teaching me how  
 to pray  
 Religion is a big part of my life

### ***Comic Poem***

I remember sitting in the toilet  
 I remember me being constipated  
 I remember roaring a primal roar  
 I remember going Super-Saiyan  
 I remember unleashing my inner poop  
 I remember flushing the toilet  
 I remember washing my hands  
 I remember writing a poem about a "gross"  
 subject

### ***Psychos, a haiku***

Knife in hand; bloody  
 Maniac laughs, wounds, pale eyes  
 Don't look behind you

### ***Sailors, a haiku***

Sailor, boat, sailor  
 Waves crashing against the boat  
 Watch out for the rock

**Giovanna Rodrigues**

***Lost In Translation, a translation of Gustavo Adolfo Becquer***

Rima XII

Your eyes are blue and when you laugh,  
it relaxes me and touches my heart.  
The dangers of tomorrow disappear  
When I see your beautiful reflection.

Your eyes are blue and when you cry  
The tears on your face  
Are like the dew on a violet.

Your eyes are blue and I love  
The times we sit together and watch the sun rise.  
the midnight sky is clear  
Except you and I, the only stars.

***A Defense Of Translation***

This poem has changed.  
You may not notice, but it's a big deal to me.  
I think it sounds better now.  
I have changed some of the words though.  
I hope you like it.



**Voicemails**

Come on! Why didn't you pick up the phone. Now, I have to go through the mess of leaving a voicemail. I mean you have a phone for a reason so use that reason Justin! But, just to make things clear we are still enemies! I just need you because... *no that's not right.*

**[PRESS # TO REDO, \* TO SEND]**

#Second try! *Wait, the thing is recording nevermind then. Next time is the one. Third time's a charm.*

**[PRESS # TO REDO, \* TO SEND]**

#Hi Justin. Pick up the phone Justin. Got it?! We are still enemies even though I'm calling you. All I'm asking for is that AMAZING book you stole from me. Just give it back and no one gets hurt. And I wanted to tell you something (stutters)...um. Something important...

**[PRESS # TO REDO, \* TO SEND]**

#Alright. Justin, I need the book back by tomorrow... My parents got a new job at the other side of the world so I'm going to be moving in a couple of days so...Please be ever so kind-- *I sound like an old person from the 1800s.* Hopefully we can meet up tomorrow so we can talk. I don't actually hate you as much as you might think and it might be too late for you to know...\*

**[PRESS # TO REDO, \* TO SEND]**

**Sarah Sattar**

*The Fish, a story told in unconventional form*

Hey Molly,

I'm sorry, but remember how you told me to watch your goldfish while you're away for vacation in Florida? Well... I got a cat as my Christmas present from my parents and it ate Pippy! I'm so sorry. It wasn't my fault. Your goldfish should toughen up. You can get a new pet that's much better, like a lizard or a turtle. I have a great idea! You should get two turtles so you can hold a turtle race! Pippy was a piece of garbage in comparison to all the other pets you could've had. *How can I be so heartless?* [tears apart note]

'Sup Molls,

You know how I've been wanting a cat for like seven years?! Well, you better believe your ears, I mean eyes since you're reading this with your *eyes*, not ears, because that dream has come true! I got a cat for Christmas! *Just insert it quickly, she'll barely notice.* And your goldfish, Pippy is dead. Bye! *Still ruthless!* [shoots note into garbage can, but misses]

Dearest Molly,

I apologize sincerely for the grief I may bring upon you. *I'm not Shakespeare!* [flushes note down the toilet, forgetting that her parents told her not to throw paper down the toilet because it may cause the toilet to become clogged]

Dear Molly,

You know that I'm a really good friend. We've been friends since kindergarten and now we're in middle school. Remember the time you ate the carrot that we were going to use as the nose for our snowman? And when you got me jars of peanut butter and jelly as my birthday present because they go together just like we do? And when we wore each other's shoes for a whole week?! And when I found out you still sleep with your teddy bear and I revealed that I do too? *I ramble too much!*

Hi Molly,

So, one day, your goldfish went missing. And I don't even know what happened to it. I didn't have anything to do with it. Pippy is just... gone, I guess. *I can't lie to her!* [crumples up note]

Dear Molly,

I'm really sorry. I got a kitten for Christmas and it ate your goldfish. I can replace it if you'd like, but I know you really loved Pippy. I took responsibility of your fish while you were away and it's my fault I failed. I hope you can forgive me, but I understand if you can't. -Mira [tear falls on note, sticks on locker]

Hey Mira,

It's alright. It was a fake fish. It was to see if you'd lie to me or tell me the truth. I took Pippy with me to Florida in a sealed container. It's our seventh year of being best friends and I knew you would live up to truly being my best friend.

***The Locked Door***

I locked myself in my room.  
This was to set my mood.  
I was very mad.  
Not very sad.  
They had taken away my toys.  
I was very annoyed.  
I climbed a stool.  
Like a fool.  
And shut the door.  
I wanted more.  
So I twisted the knob.  
Afraid of the picture of the blob.  
I crawled all around the floor.  
Waiting for someone to open the door.  
I know that you might have experienced the same.  
But this was the first of my fame.  
I heard keys.  
I fell to my knees.  
I hugged my dad.  
I was his little lad.  
I will never forget that I was once three.  
Next time, I may talk about how I attempted to climb a tree.

Wade Ung

*Haiku*

Mother nature tree.  
I cut her down recently.  
Now we are doomed.

*Brenda*

Her name was Brenda. She lived to be thirteen and a half years old, older than me. I am a human, she was a fish. She was a betta, bred to look cute, be territorial and fight. We didn't have any fancy decor or expensive water purifiers. Just Brenda, a five gallon tank, a few rooks and a bubbler. She was very old, the age of a hobbling dog, but she could have lived longer if it wasn't for my sister's *countless* friends. Some of them wanted to feed Brenda, so I trusted my sister to watch them and make sure they only fed her a little bit. They fed her the whole bottle of food. She died of over feeding. I will never forget her, and neither of us will likely forgive my sister.



### ***A Short, a simple poem***

I have a hat.  
My cat wears the hat.  
My hat wears the cat.  
I wear the cat.

### ***Sad Sesame, a personal essay***

I remember sitting in the sofa waiting for the program to begin. I was so excited, I was obsessed with *Sesame Street* at the time. Today's episode was about Elmo having trouble sleeping. An Italian singer was a guest on the show, he was going to help Elmo go to sleep. He started to sing a lullaby to Elmo. Something just stood out to me, that something led me to start crying. When I cried, I wasn't crying tears of sadness or joy. I just cried.

### ***The Egg Came First, an opinion essay***

The egg came first, I will never change my mind.

Although the Bible states that the chicken came first, that may not be true. "The egg came first", it makes more sense and has more evidence to back it up than "the chicken came first". If the chicken came first, where did it come from? You say that it came from an egg. But then where did that egg come from? A chicken you say, but where did that chicken come from?... As you can see, if the chicken came first, it will only lead to an infinite cycle of something impossible. If the egg came first, that egg would have come from an ancestor of the chicken (remember that egg-laying creatures have existed long before chickens). Let's call the chicken's ancestor the proto-chicken. This proto-chicken would have laid an egg and that egg would have had a small genetic mutation that would have made it into a chicken. This is also known as the process of evolution. Some creature would have created an offspring that had carried a small genetic mutation, similar to how humans like us (*Homo Sapiens*) were created.

If you still don't agree with me you can look it up, as I did. As Neil deGrasse Tyson once said, "Which came first: the chicken or the egg? The egg – laid by a bird that was not a chicken."

You still don't believe me? With all the logical information that I have given to you most average people would have changed their opinions but I understand that you are not like most average people, you are my dad. That is why I have back-up informational evidence. "That species evolve over time, and thus that chickens had ancestors that were not chickens". GO TEAM EGG!

## *The Naps*

Sometimes I recall this memory of myself when I was three or four, and although it was quite some time ago, it feels like it happened yesterday. It's like when you randomly remember something that you didn't consider important or special at the time, but it just seems to stick with you anyway.

It's a memory from when I was back in preschool. Every day, around noon we'd have naptime in school. The teachers would get out these small red and blue mattresses for everyone, and they'd put them on the floor in a grid pattern. All the kids would bring pillows and blankets for themselves, lie down, and take a fifteen minute nap.

I was the only kid there who was never able to go to sleep. No matter how much I tried, how much I struggled, how many times I rolled around, how much time went by, how quiet it was, or how comfortable my pillow was, I couldn't sleep—and mind you, my pillow was the one that everyone else there begged for because it was so soft. I remember feeling uncomfortable and squirmy, I felt like I was lying on a rock. I would stare longingly at the clock for what seemed like hours, and every now and then I looked over at the teacher who was always doing crossword puzzles, to see if she would allow me to sit up, at least. She was very strict and every time would throw a nasty look at me every time I tried to excuse myself.

She would always tell me afterwards that I was “disrupting” other children's sleep, even though when I asked my friends, they would say that they hadn't noticed even that I was spinning in my mattress like a top trying to find a suitable position. After naptime, I would usually end up with a headache that felt like my brain was caving in, and one time it got so bad that I started crying and promised myself that next time I'd sleep well. Once, the teacher got increasingly frustrated and told me that I would get “detention”, which consisted of sitting in front of a mirror in the corner of the room for some twenty minutes or so, looking at myself and thinking over my “misbehavior”.

I have a feeling the reason I couldn't nap in preschool was because of the environment in the classroom. Had I been at home I would have been snoozing in seconds, but in the classroom I couldn't. I was just anxious to get back to playing pretend and whatever else I'd been doing, but during those dreadful fifteen minutes I felt like I was in Alcatraz in not-so solitary confinement. The good side was that after naptime, if I didn't have a bad headache or I didn't have to look at myself in that lonely mirror, I was up and jumping around and celebrating that I'd survived another day of naptime torture. I suppose the good part overtook the sorrow.

*Unconventional Writing*

Dear Mom,

I spent half of your money on getting an autograph from Hank Aaron.

\*What am I doing? I can't just spill it all out to her!\* {Crumbles up paper and throws in the bin}

Dear Mom,

I apologize for my actions.

*Ugh! Too formal!* \*Shoves paper in her drawer\*

Dear Mom,

Remember the time when I asked you for money and then you asked what it was for and I said graduation? Yeah, um... I kinda, might've, maybe, just a little bit...

*Chill, Carissa, chill! You got this! What am I saying? No, I don't.* \*Rips paper into tiny pieces\*

Dear Mom,

I know you might be really mad at me for this but... I spent half of your money on getting an autograph from Hank Aaron.

*It's still not right. Maybe I should write to Dad since he has an even-temper.*

Dear Dad,

I'm only writing to you because you have a better temper than Mom does.

*You know what? What's the point? They both will end up showing each other!*

Dear Mom & Dad,

Remember when I asked you for...

\*Orange juice spills on paper and completely soaks it. Oh my gosh! You're kidding me! Has to clean up the mess. Takes forever cleaning up.\*

10 minutes later...

Dear Mom & Dad,

Remember when I asked you for some money? Yeah, well, I technically didn't spend it all on graduation. So you guys know how I LOVE Hank Aaron right? So, this Friday was the day he was finally signing baseballs for fans. So I kind of spent \$75 on getting a baseball signed. I know I did something really bad. And you can ground me if you want. But, who doesn't love Hank Aaron!?

P.S: I'll make up for all the money if you want!

*\*PERFECT!\**

## *The Birds*

*Note: This writing is based on an activity we did early in the year when we were making up our own characters.*

Jack flew up to the trading port for bird seed. He met a friend there named Lennie. Lennie was a bird with large wings and one who could dive as quick as a hawk. He was a black dove, and you wouldn't think a dove would dive so fast, but Lennie was specially trained by Quinn, the old bird who was 18 years old, and by far the oldest bird in the forest. Quinn was a retired nightjar who wouldn't use his energy to fly, but taught a school on the ground near SamsnerVille on the coast near the pond where there were no fish. This pond was known as the Open Whole, being that the pond was a perfect whole, with fresh water, but no life, not even plants. Jack himself was a blue jay. He was chief of the Sour Cream clan who stole sour cream from the window shelves of humans across the country.

The center of the trading systems was near the forest pond where no animal, except for birds, roamed freely since the grass around the center of the poison had given birth to bushes of poison ivy and since the birds were the only flyers in that forest, they were the only ones able to avoid the ivy. Jack was second in Command. Clark, the pigeon, was known as the "Hard-bargainer" who loved tricking other birds into selling things that aren't worth the trade. But the other birds can't tell, since Clark is cleverly deceptive. Then you have Maple, who was a sweet hummingbird and loved to fly with her nectar group when collecting nectar for decorations, such as syrup ornaments during Christmas. Jack, however, was the center of attention. Jack was a hard worker when fighting in battles with other clans in the trading system. When the seed mines opened up to the public, several seed mines were fought over in tragic wars for control. Two of those battles were Jack's clan. The second in command of the Sour Cream clan was Saber, a black crow who never took "no" for an answer. That's probably why the clan participated in these battles.

