

In Your Own Words

An Anthology of Writing

By Sixth Grade Students

The Mamie Fay School PS 122

Spring 2019

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Teachers & Writers Collaborative

Writers-in-Residence

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Introduction

Cover art by: Natalie Lai

When considering a name for our program and the anthology, we thought about something catchy - something that might stick and, hopefully, be embraced by the students. As we brainstormed, we went through a list of phrases and terms.

“In your own words” is a common expression, but it can be interpreted in a variety of ways. The students of P.S. 122 represent a rich diversity of cultures and backgrounds as well as a diversity of voices and experiences. We were both curious and excited to see how these talented students would respond to our various warm up activities, writing prompts, and assignments. We were not disappointed, nor were we prepared for what they produced. The students took us on a journey where we time traveled to countries; they wrote haikus, elegies, epistles, fiction, and non-fiction. They wrote praise poems honoring where they are from and to the people/things they love. What you are holding is a body of work that our students began in November. We are happy that this anthology exists, if nothing else, as a testament to them.

It contains their wittiness, humor, fears, hopes, concerns, imagination, and insights. Some of it is touching, personal, thoughtful, or serious, but it’s all them *in their own words*.

P.S. 122 Writers, we are so proud of you!

Love, Ms. Alicia Anabel Santos & Mr. Jonathan Hernandez

The Mamie Fay School PS 122 6th Grade Writers

Class 501

Balasov, Catinca
Chahal, Inderpreet
Choudhury, Sophia
Crescimanno, Shaila
Dervisevic, Salem
Fabella, Mateo
Ha, Aaron
Hasan, Tanzeem
Heikal, Fayrouz
Ismail, Hyder
Jimenez, Justyn
Kaur, Reema
Kirjak, Bela
Kyaw, Cynthia
Lai, Natalie
Liu, Micah
Lopez, Philip
McLaughlin, Fiona
Mulic, Lejla
Onaldin, Gregory
Pema, Sonam
Pusing, Ava
Rodriguez, Lance
Shoshi, Shayra
Tang, Jeremy
Taxilaga, Isabella
Thitithamasak, William
Walsh, Ella
Wang, Suri

Class 504

Ahmed, Taosif
Barua, Jisha
Batutis, Sara
Chowdhury, Maysha
Cummings, Noah
Dascalu, Lisa
Dickenson, Andrew
Fraga, Lucia
Ghosh, Puja
Hossain, Mariam
Islam, Tasnim
Kane, Emily
Khan, Aimal
Law, Gabriel
Lobel, Kati
Lou, Joshua
Marjana, Maleha
Mazumber, Nabil
Milo, Rea
Mohamedy, Yassin
Perdikis, Eugenia
Rigoutsos, Franklin
Rodrigues, Kevin
Rodriguez, Alexander
Saha, Mullika
Scialla, Sophie
Shirazi, Diego
Siddek, Anzam
Spyropoulos, Sofia
Tesovic, Tamara
Williamson, Maximillian

Class 506

Ahmed, Tasnia
Anderson, Owen
Ching, Timothy
Chung, Alyssa
Elazhary, Hayam
Guthrie, Kacey
Haque, Armin
Haque, Sarah
Huang, Ryan
Itskovich, Will
Kasapis, Alexander
Khandoker, Tazriam
Libert, Samuel
Luk, Alyssa
Martinez, Katerina
McGarvey, William
Menlha, Tenzin
Muheta, Tasnim
Noah, Shihab
Ommran, Mohamed
Rednic, James
Selim, Seba
Shakarov, Sophia
Talushllari, Marissa
Thakur, Maisha
Wong, Aidan
Youdon, Tenzin
Zakir, Tanvi
Zhao, Andy

Class 509

Ali, Syeda
Arriaga, Jennifer
Azeem, Prajusha
Chowdhury, Araf
Crescimanno, Serena
Diep, Angelyn
Faltin, Eilean
French, Oliver
Gaal, Alexandra
Girsang, Margareth
Hasan, Raida
Herman, Joy
Hill, Myron
Jadid, Tawseef
Jusuf, Kenneth
Karim, Azana
Kayatekin, Melda
Khan, Huda
Lehoczeki, Miles
Mathew, Naveen
Mommaas, Geneva
Nazrul, Saymaa
O'Neill, Gabriella
Perdikis, Paul
Rolls, Dionisio
Shah, Humza
Skouras, Luke
Wahlin, Kartik
Wyles, Charlotte
Yoo, Joel
Zhuo, Jocelin

Class 501



Catinca Balasov

ODE TO WRITING

The click of the keys rattles through my fingers.

The “scritch-scratch” of my shrinking pencil
Echoes through my ears and soothes my mind.

Worlds of different wonders,
Different people,
Different ways of life
Orbit around my heart, glowing in hope,
Hope that they will become known and loved.
Heroes and cowards
Cocky teens and valiant boys
Gallop through my mind
Flying with over torn cities
Or thrashing spears at brutal enemies
for survival.
All types of people face different struggles,

Take on wild adventures,
And experience a time in their life where everything changes.

A blast of warmth flows through my veins
Where I know a new adventure awaits.
Imagination and fantastical thoughts hold the reins of my mind

And I can be whoever I want to be when my pen is pointed to a page.

I pass down my wits, my impatience, my fierceness
To the subject of my unique story.

When I write

I am who I want to be

And I am who I CAN be.

When I write I am not alone

And I feel joy pulsing through my body

For all I need lies in the fate of my creativity and an obeying pen.

ELEGY TO GRANDPA

I see pictures of you
With me.

On sunny days -- laughing, playing.
Oh, back then, all was perfect, life was a gem.

We played your favorite songs made by the
King of Rock himself

While I bounced alongside you, playfully twisting
the childish steering wheel

Of that blue car that I still see today.

We cried for you.

I still long for you.

Why did you have to go so soon?

I regret all wrongs I did to you;

Want to reverse the pencils I threw at you.

Your smile still warms me- inside and out

Every time I hold hands with mom, I think of you.

My heart groans; my soul weeps.

Every second spent with you was precious.

You were funny and calm.

You were all I ever needed.

When you were gone

I was only five.

Little did I know I would see you no more.

I wish you were here

To twirl me in the air as I pranced down from the
graduation podium.

I wish you were here

To tell me you were proud of me, to hug me in adoration.

They say you are gone, but I know that is wrong.

I still feel your heart, resounding with each small thump
of my heart

For we love each other too much to really be apart.

SWITCHING SIDES - A FLASH FICTION PIECE

All my life, I have known I could never be safe. I have always known that I was different. And in Altoinia different meant a shorter life.

Day after day, I witness a rebellion that has been going on for decades against our rulers, the Domns.

I lay in bed now, fists clenched for I can't sleep. I roll over as I try to block out the shrieking sounds of dying men that haunts me every night. Suddenly, I inhale and smoke comes to my nose. I throw the covers off my bed and dart out of my burning house to my mother, waiting in the storm cellar.

For hours, we hear Domn soldiers march across our burning property, looking for us. I stare at my mother and she nods. They found me.

I pull my mother into a hug before looking up into her glassy eyes that are frothing with tears.

Suddenly, a pounding begins rattling the door to the cellar. My eyes widen in fear as a foot crashes through the old closing, shattering it into wooden pieces. Domn soldiers stampede into the room and start wrapping my mother in ropes. I instinctively thrust my arm out before me but a soldier whacks my arm aside. Too late. A glowing orb of green that comes from my hands pierces my mother's back rather than the soldier. I then see my mother fall to the floor. I wail, terrorized, realizing the tragedy. All before me fades into a hazy black.

Inderpreet Chahal

-A Story about My Mother-

As I rubbed her feet, my hands feel like a rock had smacked them 982 times. My mother's feet were like chocolate bars that were split into twenty-five pieces. Somehow, I still drifted off into space, unconsciously massaging her feet. The feeling of my mother's feet lifting off the bed brought my senses back. Startled from my wake, I jump back and hit my head on the wall. She rushes over, and holds me. Her hands feel the same. Crackly, like a chocolate bar. Was this just the effect of being close to death's door, or a disease? It turns out, it was just an effect of age. She doesn't care, she just disregards it. I don't.

She seems very--different from the rest of the family. My mother is a very outgoing person, but she really doesn't seem to care for herself. I mean, she does care about her health, but she basically brushes off all that hurts her, any cuts, bleeding, head pain, or anything else like that. Or so you think. On the outside, she's very outgoing, caring, and friendly. But, on the inside, she's a very worried person. She's going through rough times, and her family is there to help her. She is my world because I love her and her feet are cracked. If she's cracked, it's like my world is cracked. After all, she is my mother, and I love her.

1) Livestock all around

-Haiku- -Where I Am From-

2) Surrounded by lots of dust

3) India is dry

-Can we throw him out?-

A little backstory: When I was a toddler, my brother was born, and my mother slept with him. I was getting jealous. Let me just say, we lived in a one bedroom house, and the trash can was very close to us.

It was a sunny day, the birds were chirping, and our house was very quiet. It was about to get a *whole* lot louder, though. I was playing with my toys, and I started to get sleepy. I walked over to the bedroom, and I saw my mother sleeping with another baby. Now, at the time, I didn't realize that he was my brother. I'll refer to him as "the stranger" for now.

"Mom, sleep with me!" I exclaimed.

My mother replied with, "Hold on, I'm sleeping with (brother's name)."

"Please?"

“No.”

“Why not? I’m your son.”

Then my mom ignored me. I started bawling and rolling all over the place. My mom could NOT sleep. She yelled at me and then I cried even more. The stranger in my house woke up and cried. She was probably having the BIGGEST headache right now. She yelled at both of us and we stayed quiet. My Mom went back to sleep with the stranger in my house. I was OUTRAGED. How could she ignore her one and only child, me, for a total random stranger? I was pouting in the living room for like 20 minutes, and that’s when I devised an evil plan.

I would tell my mom I was ok with her not sleeping with me, and she could sleep with him/her, I don’t know yet. Afterwards, I would take the stranger while my Mom was fast asleep and bring him outside. Then, I would have two choices. The first choice was, I could throw him out so the garbage disposal workers would take him, (or at least I thought). The second choice was, I could take my brother and run away, and sell him to the black market. Ok, I was exaggerating a bit there, but I would run away and put him somewhere, maybe in a bush.

But I was a pretty idiotic baby, and instead of carrying out my plan, I asked my mom if I could do it. “Mom, can I throw him out?”

She was astounded, and asked why I would want to do that.

“Because you’re not sleeping with me, and with that ugly boy.”

“Why would you call your brother ugly?”

I didn’t know what…brother meant. “What’s that mean?”

“That means he’s family.”

“AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH.” Then I picked him up and I dropped him “by accident”.

“Stupid child!” My mother exclaimed in our language. She ran to my crying brother, picked him up, and held him away from me. Ok, looking back on this, what she did was reasonable, but back then I was still angry. I soon came to my senses and realized that this person will be living with me for the rest of my life. I went up to him and hugged him. I used to just be alone and playing with my toys at home, but now I had someone to actually play with me. I’m not lying, that was the only reason I was happy to have my brother here. So he could play with me.

“Inderpreet, why are you hugging him?”

“So I can play with him.”

Yeah, that dialogue didn’t make any sense, I could’ve played with him without hugging him, but I was not the brightest of children. I grabbed my brother by the legs and took him to the living room to play with him. His head may have hit the floor, I don’t remember, but that’s probably why he’s so stupid.

My brother was just born at this time, so he had no dialogue except crying, and when we were playing, he would just slap all the toys around, and I would get enraged and slap him.

A few hours ago, I hated this random stranger, and wanted to throw him out. Afterwards, I was hugging him and picking him up. Then, I would be angry with him again. My mom was astounded, and thought I was dumb or something. She now gets a good laugh out of it, I do too, but it’s still pretty weird.

Sophia Choudhury

Hey, that's my Peanut Butter!

I was curled up on my couch in front of the TV with a big bag of chips and a blanket. My parents weren't home, and my sister was out with them. Peace, at least for now. No sister to snatch and pounce on me for the remote this time! I turned on the TV and snuggled in my blanket. Could this day get any better? It was a little scary, just because the house seems empty without my sister and I going for each other's neck. It's a nice change for once! I watched for five minutes, immersed in the show, until suddenly I hear loud squeak. Who could that be? Could that be my sister? Oh, I'm going to give her a piece of my mind. But then, I realize it can't be, she's on her way to a sleepover. OMG, is it a ghost? I never believed in ghosts, but here I am. I sprang up, and heard a "SQUEAK, SQUEAK." It's coming from the kitchen! I walked in holding a metal pan, ready to pounce. There it goes again, "SQUEAK!" I can't imagine what monstrosity it could be. Will it eat me? I see a jar of *Skippy* peanut butter, my peanut butter on the floor, which gives me chills, knowing that it was never there before. I neared the can and nudged it with my heavy pan. I flip it around and... "AAAAAHHH!" I screamed. It's a mouse! Why is it eating *my* peanut butter?

The Gold Earrings

I stared longingly at those beautiful gold earrings. They were pure gold, and people would stare daggers just to wear them once. My mother did look quite stunning in them. My mother had gotten them from her mother, who got them from hers, who got them from hers, and so on. It was our family heirloom. They were quite simple, yet intriguing. I wondered if there was a history behind it. My culture is rich, originating from who knows where. Was it from a princess? Did someone steal it? I thought of these possibilities, and suddenly thought it was magic.

The word "magic" escaped my lips, and something absolutely incredible began to happen. The gold earrings began to glow. I jumped back startled, then curious. What happens if I wear them? My mother did say she gave them to me.... SMACK! Oh right, they're now mine! I put them on, and the room began to glow. I closed my eyes, dizzy from all the spinning. When it stopped, I opened my eyes. I was standing, in my room, with earrings on. I quickly touched to my ears and tried to pry them out. They wouldn't budge. I grew worried, but what was there really to worry about? Just that I look AMAZING in them. Other than that, my mom told me not to wear it till I was eighteen. Oh no! My mom is coming in an hour. I'm only eleven years old! I ran to the bathroom and looked. There they were, immersed in a soft golden glow. I couldn't help but admire their beauty. I looked over to where I was to unclasp them, and they looked fine. I reached over and attempted once more. Nope! They would just not budge. Oh my god, what am I

going to do? They stuck like glue. Was that its magic? Staying stuck on the owner so it could never be stolen? Yikes, people definitely wanted them. I felt a hot searing pain in my ears, and it was extremely painful. I splashed cold water on it, unsure what else to do. It began to cool down, and I couldn't help but laugh. Were these earrings more powerful than me? Those tiny, beautiful things were stronger than me. I sat there in disbelief. Is that true?

I went to a tool box, and grabbed a wrench. I pulled and pulled and pulled. I kept pulling at the back, continuously, each time pulling harder, pouring all my strength and energy into getting the gold earrings off. I started hyperventilating and felt dizzy. I can't do it, I can't do it, I really can't do it. My head suddenly felt hot, and I fell to the ground.

"Aaaaah!" I opened my eyes suddenly. I was again in the same spot, but there was something different. There they were, those magical golden earrings. Once far away from me, I gave them a long stare. I put them away, wondering if it was all just a dream.

Shaila Crescimanno

Flashbacks of Our Memories

We all sat on the cold wooden chairs as our names were being called for awards. We looked at each other and smiled when we each got one. I shed a tear when I remembered this was our last year in the same class. We had so many memories. One was Sports Time USA, and all things fun. All of us went on a roller coaster that made us scream, but we laughed as well. We took pictures, we played games, even went against each other in laser tag. We played so many games and we won many of them. We were on our own for the first time, best friends only. We also drank so many cold ice slushies while we were there. I remember when my partner and I bought tickets to ride the claw again. We got on as my mom held her phone to take pictures. We got so nervous, but we had each other, so it would be alright. The ride started swinging up and down as our seats started to slowly release pressure of our bodies. We laughed really hard as we screamed coming down. We came off the rides with us laughing, but our brains definitely were not. My best friend Gaby and I bumped each other in bumper cars and made our bodies shake. We walked around playing for more and more tickets, feeling confident to win. And there we were, in the auditorium of P.S.122, wondering if this was the end, but it was far from over.

Elegy to My Best Friend

I remember the first day I saw you
With your blonde hair
And your cheesy smile
Passing a soccer ball to me
Though you are here in this troubled world
But it feels like you aren't in mine
You created the happy me
You created the adventurous me
We hang out and laugh through a screen
But it feels like it is through a stone wall
Her heart is made of gold
But can shatter like a vase
We are what feels like 50,000 miles away
But we have a bond that cannot stretch that far
Because we cannot lose each other
Your sister helped me with my makeup
Your brother taught me to be myself
Your mom taught me to score a goal
Your dad had the sense of humor
Your cats have helped me relax
And you taught me kindness
That no long-distance friend has ever gave me.
You poured you kindness, love, and humor into me
It was sad to see you go
With your amazing personality and heart

Salem Dervisevic

The Family Heirloom

It was a necklace that has been passed down for many years. Received from my great great grandfather ages ago. Then it was passed down the line to my great grandfather, then my grandfather, then my father, then right into my hands. Never did I think that this necklace was so important. It looked as if it was just a regular necklace. I have learned a lot more about where it comes from and how important it was to my father and his entire side of the family. My great great grandfather purchased it for himself around the 1800s which was a very long time ago. I feel as if it brings me to the past. Then my great great grandfather decided to pass it down to my great grandfather. This was supposed to be a gift to my great great grandma but unfortunately she passed away. My great great grandfather decided to pass it down to my great grandfather to keep the chain going and for his son to pass it down to future generations. Then after that happened my great grandpa decided to pass it down to my grandpa and make it an heirloom. I was passed down to my father and then right into my hands. In the future when I have a son I am planning on passing it down to him so that he can pass it down to his son. It is amazing how I can touch something that was made in the 1800s is actually really cool and to me because the history behind it. This is an incredible item and I'm so grateful to have it in my hands and know that it's mine and can be passed down lots more. This necklace is gold and very special. Meaning it has been passed down from five people. Great great grandfather, Great grandfather, Grandfather, Dad, Me. It will be very cool to look at in the far future seeing how many people will inherit it. It is incredible on how far this heirloom can go and it is very cool to see how I am one of the first of all people to have this in the far future in maybe even late 2000s! That means it can even go to 10 people or even to the 2300s! This is just crazy to see how far it came from and how far it is going to go. This necklace will always be special in my life.

My Grandpa

There are some people who come into your life and change it forever, and no matter what you can't go back. There's that one friend that teaches you what being a real friend means, your first relationship teaches what it actually takes to make a relationship work, and that one person who can teach you to always have fun no matter what. That was my grandpa, he could have fun and laugh no matter what the situation was, and he was the one who taught me how to do that.

Even though my grandpa passed away about five years ago, I still remember everything about him. He was always a fun person and looked for new adventures. Together, me and him would always go out and look for new small local diners together. Every other weekend we would go to a different one. Even when the places were really bad, he still had a good time and laughed and joked. He made friends at every dinner we ate together at. Sometimes the really good ones, we would go back and the waitress would laugh and joke with him as they took our

orders. I've always looked up to my grandpa and how he had a way with people, and had a way of making everyone in the room laugh. He could always make me smile, no matter what the situation was. I could be feeling really down about something and he would go out of his way to make sure I felt better.

Mateo Fabella

Six Flags

My dad got season passes to Six Flags and we were all going. I got inside my car and it was going to be a two hour drive before we get there. I played on my phone, watched YouTube, and went to sleep. Then we finally arrived. I was so happy to be at Six Flags. It was my first time so I didn't know what to expect. I did know that we went during Halloween so some zombies would come out and try to scare you. Right as I stepped out of my car, I saw a huge roller coaster. I knew I wanted to go on it. We went to line up to get in. We first went to this huge wooden roller coaster called El Toro which was really fast. Then we went on the Bizarro coaster which had this cool loop. Then we played some mini games like basketball shooting. The games weren't that hard I won two stuffed animals. Then we went to some restaurant and had fried chicken for lunch. After lunch we went on a small roller coasters like the Dark Knight Coaster and Skull Mountain. Next we went on the Superman Ultimate flight coaster. They moved the seats up so you could feel like you were flying like superman. I liked this coaster the best just because of that one special feature. After that we went to eat dinner at Johnny Rockets. My dad and I both got burgers. At that time, the zombies were out. We saw some people get scared but most people didn't get scared. We soon left after I finished eating. Six Flags is a place that I could go to over and over again.

My near basketball win

My team and I had worked so hard to get to this point. I was so happy once we found out that my team got into the championship. I was on the Saint Sebastian's 4th grade basketball "B" team. We were going to play against a much better team than us. They had beat the other Saint Sebastian teams two years in a row, so I was afraid that they would beat us. I played Point guard with Diego. I would be on the bench and he would start. I had only scored 5-10 points the whole season. I didn't want tomorrow to come. I didn't want to lose this championship because it was really important to me. I went to bed early and got a nice big rest.

I ate a big breakfast and felt well rested. I had to drive far just to get to where we had to play. It was about an hour before I got there. I was so nervous because I really wanted to win. This was the second time we got to the championship, unfortunately, we lost last year. We only lost by two points! That game was really close. I didn't want that to happen to our team this year. Now I was already 10 minutes away. 10 minutes passed by and we were at the basketball court.

I saw some of my teammates waiting outside too, so I was relieved. Then we were let into the basketball court. I saw all of my teammates sitting there waiting. The game was going to start in about 10 minutes. The clock was winding down, 5 minutes, 3 minutes, 1 minute, and now the game was starting.

The game was just about to start and the starters on my team were already on the court. I was waiting on the bench to be subbed in. My team had won the tip off and were running down

the court with the ball. They passed the ball twice and then scored a layup. After about 5 minutes of playing time, I was subbed in. I was inbounded the ball and was running down the court. I passed the ball down the court to Lex. He shot the ball and the ball barely rolled out. Now it was the second quarter.

When it was a little into the second quarter I was subbed out. My team scored a few points, but the other team scored like ten points. Now it was halftime. During halftime we practiced our shooting and created a plan. Now it was the third quarter.

It was our ball and the ball was passed to me and I brought the ball up the court. I passed the ball and my teammate shot it, and it went in. We scored 6 points, but they scored 9 points. They were out scoring us. Now it was the fourth quarter.

We were down by nine points and there were only 4 minutes remaining. I was on the bench. Our team scored only 6 points instead of 9. We lost the championship by only 3 points. Then we shook hands with the other team and sat on the bench. They handed out trophies to our team just for being the runner ups. I was sad that we lost but happy that we made it to the championship.

Aaron Ha

Diary Entries inspired by the Diary of Latoya Hunter

“They really want to hurt us.”
“One of my biggest disappointments.”
“I thought the world would stop.”

Dear diary,

Our bullies, they really want to hurt us. My friend was tired of being picked on and decided to do something about it. All of his stored feelings of anger after all of the harassment led to a fight. The bullies outnumbered him and beat him. I saw him at the nurse’s office with a black eye and a missing tooth. The bully soon threatened me for being somewhat related to him. Hopefully, the bully has something happen to him.

Dear diary,

One of my biggest disappointments just happened today. My teacher who is known for giving reminders for quizzes and tests that never arrive! She always says, “Remember to study!” all week and it never comes. She’s basically known for the phrase “A pop quiz is like a snowstorm in New York!” This would make sense if a test or quiz would actually come. However, the ONE week I didn’t study there was a test! I didn’t have enough time to rush-study for the test, but I did manage to get a glance of a few vocabulary words that we were supposed to study. I completely bombed it! Might as well quit school while I’m ahead.

Dear diary,

Remember the test I didn’t study for? I GOT A 90%! I thought the world would stop when she called my name. I saw the paper when she held it up. Since it was a thin piece of loose-leaf, I could see the grade right through the paper. I thought that I got 60%! She held it upside-down! When I got it back, I jumped out of my seat and I shouted “YES!” The teacher glared at me and she said, “That’s inappropriate.” She was right but I didn’t care!

Ode to Shrek

Shrek
is love, Shrek is life. As I watch
your movies, Shrek, Shrek 2,
Shrek 3, and last but not least,
Shrek Forever After.

Your famous lines such as:

“Donkey!” and “Get out my swamp!”
Bring happiness and smiles to all.
The noblest action you have done is when
you demolished a group of knights.
This is why Lord Farquaad,
also known as “E”
The ruler of Duloc
Shrek you accomplished many things
Saving the princess,
Slaying and befriending a dragon,
And marrying an ogre like him.
The tale takes me to my memories.
My mother will tell me fairytales as I slept.
Those stories were my favorite fiction and
You are a brave character,
The newest film, Shrek Retold
A film that remade the first Shrek movie
With over 200 different animators with their own style.
Shrek inspired everyone and gathered a group of creators
(including me)
Shrek 4 will be a joy for all
It will be a masterpiece.

Heirloom Story

Loud music vibrates through the walls, coming from one of the other rooms in the house. "DO YOU MIND!?" Yusuf wants to yell at the person; he was attempting to draw something, and he needed his concentration. He doesn't say that though, he just continues trying to draw through all the noise. It doesn't look good so far, it actually looks quite terrible. Yusuf breaks his pencil and goes to get a new one, while hearing a noise from outside the window. He ignores it and just scraps his drawing altogether. He starts to draw again, but this time it's even worse. There is a rough outline of a dragon on the page. That was the part that Yusuf got right. However, the features resembled a dragon as much as a shrimp resembles a megalodon.

Yusuf sighs, the noise covering up another small sound from outside. Yusuf looks at the time, which is currently 11:00 PM. "When did it get so late" Yusuf says to himself, thinking that the drawings took half an hour. Beside him, there are sheets of the same attempt at the drawing scattered around the room. Suddenly, there is a massive sound like something breaking and the music stops immediately.

Yusuf hears someone saying "What th-", but that is as far as they get before Yusuf hears them scream loud enough to wake the dead. Yusuf thinks to himself "Thank God that my sons and daughters aren't here right now." Yusuf arms himself with a thick book and positions himself right next to the door. He also put some rope next to the door, connected by some pencils in a charger slot and a mouse hole.

Suddenly, the door gets kicked down and someone rushes in holding a bloody shovel. The person trips on the rope, hits his head on the ground and his shovel is knocked out of his hands. He immediately tries to get up but then stops as he sees Yusuf's drawings. He yells, "GAHHH, MY EYES!" right before Yusuf hits him in the back of the head with the book. The person is knocked unconscious and Yusuf calls the cops. While the cops are coming, Yusuf finds out that the person was someone that he took a loan from, but he forgot to pay the money back. When the cops come, they have a similar reaction to Yusuf's drawing, but they do get the person away without screaming. Yusuf thinks to himself, "I should get this laminated!" and pays a lot to get it done.

A couple days later, his sons and daughters come home, and he tells them the story. They ask to borrow the picture for a day, because there is this rude group who annoy them. The next time the group comes, the sons and daughters of Yusuf shove the picture into their faces and the people act like their eyes were being burned. They stay away from Yusuf's kids after this.

Since then, Yusuf has put it into a frame with a casing over it for protection. After he had grandkids, he passed the drawing down. It is still intact to this day.

Fayrouz Heikal

Making New Friends

This story is about trying new things for the benefit of myself. There are some things I like to do repeatedly which are in my comfort zone. Then there are other things I do not like doing but I still do them, and I have done them in the past.

I met my first real friends in kindergarten. We have been friends since then and have had so much fun together. Once in the summer they facetimes me and said, “We are so scared for middle school because what if we get separated.” I was worried too and so we decided not to make any new friends to preserve our friendship. Well at least that’s how we were planning on surviving.

After we had that talk, I kept thinking to myself a lot about middle school and friendships. I asked myself, “What if I get tired of having the same friends? Or “is it possible to go three whole years without making any new friendships?” To me and my friends it seemed impossible but in reality, it’s really not.

During the first couple of weeks of school my thinking was reversed, and I met some amazing people that I thought needed the title “friend,” some of them even my “best friends”. If I had not been open to making new friends, then some of the strong friendships I have today would not exist.

Now the lesson here is not ditch your old friends for new ones. In fact, some of your oldest friends are the ones that last forever. The lesson here is be open to new things, especially making new friendships. Some friends will not last forever, but most will. It is important to see all different kinds of people and interact with them. That’s probably the only way you discover the world.