The first battle, which was known as the battle of "The Mighty Birds" resulted in a win for the Sour Cream clan and a loss for the All Birdacan clan. Fourteen birds died in that battle. Five from the Sour Cream clan and nine from the All Birdacan clan. It was a tragic scene, but the second battle the Sour Cream clan fought was much more tragic than the first. Since the birds fought in battles by pecking savagely at one another's body and face, the Second battle resulted in not so many deaths. Unfortunately almost a hundred deaths from bird lung disease, which was caused by the opening in the bodies of many birds who got pecked. Dust and sand blew into these bodies, and disrupted the smooth flow, causing most birds to die. In this battle, it was a variety of clans fighting. It was four clans on the Sour Cream clan's side, verses six clans from the enemy clan, including the All Birdacan clan who had come back for revenge. The Sour Cream side had, surprisingly won once again, most likely because many hummingbirds dropped nectar bombs on enemy birds, temporarily blinding them, and giving

Sour Creams side an advantage. The battle resulted in 84 injuries, 25 deaths, and 5 birds completely missing. Some say the enemy had taken prisoner some ally birds. But this wasn't a



problem since the hound dogs that were at the top of the social class for the dog trading systems, could track down these prisoners.

Both mines now belonged to the Sour Cream clan. These mines supported the clan for a few years, until the great flood came, and wiped everything, except for the ones who could avoid it, out of existence. Then a time came when the flood prevailed over the lands for half a decade. While the flood happened, the birds kept high in the air. Therefore was nothing on earth to stand on so many birds starved to death. The day before the flood, there were 4.8 billion birds on earth, and by the end of the flood, about 456,000 birds had survived. The Sour Cream Clan had almost been wiped out.

# **Section III:**

## **Class 509**

***My Crazy Experience With The Ocean, a personal essay***

The waves were crashing. My family and I were at the beach. I ran over to the ocean. The water was cold at first, but when you get used to it it's warm. The water was refreshing and I felt relaxed. As I started to go further out, the strength of the waves increased. I went as deep as I could without pushing it, which is about chest level. As the waves got stronger they started to feel as if they were pushing me. I started to worry a bit, but I thought I was fine. Little did I know things were about to change.

Then the one wave came. I thought I could handle it but I was wrong. The wave hit me straight in the head and knocked me off my feet. I felt really scared at this point because I thought I might drown. My heart was beating as fast as a woodpecker pecks a tree. The waves shoved me fully underwater. I had to hold my breath as long as I could. At this point I was in full panic mode. I tried swimming back up to the surface but I didn't succeed. I was pushing and pushing down with all my might and as my head broke the surface of the waves I felt a huge relief. I then quickly swam back to the shore and got out of the water. I was gasping for air as I was approaching my mom. The look on her face after I got out of the water was unforgettable; she was so worried she gave me a towel and hugged me.

After that I just sat on my towel and watched the waves go by. I was shocked from what just happened. I didn't go back into the water that day. I felt very lucky to still be alive at that moment. After that experience, I never want to swim in oceans again. I will never forget the time I almost drowned.

Wessal Bakry

***The Witch's Forest (excerpt), a short story***

Her feet ached as she trudged through the Witch's Forest. The whole village was asleep, including the husband she had so carefully slipped away from. "It's too dangerous!" Robin would have said. "You can't go alone."

And yet she had to. It was the only way to keep her little Maya safe. Her sweet sweet Maya. A tear slipped down her cheek at the thought of losing her daughter. *Again*. She clutched the child harder, determined that history would not repeat itself. No matter what. The Witch would NOT take Maya away.

3 years ago, on the night of September 21st, they were not prepared. If only they were. Only then would they have known the fate of their first daughter. Lily. Mrs. Moncello shivered at the thought of that dreaded night. The Witch. Her daughter. Gone.

And there was nothing they could do. In a snap, the Witch had come and gone. Leaving not a single trace. Ever since, the village had been on lockdown. No one in and no one out, for they were surrounded by the Witch's Forest, with no way to escape. All they could do was brace themselves, not knowing when the Witch would strike again and take another child.

The memory was embedded in her brain, creeping into every one of Mrs. Moncello's nightmares. But now was not the time to think. Or regret. Or turn back. As they reached the outskirts of the forest, Mrs. Moncello and her daughter, Maya, grew closer and closer to the outside world. Closer and closer to freedom. And farther away from home.

***My Binder, an ode***

On my desk you lay,  
high as a skyscraper,  
filled with tiny pieces of tree bark  
thin as a fingernail.  
Without you, I'd be lost  
in my education.  
Wondering where my folders have gone.  
But with you, I am at ease.  
For in the morning, all I feel is relief.  
The joy of finding the work of my own curvy handwriting.

*I Miss You, a story told in unconventional form*

1-16-18

Dear Diary,

It's been 2 years, 2 years since she passed away. I miss her running around the yard with me. I miss having sleepovers with her. I miss screaming at stupid things like our favorite TV show, *Game of Thrones*. Isabella was my best friend. Abby wanted to go out later the day she passed away. It's almost like she didn't care. Abby probably forgot, but she acts happier now that Isabella is dead. Could she have been the one to kill her? *Beep Beep*. Oh, Abby just texted me.

Abby: Hey Jennie, want to go hang out with the girls?

Jennie: I think I'll pass this time. Sorry.

Abby: It's fine. I understand you're hurting.

See you around!

Jennie: See you.

Bye.

I can't get up. It hurts too much. Thinking about Isabella makes streams of water run down my puffy, red face. Thinking about Abby's text messages makes me furious. Does she not care that one of our best friends passed away? I can't believe Isabella has been gone for 2 years. It feels like only yesterday Isabella and I were in the mall shopping for new shoes.

- See you tomorrow, love Jennie

1-18-18

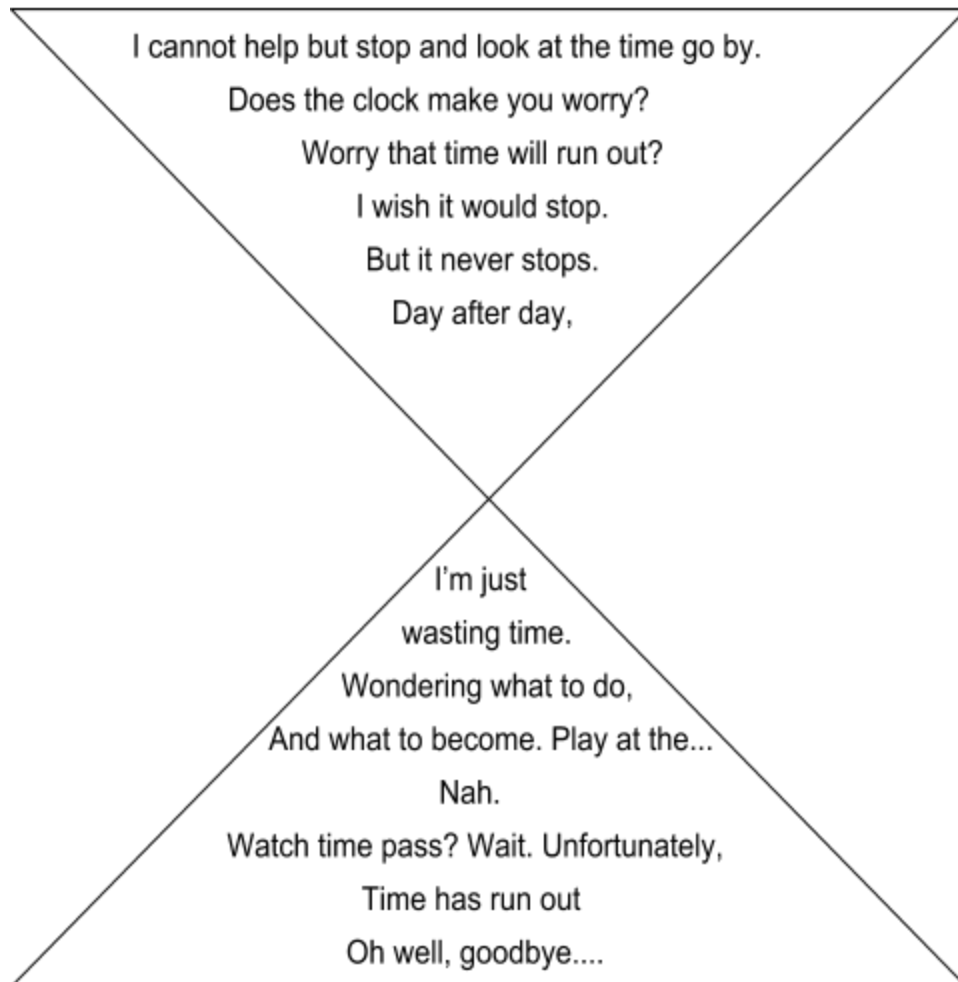
Dear Diary,

Sorry that I forgot to write in you, but I think Abby and Lisa did kill her. I decided to join Abby and Lisa at a party yesterday, and I overheard them talking about how happy they were that she was gone. Sorry that I can't write that much today, but I have to find out what happened.

- See you around, Jennie

Peter Chan

***Hourglass, a concrete poem***



***Stepping on a LEGO***, a free verse poem

Oh, the pain of stepping on a LEGO!  
The LEGO that doesn't let go!  
The LEGO attacks like a foe.

I'm in the park.  
Between two arks.  
And the park is empty.  
That doesn't rock!

I wish I could run.  
But, I will have no fun.

I'll stop  
But on top,  
There's rain that'll flop.

The mop can help  
That will mop and mop  
From stepping on more LEGOs  
But, it can't help me let go my stuck LEGO.

The LEGO finally lets me go!  
And I'll go?  
To home I'll go!

**Isabel Cordero**

***Dreams, a haiku***

Fantasy is real.  
Reality becomes fake.  
Adventure in sleep.

***Dreamland, a short & skinny poem***

Dreamland  
Where fantasy  
Becomes reality  
And reality  
Becomes fantasy.

Dreamland  
Where you can go  
On an adventure  
In your sleep.

You may get hurt,  
But you will be safe.  
You may feel pleasure  
That doesn't last long.

Snake infested challenges.  
Disabled powers.  
Failing school.  
Your darkest desires.

Dreamland  
Where anything  
Can happen.

***Memory Lane, a blues poem***

As I stroll down the lane,  
As I stroll down the lane,  
Down pours the rain.

It is very busy,  
It is very busy,  
It makes my mind dizzy.

Some people give me joy,  
Some people give me joy,  
And my face lights up.

But others give me sorrow,  
But others give me sorrow,  
And tears roll down my face.

I turn the corner,  
And keep walking  
Down Memory Lane.

***Soup, an exercise on word play***

Soup. Dreaded soup.  
Thick soup, thin soup.  
Lots of it.

Soup. Disliked soup.  
Thick soup, thin soup.  
Some of it.

Soup. Liked soup.  
Thick soup, thin soup.  
A bit of it.

Soup. Loved soup.  
Thick soup, thin soup.  
None of it.



## *The Life of an Orange Bellied Pigeon:* *short story challenge*

Plot: Running away

Character: Endangered species

Setting: Starbucks

I'm an endangered bird known as the Ulfer and I'm running away. Away from hunters that is. We look like average pigeons in the real world but the one detail that sets us apart is our spectacularly orange bellies. We thrive in the wild, the Amazon Rainforest to be exact. But today I am in a place that you would not normally find me. I am on top of a Starbucks coffee shop in the middle of a city.

Now, I know what you are thinking. What is a wild bird doing on a Starbucks building? Well, the truth is, the Amazon Rainforest is not an easy place to hide in, and Ulfers stand out there as well. Therefore, whenever a hunter comes by armed with a rifle or a shotgun, the odds of them finding and killing us are very high. But why do they kill us? Just look at my belly! Nobody can resist the orange! Anyway, back to Starbucks. So, a busy city like this is the ideal place for a pigeon. And since us Ulfers look like pigeons, we blend in easily. (Oh, and plus New Yorkers are too invested in their own lives to care about a random bird). Also, what hunter will come into a busy city with a rifle in hand? That's right, nobody. Oh my gosh! Someone dropped a donut! Gotta go get that! See ya later!

OK, I'm back. It wasn't a donut, it was just a very large wedding ring with frosting on it. Wait. Human rings don't have frosting on it. Oh man. Bobert the pigeon fooled me again. Well he wins this time. See, I look so much like a pigeon that I'm already making friends with them, and enemies.