By making friends you are developing relationships with others and it is important to do this because you need social skills all the time in life. I’m still growing up but in the past such as in pre-k and even 1st grade I did not make any good friends that I really trusted. Now I understand how to make them.

One time I got in a fight with my first two best friends. This went on for about two months. I was really upset because I like they abandoned me for someone else. At one point, I lost hope in thinking they will one day be my bestest friends. I feel like I should have known them better. They would never betray me! After a time we decided to talk things out and see what came between us. It was silly to be honest. Soon after I became great friends with their new friend. She is such a kind and funny person. Sometimes, my friends are the only reason I get up in the morning.

By becoming friends with a new person, we all stepped out of our comfort zones to experience the world. That is very special to me. I have also made some new friends that I treasure greatly. They’re sitting in front of me at the moment. If I had not stepped out of my comfort zone, I would have not met these kind hearted people. I might have even regretted not stepping out of my zone.

To think I could be sitting here without these people makes me go crazy because of how much I treasure them. My heart would be broken into a thousand pieces. Making new friends is certainly not about ditching the old ones, but it is about experiencing the world and how to really care about your friendships. We are all very lucky to be given the decision of who we want to be friends with and so my advice to you is to choose wisely.

Elegy Poem

It was sad to see you go like a blink of an eye.
All I can say is now,
What am I going to do when the best part of me was always you?
The memories we've made together.
The other day I went outside.
When I saw the moon it made me think of you.
Your glow in the darkness,
Your smooth sentences.
If I knew you were going to go,
I would have never left your side.
You always were adventurous,
The best part of my day!
Your soft smile lit up the world.
When you frown,
The whole world frowns with you.
The world stands beside you.
But most of all the best part of me was always you
You made me *me*.
I'll never forget you and how you shaped the world.
With you my world was a better place!

Hyder Ismail

Praise poem - Where I am from

I live in the city that never sleeps
Staying up having fun,
Playing games is what I do
I have a dog,
His name is bear
He is very cute,
Very friendly is what he is
I'm from a place where you speak Arabic
I don't know how,
But I can understand some
Not to light not to dark
I'm from a country called Lebanon
Living in New York is great
I'm always charged with energy
Never getting bored is my job
He is so cute
And fluffy
His name is bear
And really small
I got him in July
His birthday is in May
Michigan is where he came from

Very hyper most of the time
And sleepy
Loves to go outside
He loves his treats
Loves to play with other dogs
Looks like a fox but he's a dog
Loves a tummy scratch
His favorite snack is bacon strips
Ran away from home once
And came straight back into my hands
I can't feel the feeling of losing him again
Loves to play in the grass
Also gets very messy
So happy he's in my life
Can't imagine what I would do without
having him in my hands
I love playing with him
Loves the snow
Can't forget the first time seeing him in
the snow
He is 3 years old
The best dog, Bear

Justyn Jimenez

Ode to Basketball

I am always active because of you
You make me feel free
That jumpy feeling inside
The energy stored in me boosts up when I play with you
You make me feel confident whenever I shoot you
You build me with inner strength
You give me a chance to play with others
Friends, family
And others I do not know but get to build new relationships through our shared love of you
If not for you I probably be lazy
When I met you it was time for a change
I knew I had to spend more time outside
Whenever it is the last shot I feel I can make it
The moves I've learned through practicing together
There is no way I can miss
I can now teach others what I learned with you
When I dribble I can feel the swift breeze
When I watch you play I can feel excitement through my veins
Watching my favorite player jump from the floor and make a slam dunk with you
On the wooden floor
Your bouncy orange rugged texture
I will never stop playing with you
As we will play in any season
Even age won't stop our connection
My love for you will never cease and will remain unconditional

The Chain

John had woke up one morning as it was his birthday. He tiptoed down the stairs of his house to be surprised. His family had surprised him with plenty of gifts and more. His grandpa had even arrived to his party and he gave John one of his most prized possessions: his chain that he wore in the war for the United States of America. It is said that the chain had kept him alive through this war. This was a very exciting moment for John because he knew how much the chain had meant to his grandpa and now for it to be his was exciting. He had rushed to his room to take a better look at the chain as his mom was cooking dinner for his birthday. He had put the chain on and then had fell into a different world where he was about to take off into space. Three, Two, One and there he was blasted off to space. He had seen people he had not known. They looked like astronauts. He had the same suit as the other astronauts. John had been trapped through this chain he had thought because the second he had put it on in his room he had been put into the spaceship. They had talked about exploring mars which at this time had never been explored before. He had then realized that they he had been in a different time and they were the

astronauts that had explored Mars years ago and died. Then all of a sudden they had arrived to Mars. Then, they all had crept out the spaceship, even John. John had then seen something that seemed to fly over them when he called the team they were too busy getting Martian soil samples. Then, the ship which looked as if it had aliens in it. I yelled out run to my team members as we ran as fast as we could into the spaceship as we could. Then as we were getting ready to escape we suddenly had been shot with a beam in the engine John had experience with mechanics so he went down to the left engine as they were trying to get away. But there was not enough power in the right engine for them to escape. But shockingly John and the tools he was supplied with was enough for them to escape back to Earth. Then suddenly John had awoken as he thought to himself this chain really is magical. It had saved good people that deserve to live there life John had thought to himself.

Reema Kaur

Non-fiction piece

My Beloved Mother

My mom is someone I can't live without. Clearly without her I wouldn't be in this world in the first place. I have made a lot of memories with her in the last year, and the years before that too. We went to our home country India, where I got to see my relatives. Let's just say that I was really happy. It's been a long time since the last time I visited them, and I can't wait to experience an adventure there. We were finally on the plane ready to head off to see our relatives. My mom began to realize that I was a little too fidgety in my seat. She was the first one who realized that I was scared to be on the plane. I always wondered how mothers can be this observant of their kids. It always made me curious how in movies, mothers know exactly what their kids are doing. Though I am not surprised that my mom knows I am scared. She held my hand, comforting me, telling me that everything was okay and that she was there. I relaxed. They say the journey is more important than the destination, and my mother comforting me during my journey, that was the best thing ever. I am happy I have my mom with me. This memory is something I have that reminded me of a mother's love for her child. It may seem like it is not of importance to some people, but I know I couldn't ask for anything more. She is the most important person in my life, and I really want to show how much I love her.

((^_^)/ * ((^_^)/ * ((^_^)/ * (^ - ^) * \(^-^\) * \(^-^\) * \(^-^\)

ODE of 'Painting'

My journey started at the beginning.
With a pure white canvas,
and my paint and brushes ready.
With the very first paint on my paintbrush,
I took over the whole canvas,
with a layer of blue.
With the flick of my brush,
my mood of the color changes.
Swish! Swish! as my brush stroked white
clouds.
With each stroke, came a trail of white.
My sky view was complete.

Next up came the details of the land.
To the big details, to the small ones,
I added flowers, buildings, birds,
streets, lights, the sun, you name it.
With my wet brush,
I coated a layer of protection to my
canvas.
As it was a precious artifact to me.
Four hours had passed by.
There goes my initials 'Reema K.'
Before you know it, I was done.
I said "Wow.....it's ugly! Need to start all
over!"

Bela Kirjak

Elegy

I run down the road
The dirt flies in a cloud.
I turn back one time tears flying.
There is a huge stone cross
A figure looms in the distance, watching me go.
Another gust of wind The sun sets red, glistening. I run off the road
The grass gets thicker The trees get taller. Then I climb.
All the way to the top
The full moon hints a light atop me.
My heart seems to tear in two.
My tears mix with the rain.
I think back.
To the beginning.
Before the bullet hit your chest
Before the fight
Before I wished you dead.
I see you in the sky.
A final glance upon the forest.
Then I jump.
I do not fall.
I rise up in the heavens to join you

There was a cold and damp feeling in the dark alleyway which I walked into, a single street lamp flickering, until it blew out completely. I took out my only source of light. A torch that flickered and bounced with bright orange flames. The light led me to a wet vehicle, most likely a tank that was crashed into here during The Storming. Or the rebellion. I don't know which is which, all I know is that they were both poor causes to fight for. I climbed over the tank, climbing deeper into the sinister darkness, grappling towards me, and shutting out all light. Then I heard the voices. The Storming. "CHECK IN THERE!" I bolted deeper into the room, until I found a fire escape. I pulled the ladder down, resulting in a large CRRREEEAAAKKKKKK. Uh-oh. I climbed hastily up the flights, seeing flashlights search below. I scrambled up to the last flight and looked over to the city. Ashes. Fire and ashes were all I could see. And The Storming. All of them. I hopped from house, to house, trying not to be seen. My black clothes would not be enough. Below, a fire was spreading around the street. I hopped down and ran into a deep trench. It was called the East River at some point, but now it's just dried mud. Mud and ashes. Inside I ran into a cavern against the side and pushed a large boulder over the entrance. Inside there were glowing embers. There was a box of canned food, water, and a couple of vaccinations. I threw some dried leaves into the fire, resulting in a blast of flames and smoke. I walked, past the fire into the tunnel behind it. It was covered with a small ripped up curtain. Inside the next room were three sleeping bags, a desk full of blueprints and plans, and a wall, with fragments of the past tacked on them. One was a painting of blossoming trees, flowers, and a bright blue sky with puffy white clouds. There was also a photo of a

creature called a butterfly. There was also a piece of bark and a journal. I stepped into the room, two of the sleeping bags taken. Up on the ground there was a large *BOOM!* I looked up, a small pebble falling off the ceiling. *CRASH! BOOM!* The roof of the cave lurched. *Oh god*, I thought to myself.

Cynthia Kyaw

Elegy - Grandfather

When I heard that you were in the hospital,
my heart dropped.
Doctors said that you very sick so I was even
more worried.
My grandfather was a strong man and I looked
up to him.
He was my role model, my everything.
It was said that he was getting weaker and
weaker.
Due to this, my father went to my country,
Burma to take care of him.
I couldn't go because I had school.
Instead, every day, my father would facetime
us (my sister and I).
We saw him with an oxygen mask to help him
breathe.
He was trying to stay strong so he could travel
the world with us.
Sadly, he couldn't make it through.
When I heard the sad news, I burst into tears.
The only thing that I could think of is, "how
am I going to survive this cruel world?"

Praise Poem

I am 5 feet 3 inches
Known for my drawings
I am from the golden land
Live in a banana-colored house
Speak Burmese
I have short hair
It is dark
Dark as the night sky
I am multilingual
I tower over everyone else like a
skyscraper
Like to draw eyes
I am "funny"
I have one sister
I have an Uplifting personality
I am Cynthia

Gautama

Luna was coming home after a long day of work. Her boss has been nagging her all day. He was using her as a servant telling her to buy him a quad long shot grande in a venti cup, half-calf-double-cupped-no-sleeve- salted-caramel-mocha-latte with 2 pumps of vanilla; substitute 2 pumps of white chocolate mocha, for mocha and substitute 2 pumps of hazelnut, for toffee-nut-half-whole-milk and half breve with no whipped cream extra hot, extra foam, extra caramel drizzle, with extra salt, add a scoop of vanilla bean powder with light ice, well stirred. He went on to demand she print him 200 flyers and many more jobs. Luna arrives home and goes straight to her room. She starts kneeling on her bed in front of a shelf. What was that she saw? It was one of her gods, Gautama. Gautama is one of the five Buddhas. There's a catch! It was personally made for solely her family. The objective of Gautama for Luna's family is to keep a peaceful, happy family.

Luna was kneeling and saying, “Grandpa, grandma, dad, mom, please be happy and healthy.” Then, she made her wish, “I wish that my boss would stop using me as his personal servant. I go there to work, not to be bossed around all day. Not only do I do chores for him, but I also have to do the chores the CEO has assigned him to do so please help me the great and powerful Gautama.” Although Gautama can’t “hear”, Luna, knows that he is listening telepathically. The statue is very special to her family, it was uniquely painted. The robe was painted red to show in-depth what Gautama wears. Additionally, the base where Gautama is sitting is painted green to symbolize peace.

The next day, Luna goes to work drained and tired knowing the same thing will happen every single day. All of a sudden, she doesn't hear anyone saying. “Hey Luna, come over!” Instead, Luna hears, “good morning Luna and did you sleep well?” Then the time comes, she gets called over by her boss.

“Good day to you Luna, I've got some exciting news for you,” says her boss. Luna thinks, “What could it be? Am I getting fired?” Her boss goes on and says, “The CEO and I have decided to promote you to team manager!” Luna had said to herself “Gautama I am very thankful to you for changing my life. I am in great debt to you. How shall I repay you?” The cheerful Luna comes back from work and kneels just like yesterday. She looks at Gautama with a bright smile and just stares for a good five minutes. Luna knows that it is just the start of her luck. She knows that she shouldn't overdo it. Starting from today, it is Luna’s time to shine.

Natalie Lai

I ALMOST DIED

My feet pounded against the hardwood floor. I was three. Someone told me it was a smart idea to run around the house. Stupidly, I believed him. The scene went a little something like this.

“Hey. Nat. Did you know that you should run around the house? It’s really fun, and mom will get mad.” My brother hisses. I don’t think he would know what could’ve happened either. He was only five at the time. Although it’s hard to believe he didn’t know the consequences. I sure didn’t.

“MMM. Ok.” I replied. I didn’t know much at the time. But running in endless loops around the house seemed good to me.

My small feet thumped against the floor, my eyes focusing on nothing but the red blur of a T-shirt that was my brother.

“Slow poke!” he remarks. I remember that was his favorite insult to me when I was young. It was more or less the *only* thing he’d say to me. I was dumb though. I didn’t mind.

“Cuidado.” my mom warns me. I paid no attention. It’s like sometimes people’s words slip through my mind. They go through one ear and out the other. Just like in math class.

I ran as fast as I could, my vision blurring as I accelerated. Thinking back, I probably wasn’t even that fast. I mean, even now I can’t even reach half the laps required for the pacer test. Back then I was three. How fast could I really have gone?

Well, here’s the answer; Fast enough to have seriously injured myself.