**Aunirbhan Das**

***Ode To My Eraser***

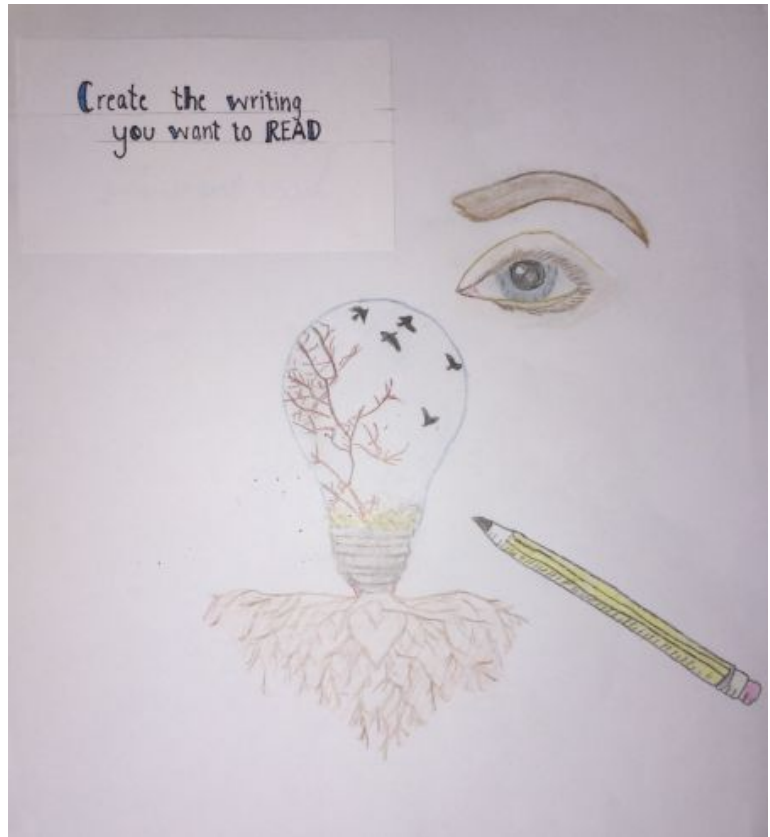
You come in many colors.  
You sacrifice yourself to  
create a clean template.  
Smell like plastic,  
feel like rubber.  
Without you,  
my mistakes  
would not go away.

***Waterfall, a haiku***

Flowing down the hill  
Splashing down into the ground  
Perfect waterfall

***Food, a haiku***

All the different foods  
I would like to try them all  
They taste really good



***To Do List, a story told in unconventional form***

- Buy Groceries
- Rent A Van
- Cancel Doctor's Appointment
- Group Up Robbers
- Go To The Bank

***Video Games, a short & skinny poem***

Running  
to the  
room.  
Picking up the  
controller.  
Playing games  
all day.

***Bellowood Creek (excerpt), an exercise on character***

“Winnie!” screamed a familiar voice. It was an early morning in Bellowood Creek and the sun had just risen. The voice of my mother and the warm rays from the sun woke me up. Outside, you could see the boring houses and the boring shops. Obviously, today was going to be a delight-full of laughter, adventures, and chores. Oh wait, not so fun after all.

“Winnie are you coming down here or not? There is work to be done!” There was the voice of my mother again. All she ever talks to me about is school or chores. At least today was a Saturday so no school but, no school meant more chores. I don’t understand the women in this house. Making me work on a Saturday? I needed a break from school, not more work. Anyways, I needed to get ready before my mother came up to my room and brought me downstairs herself.

I went to my closet and took out some clothes, then went to the bathroom to brush my teeth and change. I usually don’t take baths in the morning. What’s the point if I’m going to get dirty doing my chores anyways? I put on my gray dress and slid on my black stockings, then slipped my feet into my shoes. I quickly brushed my hair, then hurried downstairs, and plopped down in a chair.

My grandmother was sitting across from me, chopping some vegetables. My older sister had already finished her breakfast and was washing dishes. “You’re late. Hurry up and eat. I need you to rake the leaves in the backyard,” my mother said.

I rolled my eyes. “Good morning to you too.”

My mother set a bowl of warm oatmeal in front of me. Yum. I quickly ate my oatmeal and set the dishes in the sink for someone else to wash.

Next to the back door was a rake. I grabbed it and headed outside. It was autumn and the cool breeze blew in my hair. I started to rake the yard until I had a huge pile of leaves. I sat down to rest and looked beyond the fence that surrounded my home. Behind the fence laid the Bellowood Forest. Its intimidating look gave me shivers. What lies in there or beyond it is unknown. My grandmother used to tell me myths about it. I don’t know if they are true. Some seem a little far-fetched and fake. Maybe she just told me such stories to keep me away. Everyone wants to keep their children away from the forest.

Though these stories give me the creeps, they don’t stop me from being curious. What exactly lies beyond Bellowood Forest? I paused. I then stood up and headed towards the forest. Slowly.

Antonia Duffey

## **Recipe for Love, a story told in unconventional form**

*Kara's Bakes*

### **Couple Cupcakes**

Makes: 2

#### **Ingredients**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda

1 cup milk

#### **Step 1**

Preheat the oven to 350° f.

#### **Step 2**

Mix flour, salt and baking soda.

#### **Step 3**

Mix the butter and sugar in an electric mixer. ~~I used to have a pink and blue mixer. Jamie and I would make these cupcakes together. He taught me how. When the mixer was on high he would put his hand on mine, to steady it. His strong hand.~~ **Focus**

#### **Step 4**

Add the eggs. ~~Whenever I cracked the eggs, he made me crack them in a cup, in case shell got in. I got upset every time I got some in, but he made me do it again, until I got it right.~~ **Concentrate**

#### **Step 5**

Add vanilla. ~~I always spilled some of the vanilla, when I was with him, because I was shy, but Jamie said to use it anyway. After, when the cupcakes were done they would be so, so sweet, and he'd say I was as sweet as vanilla. We always laughed.~~ **Think**

#### **Step 6**

Combine with dry mixture, alternating, adding  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the dry, then  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the milk. ~~When I mixed it with Jamie, it always worked. Everything was always just right. Now it is never quite right.~~ **Stop**

#### **Step 7**

Distribute into cupcake tins, and bake for 13-15 minutes. When cooled add frosting. ~~I love him.~~ ❤️

### **Ode to a Book**

Your wings flap releasing similes.

Your breath reeks personification.

Dust particles fly from your fluttering leaves.

Printed hyperboles,

Written stories,

In a poem,

Sturdy frame,

Delicate pages,

Easy to tear,

Oh you,

My simile,

My metaphor,

My hyperbole.

***Secret Life, a concrete poem***

Wait!

I have a secret

No one

Knows

I'm not OK

I'm really not

I have a secret

What

Is it

You

Ask?

If

I told you

I'd have to

Kill you

What?

You have

a secret?

Tell me!

Not OK?

Then let

me help

you!

WHAT

IS THE

SECRET?!

Wait,

hold on.

Kill me?

But...

***Secret Life: Explained, a haiku***

A secret girl's life

Nobody knows what she is

A secret agent

***The Life of my Childhood***, a personal essay

It was 7 years ago. I was 4 years old, but I still loved to play with my friendly neighbor who was my best friend in pre-k. Her name was Kayla. She wasn't in my pre-k class but we used to see each other and say hi during recess or in the hallway. She used to play with me in our backyards. I even remember how I used to think she looked like Matilda. Her brother and I did not get along that well but, we did have fun playing Super Mario with each other on our DS'.

Her brother was in my sister's grade. My sister was actually at the same school as me. My sister and I would play with each other during recess sometimes. Kayla and I always used to play in our backyards in the summer. We used to have water balloon fights. She was my best friend until she moved. Her mom told our family that they were going to move. I was really sad that day because Kayla and I used to have so much fun together. My family gave her mother a gift before they left. My mom gave her mother a circular designed jewelry box.

Now, everyday when I come back from school, I see her grandmother, because she kept their old house. That actually reminds me of the time I moved to my new house. My old house was very fun. My 2 sisters would try to avoid me going to their room, but they failed all the time. Although they shared a room and made a team against me coming to their room, they used to fight a lot. They even used to put dividers in their room to watch Hannah Montana and avoid eye contact while they were still fighting. Sometimes, Samantha, a family friend used to come over. We made 3 Youtube videos together. One of them had 269 views. It is called "Absara's Future Forecast," because my sister Absara would make drawings and predict the future with them. I was 3 years old so, I would either get yelled at by my sisters, or jump on the bed.

The day I found out we were moving was very scary. I was very nervous to leave that house because I really loved it. I'd been living there since I was born and I wanted to keep it that way. My cousins were even a floor below me! It was great. However, the movers lost **all** of my toys. All of them. I was very mad but I got new ones so I could stop crying. Moving was not as bad as I thought. I have a bigger house now, even though I have to share a room with my brother and my parents because my sisters have their own room. But, other than that, I like my new house. Especially because my dad owns it so, we get to use the backyard.

We recently got new people living in my apartment. The other person who used to live in our apartment owed us \$4,000 or \$5,000. When we all left to go to Costco, he ditched us and never paid. That is why we like the people living in our basement. They pay early or exactly on time. Never a day late. Anyways, I got used to everything when I moved to my new house. I hope it went the same way for Kayla.

*A Mysterious Past (excerpt), an exercise on simile & metaphor*

The deep secrets! I **HATE** them!!! There was so much I wanted to learn about my past, but it was too much to think about. I felt as if my mind was buzzing as fast as an angry bee. Ever since my accident, all that I knew and loved changed drastically. My state was as terrible as a mold-growing apple. I was oblivious to things that I had a right to know about like a pathetic book nerd who has no clue about the activities that go on in the world. Despite that, I was prepared for any obstacle that might come my way, no matter what it was.

*Lost, haiku series*

So mysterious—  
Coming to reality  
In a world too big

Feeling hesitant  
To meet other people  
After a long time

*An Enchanted World of Feasts (excerpt), exercise on sensory details*

Thanksgiving is a bursting bubble of food that woos all of us in for a massive explosion. Around the noisy dinner table is obnoxious clamoring and a plethora of mouthwatering delicacies. The hearty odor of steamy mashed potatoes with gravy and fancy plates full of eclairs makes it ten times more difficult to continue our lousy dinner rituals before stuffing our desperate mouths impatiently. In a joint family of sociable people, food is the foremost thought on our minds, while sitting at the jubilant dining table reserved for special occasions. All we ever think about is how to mitigate our hungry stomachs with a piece of garlicky toast, juicy beans, and rich chicken. May our growling bodies be satisfied with the smooth and buttery food.

*The Worst Day In The Universe, an interior monologue*

December 08, 2017

Dear Diary,

Something bizarre happened to me today! While I was walking down the streets of Hollywood this afternoon to attend a prestigious film audition, a bustling crowd of rowdy dogs headed towards me. When they came closer, they violently tackled me to the ground and started to bite my purse and shoes. I desperately screeched for help and frantically asked others around me to call the cops. But to my dismay, a pack of dogs assaulting someone was not important to them. To make the situation even worse, the dogs pooped on my brand new purse and high heels. I was so furious! I could not let these ferocious dogs destroy \$5,750 worth of designer accessories. I began to distract those creatures and get out of this mess. I sprayed my aromatic chamomile perfume on scraps of chewed paper from my purse and tossed it everywhere. Those dogs crazily went to get them and were found by their owner. After confronting the careless man about the damage made, he understood my rage and wrote a check for \$10,000. I ended up missing the audition because of the poop in my shoes. I cannot believe that I just lost the biggest opportunity of my life! This was officially the WORST day of my ENTIRE life!!!!!!!

With great regrets and pain, Syeda Hossain

## Tyler Imeraj

### *Story 1, short story challenge*

There once was a dictator named Jacúes Píergo, who wanted to rule all of the Western Hemisphere. However, Jacúes was ordering factories to produce the same old AR weapons that were used in the Cold War. He wanted to create a new weapon design. This weapon required the rare saliva of a jaguar, however. The closest place to find these weapon requirements was in the nearby Amazon Rainforest. So, Jacúes sent out an expedition team to recover about a few cups of saliva. This obviously involved killing the animal, and then swabbing the mouths of their corpses. Due to the importance of the assignment, Jacúes and his chief chemistry scientist, Nelson Crane, a former New Yorker that defected to the Argentinian fascist government in 1965, became a part of the experimental prototype. The project required the saliva of at least 10 jaguars in order to make just 1 weapon. At the end of the first experiment they started to develop the weapon; they named the project: "Operation Amazonia." The "weapon" was an adrenaline booster type steroid of the Argentinian army, navy, and air force. They named the weapon "WARTB" (Weaponized Adrenalized Reaction Time Booster). In a lab in southern Argentina, a case of WARTB had been lost in the jungle. When troops went out to recover it, they found a tooth next to the empty bottle that had been drunken, suspectedly by a jaguar. On the last expedition of the operation, the team didn't come back. Troops went out on a search, they heard a creak behind them, then... BOOM! A gunshot went off and blood leaked out of a dead body, again a pounce, then a scream and then... silence. The Argentinian Secret Service Militia (ASSM) enclosed the cold case as an attack of jaguars that were infected with the WARTB prototype. Jacúes Píergo, Crane, and some troops were never found again.