At first it was all laughs and smiles. We were just running. Until I couldn’t anymore. And I suddenly was no longer in my house. I was in the doctor’s office, or hospital, or something... the details are quite blurry.

I woke up, with a new facial feature- a giant gash on my forehead. Ok, it wasn’t *giant*, per say, but I still have the scar.

I didn’t even know I was bleeding or anything. I told you already, I was not the brightest. The result of this injury was me bashing into the corner of a wall. I cried. A lot. I mean, who could help it? I was having a needle and thread penetrate my skin... if that’s what stitches is, right? I’m no doctor but I promise you it hurts.

“Cool.” my brother smirks.

“Oh yeah, Nat. Like Harry Potter.” my older cousin Rachel exclaims.

“Mmm?” I grumble. I hated it. An ugly scar on my forehead? Was I going to even live? What if the opening got infected of something?

I had a million questions. I didn’t even know if I was okay. After a week though, I was just fine. I remember that the doctor gave me fun Band-Aids. Not the normal tan ones and stuff. I remember I’d be excited every morning thinking about which Band-Aid I would wear next. Kind of like someone being excited about picking out a new outfit every morning.

My favorite one had a print of ducks on it. I always contemplated on whether I should save that one for last or not. It was a big deal, okay guys? Adorable Band-Aids made my suffering so much better. I’m still here today so I do suppose that scar did me no harm.

Micah Liu

Ode to Baseball

You make me feel alive
Bring me up when I am down
Through the darkest times
You are always at my side
The sounds
The crack of the bat
The smack of the glove
Crowds roaring
Vendors selling
Peanuts! Peanuts!
Hot Dogs! Hot Dogs!
Ah, the Sounds
The beautiful sounds of baseball
It gets me ready
It gets me pumped
It's so exciting
World Series Game Seven
Down by three
Bottom of the ninth
Bases loaded
Two strikes
"And he sends one deep in the air to left"
"It's gone a Home Run!"
"Game Over!"
"Mets Win the World Series"
I love baseball

Elegy Poem to Kellen

By the first day, you were diagnosed
I barely got to see you at all
But I do know a lot,
You were a warrior
You didn't know but that's what your
name meant
You lived up to your name
You fought through
Lived till three
That expected by nobody
The last time I saw you,
I can't fully remember
You weren't doing so well
But I had a little time to see you
Your cute chubby face
Your tiny little feet
You couldn't talk yet
But I don't know if you ever would have
been
I was crushed to hear you passed
I was at home playing with my friend
My dad pulled me over
He broke to me the news
It felt like I was stabbed right in the chest
I was in darkness and despair
You were gone forever...

The Diary of Micah Liu

Saturday, April 6th, 2019

It was the day, the big day, the first game. I got up early put on my uniform and my hat then hopped into the car. We drove up to the field and I started warming up. The sounds of the smack of the glove and the crack of wood. I step on the mound digging in my feet to get comfortable. The game starts and I am doing ok. I get taken out after just $\frac{1}{3}$ of the game because of too many walks "That was my biggest disappointment" The game ended in a tie, which isn't bad but I think I could have done better.

Sunday, April 7th, 2019

We waited in long lines that went all the way back then curved to the beginning. We waited, person by person, minute by minute, hour by hour, we finally got almost to the front of the line we checked the time, oh wait – it was only five minutes. Whatever, we battled and battled the heat and the feeling of wanting to drop to the floor and finally we got inside and they gave it to us, we got it, the glorious, amazing... BOBBLEHEAD. We got to our seats and watched the game and the other team started hitting ball after ball, “they really want to hurt us.” Later on, when everyone left, only the true fans were still there, unless the other people had something to do, or, I don’t know, but our team started coming back. They almost won, almost.

Saturday, April 13th, 2019

It was 5:30 in the morning and it was pouring rain. I wondered if my game would get rained out, I hope not. I slumped back into bed. I woke up in the morning and it wasn’t raining! The sun was out and it was shining. I leaped out of bed and ran into my parent’s room and said: “The game is still on right?” My mom shook her head. NOOOOOOOOOOO!!! I decided I was still going to play ball so I called up some of my friends and told them to meet me at the park. They came and we had a game. My friend pitched to me and he always hits me with the pitch so I stayed alert and I actually hit it! “I can’t believe I’m here writing to you with no scratches or bruises. I actually made it!” When everyone left I still wanted to play baseball, so I went to a field with my friends, again and we played more baseball. So, that day wasn’t so bad after all.

Philip Lopez

The Teardrop Ring

As I entered the doors to the airport, my mother gave me this beautiful teardrop ring. She handed me this as a Japanese tradition, and my sisters got pearl necklaces instead. I departed from Japan, an eighteen hour flight to get to New York, leaving my family behind, and starting a new life. I walked into my apartment and scanned my room. It looked pretty simplistic, but I soon realized I had very thin walls as I heard my loud neighbors screaming at each other for who knows what reason.

All of a sudden, I feel a vibration on my ring finger. Looking down, I see a flash of blinding green light. It smelled as if something was burning, but the ringing coming from it sounded relaxing. Once it was over, standing in front of me I see the spirits of my ancestors. I was in shock, unsure of what to do because I didn't understand what was happening. They all glowed a strange neon green, and the oldest, Hiroshi, began talking to me. My mom had shown me pictures of all of them that she kept in an album, so I knew who everyone was. "Etsuko," he said, "You've traveled a very long way from home. We're here to help you create a new life for yourself, so you can find new opportunities that our family has not had before." I had so many questions, I didn't know where to start. "How is this possible?" I asked. They all smiled, as if they knew everything I was going to say. My great-grandmother, Hana, was the one to answer this for me. "Your mother asked the exact same question the very first time she spoke to us.

Every time we die, each of our spirits gets absorbed into this ring to help future generations of our family to thrive. Your mother thought you would be the one to need us most, as you're in an entirely new country, nearly halfway across the world. She made a wise choice," Hana replied with a smile. I talked to them until I decided to go to sleep, and they told me to tap the ring thrice if I were ever to need them. However, they told me, I could only call in desperate times, or else they would be forced to stop appearing. With that thought, I laid down in my bed and fell asleep.

I woke up feeling like there were needles picking at my brain. The sun shone brightly on my face. I ate breakfast and went looking for a job. There was a supermarket across the street hiring new cashiers, so I decided to go check it out. I knew it would be difficult, because I had a thick Japanese accent whenever I spoke English, but I had to make the effort. I walk into the store, and I asked around to find out where I could apply for the job. He led me to a small office, where the manager of the supermarket was located. We talked, but the interview started going downhill very quickly. I asked to be excused for a second, and in their break room, I hurriedly tapped the ring three times. There was no answer. I tapped again and again, but no one appeared. I threw it down, getting mad, and it broke. I had lost them forever. I didn't understand why.

Ode to Sushi

The raw fish inside
Rice on the outside
And maybe with seaweed
Eat it with soy sauce
It will taste salty
Delicious in general
Freshly made
Even better
Sushi is my favorite food
Rice perfectly cooked
Different combinations
So many to eat

Spicy tuna
California roll
Philadelphia roll
Dragon roll
Spicy Salmon
Sushi is so tasty
Many people eat it in Japan
Eat it with chopsticks
Or with your hands
Delicious food
Amazing food
Wonderful food
Glorious sushi
I wish I was eating it right now

Fiona McLaughlin

Procrastination

Tick-Tock, the clock in the background.
As I sketch on the side of my page.
My mind is freaking out, telling me to work, to work!
Full of anxiety, so much anxiety, to finish this one assignment.
And another.
And another.
And another.
But that one's just small, I'll be fine. I've got time.
It's eleven o'clock and I've done one thing.
Just one thing. ONE THING.
I have a headache, my hand aches, I'd really like some sleep.
I NEED to go to sleep.
I fall into bed at one a.m.
Now, there is no way, no possible way I will put it off again tomorrow.
I mean, unless I have less homework tomorrow.

A "Gift"

It was almost seven years ago now. The tiny amount I can remember of her etches tracks of tears down my cheeks. But there is one day that I can recall, clear as day. The room was bright, and everyone's mood was quite the opposite. There was a woman standing on a small platform calling names out to come up and speak, and to cry. I was rather distracted, just until she called my name.

My feet blindly carried me up to the platform, my brother at my side. I still didn't get it, how I suddenly felt so heavy inside. Terror and fright and confusion and so much sadness. Everyone, everywhere, looked terrible, even my brother James. I knew what happened, although not exactly. I knew why I was there. But I didn't really get it. I was only five, so people weren't surprised when I didn't seem quite so awful. I let my feet walk up the steps. No one would want to go on a stage right then, after all that, especially when all eyes were on me and James alone, everyone with the same teary eyes and the same soft smile. But I had loved her, though after all these years, I barely remember.

The woman on the stage, I never got her name, started talking about my grandmother teaching little kids and her art, as well as her joy and her love. They were nice words, but nothing sank into my mind but my own name and the bittersweet smile across the woman's soft face.

"...and here is her special gift to her two only grandchildren, James and Fiona McLaughlin, the children of her amazing son."

A light smattering of applause echoed across the room. Her hand reached down behind the curtain on the underside of her table and searched for a second, a second of silence throughout the giant hall. A toy flower plushie with a music box in the base and a face between the magenta petals emerged from behind the faded red and golden curtain. She handed it to me, and James stood quietly behind me, with far more control than many nine year olds possess. Part of me noticed the tears in his eyes, but I mostly wanted to see the flower as much as I could in case they took it back. The woman silently reached over and flipped a miniature black switch on the flower pot.

A beautiful song echoed out of the small speakers, filling and enchanting the otherwise deathly silent room. I knew that song, even at just five. She had sung it to me, my mother had sung it to me, and I had sung along. It was a song that made me feel wanted and loved, although now it brings tears to my eyes.

"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray..."

The music sang so loudly in my ears. My eyes began to glisten with soft tears that, after a few seconds, began to pour across my face in waves. I think that was when I truly realized that I would never see her again. I would never hear her soft voice, the voice I had loved so much, again. The first tear down my cheek was when I understood both love and overwhelming pain.

Alone

The thought of losing you is strange in my mind,
Like the thoughts of the never-ending universe
Or of not being me.
I know it would not be like
Any deaths we've known
Not uncomfortable or awkward
But unforgettable.
Waterfalls would stream across my face,
Drowning me in pain.
My reality would be in flames
Burning me alive
Crushing all my memories
With a single thought and a single tear
The thought that you're not out there
The idea that you can't help

The feeling that no matter how many times I call
You won't pick up the phone
You won't be there to help me up
Or make me feel alright
Not even there to tease me
Or to make me wish you just left me alone
Anything would be better than being alone without
you.
I wish more than anything
That I won't see you go
But that chance is a speck,
A speck of dust in a junkyard,
And a speck of sadness in the world
But the world to that single speck.
That single speck of me.

Lejla Mulic

Praise Poem

My hair is a honey waterfall that
rushes down to my shoulders.

My eyes paint the blue waves of the Adriatic
Sea.

I am so tall that I can touch the puffy white
clouds filled with dreams and wonder
My eyelashes are long waves that almost
make my face full.

My pale white skin has blushes of strawberry
red on my cheeks.

I am from a place where mountains cast long
shadows across the landscape,
Montenegro, which means “*Black Mountain*”
in Latin is where I am from.

Mountain Goats race the wind as they climb
the treacherous mountains motivated to seek
the horizon.

I live in between the canyons that fulfill
Astoria.

I live near Astoria Park that has bright green
and tall trees that squirrels run up on.

Haiku

Where I am from?

*This place has nature
I am from Montenegro
It is beautiful*

Ode to Ice cream

Oh ice cream, my favorite dessert,
fluffy,
cold,
creamy,
sweet,
refreshing,
and delicious!

As I lick you I feel a sense of refreshment
run through me.

I fulfill my mouth with flavors of joy.
I would climb a mountain just for you,
to tickle my taste buds.

With a little whip cream and a cherry on
top you brighten my day.

There are so many flavors,
Oh, too much to count.

Rainbow sprinkles jazz me up!

I can eat you any time of the day,
Breakfast, lunch or even late at night!

I would never get sick of eating you,
I can eat you every day

I have no problem eating you in the winter
even though it is very cold.

When you go in my mouth I feel the rich,
creamy texture melt.

That is the best feeling on Earth to me.

No other dessert compares with you, such
as

cake, cupcakes, or brownies.

I love how you make me get into this
happy mood

Gregory Onaldin

The Big Bad Teacher

Being a student for Mrs. Moron was like poking a bear with a stick. It was like being a Billie goat trying to get across the bridge with the troll under it. No matter how many times you tried, you couldn't get past her and it didn't help that all the other students were her assistant trolls, who made sure you couldn't take a boat across the lake. Come to think of it, she was kind of like the witch in Hansel and Gretel. Well, I mean she didn't try to capture and eat me but still, I wouldn't be surprised if she did. I always felt like after school she would ask me to talk and when everyone left, she would stick a bag over my head, drag me to her house, chop me up into little pieces and feed me to her dog. I felt like every day it was a new insult. "Gregory, you're worthless. Gregory, a bag of worms is smarter than you. Wow, you're really dumb. I don't know how you got into gifted." And, yes, those words in that order came out of her mouth.

There are bad teachers, but Mrs. Moron was the devil. Trust me, I can prove it. One day in math we were learning about multiplying and dividing fractions, for the ten thousandth time in a row, even though it was gifted, and we were supposed to be learning new topics. As usual, I was the one who she called on. Of course, I got the answer "wrong" and Mrs. Moron followed with an insult which was "Gregory, I feel bad for your mother and father, I would consider putting you up for adoption, if I were them." Those words spewed out of her mouth like bullets coming out of a gun. Before I knew it, tears were coming out of my eyes as fast as people running away from well, Mrs. Mora

Luckily, my parents realized what I was going through at that school and put me in another school the following year. Mrs. Moron got fired and went back to hiding under her bridge terrorizing all the other Billie goats that tried to walk across it. Even though it was a horrible experience it taught a valuable lesson. If there is a house made out of candy run, run very far away from that house.

The Last Time I Saw You

The last time I saw you was in my head
wondering why you decided to leave us,
wondering why you decided to leave HER! I
know it wasn't suicide but it feels like it was.
You risked your life for what. You thought he
wasn't going to love you anymore. HE WILL
ALWAYS LOVE YOU! He loves you now that
you're gone, and he will NEVER STOP
LOVING YOU! The last time I saw you was in
my head thinking what life would be like with
you around. What if you came out healthy?
WHAT IF THE STUPID HOSPITAL LADY

DIDN'T HAVE THAT FAKE LOOK ON
HER FACE LIKE SHE CARED, WHEN
SHE DIDN'T! What if you didn't let me
down, her down, him down? WHAT IF
YOU WERE JUST ALIVE! Even though I
never met you it feels like I have.

Sonam Pema

Piece

White sheet of paper,
Pencil all ready for use,
But what shall I write?

Dear big sis,
You always cheer me up when I'm sad
Being a big sister might be stressful for you,
But I'll always be there for you.
Our parents expect more from me than they do
to you,
I'm less experienced than you, too.
However much we fight,
or however much I call you a fool,
I will still love you.
Love, your best friend till the end.

Who I am

I might be small,
but my heart is big.
I have short hair,
that I wish to grow long.
Even with my small eyes,
I can find the goodness in everyone.
When I am with friends,
I am the bravest girl you will meet,
But in front of a crowd,
I become weak.
In other words,
I am not perfect,
But that's okay.

Ava Pusing

My Red Camera

I run down the stairs, with my backpack on my back, excited for the new adventure my family and I will be going on. My father was by the trunk of our truck, asking my mother if we were missing anything. “Water? Extra clothes? OH! Do we have my running shoes?” I look at my mother as she checks each bag to answer my father's questions. I call for her and she looks up. “Are you ready, anak?” I nod and walk towards the car door, open it, and sat next to my sister, who was on her phone. I check my belongings to see if I have everything I needed. Once I finished, I waited for my father and my mother to enter the vehicle that would take us to our new adventure.

About 15 minutes later, my father enters the car, after my mother. We all then clicked on our seatbelts in a synchronized manner. “Hey, did you bring your camera?” I heard my father say from the front of the car. “Duh!” I joked. I glanced at my lap, where my red Canon camera lay. I turned it on and watched as my fingers silently guided themselves to each memory, letting my mind remember each moment that I captured inside the camera. As I flipped through each piece of footage, I stopped at one video that caught my mind’s attention. It was the video that my father took on the day he announced the camera was being passed down to me. I pressed play and saw the ten-year-old me, standing in the middle of our apartment living room, staring at my father as my mother sang “*Happy birthday to you...*” I smiled and I could hear my father let out a light chuckle from the driver's seat. “You didn’t delete that did you?” I giggle and look back at the camera. Behind the small 5x4 screen I hear my father say “*Open your present, anak.*” I observe as the younger me crouches down and opens a tiny package. Once I managed to open it, a small black card the size of a toenail falls onto my hand. “*Tatay, what is this?*” I hear. I remember how wide my father smiled that day, lips going from ear to ear. “*Once we put that new card into this camera, you could be able to create new memories with your family when you grow up, and you can pass it down to your children when they’re your age.*” My face lights up with joy as I squeal, my pixelated body jumping around the screen. I watch my body stop and run to my father to wrap my short arms around him. I pause the video, and I unexpectedly see a drop of water drop roll off my face onto the screen. I wipe it off as fast as I could and turn off the camera and look outside the car window.

I remember how during that day, I vowed to never lose this camera. I told myself that I would place all of my special memories in the camera, bad or good. I would share every memory and keep them. I turned the camera on again and looked back on the memories that my father and I have already preserved. I pass photos and videos related to birthdays, camping sites, hiking trails, and so on. I look outside the window and ask my father, “Where are we going next, captain?” He looks through the rear mirror and says. “Going to fill that camera with new memories, duh!”

Lance Rodriguez

Heirloom

My family heirloom are these sort of red half-moon things made out of wood called JiaoBei that answer yes or no questions. We use them by throwing them onto the floor and they have special meanings. For example, when both of them are facing up, it means the Taoist gods are laughing. I believe in both Christianity and Taoism because one side of my parents is Christian, and the other side of my family is Taoist. However, I mainly practice Christianity. Anyway, when both of the objects are facing down, the answer is no, and when one is facing up and the other down, the answer is yes. This got passed down from generation to generation. First, from my great grandfather down to my grandfather, to my ma and now to me. This heirloom is extremely important to us, since it is sort of a gateway for us to contact our ancestors and gods and ask yes or no questions. We hold this dearly as we keep safely on top of our altar.

Another heirloom that we hold dearly as well is the Santo Nino that we keep safely in our bedroom. It is carved out of wood and we hold it since we believe it to have special abilities. It was also used in a Christian procession in the Philippines when they were walking to the church. For example, when you kiss the Santo Nino you get the blessing of god and you ask for anything you want. We hold this dearly since during the procession, my mother was the one that held the Santo Nino during the procession. However, one of its arms have been lost since then. Without trying to stir up controversy, another relic that we held is the same statue but made out of ivory. In Asian culture, the ivory is held to be expensive, although it is illegal here in the U.S.

Another relic that we hold dearly is the picture of my grandfather before he died. We keep this picture as it reminds us of him and whenever we look up at the picture of him in the altar we think of him and remember him. We keep his picture along with his father's and our ancestors pictures. In addition to this relic, one of my grandfather's family's things is a Buddha since their side of the family was Buddhist. We keep this Buddha along with an incense bowl where we pray and a guan yin ma which is a statue of a woman goddess. This is important to us since the statue of Buddha was handed down from my ancestors and also is made out of bronze as the statue of guan yin ma was made of clay. The last relic that my family has that holds some relevance towards our family is my mother's Jade ring. Jade in Asian culture is commonly known to be expensive and is extremely popular. This Jade ring that my mother has is important since my great grandmother gave it to her and she was the most kind-hearted woman in the world. Her picture is posted on the altar as well to pray for her as well. This shows the different relics/heirlooms that I have and how they will remain as treasure in my heart.

Shayra Shoshi

BAD BIRTHDAY AND JOURNEY THROUGH PRE-K

Personal Narrative

I was two years old. It was my birthday. I kept smiling because my dad kept telling me that I would get to see my mom again that day. I heard that I would be a big sister. I still didn't fully understand. I understood that I would be a big sister, but what why was my mom needed? Was my mom leaving me and taking care of my little sister instead of me? I was just happy that I would see my mother again. The next day, I saw my mother. For some reason, she seemed different. She seemed tired.

I saw my little sister. "Ma!" I screamed in my baby voice. She was really happy to see me. At least she had a smile on her face, and she was calling me to her. I was about to jump into her lap until I saw that it was already occupied with a little baby. I just did not stop calling her 'baby' until I was three or four years old. I never knew that she had a name besides that. I was just standing there while my baby sister was getting all the attention. No one seemed to care about me. I could've just walked out of the room with no one noticing.

For the next couple of years, my mom spent a lot of time with my sister. I used to get bored and do crazy things like dipping my mom's phone in water along with some potato chips. I got in lots of trouble for that. My mom was yelling at me a lot. I couldn't understand. Why did my mom yell at me all the time, instead of my sister? There I was, spending the rest of the day doing nothing, or crying.

When I was three years old I figured out what a birthday was supposed to be. There was a party, and the party was supposed to be for the person whose birthday it was. That year, we had a birthday party, but it was just a family party. The year after that, we had an actual princess birthday party. If my sister wasn't born on my birthday, it would've been all mine. I remembered that day when my sister was born, and I wasn't so important. Thanks to my sister, I lost one of the very few days of my life where I actually get to feel important. Out of one hundred percent of the attention I am supposed to get through my birthdays all my life, my sister has to always take away fifty percent of the attention.

When I was three, my family and I went to Bangladesh. There, at the age of three, I was really crazy to go to school. One day, I did, but I had no idea what was going on. I got bored. My mom used to try to sit with me and make me write my ABCs and 123s. I would listen to her, but whenever I was my cousins playing with the roosters, or running around, I joined them. One time, my cousin was reading a book. My mom said. Look, he is reading, why don't you write? I used to sit down as my mom gave me my alphabet and number writing book.

The next year, I was in Pre- K. It was my first year of school. I made my first masterpiece with paint. I scribbled colorful paint into random parts of my paper. I remember that even I didn't know what I was doing. I was just glad that I was painting. The artwork smells like Pre-K. There was also Show and Tell Day on Fridays. I brought my stuffed animals. I still remember that I sat at the yellow table for lunch. In the beginning of every school day, we would unpack, and the first thing we did was eat lunch. Pre- K was half of every school day, so my school day started from the afternoon. Others had their school days in the mornings. After eating, we would dance to warm up for the day. My teacher would read us a book. In center time, I would play with blocks, paint, draw, or play kitchen. In the drawing section, I wrote random

digits from my mom's phone number, my sister, and my age. I wrote all the words that randomly came to the top of my head. Every day when I got home, I used to play teacher. I had a chalkboard in my house. On the chalkboard, I wrote all the letters and numbers that I could think of. I taught them what the letters are called, and what sound they make. My mom was sitting on the bed trying to pretend that she was learning from what I was teaching. My sister was on her lap taking a nap.

HEIRLOOM

The diary that has been passed on from generations to generations at last, would be mine. As my dad took out the diary, my hands couldn't stop moving. A smile appeared on my face. I felt that I was dreaming. I was now officially the owner of this diary. In a language that I had recently learned how to read and write, words that showed my grandfather's feelings were written. He wrote about his sorrows, and times of laughter. He wrote his poems. He wrote about his experiences being a poet. I knew that this diary would be the key to me learning about life during his time. I would be able to learn about life when war was going on. This would be my chance to learn how my grandfather was a really pious man, how he was a poet, and the professor of a university. As my dad was about to hand it to me, my teeth clattered, as my hands shook. I touched the smooth grey cover. The peach colored pages managed to stay straight. I would now be the owner of my grandfather's secrets of his life. The way he solved issues, and hopefully, I would be able to borrow his ways to being wise. I would be able to use this chance as my way to being inspired. According to my dad, I am aloud to continue that diary. I asked my dad to repeat what he said. I couldn't believe. Now I get to write in a book that was passed on for generations, and will be passed on for generations. My generation in the future will see what I wrote! I now felt famous. As I turned the pages, I saw the neatest handwriting of Bengali ever. It could be noticed that he used a pen with a lot of ink, but the ink did not scatter, and go all over the page. Instead, book was neat. Now, it is my turn to keep the book with a lot of value to my generation, and I had promised keep it safe. As I kept flipping through the pages and reading, curiosity started booming in me. I realized that the diary opens up many possibilities for me. As I turned to the first pages of the diary, the sweet scent of fragrant exposed itself. It could also be something that can help me learn about Bangladesh's history.

The diary was first passed on from my grandfather, to my father, and now to me. I was now responsible for it, and responsible for passing it onto the next generation. I would be the first girl to hold onto and write in that diary. I predicted being known throughout my future generation because of being the first girl to hold onto it. The diary made me realize how lucky I am. I used to complain about being the older kid, but being given the responsibility of the diary was too much of the honor.

Jeremy Tang

Ode to My Dog

You're the only one I know
who doesn't care about what I've done
or what I will do
you just look at me perk your ears
and slightly tilt your head.
Every time I look behind me
I see your fluffy face
and your tail held high
wagging from side to side.
When the world's against me
you still come walking over
to try and comfort me
and nudge me with your wet nose

reminding me to keep going on in life.
Whenever I sit down in a chair
whether I'm doing homework
or eating dinner at the table
you hop to the chair next to me
and poke your head through my arm
wondering what is going on.
I wish you could read this
or at least understand me so
I could read it to you
no matter what anyone says or does
you're always there for me
and I'm always there for you.

Mochi (Not The Ice Cream)

One month before Thanksgiving, my mom told me and my brother something that would change our lives. Her co-worker had a litter of puppies and was selling them! My brother and I begged for weeks for a puppy and eventually our mom abided. There were four puppies and they were all white, black, and brown Shih Tzus. We chose the one named Coco. We pestered our mom for weeks and asked "When will we see her" and "When will we meet her", and finally about 13 days before thanksgiving we drove to New Jersey. My Mom's other co-worker picked her up from Houston, Texas. We went to her house and she came out and told us to go in. When we entered, a brown shaggy dog jumped on us and started licking us. It was my mom's co-worker's dog though. Coco was hiding in the corner, scared. She was white with brown areas on her back and the tips of her ears were black. "What should we name her" I asked my brother. He replied "Mochi" and then we both decided her middle name should be Akiwowo from an African song we both learned in kindergarten. We both approached her. We both held our hands out and she sniffed and licked them. My dad put a leash on her and tried to bring her back to the car. She wouldn't cooperate, so my brother carried her. She sat between me and my brother the whole car ride. Once we got to our apartment she ran straight under the table but the bottom was only five inches above the ground, so my brother couldn't crawl under to get her. We had to take a broom to try to poke her out but it didn't work so we used our roomba. After that she started to warm up to us, and now she would let us play wrestle with her and even lay down her life for us. Now her ears are gray, not black. Now she can't fit under the table. But to me, she still resembles that small shy dog in the corner I met two years ago.

Isabella Taxilaga

Family Heirloom

I walked into my mother's bedroom. It was dark and cold, so I took a sweater from her closet. I had just gone to check up on her. The hospital had just allowed the transfer, and this was my mom's first day back home. She looked weak and frail, and I've never seen her this way. I missed her so much. One year ago, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. The hospital said that she was doing better, better enough to go home. Seeing her lay there, helpless and still, I tried hard to believe what the doctor's said. I knew there was still a chance, a chance that she will be with me forever, but thinking that she won't, water filled my eyes. I tried to fight them, because I don't want my mom's comfort when I should be comforting her. I sat on the edge of the bed, lightly, trying not to disturb her. All that I focused on was the beeping of the machine that shows her heart rate. Its sound started to gradually increase. It just got louder and louder. Just when I was about to scream, my mom suddenly woke from her fourteen hour sleep.

"Sofia," she said, "I told you I don't need anybody checking up on me anymore. I'm fine."

"I know, ma. But what if you won't be?" I whispered, as my voice cracked.