*The Point of View of an ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile), a concrete poem*

Why?  
Hold On  
Has it come to this?  
Up all the way here.  
You... sent me here  
Why? To... attack?  
Has it come to this?  
Really? Why???

If only you hadn't!!  
But I guess you had to!  
I have to die, a city has to die

Piercing Horrible  
Aggravatingly Insensitively



**You are You:**

*a translation of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer's "Rima XIII"*

*(in collaboration with Farhan Sadik, Labib Mahmud, & Omar Barr)*

Your eyes are blue. When you laugh  
it reminds me of your soft brightness,  
like the beautiful glow in the morning sun reflected  
by the shimmering sea, in the name of love.

**Darkness, a haiku**

The world has turned back.  
The shimmering sun darkened.  
Towards me, nature.

**My Home**

You always sleep with me.  
You have shown me the way.  
From the first ray of sunshine, you wake me up.  
From the beginning, I wished you to be with me all the way.  
I won't tolerate your madness, your wrinkled brow shuddered my body,  
But there is always an end to heaven.  
So, please understand how I feel.

**Metaphor Exercise**

What is a person to a book  
What is a person to a pyramid  
What is a person to the sky  
What is a flower to the wind  
What is a flower to the sun  
What is a flower to beyond

**Remember, a poem on memory**

I remember the day I got bullied and teased because of my color.  
I remember the day I was chosen as Student of the Month.  
I remember the day I started my own massage business.

Sumaia Jewena

***The Colors of the Rainbow, a haiku***

Now I understand  
The colors of the rainbow  
They're so beautiful

***The Rainbow, a short & skinny poem***

There it is  
A sight  
Of a  
Lifetime  
There lies  
A rainbow

***Be a Bee, a rap (in collaboration with Metok Kogyal)***

Listen to what I see.  
Be a bee.  
I see the sea.  
Look at me.  
Be a bee.  
I see that tee.  
I sting you on the knee.  
Be a bee.

***Grief & Happiness, a poem on memory***

I remember the first time I laughed, that joke was really funny.  
I remember the first time I cried, I couldn't get that chocolate bar.  
I remember when I fell out of that apple tree, I remember it being thousands of feet high.  
I remember that day in the hospital, when I scraped my knee.  
I remember my first time on a roller coaster, the ride was scary and life changing.  
I remember the only time I saw my mom laugh, I tripped and spilled soda on me.  
I remember the only time I saw my dad cry, he was late for work.  
I remember the day my brother was born.  
I remember that same day my sister passed away.

***RUNNING FROM THE LOCH NESS IN CANADA, SHORT STORY CHALLENGE***

MY NAME IS BILLY AND I'M CURRENTLY RUNNING AWAY FROM THE LOCH NESS MONSTER. AT LEAST THE MONSTER LOOKED LIKE THE LOCH NESS. JUST DON'T QUESTION THE SCIENCE OF THIS SITUATION. I WILL TELL YOU ABOUT HOW I ENDED UP IN THIS NIGHTMARE. IT ALL STARTED WHEN THERE WAS A RUMOR THAT THE LOCH NESS MONSTER WAS AT NIAGARA FALLS. AS A NEW SCIENTIST, I WAS SENT BY MY COMPANY TO CHECK THE VALIDITY OF THIS RUMOR. I WAS HAVING SO MUCH FUN! UNTIL ONE OF THE ROVS LOST CONNECTION. I TRIED PICKING IT UP USING THE CONNECTION CABLE, BUT I FELL IN THE WATER. I WAS ABOUT TO DROWN UNTIL SOMETHING SCALY HELPED SURFACE ME. AND THERE IT WAS IN ALL ITS GLORY. I TRIED TO SNAP A PICTURE WITH A REUSABLE CAMERA, BUT IT REALIZED THAT I HAD A CAMERA AND STARTED CHASING ME. I SWAM TO THE EDGE AND GOT HELPED UP BY MY SCIENTIST BUDDIES. I THOUGHT I WAS SAFE UNTIL I SAW THAT THE MONSTER WAS MOBILE ON LAND. THEN WE ALL STARTED RUNNING. AND THAT'S HOW I ENDED UP LIKE THIS.

***FOOD, AN EXERCISE ON WORD PLAY***

IS THERE FOOD?

FOOD IS FOOD.

FOOD IS THE BEST TYPE OF FOOD.

FOOD IS FOOD.

***BILLY, AN EXERCISE ON WORD PLAY***

BILLY THE BEER BOTTLE WAS BICKERING ABOUT BENJAMIN THE BLUE BOTTLE, WHO WAS BOOING THOMAS THE BLUE TRAIN, WHO WAS HAVING A BALL WITH A BLACK BOMB THAT JUST WENT BOOM.

***I REMEMBER, A POEM ON MEMORY***

I REMEMBER THE DAY WHEN I FOUND A HELICOPTER STUCK IN A TREE IN THE FRONT YARD.

I REMEMBER HOW THERE WAS SO MUCH STRESS WITH GETTING IT DOWN.

I REMEMBER THAT I SAID "YOU'RE WELCOME" TO A THANK YOU.

I REMEMBER HOW I THOUGHT CATS COULD KNOCK EVERYTHING OFF THE PLANET AS IF THE PLANET WAS A TABLE AND WE WERE A BALL OF YARN.

I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME INVESTING IN DOGECOIN.

I REMEMBER HOW PEOPLE WOULD CARE FOR ME EVEN AFTER A PAPER CUT.

I REMEMBER WHEN MY CAT DIED.

## Metok Kogyal

### *Backbiting Thought, a story told in unconventional form*

#### Mom's Favorite Homemade Mug Cake Recipe:

##### Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon butter, softened
- 4 tablespoons milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

Poison?

##### Instructions:

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Pour into a large cup.
3. Microwave for 90 seconds.
4. Drizzle the poison over the mug cake and let it settle for a minute or two.

To: Elm Street Graveyard, Barbara Duncan's Grave

From: Elm Street 23-17

Dear Mom,

8 - 06 - 09

I don't know what I'm going to do. Why did you have to leave? I don't understand. I'm left to my own choices. This world is a very cruel place.

-Amelia Duncan

Mom, I'm going to do it tonight. I'm sorry. I just don't know how to deal with it. I'll be by your side. See you soon.



"We dedicate our time and memories to our good friend. Think back, to the fond and treasured moments you made with her. The grief she dealt with later on was enough to drive her mad. She wouldn't want the same thing to happen to us. Let us move on, yet remember her."

- Excerpt from Amelia Duncan's friend, spoken at Amelia Duncan's Funeral Reception (2009)

#### *The Veil, a haiku*

Look at me and smile  
Wrapped up in a silly joke  
Trying to get out

#### *Ode to Life*

Reality as I know it  
Gave birth to the world  
Every spark of hope, fear  
Is felt by you  
Love is just a game to you  
Reality as I know it

***I Remember the Devastating Phone Call, a personal essay***

The air conditioner was loud and half working. The rat-tat-tating of the machine filled the room. My brother and I were playing video games in a battle against boredom. We were the only ones in the house when we heard the phone ring. Hesitantly, I picked it up to hear the voice of my mom. In a calming tone, she explained to me that my grandma was dead. My heart anchored my whole body. The once annoying AC was completely zoned out. I was overwhelmed with a wave of sadness and shock. I hung up but didn't cry or make a scene. I just sat there and sucked it up.

***Hometown, New York, a haiku***

Grey jungle, hot mess  
Sweat flowing down, never sleeps  
Lights, camera, home

***Nature***

Fog on trees  
White  
Calm, green  
Life  
Death  
Perfectly imperfect

***Sadness, a blues poem***

If there is no heaven or hell  
If there is no heaven or hell  
What is the point of being in this cell

Sorrow has no end  
Sorrow has no end  
And happiness never began

Labib Mahmud

## *A Man's Soul, a blues poem*

I came to Earth for a reason,  
No I did not commit treason,  
Just let me live before I die.

Tell me what have I done,  
Just tell me what I have done,  
What have I done for the Earth?

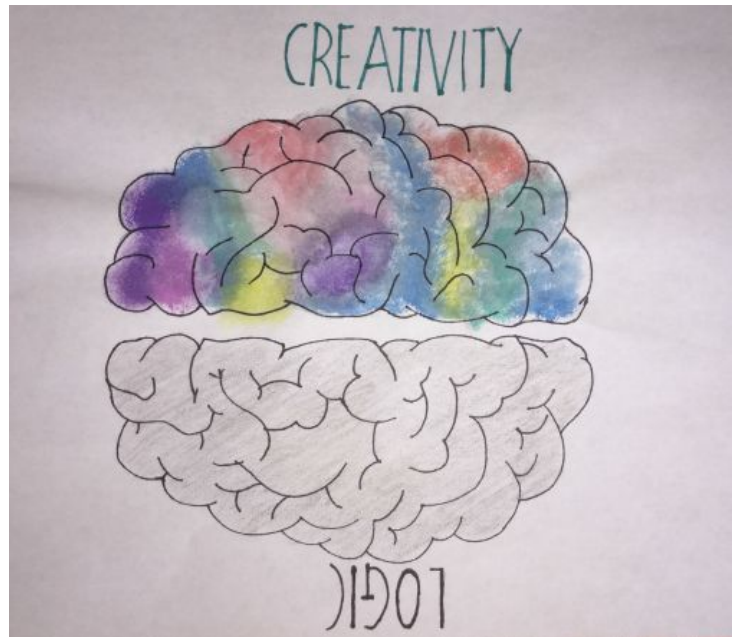
Oh let me fulfill your wishes,  
Just let me fulfill your wishes,  
I will do anything for you.

Before I go, let me tell the world what injustice is,  
Just let me tell the world what injustice is,  
Let all people know what harshness is.

## *Stalking Someone, haiku series*

Out from the forest  
The gazelle munches on grass  
What will happen next?

The mean leopard stalks  
He will eat you and someone  
Will he hunt you down?



## ***Weak to Wise, short story challenge***

One day, a dictator named Bob Bum Boom was in a hurry to get to a meeting with some ambassadors from the American army. His wife drove the car to work, so Bob decided to take the subway. The subway car that he hesitantly entered had an exceeding amount of people inside of it. Since he was the dictator of the country, Bob foolishly decided that he would yell at everyone in the car and make them get off.

At that moment, a wise old man came near Bob Bum Boom and told him that anger would not solve the problem. He clearly saw that Bob Bum Boom was starting to get agitated. The wise old man disappeared, but not before saying, “Remember.” That word, *remember*, told Bob that he was doing the wrong thing. Bob Bum Boom immediately thought about not yelling at people. He realized that crowding is normal and that he would get nowhere by yelling. In the end, Bob Bum Boom got to his meeting and had a good rest of the day.

## ***You Won't Stop Him, an ode***

Scurrying on his way  
Irrelevant to the speed of light  
Needs all the time in the world  
Like a flock of birds  
Just not quite there  
Small  
But tough  
Left the hare  
No interest in despair  
Reached the beach

Then reached the shore  
With the loving  
And the hatred  
But has no time to whine  
Things have gone  
All wrong  
His life was not eternal  
But not  
Short at all  
He has fallen  
Deep in it  
His last words....  
“Goodbye Forever”

**Athena Mamakos**

*Rima XIII Redone, a translation of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer's "Rima XIII"*

Your eyes are blue  
like the ocean breeze  
and when you laugh  
their soft clarity  
reminds me  
of the tremendous sight  
of the morning breeze  
the sea reflects its waters  
upon me.

## **FRUIT**

Strawberries red  
Oranges orange  
Bananas yellow  
Kiwi green  
Blueberries blue  
Plums purple  
Dragon Fruit pink  
You are all the colors  
of my rainbow  
fruit





***Instrument for Thought***

*(an ode)*

I reach for  
Your cold, hard form,  
The light reflecting on  
Your smooth, glossy surface.

And with just one click  
My mind can flow onto paper.

My unorganized thoughts,  
Ordered and filed,  
Ready to be written,  
To be shared with  
Something other than  
my own cluttered brain.

But there's been a mistake;  
A misspelling;  
A grammatical error;  
A flaw in the story.

For just a moment  
It seems to fall apart.  
*Click.*  
But you will rebuild.

*Click.*  
Again, the thoughts  
Become rearranged,  
Made to fit in with this blunder.  
My grip becomes stronger.

In the end,  
You have laid out  
My thoughts artfully.  
The flaw?

Just another part  
Of a masterpiece.

And it was all done  
With you,  
A humble pen;  
My instrument of thought.

***I remember...***

*(a poem on memory)*

I remember walking into a huge school  
cafeteria, dazed by the noise and scale of  
the room.

I remember a kind voice asking, "What's  
your name?"

I remember whispering my name. I  
must've repeated it at least three times to  
be anywhere near audible.

I remember being bashful around all of  
the unfamiliar faces and sounds.

I remember wanting to initiate  
conversations, but not knowing how.

I remember, much more recently, entering  
another unfamiliar (and noisy) school.