There was no answer. My mom, she started to violently cough, I remember like it was yesterday. There was blood on her shirt.

"Ma, are you ok!?" I exclaimed

"Oh my gosh. Yes, yes I'm fine" she said, trying to "brush" it off.

"Ma, if you were fine you wouldn't be coughing up blood. You're supposed to be fine. You should still be in the hospi— oh my gosh, you lied!"

"I couldn't have my daughter living by herself, and I would never leave you with your father!" she yelled.

"BUT IT'S NOT ABOUT —"

"Shhh. Let me tell you something. I was just like you when I was younger. Supportive, caring, independent, and brave. When your *abuela* was on her deathbed, she told me she forced the hospital to let her go, so she could spend her final hours with me" a tear fell down her cheek.

"Ma, you never told me this"

"I know. I was upset as you are. But she loved me, just as much as I love you. In the final minutes before she died, she gave me this necklace. Then I would've always had a part of her with me. I hugged her, telling how much I love her." She delicately took the necklace off and placed it in her hand.

"Now, you will always have a part of me. Now, you give this to the generations to come, ok?" We both broke into tears. Laughing, she said, "Now let me get my rest. I love you so much, and I always will, I promise. And don't you ever stop loving me."

"I promise, ma".

That night, Sofia's mom died in her sleep. She wept for days, but she kept her promise. When Sofia was too, on her deathbed, she passed it onto her daughter, and her daughter passed it to her daughter when she was on her deathbed. And until Sofia's eyes closed forever, she never stopped loving her mom.

Elegy

It wasn't a long time ago, but it feels like
forever that I haven't seen your face
You were my biggest supporter
And now that you're gone, who's here for me
now?
Your brownish and blonde hair
All the effort you put just for me, just because
you loved me
The smell of your amazing food

That you would especially make for me
I miss every single thing about you
The smell of your perfume, your laugh
I wish that I never hurt you
That I never disrespected you
I want you back
It's hard to look at pictures of us
Without crying
But you can't come back
If only you could hear me say the words,
"I love you grandma."

William Thitithamasak

The Heirloom from The Future

Once there was a man that was sleeping. He was sleeping until he was awakened by a mechanical sound. The man could not remember most things. He just remembered his name, where he was from, his age, his family, and his job as a programmer. He looked around noticed that he was not in his house, but one that looked futuristic. Grumpy and tired, he went to his door. He found the door and peeked through the eye hole. He saw a pair of stunning red eyes looking at him and knocking on the door. But, this was not a pair of red eyes that belonged to a human. It belonged to a mechanical machine with a lion-like head. Scarred and scratched. Some of its golden paint had come off. He could see parts of the mechanical skeleton inside. He saw a latch and part of a computer near its stomach. It was rusty and had some wires sticking out of the computer. The screen of the computer said ejecting flash drive. He also saw a red flash drive on the side of the

computer. It ejected and flew off the side of the computer right into his mail slot in his door. With a “clack,” the red hard drive was on the floor in front of him. As soon as he took the red hard drive and silently tiptoed up the stairs the hunk of wires turned off... He found a futuristic looking computer in his upstairs living room. He plugged in the power cable and waited for the computer to turn on. He scanned through the Hard disk trying to find out where he was. He found the sensitive piece of data he was looking for. He was in New York USA. It was the year 3056. H had slept for over 1000 years. He rebooted the chip and placed it outside of his door where the robot sat there waiting. The mechanical machine turned on and plugged in the chip that the man rebooted. Its eyes turned from red to blue. Then, in a sensitive voice, it said “Follow me.” As the robot turned to leave, the man got dressed and followed the robot. The robot had walked into an

area that said area 51. The man saw lots of advanced machinery. The robot lifted up a finger and the doors opened. He saw many robots inside. All had different animal like features. One was a horse, one was a rabbit, but there were too many to count for him. The robot gave the man a syringe looking item which had no needle. The robot took the red chip that was in his computer to the man. On the syringe, was a place to put the hard drive. The syringe closed up as the group of mad robots came swarming at them. The man grabbed the syringe and stabbed it at the closest mad robot. The robot’s eyes came blue and said, “Passive.” The robot was on a big computer which he was putting a copy of the red hard drive in. After pressing enter, almost all of the robots became passive. Except for 1

robot. Its eyes were red still and its color was bright red too. It lunged itself at the big lion-like robot. The lion-like robot and other robots were trying to hold off the Red Robot. The red robot bit the lion-like robot and a piece of its arm came off. The man took the arm and saw a bright blue portal. As the portal became clearer, the other robots were able to get rid of the red robot. He was his lion-like friend on the

ground trying to keep its energy core on. It was badly damaged. He grabbed the robot's arm and dragged it into the portal. In a flash of light, the man saw only darkness. He opened his eyes and saw one of his arms carrying the arm of the robot. In his other, he saw a rest of it. He heard thundering footsteps up the stairs and saw his family run to him. Then he remembered it all. And from that day on, the

rusty lifeless shell of the robot has been a family heirloom. It was waiting for the one specific generation for when after the man died, he would be his grandson's grandson.

Summer Camp

Nature, friends, and stings.
Much hidden hurricane
Bug bites, scratches, bad.

Choice

A man woke up one day to find myself in a dark room. Turns out it was his bedroom. However, he had a bad feeling about it. He got out of bed and walked through the silent corridors of the house. There was a door with light coming from underneath.

And a door that had no light coming from underneath. He had to choose, he chose the door with no light. This room wasn't like his room. Even Though it was dark, he had a good feeling. He climbed on his bed and slept with his parents. In the dark room.

Ella Walsh

Flash Fiction: Ms. Ewomg's Home for Children

There was no light, nor any stable floor boards. The wild wind shook the worn out shutters, and I curled up my legs on the stiff cot. I wrapped my thin blanket tighter around me, trying to keep the frigid air out.

The small business can't close down because NOBODY dared to get close to the owner, Ms. Ewomg (pronounced EW-oh-mi-gawd). Ms. Ewomg's home for children didn't follow many safety regulations, so there was no railing on the staircase either. As the old, wrinkly lady staggered up the stairs, her long, disgusting nails screeched across the dirty wall, as if the wall was a chalkboard. I was frightened as she drew closer to me, not because of what I have heard about her, or because I've never actually heard her speak and she was mumbling, but because she was holding a rose. I heard about the rose. Legend has it that it brings bad luck to every thirteen-year-old. Makes your unlucky year *even more* unlucky. The rose eventually ends up with one petal. Once that petal falls, nobody will ever see you again, so the rumors say. Mrs. Ewomg approached me. Oh no, I thought.

"Carly, my sweet child >:)" says the creepy lady in a deep, grim, but also sarcastic voice. "Your thirteenth birthday is near. I am going to give you a rose, which you most likely know already. Those darn kids! Spilling all my tea! Figurative and literally!" She shook her head in disbelief as she touched the stains on her dress. "Well, just take it. I really don't care. You're just another stupid child! As the last petal falls.... Well, I have already said too much. It's quite obvious that you're interested, but to make your life more miserable than it already is, I'm going to keep my mouth shut! You're welcome, and thank me later. And you better... or else..."

I didn't even *want to think* about what Ms. Ewomg might do to me. I placed the rose on my dusty shelf, and waited...

Haikus

My Favorite things

I stand at the shore
Waves crashing against my
feet
But I don't want that

A bowl of candy
Many sweets and treats to
eat
But it's not enough-

Kawaii potatoes?
One that's sleeping, or
dancing?
Yes, that is PERFECT.

Suri Wang

VISIONS.

“Goo goo!” I yawn. This is my way of communicating “I’m tired” to my dear mother, who looks weary and is lacking sleep. She set me down in my crib. Am I truly that needy?

The world is enormous. There are lights. There are faces. There is sound. The world is a huge adventure playground. I am uncertain about what lies ahead.

“Gah! Gum!” I laugh with gratefulness. My mother chuckles and shows me her beautiful smile. “Haga!” I laugh. Laughing is one of the greatest parts of this foreign place. In the dreaded darkness of the womb, there was no happiness. There was only me.

BAMM! The door shuts with a bang. I am now alone. Questions fill my head. What is life? Why am I alive? What is the womb? Why do I exist? What even is the world? What is happening? I am uncertain. After all, I am just a baby! But I can’t explain how I came to be, from darkness to light.

My eyelids shut, and as soon as that happens, I get a vision. A dream. Something that I’ve never seen before.

There is pouring rain. The sky is hazy, and the morale is low. A girl who is about my cousin’s age is present. She is sobbing, crying a river. She has tears running down her face. “Why...I tried so hard! I put all my effort into this one event...why does the universe dislike me so much?” she whimpers. Her eyes are quite red. Her brother is jumping around in puddles in the rain, oblivious to what just happened. And her mom is mad at her for being so embarrassing.

“Wait. Is that...me?” My brain contemplates this. Surely it is. But as soon as I begin to realize what I have seen, I get another vision.

It is dark, but there is light. There is a picture on the screen. It is moving? My little baby brain is confused. This surely can’t be. How? Again, I spot myself. (To be honest, is that REALLY how I dress? Ugh.) Along with that, I also spot my parents. And my brother, who I have yet to meet! I also see some other people my age... who dress MUCH better. They are laughing and having fun... is life fun? Is it sad? What is growing up like? There are so many questions. Then they played games for the rest of the night. Ahhh... what a wonderful vision!

Again, I get transported. This time, it is rejection. With a letter. I eat a cup of ice cream. (16 OUNCES!) I cry for hours. I try to be happy. My mom is lecturing me, how I should be happy. But I’m not. All I can do is cry, act happy when I’m not, and spend countless hours online. I am covetous of others. Life is miserable. Losing friends. Feeling not good enough.

But soon my brain gets back into the real world, where I know I am safe and sound. The future has yet to come- so be happy. You should always be optimistic about the future. The world is not miserable. It is a mix. It is a mix for a reason.

G O N E.

The sun was beaming in the sky.
And there you laid,

A lonely crow, flying by.
in front of my eyes.

I tried to scream, to plead for help,
But nothing would escape.
Wailing and mourning till I couldn't take it anymore.
And there I was, as I dropped to the floor,

To beg for a miracle,
A seed of help.

Last I saw, you were fine,

What has happened all this time?

I quivered and shouted,
But my body was frail,
pain.

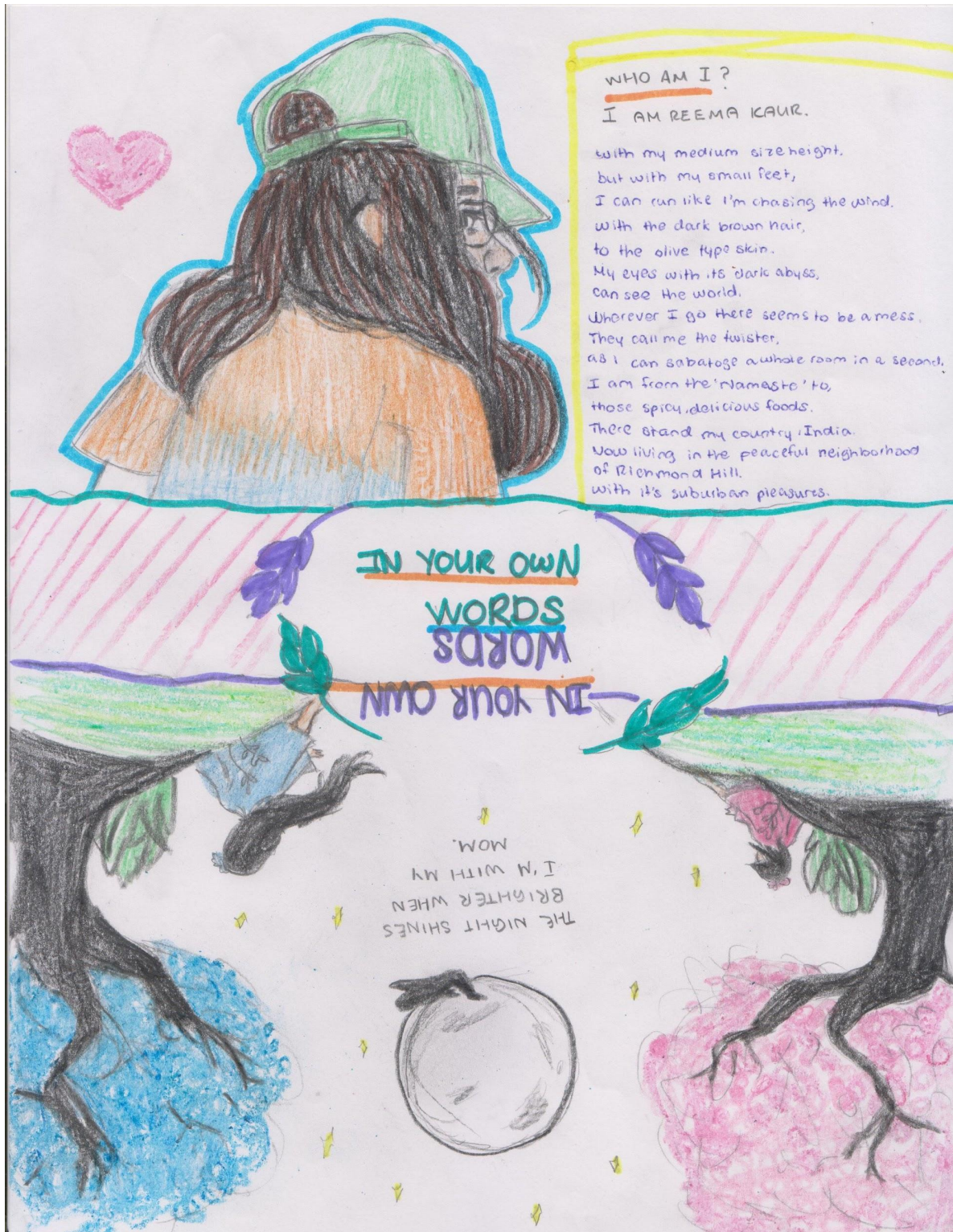
And tried not to break,
From all this

Like you, I couldn't go on!

I was verklemt by the fear,

If only I could halt time, we wouldn't be gone.

Class 504



Freedom to the Next Level

They wanted change. They wanted a better future. But they just weren't patient.

They sought change in the worst way possible. They bombed the street, killed the trash can, and yet no change.

Is this the best way to have change?

Mercilessly creating a riot, people wouldn't even think of this as a "protest". They didn't know how to talk, so that had to be the alternative.

They wanted change desperately. Whether it was about equal pay or a less corrupt government, they wanted it. But, this is inhumane.

Can a person be so into a cause that they ought to use sheer violence to get their point out?

Well, they do say "**History is bound to repeat itself.**"

So What Are You Anyways?

"So What Are You Anyways" is a text that addresses the issue of how there are people that morally think that people should only be married to people of their race. The couple



in this text think that a child should either be fully white or fully

black. They also try to find out if Carole is mixed or not. They repeatedly ask how she would color her parents in a coloring book. Carole obviously feels uncomfortable since she doesn't know what race or color means. The couple finally damage Carole by calling her a mulatto. Carole doesn't understand anything, she just thinks she's a normal person. Carole yells at the couple and finally sits with the stewardess. We learn from this text that sometimes people think that a child should only belong to one race. This thinking is obviously flawed as the only thing that should matter to a child is that their parents love them. They shouldn't worry that their parents have different races. Everyone should be tolerant of each other, no matter the color of their parents' skin or their race. We are all human beings, and that's what only matters.

Jisha Barua

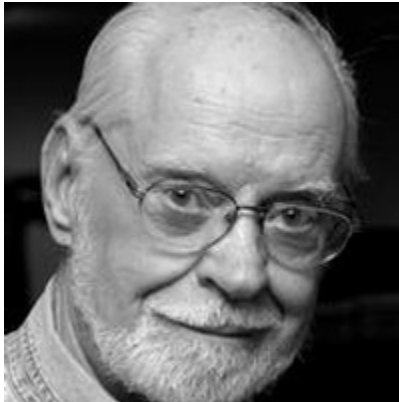
SHORT STORY

A glint of gold caught my eye. As I walked back a few steps, I got a better look at it. There was a wooden box lying on the top of my mom's bed in her room. Gleaming through the crack, I saw a something twinkle. I looked around me and I quietly and quickly stepped into the room. I was not allowed to go into my mom's room OR take anything. The object seemed to call out to me. I opened the box as I sat on the bed. The box squeaked as I opened and closed it. Inside was a polished golden watch. I took it out and laid it on the side of the side of the box. The strap swayed to each side as I shook it. When I got a better look at it, I noticed the inside was dark and smooth with gold numbers and hands. I put the watch over my fingers and started to rotate it. It was small and the details on it was almost microscopic. As I watched the watch spin, I was starting to like it. I started spinning it faster and faster completely ignoring the fact that this was someone else's. Suddenly, the watch swung off my fingertips and slid into a random spot. It took me a while to realize that I didn't have the watch. As soon as I did my heart started to race. I jumped down on my knees to find it, scurrying on the ground. I checked almost everywhere but I knew I didn't because the watch was still left unfound. I started to bite my nails so hard that a minute later I reached the stub on four fingers. My mom was coming back from her meeting really soon. I closed the box to leave it exactly the way it was. I was expecting the wait to be longer. Then suddenly my mom rushed home. I gasped silently. I froze in place and dashed out of her room into mine. My eyes were wide. Tears were starting to form in my eyes. "What am I going to do?" was the first thought that came into my head. I closed the box and tried to leave it exactly the way it was before. I dashed towards my room. Before I could reach it though, I heard the door open. I froze forgetting what I had to do. I walked inside my room and went to my desk. I took out some leftover homework and started to work on it. My mom came in and sighed with relief. I gave her a weird look and went back to my work. As she left the room, I heard her heavy footsteps. The house was unusually quiet. Then all of a sudden, a gasp broke the silence. I heard a groan and tears after that. I pretended I didn't hear it. I didn't want to risk checking on her. The watch was obviously more important than I thought it was. I was slowly falling into a hole of guilt.

Sara Batutis

Who am I? A Praise Poem

I am like a cat,
Shy yet strong, a loner yet social.
I love the sound of the wind and the birds,
Chirping and representing life
and birth in the blooming springs trees
With music coursing through my veins
And a longing for melody,
My hair the color of gold
Dotted freckles sprawled across my skin, as pale as snow,
With cheeks soft like peach skin.
Times when I'm down I'm always there for myself,
Two minds in one body,
In a constant fight
over what is wrong
Sometimes it's one or the other, other times it's both.
Either way, I am me.



Elegy

I remember your raven hair,
Mixed with speckles of white,
Your big hands warm and soft
That whenever your hands held mine,
I could feel the love and care coursing through them.
You were a fighter who cared for many,
With a blessing of endless love.
But sadly soon the warmth in your hands faded,
And your soft caring eyes closed.
Leaving me forever,
If only I had known.
When I sleep I see you,
but when I reach for your warm hands

You fade away.
But if you're listening now I want you to know
That your granddaughter misses you dearly.

My personal narrative piece

It was a nice sunny morning and I woke up knowing today would be great. It was my birthday! I was turning nine years old and I had been preparing this birthday for months. First we would snack on edamame and dumplings then we would enter what I was truly looking forward to, the cat room! This room had around eleven rescue cats playing and waiting to be adopted, I knew it would be hard to convince my dad to get another cat but this was the next best thing! I have always loved cats and this was the perfect way to infuse that love into my birthday. When we walked into the cat room, we took off our shoes and coats. I could already see at least three cats jumping around happily or resting their heads. Finally we went into the main room on the top floor, I couldn't believe my eyes! There were cats everywhere and there was one I immediately fell in love with. Later we found out she was named Macy and was both deaf and losing her eyesight. I felt bad but I knew that she was living a perfectly happy life. Then, we went to a room downstairs where more cats were playing around. All my friends ran to a little kitten named Cucumber who was playing around on a bean bag chair. Meanwhile, I was more interested in a ginger cat that reminded me of my cat from when I was much younger, they had the same amber eyes and fluffy white and orange fur and just looking at that cat brought back happy memories. By that time it was time to leave the cat room but the birthday wasn't completely over yet. We still had to eat the cake! After we went back upstairs my mom brought out a raspberry vanilla cake that she made herself. It was delicious but I couldn't believe my birthday was over. Still, it was the best birthday ever!



Maysha Chowdhury

Short Story

Funeral

She walked against the winds will. Hard sheets of rain fell from the dark, turbulent sky. Blasts of icy wind blew against her face pushing her hair away. The tall trees left a dark, dark shadow. She tried to hold her tears in, but one slipped away. The pouring rain slid across her face. Her heart was beating. She only heard muffled voices calling out her name and feet stomping in the mud. She knew she was being chased, but she didn't know why. She didn't even remember why she was running in the first place, but she knew it was what she had to do. Her feet skipped in the large puddles, splashing murky water all over her black clothes. When she stopped to catch her breath it suddenly hit her. She remembered she ran away from a funeral, her father's funeral. She couldn't bear to see his coffin right in front of her knowing he was inside.

At that moment she fell to the ground with a blank expression on her face and broke down into tears. She cried out his name. Charlie clutched the locket around her neck and opened it, it showed her family tree. When she saw her father in there, her cries just grew louder. She continued to cry out his name and just stare at his photograph. All the stories he would tell and all the memories of him. She remembered when he would make his famous red velvet cake, and how kind he was, much more compared to her mother. She missed him dearly. But nothing could bring him back, and she knew that.

They came to her and picked her up, they all came. Her mother and her siblings never liked Charlie. They would show their "affection" in front of others to maintain a good public image. They dragged her back to the funeral. She continued to bawl but they said nothing, they just dragged her and placed her in the front row. Her mother sat right next to her and gave Charlie a nasty look. Everyone else stared with a blank expression. Baffled as to why someone would do that to a poor, innocent child. Charlie knew what was going to happen when they would arrive home and she didn't want it to happen. She never liked her mother, and she never will. If only her father were here to help. She sat there trying to hold back her tears while she whimpered. People stopped staring. She could hear whispers and that's all. Only a few people looked concerned for Charlie, everyone else just carried on with their lives as if nothing had happened. Everyone from her father's side came over.

They asked, "Are you okay?"

"I wish you could come live with us."

"That 'mother' of yours is not like any other." Charlie would simply reply with a shrug. When they left, Charlie sat there with her arms crossed and her eyes staring down at the ground. She kept swinging her feet, sitting there in such self-pity. If only she had saved him. If only she had told him to stop walking and step-back, just as she had. If only it was her who was hit by the truck instead of him. Why him?

Praise Poem to Me

The smile on her face
The world is a place to live happily
All she sees is beautiful, no bad, no hate
 Yellow are the bees
 Green are the trees in the summer
 These are her favorite colors
 Loves others, others she loves
 Family
Her sister, her brother, her mother, and father
Cousins, uncles, grandmas, we all love each other
Learns the language with no words
 Signs it uses
Is not fluent, but tries to achieve it
Goals should not be made when you know you won't do it
Procrastinates sometimes, but usually gets to it
Loves sweets and smiles a lot
 Always full of glee

Noah Cummings

Ode to Cheez Doodles

I walk through isle nine
And what do I find
A big bag of cheese doodles
they're all mine
So nice
lovely
and cheesy
You are best food to ever happen
You are like candy
But salty
You put Cheetos to shame
If I need food you are the name
So many kinds
Extra cheddar
crunchy
And puffs
So good I just can't get enough
Without you
life would be rough
For people
Real life or fiction
In the deli
Guess who I meet
Find a bag of my sweet treat
\$2.00 that is the price
Just trust me it will be nice

My favorite food

Cheese on the outside
Under are some small curls fried
Now they are all mine



Lisa Dascalu

Ode to my cat

Pretty kitty
You make my day everyday
You are mine
Running around
Sleeping with me
Or just eating
You are too cute.
Sometimes I think to myself
What would I do without you?
When everybody is mad at me
You are always there to make me smile
You are loyal
You are loving
And you are caring
Not only to me
But to everyone
There are so many ways to describe you
You are not only a cat to me
But you are my best friend
If I had to choose a best friend
I would choose you without any regrets
For every day for the rest of my
life
I would like to thank you
For being my best friend
I love you cat
Forever and ever

Free write

In my opinion this quote means that life is not measured in how many years, minutes or even seconds we spend living on this Earth, but rather how we spend our limited time on Earth. We can work and have a boring life, or we can **live** our life. After all, we only live once. We all should live our lives to the fullest because our time isn't unlimited. We should all do what we love. Not what we need to do. The quote is saying, "Live your life, don't survive" because one day you'll wake up and regret things that you didn't do. Or you might regret not spending much time with somebody you love. Always **live!** Don't just survive and live with that guilt feeling of not accomplishing what you love. Do what you love and live.

My favorite things



My cat

Food!!!!

Andrew Dickerson

Ode to Overwatch

A game with a story,
One that does not apply,
There are heroes with abilities,
Some can even fly.
If an enemy approaches and you happen to die,
You can just respawn and give them a taste of their own medicine,
Choose a counter, you are able to switch.
If you are a sniper, prepare for some teammates to ditch.
Even though your headshots and eliminations will pile.
Hanzo uses a bow which may be out of style,
But even he can carry your team for a while.
Ryujin no ken wo kurae! Is what Hanzo's brother Genji will say,
When he pulls out his blade prepare for a Play of The Game.
Brigitte, the daughter of Torbjörn,
She uses a mace and will whack you in the face,
With a shield and a stun,
There is no need for a gun,
A rocket flail will keep you back,
How will you even attack?
My favorite hero being Junkrat,
Who has explosives which are fun.
His friend Roadhog is a tank with a shotgun,
And a hook for close melee.
This game is awesome and I recommend it,
If you like action and tightly packed first person combat.
Overall a great game which deserves to be in the hall of fame.

250 Word Story

Shots coming from all around. I hide in my trench hoping for the best. I prepare to run, my group is next. I put on my helmet, my armor, my gear. I take a deep breath and prepare. I might die on Christmas day because of this war. I think great thoughts: thoughts of my family, my friends, my home, and anyone who has ever helped or cared about me. When suddenly I hear singing from the opposing side. They cease their fire and start to sing, I don't know what they're singing, but they

were singing nonetheless. We start to sing our own songs as well. We sang Christmas carols, as that's what we thought they are singing as well. Both sides, ours and theirs, had just stopped firing to sing and meet in No Man's Land. It made no sense, none at all, but at the same time it did. Wars are a very terrible thing to happen and cost millions, in lives and money. In the ideal world there would be no war, and if there was we would do this. We would stop and think about what this is, why we have all been drafted into a place where there is no place that you're safe in. I was saved by people's kindness, trust and responsibility. We all took action and did the right thing. There were so many deaths that still occurred but this made up for some of them. All in all. I take off my helmet, my armor, my gear.

Lucia Fraga

500 Word Flash Fiction-Heirloom

Now, with the small ray of light shining through the crack in the wall I look at the faded letters engraved on my leather bracelet, MP, Maggie Pullman. You might not know it yet but the memory of this name, these letters will be the only thing to get me through this war. My mother was an amazing person. If she was alive now, she wouldn't be hiding in this cellar, she would be out there, fighting for us, fighting for me. I look through a crack in the ceiling but I can't see anything. Only black. Every time I hear even the smallest noise I hold my breath and pray. Here with my dad, and a lot of other Jews, God is the only thing that can get us through this war, no, slaughter. We are going through a lot for this religion, the least God can do is protect us during this dark time.

The bracelet is my mothers. She gave it to me when I was ten. Her leg was broken, crushed by the burning remains of our home, she begged us to leave, to leave her. My father reluctantly picked me up and we ran, crying to the woods where we hid until they found us, people going around saving the Jews, risking their lives for ours. They brought us here, and here we stayed. People come every day to give us food and water, it's not a lot, but it keeps us alive. We don't shower, it smells down here but it is better than a concentration camp.

Sometimes I feel like I can't go on but I feel the rough leather of my bracelet and I know I have to do it, for me, for my mom, for my future children and grandchildren, and great grandchildren. I know I can't give up, not after all I've gone through losing my mother, narrowly escaping the Nazis' grasp. I know I can't give up now, I can't waste the chance my mother gave me when she distracted the Nazis so we could hide, and when we came out it was too late.