I remember, like before, not quite knowing  
what to do or how to act.

I remember, *unlike* before, being able to  
speak my name aloud.

I remember being bashful around all the  
unfamiliar faces and sounds.

I remember trying to initiate  
conversations. Awkward, but a start.

I remember slowly getting closer to each  
person.

I remember not wanting to leave them.

I remember knowing that I'd have to leave  
them.

**Aqil Rahim**

***MY DEAD FISCHER, a blues poem***

Oh Joy! Oh Joy!  
Why did you leave me?  
Joy! Joy!  
Did you leave me?  
You fell to the floor  
As I came, just to see...

I picked you up quickly  
But not enough to save you  
Picked you up quickly  
Not enough to save you  
Your face was deathly  
And you looked rather sickly...

With you in my hands  
I ran to the sink  
You in my hands  
Ran to the sink  
When I stared at your face  
I knew we were at the end, close to the brink...

I stared at the ground  
And walked outside  
Stared at the ground  
Walked outside  
And announced to the world  
That my pet Fischer has died

I looked to the sky  
Ever so slightly  
Looked to the sky  
So slightly  
And asked dear God  
Why this had to be?

Why Oh Why  
Did I do something wrong?  
My fish, don't leave me!  
Now the whole world can see...

*When the Cure Came In (excerpt), an exercise on sensory details*

The scent of tangerines has always reminded me of funerals. So when I wake up to the scent, I instinctively cringe. I look at the small, navy, digital clock on my desk that reads 6:00 A.M. The sky is a pale morning blue, the sunlight barely extending along the walls of my bedroom. I get up and head to the bathroom to take a shower. As I stare at the unfamiliar reflection looking up at me, I notice I have shadows under my eyes from the long, sleepless nights.

When I finish getting dressed I head toward the kitchen for a quick snack. My brother and his best friend Cameron are already at the table talking about some baseball game they had seen earlier.

“Hey,” I say, as I begin to peel a mango, unwinding long bright orange curls, the whole time trying to hold my breath against the smell of the tangerines my brother was chewing. They watch me in silence. When I’m finished, I go sit down and try to ignore them. But it’s no use. I finally hear them murmur something along the lines of “Good Morning” under their breaths. I know they’re worried that after the procedure I’ll change, but I won’t.

“You know, it would be a lot easier if you would speak to me before I leave,” I said nudging my brother. I love my brother, and I know he loves me too. He’s just mad that I will turn out to be like mom, abandoning her family, leaving us like she had every right too. Grace, our mom, is dead now. She always said she never wanted children in the first place. That’s one of the downsides of the procedure; in the absence of insanities and fantasies, some people find parenting distasteful. Thankfully, these cases of full-blown detachment are few.

Before going to school, I return to my bedroom to check everything. It will be humid today. It’s already warm in my bedroom, and when I open the windows to clear out the smell of the tangerines, the air outside appears thick and dense. I take in the air, inhaling the clean fragrance of seaweed and damp wood, listening to the far-off squawks of the seagulls as they rotate endlessly, beyond the flat, pale, sloping structures, over the bay. Outside, a car engine honks suddenly. The sound startles me, and I jump.

“Ready?” I turn around. My aunt Tessa is standing in the doorway, her hands folded.

“Yeah,” I say, though this is a lie.

She smiles, just barely, a brief, temporary thing. “Don’t worry. You’ll be fine. We can review for the exam along the way.”

**Farhan Sadik**

***Dear Pizza, an ode***

Your cheesy suit  
That feels perfect in my mouth  
With your splendid shape  
Looking like you're pointing  
Straight at me  
Wanting to be eaten

Your crust feels so smooth  
In my hands  
And you smell like heaven  
There's nothing like it

The tomato sauce  
Joins with my blood  
And your accessories  
Look equally as gorgeous  
And taste like I'm  
In Nirvana

***Getting Back A Test, a blues poem***

My heart was racing  
My heart was racing  
It might be chasing

A hand comes near  
A hand comes near  
Hopefully it is sincere

I take a glance  
I take a glance  
It was not something for a dance

Test was like a rat  
Test was like a rat  
I wish I had a bat

***Stuck in A Crowd, a haiku***

The tall giants rose  
They were everywhere  
It was a forest



**~Cry You May~**

*(a blues poem)*

Oh, the pain of knowing something or someone is going  
Oh, the pain of knowing something or someone is going  
But is it showing?

You can never be sure  
You can never be sure  
I know that you will wish they could stay a little more

It's really not easy  
It's really not easy  
Simple it's not, but why would you expect it to be breezy?

You will want them back  
You will want them back  
Even if it means that you will have to run three laps

All the love you cherished will go down the drain  
All the love you cherished will go down the drain  
I told you that you would expect your efforts to end in vain

After all my experience with this  
After all my experience with this  
You could only wish to remember that last kiss

Cry you may  
Cry you may  
I know it is hard to keep those feelings at bay

I assure you that you will learn to cope  
I assure you that you will learn to cope  
But you will be hit with the paranoia of wondering what would have happened if you got them  
quicker to the doctor's stethoscope

Now I must go  
Now I must go  
I hope I got my point across, so...

# Sayjel Tan

*Ice Cream for Life, a personal essay*

I rush out the door pushing everyone out of my path.

There, I see it.

The glorious ice cream cart seems to BEAM! But , a long line stands behind it. I drag my feet to the end of the line, my best friend following.

Every step I take just makes the cart seem farther and farther. The smell of blue raspberry, cotton candy, vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, and cookies & cream inches away.

Untilllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll,

The ice cream cart was right in front of me. I look at the variety of flavors eager to get started on them. I shove my money towards the server and quickly chose my 2 scoops of ice cream: raspberry and cotton candy, the two smells that my nose had chosen for me.

As I finally take the cone into my very own hands,

I feel the bumpy texture as I run my finger down the cone,

The creamy mixture dripping down my whole hand,

I can already feel the ice cream melting in my mouth.

I open my mouth to take my first lick of the first scoop, cotton candy. The bright neon blue seems to contrast with the dark pink as the ice cream sparkles,

But,

In less than a second, it is out of my hands.

I feel as if I've been punched in the stomach.

The ice cream was there in my hands,

BUT IT WAS CERTAINLY NOT IN MY MOUTH!

I turn around in rage to see who ruined this perfectly good day. But as I turn around, I knock my best friend's ice cream out of her hands.

Now we both look like roasting red tomatoes on a hot summer day.

I sulk and moan as my scoops of ice cream lay on the grass.

By now, it could have been in my mouth,

But it is not.

I know my friend is thinking the same thing, so I tip-toe away silently.

At the end of the day, I walk away from school with nothing to satisfy me, but that's okay because I can get one another day!

*THE COOKIE CANNIBAL, an exercise on creating character*

Today, the most amazing thing happened to me. A whole group of unsuspecting cookies were standing close by and mmm... they smelled delicious. Creeping up slowly, I got ready for my snack. And then I leaped and bit one of the cookies. The rest of them were too busy screaming their heads off to help their bitten friend, so I finished the job and ate the rest of the cookie. The rest of them were easy to devour because they were too paralyzed by fear to run away from me. They were probably surprised that one of their own kind, a cookie, would eat them. That's what most of my victims think. After devouring every last cookie in the group, I still wanted more.

Despite the fact that I am a cookie, I love eating them. Some of the cookies call me a cannibal, but I don't think I am one. I simply like the taste of cookies and I am always hungry. According to them, they saw me when I was asleep, getting stuffed in the face with some of my own kind. After that, the only thing I ate was cookies. I still can't figure out why I never got tired of eating cookies, but it never gets old seeing the reaction of other cookies when they see their family and friends getting eaten.

I've heard from many of the cookies I eat that apparently there is a whole city of cookies located at a place called CookieVille. Despite my failing efforts to find this location before, I continued roaming around to see if I could find CookieVille, preferably by the end of today. I looked really far away and then I saw it; I saw CookieVille. I raced over to the city and saw these massive buildings in the distance. I could not see what they were made of but I smelled so many cookies. When I got closer to CookieVille, I must have set off an alarm because suddenly, a huge siren turned on and was wailing "Intruder! Intruder!" After hearing that, I saw a massive cookie flying towards me. When it got closer to me, it said "Cookie Bomb!" and that was the last thing I saw.

THE END

Ioanna Todaro

*And Then There Was That, a personal essay*

It was the hot, everlasting summer of the year 2008. To me, it was just another one of those August days where I didn't want to walk barefoot on the sidewalk. To my parents, it was one of the funniest days of their lives. I don't get why, but it is what it is.

It was a little after ten in the morning when we woke up. At that time, it was just my parents and me in an old, two-story house that trapped heat like a Venus Flytrap traps flies. It was undeniable, the heat inside our old house. It made the air seemingly shimmer above the windowsills, and it would cause the air inside my bedroom to blur in every nook and cranny.

After a short, humid breakfast, my father left for work, complaining about the heat inside and out. "The black roof doesn't make anything better," he would say every two or three minutes. With a sigh, he stepped out into the sunshine and closed the door behind him. In those last few moments, with the rays of light beaming into the hallway before he shut the door, I tried to eat the sunlight filtering through.

My mother and I stayed inside for some time, playing with foam building blocks and reading my collection of hardcover baby books. Eventually, we headed downstairs, where my mother turned on the TV and put on *Curious George*. I watched in immense fascination, until the TV shut off with a *click*. My mother had turned it off and begun walking to the front door. I followed her, wondering why she had turned it off and why she was walking out into the hot sunlight. I warily noticed she had on sandals, and my feet were bare.

She sat down on the wooden rocking chair and waited for me to toddle into her lap. I was about to reach out and say *opa*, which sort-of means "lift," when my eye caught the coffee table and its giant stack of somethings. I didn't know what they were. I had never seen them before.

"Do you like them?" my mother asked. "They're magazines."

The word rolled around my tongue. I stared at them without blinking. This was the first moment I had seen something other than a hardcover book for babies.

My mother withdrew a magazine from the middle of the pile, and I immediately ripped it out of her hands. I sat right there, on the hot wooden porch, and opened the magazine, looking intensely at every single bright picture. I would occasionally point at some of them and mindlessly babble.

It was a long time before I wanted to go inside. My father finished his shift around the time I went inside. It was six in the afternoon. After I finished the iced tea my mother gave me, I decided to crawl up the carpeted stairs to my parents' room, where my mother's closet door was cracked open slightly.

Inside, there were plenty of shoes and dresses and—to my delight—magazines stacked neatly in a corner. I pulled one out and looked at the cover. There was a model on the front wearing a long blue dress and red shoes. I dug around until I found a pair of red heels and a long, sky-blue skirt that would probably fit if I pulled it high enough. I did pull, until the waste-band was loosely around my shoulders. It still dragged a little bit on the floor, but it was better than my arms thought they could accomplish. I then attempted to put on the red heels, which barely fit. If I dragged my feet, with the help of the lining of the bed, I would be able to walk. I began to clomp around as best as I could, occasionally stopping to catch my breath.

I didn't hear my mother and my father coming up the stairs, opening the door, or coming in. I didn't notice until I turned around to find my father with a video camera in his hands and a smile on his face. My mother was right behind him, laughing quietly, her body shaking.

I looked at them and quickly hid under the bed. I heard their laughter grow audible. I sat under the bed, thinking of what to do. And then, my light-bulb clicked.

I crawled out, pointed my finger at them, and mouthed nonsense. They just laughed harder as I attempted to scold them. After some time, they stopped and hugged me. I was stiff and confused.

What was so funny?



***The Soccer Game***, a personal essay

I was a bit young, third, maybe second grade. I was on the same soccer team that I am still on now, except that it was probably my fifth or sixth season. Honestly, I really have no interest in soccer—I just like hanging out with my friends.

It was a very rainy day. In fact, it was pouring outside. I thought, actually hoped, that the game would be cancelled. It was not. Oh well. The coach, whichever one it was, put me up front as usual. I was pretty bad at soccer, so I would usually chase the ball and pray that the coach took me out of the game as soon as possible. This particular game was a nasty one because everyone kept falling and sliding in the mud. It wasn't really an important game, and we were already winning by two goals or something. We were nearing the end, so the coach decided to put me in again for the last few minutes of the game.

I ran around for a little bit. I just wanted the game to be finished. Eventually, our team got the ball and one of our good players started dribbling down the field. I kept running along with the ball, and soon enough, I was right by the goal. The kid who had the ball passed it to me, and I just tapped the ball into the corner of the net from the point-blank range. It was my first contribution to the team, but I really didn't care about it one way or the other—I was just glad to get out of the rain.

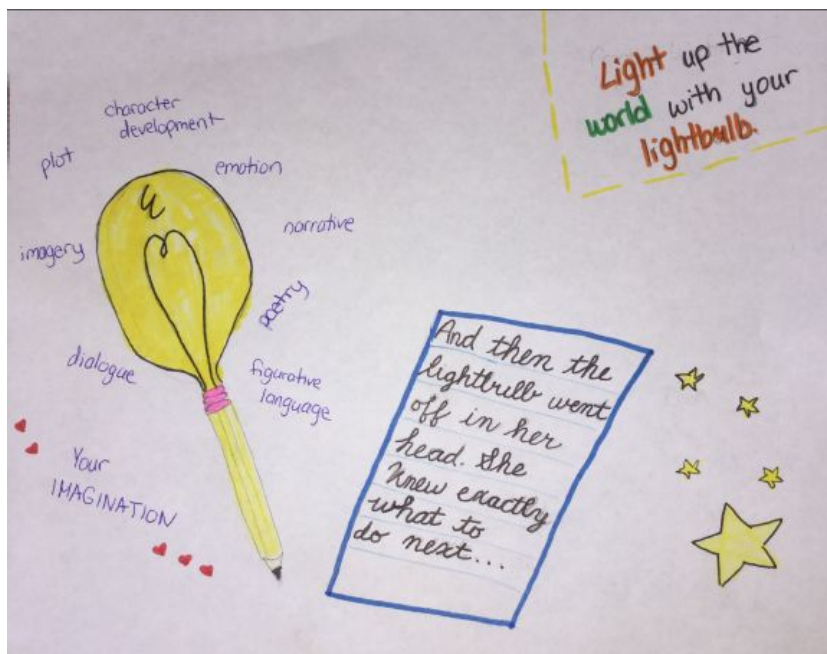
# **Section IV:**

## **Class 504**

## Fortnite Rap

My mom called me  
Right away I said I'm coming  
But I was never on my way  
My pump, its pumping  
It's a fiction addiction  
A win is my mission  
John Wick is superstitious  
RPG, and the scar  
Man was on top of car  
Elimination, no scope  
This is the time, no time to elope  
See movement, give my team the coordinates  
Not too good, did not push  
Got em' sniped  
Got me hyped  
One hit to me from behind  
Built a wall  
Then I fall

Built a staircase  
Jump up, turn around  
He died, yes I scarred him out  
5 people left, circle in the west  
Storm coming after me, I'm just a foot away  
Damage, med kit  
Video games, no need to be fit  
Killed a guy, and another  
Team died, not together  
Sniped a guy, 1v1  
I don't wanna go to court  
So I placed a port-a-fort  
In war with John Wick  
60 damage  
Then I get rocket launched, death  
Next match, I play day and night  
Llama in sight  
The plug is real, Fortnite



**Samia Ahmed**

***MONEY, A HAIKU***

One who has it all  
Can only use it for life  
But not for happiness.

***TODAY'S REALITY, A FREE WRITE ON A PHOTOGRAPH***

Pictures are worth a million words.  
Effort shows your pride.  
Confidence shows your strength.  
Without these things,  
You can break.

***COMPETITION***

One who tries too hard  
Only makes a mess  
One who doesn't try at all  
Can't go anywhere  
So which way do I go?

***THE PAST, A POEM ON MEMORY***

I remember when there were no screens.  
I remember when there was a blur.  
I remember when there was no scene.  
But that was before.

***MISTAKES***

One who makes mistakes,  
And doesn't want to erase it,  
Won't make the same mistakes again.

***Helpful Haiku***

Here is a haiku  
There's seven syllables here  
And there is five here

***Summer Bummer, a rap***

I wanna go swimming  
everyday.  
I really hate mosquitoes  
but they won't go away.  
A summer reading packet?  
To that I say:  
"No way!"  
I love the summer,  
but it truly is a bummer.  
I have Prep for Prep.  
I gotta take an extra step,  
to do this boring work  
in classes where I lurk.  
I'm studying,  
on the grind.  
Overworking my mind.  
Answers I must find.  
Studying is a must,  
in SparkNotes we all trust.  
Good grades is what I lust.  
I just wanna succeed.  
Finishing annotations in lightning speed.  
A calculator I need,  
doing math all night.  
Getting no sleep,  
when I joined this program I said goodbye to counting sheep.  
Education ain't cheap,  
I'm not talking about money.  
Lack of sleep isn't funny,  
I wanna take a nap,  
but instead I made this rap.

Mohamed Amechtak

***Memories—The story of a child who remembers the World Wars:***

*a poem on memory*

I remember the year 1914  
I remember the Serb shooting the Archduke of the Austro-Hungarian Empire  
I remember the Declaration of War  
I remember Russia intervening to help Serbia  
I remember Germany helping Austria-Hungary  
I remember France and England intervening to fight Germany  
I remember the Ottomans helping Austria-Hungary  
I remember the Entente  
I remember the Central Powers  
I remember my father injuring his arm in an air raid  
I remember us moving to Switzerland  
I remember the year 1917  
I remember my father on that U-Boat that attacked US merchant ships  
I remember the Soviets uniting under communism  
I remember the year 1918  
I remember my father surrendering to Britain...  
I remember the period of peace  
I remember the Stock Market Crash of 1929  
I remember the rise of Hitler  
I remember the Annexation of Czechoslovakia and Austria  
I remember the Italians and Japanese siding with us  
I remember the Axis and the Allies  
I remember my father going to fight the French and British  
I remember leaving at night and going to London  
I remember enlisting in the British Army  
I remember not making the same mistake my father had  
I remember seeing him in Paris  
I remember aiming the gun  
I remember looking away with tears in my eyes  
**I remember pulling the trigger**

***Ode to Summer***

Summer sets me free  
Let's me be who I want to be  
Puts my uniform on a rack  
Breaks me free of the shackles of my backpack  
During that time, I won't go to school  
For if I do, I am surely a fool

***My Strawberries, a blues poem***

I need food  
I need food  
I'm in a bad mood

The fridge is so cold  
The fridge is so cold  
Thank God the strawberries have no mold

I can't eat anymore I'm done with food  
I can't eat anymore I'm done with food  
Now I'm in a better mood

***Fruit is good too, a blues poem***

You don't like cake?  
You don't like cake?  
There's something wrong with you

I can't live without cake  
I can't live without cake  
Literally, I would die without my cake

Yes I love cake  
Yes I love cake  
However, I really love fruit too

**Sophia Chan**

***I Remember***, a personal essay with photo, below

I remember when I was younger. My feet hovered above the dark blue carpet stairs, as I rushed down to help my grandfather with the laundry. We stood in silence together, taking down one fresh white sheet after the other. You could smell Tide from a mile away.

That's the day everything changed. It was later in the day, on a Thursday. The ambulance rushed towards my block and into my house. Most of my family had left in the ambulance, while me and my brothers sat close together, crying until they got back. I hoped my grandfather would be ok. But little did I know, I was wrong.

Now, more than a year later, I still cry about the day everything changed, while I stand alone folding crisp white sheets of laundry. As the smell of Tide fades away.

***I Wish I Could Go Back***, a blues poem

Down the dark lane  
Down the dark lane  
It began to rain

There was nothing I could do  
There was nothing I could do  
To prevent myself from stepping in that glue

I couldn't go back  
I couldn't go back  
To change my track

Now I'm stuck  
Now I'm stuck  
With this guck



*(Sophia's grandfather before he passed away)*



***The Journal of Sarah Cohen: An Ordinary Girl, an interior monologue***

I don't know who I am. I don't know my name. I don't remember what happened that day. My mind is bombarded with various thoughts, which I want to spill out. But, I don't know where to start. The only thing I remember is that I was in one of the two tall towers located on the East side of Manhattan with my dad, and my best friend, who apparently moved to California. When I look at myself in the mirror, I often get scared. I wonder what happened. My eyes are not the same and I have scars all over. When I ask my parents what happened to my 10-year-old face, they only reply with the same phrase, "You got hurt very often, you were always falling." Although, I do get small hints of the accident. *Fire*. Why do I have such horrendous memories with fire?

Since then my body has recovered from my accident, except for my face. My parents keep on bugging me to go back to school. They say that I need to face my fears and show my true beauty to everyone. My birthday was just a few days ago, which means that now I am 11. I listen to my parents, I will have to attend middle school, the place where children get bullied the most. I will get made fun of everyday in the 3 years I am going to spend there. After listening to my mom's boring lecture on how I will be able to make new friends, my head starts to spin. I trudge upstairs to my room to get some rest, and think about the proposal my parents mentioned to me all evening. I go downstairs to talk to my dad about my decision.

"I am ready to go to school," I say looking all confident from the outside, but regretting what I just said inside. The next morning, I go to buy supplies for my first day of torture, aka school. As usual, I brought my favorite, pink shiny backpack from 3rd grade to my first day of 6th grade.

**THE FIRST DAY OF TORTURE!**

As I walked through the long hallways of Anderson Middle School, I received a lot of glares, which would often scare me. I knew at that moment that it would be very hard to make friends because of the most terrifying feature of my body, my face. I HATE MY FACE. It was a barrier between my "friends" and me. It was the part of my body that stood out the most.

I finally reached my first class, in which I received twice as many creepy looks. "The bullying session has begun," I repeated in my head. I was a quiet girl in a unknown school with no friends.

**A FEW DAYS LATER...**

I was now remembering my childhood memories. Soon, I would be able to recall the dreaded accident that occurred that day... One afternoon, I was playing my favorite card game, Go Fish, with my family. Suddenly, I was hit with a burst of memories. My head was spinning and I fell unconscious... When I woke up, I remembered that day was September 11, 2001. My father and friend escaped, but I was stuck in the burning flames.

**Wilson Duong**

## ***I Remember...***

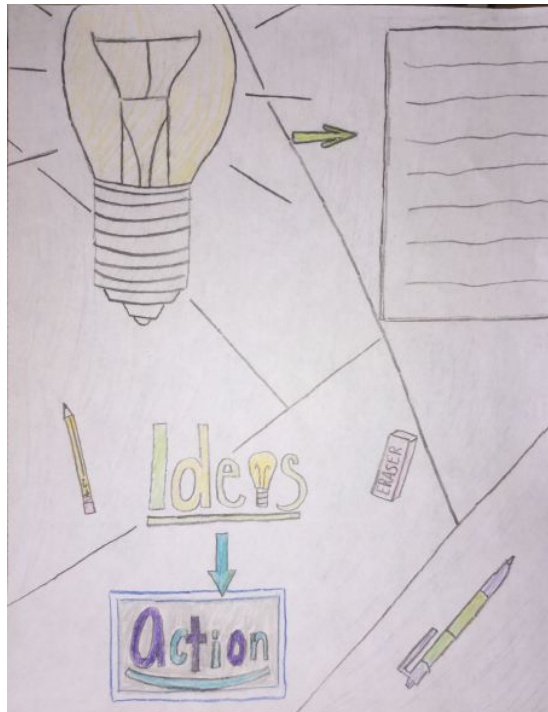
*poems on memory*

**Me:**

I remember I was young,  
I remember I was done,  
I remember I was wrong,  
I remember I was gone,  
I remember when everything went wrong,  
I remember when I took off...  
I remember I never saw the light of day again.

**My brother:**

I remember my brother,  
I remember we would have fights,  
I remember when we would try to have fun,  
I remember when I was all done,  
I remember we would then play games,  
I remember how we would stay up late to watch the night sky howl in anger.



## ***Fallen — A Story Through Texts***

~~~Jimmy O'Loker is now online

Jacob: Hey Jimmy.

Jimmy: Hey Jacob.

Jacob: I heard about what happened, I'm so sorry.

Jimmy: Don't apologize!

Jacob: What?!

Jimmy: You apologize for everything even when it's not your fault!

Jacob: Sorry, I can't control it.

Jimmy: You did it again!

Jacob: Sor~~I mean..... just come home.

Jacob: Mom and dad miss you. There is nothing left for you there.

Jimmy: I can't leave, not yet.

Jacob: Why not?

Jimmy: You wouldn't understand.

Jacob: Please, come home.

Jimmy: Goodbye.

Jacob: NO, WAIT!

~~~Jimmy O'Loker is now offline

Jacob: UGH!

~~~ Jacob O'Loker is now offline

~~~Jimmy O'Loker is now online

Jimmy: I'm so sorry Jacob.

Jimmy: Goodbye.

~~~Jimmy O'Loker is now offline

~~~~~**Bang!**~~~~~

## ***Haiku of Peace***

A bark for a bite.

Just a bullet for a life.

A hug ends it all.

**Eleanor Fan**

***Legend***, a short & skinny poem

Legend has it  
That George  
Cut down a  
Cherry tree.

But do  
You  
Think it's  
Really true?

***Earth***, a haiku

The cold moon looks down  
On a green and blue planet  
The wonderful Earth

***I Remember***, a poem on memory

I remember my parents leaving me in charge. My brother wouldn't listen.  
I remember the stomach flu. I stayed home all day.  
I remember reading all day.  
I remember *Dora*. Her singing backpack was annoying.  
I remember the cat scratching me. I only tried to pet it.  
I remember my grandma trying to wash the cat. It later sat in my lap for the first time.  
I remember being scared of dogs.  
I remember my first stuffed animal.  
I remember going to see the Brooklyn Cyclones.  
I remember camping.  
I remember summer. The mosquitos were, and still are, awful.  
I remember trying to crochet.  
I remember Din Tai Fung. They made the best soup dumplings.

*SUMMER, A HAIKU*

The sun shining bright  
Playing like there is no end  
My favorite season

*NEW YORK, A HAIKU*

Big city with bright lights  
My forever, loving home  
Irreplaceable

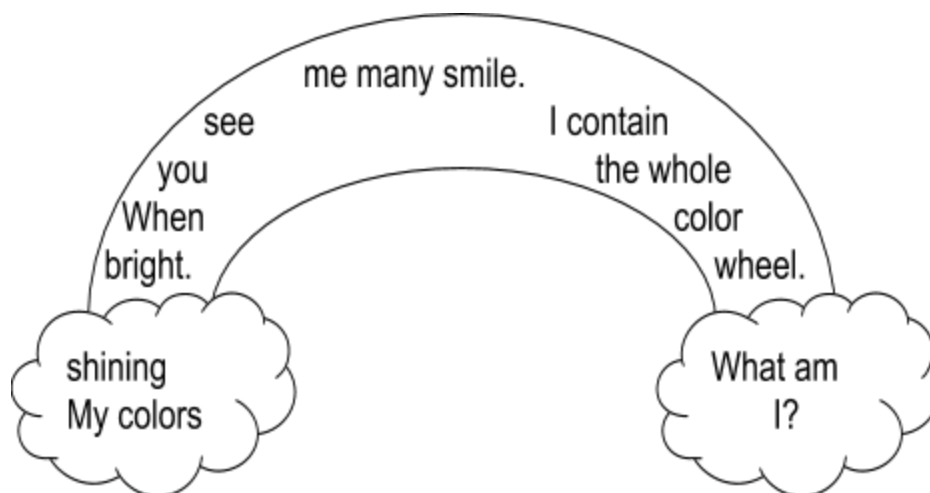
*ODE TO NUTELLA*

In your jar  
So glossy and shiny  
Though not the most  
Appetizing color  
You make me and many feel

Otherwise  
With your chocolatey goodness  
Wafting towards my face  
Even a mile away with  
A hint of a nutty hazelnut flavor  
I will always love

*BEAUTIFUL EARTH: RAINBOW*

*A CONCRETE POEM*



*Into the Diary of Max Mayfield, an interior monologue*

What I'm doing, I don't know. What I want to be doing, I don't know. My life is what you call a hot mess. I move a lot due to my mom's job and everywhere we go usually feels the same, quiet and lonely. We actually moved here because of my mom's remarriage. Although, here in Hawkins, everything feels different. I think I actually made friends, for the first time. I'm a pretty quiet person; sure I have a plethora of thoughts in my head but, saying them all out loud has never worked for me.

Let's talk about my new family now. I HATE THEM! My step-dad keeps telling my step-brother, Billy that he's in charge of me. Billy is the worst brother ever. He is forced to drop me off and pick me up from school. He does it, but if I am even a minute late he'll drive off or torture me in some way. A few days ago when I snuck out of the house, Billy was forced to drive around looking for me. I don't know how he found me, but when he did, he was furious. That's all for my family right now. I'll keep you updated.

My new friends are pretty cool though. It all started when I realized they were stalking me. I think I understand why though. A few days ago I stumbled across an arcade with this game, *Dig Dug*, which I loved to play as a little kid. I beat the high score under the name MADMAX. Later that week, I was dropped off at Hawkins Middle School by my step-brother, Billy, for my first day. I was introduced to my new class by Mr. Clarke. After school, Dustin, Lucas, Mike, and Will followed and watched me while I was skateboarding. I noticed and left a note for them that read "Stop Spying on Me! Creeps!" Since then, we've talked and they're pretty cool people. Lucas and Dustin invited me to go trick-or-treating with them without consulting Mike. When I joined them on Halloween, Mike was upset about my presence, which was pretty awkward. The next day at school Dustin included me in the group when he showed us a new creature he had found – a pollywog-like creature Dustin had called D'Artagnan. When the boys started to discuss that the creature could be related to the Upside Down, which I still don't know about, they refused to tell me about the events that occurred in the previous year and asked me to leave the room.

D'Artagnan later escaped and I tried to help them find the creature. I later met Mike in the gym where I confronted him about not being included in the group. I was tired of being excluded from certain information. Later on Lucas met me at the arcade. He told me about The Demogorgon and I swore not to tell anyone. I obviously did not believe Lucas' story, I mean it was ridiculous. Later, Lucas arrived at my house to show me proof of his story. I just don't understand how this is all possible.

***The Land***, haiku series

The big land is green  
The big crust is bountiful  
The land is so vast

The uses of land  
Give us tasty vegetables  
Give us life's big hope

Times it is misused  
It sparks the flame of war  
People are displaced

Land can be useless  
Land can invite the worst greed  
That can destroy the world

There comes compassion  
That helps the race of the man  
Greed shall die in flames

Saves the noble world  
No more military pride  
Saves the hopeful land

No more flames ignite  
Water extinguishes it  
No cheap wars indeed

The uses of land  
The uses of the brown soil  
Shall be used indeed



**Ella Hoffman**

***Rise UP, a rap***

Listen to us  
Can't you see  
We will never be  
A democracy  
Without  
New voices  
Young voices  
Survivor voices  
Our stories need to be told  
Your stories need to be told  
Before they get old  
Yellin', embellishin' and crackin', oh  
Protest

**RISE UP**

***Writer's Block, a rap***

Damn  
Stoppin' creative tides  
No imagination  
To support  
Our fragile nation  
Can't think of anything to write  
Just can't get it right  
Wait  
What am I doing right now?  
KAPOW!  
G'bye writing block!

***A Junky Story (excerpt), an exercise on creating character***

"Oh God! What have I done?" I exclaimed, sliding down a junk mountain on a piece of cardboard.

"Avalanche!" I quickly hopped off my rudimentary sled, and raced off towards my bike. I grabbed my sack of parts, and pedaled away, away from the collapsing heap.

One hour later...

"Aiya!" Popo said as she caught sight of me. "What have you done now?"

"I went to the junkyard," was my hasty reply. "There was a nice, new flux capacitor, and I had to have it." After a few moments of open-mouth gaping by my Popo, followed by a quick berating, I was ready to go and wash the layers of grime off my body. However, that nice relaxing plan was thwarted as soon as my Safta walked in through the door, and my heart began racing. Junk-diving was a secret Popo and I shared, but Safta had no idea I did anything of the sort. Actually, this morning, Safta thought I was weeding and studying.. I quickly grabbed the apron that Popo was holding for me, and in one fluid motion tied it around my waist. It was way too small, but that's besides the point. I just needed a cover story.

"Oh great!" Safta said. "Helping Popo with dinner? What a nice Frey."

"Yeah," I mumbled, trying to appear enthusiastic about making matzo balls and tangyuan without meeting her eyes. I hustled around, trying to look busy, occasionally eyeing my bag. If Safta opened it up... Well, let us say there would be a Frey Zhang blasted into oblivion if Safta opened up my junk bag, never to return.



### ***Why Today?***

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Why today?        | Why not Wednesday?        |
| Why not tomorrow? | Why today?                |
| Why today?        | Why not Thursday?         |
| Why not Sunday?   | Why today?                |
| Why today?        | Why not next week?        |
| Why not Monday?   | Why is the test today?    |
| Why today?        | Why do I have to take it? |
| Why not Tuesday?  | Why not never?            |
| Why today?        |                           |

### ***50 Fishies, a short story***

I remember the day my dad walked in. He had bags, each filled with water, but there were too many to count. Each bag had fish. Not dead but *alive*. In each bag there were too many fish to count. If you wanted to you'd have to count at least by fives or by tens. Each fish was small and independent. Each fish was small and was different. Some were black, some were white, and some were both. Some had stripes and some didn't. Some were friendly, others not so much. Some were bigger and some were smaller.

We had a fish tank, big and strong. We poured the fish in. Not by ones or twos, but all in one go! The fish were crammed. They barely moved. Too little space to breathe. One by one, each fish suffocated with their last words being, "Bye, bye," until each one had died. But at last there was one survivor, so shook from all he had seen, he jumped out the tank. He joined the rest of his so called "friends." Once he died we had 50 holes in our backyard, and 50 pebbles, one fish for each hole. And to this day those fifty fishies are remembered in my own backyard.

### ***Syllables Haiku***

Five over here and

seven in this line right here.

Can I go home now?

**Jhonny Malakar**

### ***Anime Rap***

Looking around with those big eyes, trying to find those weird looking fries  
Now that you found them you try to tell lies, even though you're just like the next guy  
Transformations grant us power, even though we already have a will of fire  
Passing it along as we all retire, wisdom being passed out like flyers

Transforming with every color, even though they are all fodder  
Shouting louder, but can't get higher. Still fast enough to shoot higher  
Power rises and shoots up like geysers, shooting out blasts like tranquilizers

Awakened Ultra Instinct successfully, using it to dodge every hurdle safely  
Every foe kept challenging my ways, it wasn't enough from stopping me slay  
My enemies never remember me, it ends with them being changed positively

In the end it's all a bunch flames, the world is just being put to shame  
Although it's just a game, which ends up being kind of lame  
Till the day it all ends, you are stuck here, but holding fear



***Ode to an Atom Bond***

Beneath the surface  
Past the charred  
Crust  
Of the marshmallow  
Past the  
Superficial exterior  
Deeper  
Closer  
A single  
Capillary  
In a cosmos  
Of circulation  
No sound  
No attention  
An unnoticeable speck  
In a universe  
Of vibration  
A collision  
Then explosion  
Heat

Energy  
An unstoppable  
Force  
An enzyme  
The knife of digestion  
You, the atom bond  
Are broken  
A selfless act  
You have gifted  
A life giving  
Charge  
You are the  
Essential part  
Of the being  
Without you  
Chaos  
Collapse  
Would reign  
Blue limbs  
Amputation

## Chapter One

### *The Ring:*

*an exercise on creating character*

*What have I just done?* I asked myself. As the ring slipped off of my finger, a mist expanded from its center. It evolved into a figure that looked like the Halloween decorations from Party City. As I started up in horror, the phantom smiled, showing rows and rows of jagged teeth.

“Oh I see, another one, eh? This just keeps getting better and better. It’s a wonder that you have not changed all these years, except for the eyes. What have you done to them? 26 years trapped in that thing! Can you imagine? Well, of course you can’t. You pitiful little humans obviously wouldn’t understand. You never did,” he said (don’t ask how I knew its gender).

“Who are you?” I asked. I knew that I should have been really scared (and probably ran in the opposite direction, but I’m an idiot, so I obviously didn’t), but somewhere deep down in my heart, I just knew who he was. But I didn’t understand it at the time.

“You are asking me who I am? YOU? Don’t you remember? DON’T YOU?” he asked me. He leaned so close to me that I could smell the rotten scent wafting off of his body (if that *thing* is something that you would even call a body).

“Look, I don’t know who you are, so can you just go back the way you came? That would be really convenient.” I tried to explain. He just laughed, a wild, harsh sound that somehow escaped his mouth (and honestly, hurt my ears). He was starting to lean even closer.

“You know what? I won’t. I will take control of your body and make y-”, he was unable to finish his sentence because my father chose the perfect time to come looking for me. Alvin Frost burst into the room, holding a weird stick-shaped thing in his hand. Light burst from the end of it, forming a protective layer around me. Just at that moment, the phantom hit the barriers of my new protective bubble and burst into specks of dust.

“What do you think you’re doing?” father asked me. He was breathing hard, like *really* hard. “Come wit-”, but he never finished his sentence. He collapsed onto the floor, as I ran to help.

***BURNING***, a SHORT STORY

She didn't run, for she burned without leaving  
     Left a mark, a dark stain, even without trying  
 She hurt, but didn't mean to  
     She only left when the depths of a blue ocean swallowed her whole  
 Even then, there was fear for her and what she would become in time  
     She wanted a life, but life didn't want her  
 Her warmth was forgotten  
     For she could become a danger, something nobody wanted to risk  
 For when she was ignited, she burned.

**REALITY**, a poem on memory

I remember not caring about my welfare  
I remember the words people said about me  
I remember not wanting to care  
I remember when I could watch but not understand  
I remember being the only one who saw the big,  
brown  
bear  
I remember ignoring the taste of the scorching, hot tea  
I remember the leaves floating through the air  
I remember wanting to disappear out of reality

***СИГУ, а НАИКИ***

Cities are too big  
Strong, cold winds surround cities  
City days and nights

Otto Ort

***The Starbucks on Green Street***, short story challenge

Plot: Running Away

Setting: Coffee Shop

If you've ever walked into the Starbucks on Green Street, the same person would always be there. Where? Look closely, I'll give you a hint: observe the higher side. Did you find him? No? He's on top of the vending machine. Yes, he is that itty, bitty person... and he is hiding. I know he is there because, well, I am his brother.

My brother was once a rich senator in the state of Wyoming. I know what you're going to say, so just listen. He was running for president and all of the polls were in his favor. Everybody was sure he was going to become the 57th commander-in-chief. Then something happened, as it usually does, that changed everything. His wife died and he was accused of murdering her. He went to court and desperately fought to stay out of jail, but to no avail. He was thrown behind bars for life. Serving his fifth year as a prisoner, twiddling his thumbs, he saw something slither next to his thigh in the darkness. There was a snake in his prison cell, a snake with a huge and bloody gash in its back. For some reason, at the sight of the snake he did not have a feeling of fear; so my brother hurriedly looked for something to clean the nasty wound with but came up with nothing. Quickly he jumped up, rattled the bars as loud as he could, (he probably woke about 20 prisoners) and shouted for a guard to come. A guard arrived and asked what all the commotion was about. My brother shouted back that he had a snake in his cell with a terrible cut. The guard ran back, brought a box for the spilling-blood snake to go in, and took the snake away.

The next day, the snake returned, on its own, to the prison cell and was in full health. But then an even more miraculous thing happened, it spoke, the snake actually spoke. Shh! Don't interrupt! Yes, ... ah, let's see, oh yes, so, the snake said that he knew my brother didn't do anything and because he had helped him, he would give him a way to get out of prison. So the snake licked my brother's neck three times and suddenly my brother was shrinking! He could literally feel his skin contracting! But then the snake spoke once more. The snake said that my brother would of course be looked for. The snake stated that he would find a way to make everybody in the whole world think that he had never done any crime. He told him to sneak on board the 3:00 o'clock plane on Tuesday that would take him to New York. He then advised him to go to the Starbucks on Green Street. "That is where your brother is," the snake said. "Wait for me there, and I will return you to your original size."

And so my brother and I are waiting for the snake to return, tell him how he has cleared my brother's name, and then return my brother to his original size.

***The Snow***, a blues poem

Oh, the snow, the snow, the snow.  
The white, the warmth, the snow.  
I feel so good. I think you know.

But then comes the rain!  
Oh no, not the rain!

It wipes all the good snow away.

And I'm upset, thanks a lot rain! I  
hate you.  
Now I can't go sledding or skiing.  
Snow, I miss you.  
I don't know what to do.

***Food Mood, a rhyming poem***

Why is food, food  
Is it because it gets you in a mood  
Some is crispy, some is crunchy  
It gets some people punchy  
The bacon, the fries, the sushi, the noodles, the meat  
Sometimes you gotta eat

Cakes, ice creams, cookies, brownies, doughnuts  
These deserts are not just for children but also grownups  
Pies, cheesecakes, tarts, cannolis  
Why can't this food have some guacamole

Asparagus, celery, turnips, zucchini, tomatoes  
These vegetables might cause you to act like a tornado  
Onions, peppers, cucumbers, eggplants, mushrooms  
All these nasty foods have their own perfumes  
Brussel sprouts, carrots, corn, cabbages  
These foods give you advantages

Apples, bananas, blueberries, peaches, pears  
I can't think of a fruit shaped like squares  
Watermelons, plums, oranges, cherries  
If only you could find fruit in libraries

Crabs, oysters, salmon, squid  
All these seafoods have some sort of liquid  
Shrimp, mussel, scallop, clam  
Some of these foods tastes like ham

## *Discovery At Niagara Falls:*

*short story challenge*

Nora was with her family at Niagara Falls when all of a sudden she began to choke. Nora felt a sudden need for water and her view was no longer her mother's face but her shoes. Then Nora remembered that she was at Niagara Falls, which is basically all water, and she did something she never would've done: she jumped off of the viewing pad and into the beautiful waterfall. Nora felt as if she was falling for years as she glided down the waterfall. Nora began to smile and caught a glimpse of a shiny orange fin where her arm used to be. Everything started to make sense except for how...

BOOM. Nora finally crashed into the water below. Nora closed her eyes but then opened them realizing that she felt totally fine and was swimming like a pro. Nora looked up to prove to herself that she was under water and still not losing her breath. Then, as she started to think of herself as a human it all stopped: she started to struggle with her swimming, she started losing breath, and she started seeing her arms moving as fast as they could to keep her above water.

"Ever since then I knew I was special," Nora said to a reporter. Nora had just saved a mother and child from a terrible fire and now she was surrounded by reporters. She had turned herself into a monkey in order to quickly climb up the burning building, saving the mother and child. "All I have to do is think about the animal I need to be in each situation and my body somehow turns into that animal."



***Sleep, a blues poem***

I wish we didn't have to sleep  
I wish we didn't have to sleep  
It takes up so much time and time isn't cheap

It's not fun  
It's not fun  
To have a nightmare of meeting a bear from which I have to run

And sometimes you have a nice dream  
And sometimes you have a nice dream  
But to say that the ten minutes of dream you remember makes up for the hours of sleep is extreme

But if I don't sleep I am grumpy  
But if I don't sleep I am grumpy  
And more than a little jumpy

Imagine if we didn't have to sleep and instead we could be productive  
Imagine if we didn't have to sleep and instead we could be productive  
Imagine if we didn't have to sleep because sleep is destructive

***Focus, a blues poem***

How am I supposed to focus when outside music is blaring?  
How am I supposed to focus when outside music is blaring?  
How can I focus when the volume of their music is not caring?

How am I supposed to focus when I see the time passing by?  
How am I supposed to focus when I see the time passing by?  
And I wonder why I left this task to the last minute, why oh why?

How am I supposed to focus when thinking of ideas is boring?  
How am I supposed to focus when thinking of ideas is boring?  
How can I focus when the internet needs exploring?

How am I supposed to focus when I have not eaten in a while?  
How am I supposed to focus when I have not eaten in a while?  
How can I focus when going five minutes without eating in this setting is a trial?

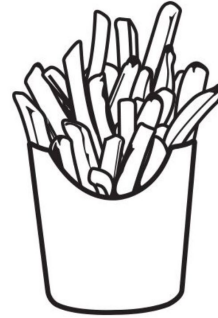
I am almost done!  
I am almost done!  
How can I focus when I'm thinking about how after I'm done I'll have so much fun?

Manisha Sarder

## *we Did It!*

*(a rap)*

We did it?  
Ya, we did it.  
Ya, we did it.  
10 months and 10 minutes.  
Can you believe that the days have gone by  
with us eating potato fries?



## *Presentations*

*(an ode)*

For some it's a cup of tea  
For others it's like swimming in a pond of sharks  
Eyes stare at you like thousands of fireflies blinking in the dark  
Others enjoy being the center of attention  
Pretending that the universe revolves around them  
Fear decides to stay 10 feet away from them



## ***Anti-haiku***

Haikus are stupid  
They are hard to make any time!  
I am frustrated

### ***The cheese of defiance, a haiku***

You said I could not  
So I wrote a cheese haiku  
I love cheese, woo hoo

***Sitting alone on the bus***, an exercise on word play

I see a field of grass with gold sprinkles on top  
I see a field of golden sun and hope  
I see a field of wishes waiting to be made  
I see dandelions  
I see the reflection of a sad stranger I know too well

**IDK**

Oh me? Oh gee, uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...  
What do you mean do I have something to say?  
Why else would I have raised my hand today?  
Oh my gosh I hate thinking on the fly.  
If I don't think of something fast I'll DIE!  
Oh, I know!  
I sure hope that this idea doesn't KABOOM  
Sorry miss teacher, but may I use the restroom?

## ***Happy Face*, a concrete poem**

I am in love with life  
I am so happy now  
This i s great  
I love this s o amazingly much  
This is great  
I am so unbe lievably happy now  
I am so unbelievably happy now  
I am so happy now  
I am soooooooooooooo in love with life  
Yaaaaaaaaaaaaay!

Ryan Shi

*Pride, a blues poem*

What's wrong with being gay?  
What's wrong with being gay?  
Don't you see it everyday?

What if I'm a guy?  
What if I'm a guy?  
Do I now deserve to die?

I'm human too.  
I'm human too.  
I am human just like you.

There's nothing wrong.  
There's nothing wrong.  
This is where I do belong.

I will not change.  
I will not change.  
I don't care if you think I'm strange.

I have no shame.  
I have no shame.  
I am proud of my name.

This country's free.  
This country's free.  
This is who I want to be.

You can't stop me.  
You can't stop me.  
And please refer to me as "she."

I'm not straight.  
I'm not straight.  
I'm gay, don't hate.

### ***Ode To Cows***

A cow... sounds majestic, like a trumpet (with serious vocal problems).  
Their footsteps are as toy blocks, falling to the ground (well, 20 pound steel blocks, anyways).  
As for looks, they are practically zebras (yet much fatter and heavier).  
They taste of pork (very overcooked, completely brown pork, that is).  
They feel as smooth as armor (if knights wore shaky, fuzzy, and soft armor, at any rate).

### ***Ode To Lobsters***

Scissors cutting from afar,  
Needing rubber, which sticks like tar.  
A summer food, it tastes of a star.  
From blue to red, it's not to dread.  
It keeps you well fed,  
As you sleep in your bed.  
It tastes of salt,  
Yet never asphalt.  
If you take a bite,  
You'll see,  
The taste sure is  
Worth the fee.

### ***Writer's Block Haiku***

I have writer's block.  
I can't think of what to write.  
Might as well stop now.

### ***Summer Break Haiku***

Working hard in school.  
Waiting for the summer break.  
Trying to survive.

### ***I Don't Remember: The Story of an Amnesiac Child, a poem on memory***

I don't remember the accident.  
I don't remember anything.  
I don't remember how to walk.  
I don't remember if I was a jock.  
I don't remember my life.  
I don't remember if it was full of strife.  
I don't remember if I was pushed.  
I don't remember who I was.  
I don't remember at all.

Ryan Syed

## ***What is Love?***

***(a haiku)***

*Simple but complex  
Chilly but warm, amazing  
Love is hard but nice*

?

***(A HAIKU)***

Weird but also clear  
Not warm just cool just silence  
I hate confusion

## ***Don't deal with the devil, a blues poem***

I WALK THROUGH THE BEACH  
I WALK THROUGH THE BEACH  
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE I'M IN THE DEVIL'S REACH

THROUGH SWAMP I GO  
I SEE MANY THINGS THAT GLOW  
THE DEVIL TRIES TO GRASP ME WHEN I ESCAPE THOUGH

I HAVE BEEN THROUGH HELL  
I HAVE SEEN THROUGH HELL  
PLEASE DON'T TELL THE DEVIL WHERE I DWELL

## ***DEATH***

THE SILENT KILLER  
THE ONE THAT MAKES THRILLERS

AS MUCH AS YOU TRY YOU WILL DIE  
NO NEED TO CRY, YOU KNOW WHY

SAY GOODBYE  
YOUR TIME IS NIGH

YOUR TIME IS DONE  
AND IT'S TIME FOR MY FUN

***The Meaning of Life, an exercise on word play***

Life is amazing  
life is great  
But sometimes it makes the heart ache  
People are sad  
because they choose to make their life bad  
But, at the end of all the horrible things we do  
we just end up making ourselves and others feel horrible too  
Life is amazing life is great  
but taking things for granted is a horrible, horrible mistake

***The Horrible State Tests, an exercise on word play***

I am trying to think straight  
but I can't  
Everywhere I turn, there is something blocking the path  
Nowhere to turn  
nowhere to hide  
Got to face my fears  
with confidence and pride  
Sweat dripping, my time's running out  
5, 4, 3, 2, 1  
Time is done  
This was no fun

Naim Yahya

## ***The True Murder:***

*a haiku*

It is green and blue.  
Beautiful but can still kill.  
Water, nature's death.

## ***The Months:***

*an exercise on word play*

Why this month?  
Why not February?  
It's always chilly.

Why this Month?  
Why not March?  
It's always windy.

Why this Month?  
Why not April?  
It's always freezing.

Why this Month?



Closing Thoughts

GOODBYE 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE  
CLASS OF PS 122. WE  
WILL MISS YOU ALL  
TREMENDOUSLY.

ENJOY YOUR  
SUMMER, AND  
WRITE WRITE  
WRITE!!

XOXO, India & Olaya



***Illustration Credits:***

Pg. 9, Kalina Sabala

Pg. 10, Luca Sheridan

Pg. 15, Ream Nassar

Pg. 19, Talen Benziger

Pg. 34, Tenzin Samten

Pg. 46, Fatiq Syed

Pg. 47, Eleanor Fan

Pg. 60, Manisha Sarder

Pg. 74, Reeda Rashid

Pg. 86, Fabiha Nashrah

Pg. 88, Ramisa Haque

Pg. 92, Amy Gorreja

Pg. 99, Sarah Sattar

Pg. 106, Otto Cline

Pg. 111, Ahanaf Zaman

Pg. 114, Ioanna Todaro

Pg. 130, Ryan Shi