In the dark of the cellar, with all the death and destruction around me, I realize how lucky I am to be alive, to have my dad. I think of all those parents who have lost their children, all the children who are all alone in this dark, dark world. I feel tears well up in my eyes and I stare at my leather bracelet, in all its faded glory, I feel a tear silently roll down my cheek. I can't believe all the things the Nazis took for me, from us, all these things we can never get back. My mom, my grandma, who died in a concentration camp. I know I have to do something I just don't know what. I don't know how to stop this war, to save my family, my friends. So I stay where I am, staring at my worn bracelet, wondering when this will end.

Poem

I Am Me

Standing taller than the mountains
My head brushing the sky
Filled with knowledge
Creativity
And talent
I reach for the moon
I land among the stars
Staring down at Earth
My home
A marble of green, blue, and white
Filled with people, different and alike
I swing through the trees with monkeys
I swim through the depths with the dolphins
I run with the cheetahs
Adventure after adventure
I am me

Puja Ghosh

Personal narrative

“Oof!” I screamed at myself as I tripped on my shoelace once again, the fifth time that day. In my anger, I took my shoes off and was about to throw it at the park railing. My mom called for me. She knelt down to tie my shoelace once again. This time, it untied immediately. She peered up at me. I gave her a sheepish grin.

“Sorry Mama. It was an accident!” Actually, my little brother had done it. He was the same as always, wanting me to get in trouble. But if I told Mama, she wouldn’t even believe me. Meanwhile, my little brother was making bubbly noises and chewing on Mama’s scarf. He looked cute when he did that. Next he grabbed the rubber ball we brought, and started gnawing on that too. Oh, my silly brother! I’ll always wonder why my Mama named him Prince. He surely doesn’t act like one!

When Mama, Prince, and I were walking home, Prince started stomping on my shoe.

“Ugh stop it!” I said, getting frustrated. “Why are you so annoying? Go stomp on your own shoe and leave me alone.”

“Puja, don’t be mean to him. He only wants to play with you. You should be nicer to him. He’s so much sweeter when he wants to be with his big sister, Mama said. Yeah right, I thought. He’s the sweetest thing ever, especially when he annoys the hell out of me.

We got home and I put my shoes and jacket away. Prince was copying me like always, trying to act like he knew how to do things himself. Instead, he plopped his shoe on top of my mine and put his jacket on top of mine. I glared at him as he smiled brightly and walked to the living room table. I sat on the sofa and watched him drawing with his crayons. He was really sweet when he behaved, and I question why he made me feel mad at one moment, and then sad the next. Well guess what. He was going to make me mad again, wasn’t it a pattern all the time?

I had walked up to my bedroom and was typing a few things on my computer. Meanwhile, Mama was cooking in the kitchen. Prince walked into my room and laid down on my bed. He pulled my pillow down and covered himself with my bed blankets. Then, he started making groaning and moaning noises.

“You idiot!” I screamed. I marched up to my bed and started pulling the blanket from him. “Go to your room and do all of that annoying stuff!” But, I didn’t know that he had put a toy roller on the floor. And as I got down, I tripped on it and fell on my face. Ow! It hurt so bad, I started screaming at him and crying at the same time. My face was totally blue. “Stop laughing!” I yelled. He was laughing so hard and calling me clumsy-face. Calling Mama wouldn’t help. She would just tell me to have been more careful and let him play. Frustrated, I got out of the room and put some cream on my cheek, where there was a scar.

I was watching TV for quite some time, and Mama called me to eat dinner. Dad was on a business trip. I went into the dining room and saw my little brother sitting in his chair. I sat down and glared at him for about a minute. He just giggled and I rolled my eyes. I ate dinner quietly while Mama fed Prince, and then he ate his cookies. I groaned softly as she used her soft, baby voices with

him. I told Mama I was finished and went to wash my dishes. I ran upstairs and slammed my door shut, my face pale. I got under the covers and tried to sleep.

In the middle of the night, I heard weird noises downstairs. I got out of bed, cautiously. I quietly walked out of my room, and checked Mama's room where she was sleeping. Then, I checked if Prince was sleeping next to her. No, the little kid wasn't. Oh great, I thought. I tiptoed downstairs. "Prince are you there?" I whispered. It was so quiet, I was getting scared. Where are you, I wondered as panic rose up inside me. I hurried toward the kitchen and before I could reach anything, I slipped and fell. I screeched so loud. It was a miracle Mama didn't come rushing down. There was a bump on my arm, but before I could worry about it, I ran into the kitchen. "Prince where are you?" I whispered loudly. I turned the kitchen light on, and there he was. He was holding a jar of water, which was now empty.

"Hi Puja. Why are you sad?" I was NOT sad. I was actually REALLY mad. I looked behind me and saw the water spilled on the floor. Great, I thought. Now my favorite shirt was wet. "I'm not sad. But thanks for giving me a shower."

"Your welcome, Puja." He brought a big tissue and started scraping my wet shirt. Instead, I picked him up and carried him up the stairs. He purposely spit on my shirt and his saliva got on it. Yuck, I thought as I stuck my tongue out at him. I brought him into my room, not wanting to disturb Mama. I shoed him away as I changed into a new shirt. Ugh, I thought. My arm still hurt but I called him in. I took a long pillow and put it between the two pillows I put onto the bed.

"Now, don't go over this pillow ok?" For his protection, I moved the pillow more to my side and put a line of small pillows so he wouldn't fall on the side. After he got into bed, he fell fast asleep.

For the rest of the night, I just made sure not to fall off the side of the bed. And I stared at the ceiling, listening to my little brother sighing here and there.

In the morning, Mama came to wake me up. She thanked me for putting prince to sleep. But he did, I wanted to say. But I didn't. She asked me if I had slept well. I lied, "I did," but for the rest of the morning, my eyes drooped of exhaustion. Eh, I thought. At least it's better than having your little brother injure you. Good thing I didn't go to the hospital. *

Mariam Hossain

Jennie & Rose - 500 Word Short Story

Jennie is a twelve-year-old girl in seventh grade. For one of her classes, she had to bring in something that meant a lot to her and write an essay about why it was important to her. She knew right away what she would bring. She would bring the doll that her grandma made for her when she was born.

When school was over, Jennie quickly rushed home. She had just moved, and the doll was somewhere in one of the boxes, and there were a lot of them. She started to look through all of the boxes. A picture of the doll was in Jennie's mind. The doll had brown strings for hair and two black buttons for eyes. It had a blue dress and red shoes. Jennie named the doll Rose because it had a tiny red rose stitched to its dress.

"What are you looking for?" asked Jennie's mom.

Jennie replied saying, "I'm looking for Rose. I need her for an essay in school due tomorrow."

Jennie's mom said, "You should go write the essay, I'll go look for Rose." Jennie went to her room. She remembered all of the fun things she did with Rose and started to write about it. She wrote that her grandma gave Rose to her. Her grandma told her to take good care of Rose and to play with her whenever she got sad. She wrote about how she would take Rose wherever she went when she was little. Jennie would take Rose to the park, school, store, and even to the bathroom! She really loved the doll. However, she stopped taking

Rose everywhere in fourth grade because all of her friends said it looked creepy. This hurt Jennie, but she didn't want to lose friends. So, she started to leave Rose at home.

Jennie wrote about all of the adventures they went on together. She remembered when she would play with Rose and pretend the Rose was the baby and she was the mommy. Jennie would pretend to feed, clean, and put Rose to sleep. Sometimes, Jennie would play for so long that she would lose track of time. She would sometimes miss her favorite TV show because she was too busy playing with Rose. When she was little, Rose was her only friend since she didn't live around anyone her age. Once, Jennie lost Rose at a store and cried until her mom found her.

There was a knock on the door. Jennie's mom opened it. Jennie's new neighbors were standing outside the door. The family introduced themselves and they brought brownies. There was a girl her age named Reese. Jennie's mom and Reese's parents went to the living room while Jennie and Reese went to Jennie's room and talked about their assignment. They became pretty good friends, too.

It was the next day. After Jennie presented her essay confidently. She didn't care if people thought Rose was creepy, she loved her doll. Jenny received a good score on her assignment.

Midterms: Spoken Word

It is time for the midterms. My parent would only let me go on the iPad for a small amount of time and would make me study for the rest of the day. They tell me to read everything I learned so far and to review it. I would say, "Mom, can I please play on the iPad for a little longer? I can study on the bus." She would reply by saying, "You won't be able to study on the bus. It would be better if you study now." I would get sad and start studying. Sometimes my mind would wander and think of something else. *Do fish*

see air the way we see water? Is dirt dirty? Is water wet? Oh wait, I have to study! The next morning, I would get on the bus and think of studying. But instead, I would talk to my friends. When we arrive at school, I would realize, I forgot to study! I would go to take the test and it was surprisingly easy. That's probably because I studies at home I was happy that I listened to my mom and studied at home.

Haikus

My Favorite Food

Food keeps us alive
It would take a thousand years
To pick the best one

Who I Am

I am a small girl
Who has brown eyes and dark hair
My name has two M's

Where I Am From

Trees in the country
Busy streets in the city
This is Bangladesh



Tasnim Islam

Praise poem

Home sweet home
the place I stay warm
I feel nice and safe
the feeling of joy
the red bricks and wood
are just materials
but what it makes
is what matters
just some little room
but surely I shall miss
At departure
where I stay
the warmth inside



I will never deny
its safe feeling is all I need
but without it
I feel incomplete
not many have
a home
but I'm one
who has
and home sweet home
Is what they need
Cause it's important
to all
just like me

Prized possession flash fiction

This shiny watch. It was once my fathers, oh so lovely. It has a leather strap – one in a million. So soft with cotton feels. Its hands with a small touch of blue. This watch is nothing I would ever regret getting. I remember once it was lost I was a wailing child. It was the only thing I could do as a thoughtless one. It was just an ordinary watch but, what it has gone through is more interesting. The first time I saw it looked like an ordinary watch with no special purpose, though when explained my mind could think of nothing but, the watch. I was at home and I saw dust clumps. How was it in that bad of a condition? Ever since then it earned a spot on my wrist. The perfect source of joy, it was never dirty since then. I dust off everything week by week. While I kept it safe in a drawer for protection, it needed to not get dusty. Now I see it brand new, but it doesn't feel so special anymore. Why did I renew this watch? Its strap was gone, it was now weightless. Though I remember the old times with the watch. The memories were good enough to see. Though I feel the need for the watch. New Technology can make me forget about my watch. Technology can overwhelm you as it did to me. I never knew my watch would be so, weird and not my type. Its comfort is lost just because I wanted to make it improved. Though I still can feel the watch. I remember how its small vibration would be like a massager to my arm, how its hands made it so simple to read it, though the numerals were the things I could barely see. The watch left me to be renewed, and it was one thing could hate me for. If you took a picture of both you would see similarities. As I see the hands were changed, the strap was now changed too and worst of all the style. I loved silver better; it was shinier more natural and not so, attention-grabbing. Though now I have gold, it feels dull, expensive and new. I never noticed much of it though by the months. I forgot by then, and the new watch was comfortable. Though when I see my old photo album, I remember it. The old memories, the way I remembered it better than yesterday. I could feel the watch with me but, I had no exact watch to like. How could I have forgotten it? It was like a dream, I can

remember it. The light blue hands, it is a very shiny style in the night, and the vibration it made when I didn't wear it. I finally retrieved a memory and thing I loved and it was the best.

Emily Kane

Praise Poem

I am from the Island of Green
With leprechauns and mountains all over me
I play the piano and let my fingers dance
Along the keys to make a beautiful sound.
I dance and when I dance
My feet flow with me.
I fly like a butterfly
But can roll like a rolly polly.
I also play soccer
The game with no hands
But you need your feet.
I like to help those who are in need,
Old, and show the greedy
What they have is more than they need.
My friends and my family are very important
to me
And I am as supportive as I can be
I am very fortunate
And I am thankful for the wonderful life I
have

Ode to Grandma

I am so lucky to have a grandma
Who helps me in any way she can.
I try to return the love she shows me
Whenever there is a chance.
When I feel like I am in the shadow
She brightens up my day
She listens with great interest
About what I have to say
My grandma doesn't live too close
But still sees us every week
She drives all alone
Just to come to our home
Where she always gets
A warm welcome
She is not a night driver
Therefore to my delight
She will often stay the night
We like to play cards
Like kings in the corner
And gin rummy too
I like her stories
About my dad and his brothers
I can see her heart filled with joy.
She is tough on the outside,
Soft on the inside
In short
I LOVE my grandma

Aimal Khan

Flash Fiction

He was drenched in the hot, sticky, sweat that poured down his triangle shaped ears. Because of so much perspiration, his fur stuck to his body. The sun stared down at his back as he pulled his paws across the sparkling, golden sand. They burned and his parched, dry, mouth begged him for water. He hadn't had water or food for a long time. A humid wind blew sand on his face causing him to cough. The coyote spotted a very small puddle of water. Licking the last drop of water from the sand, he gathered up some strength to go on. He started walking, not knowing where, but he kept going on. Huge piles of golden sand surrounded him. He didn't want to go on. He yearned for cool water. He longed to take a nice cold bath in a pond. His head was throbbing. In the distance he saw an oasis. His tiny heart leapt with joy. He ran towards the beautiful green palm trees and the shining blue pond. As he approached it, it disappeared. There were only huge piles of sand everywhere. He was sure he saw the water. He coughed again, his dry throat aching. Tasting blood in his mouth, he spat into the sand. The sand turned from a bright golden to a deep red. He fell down on his furry back, sobbing. He curled up into a ball hoping for all the pain to go away. Finally, he fell into a deep sleep.

-My Favorite Food Haiku-

**Creamy, Gooeyness
Cheesy, Pasta Yumminess
I love mac & cheese**



Gabriel Law

Personal Narrative

My Biggest Regret

I never thought about it and I mean, I really shouldn't have. It was something that, in terms of the big picture, it was completely irrelevant. It filled up space in my head, not really helping with everything else going on. I still didn't know why it even existed. When I thought about it, I really didn't agree with the thoughts. It was unhelpful in various ways, yet it was like no matter how hard I tried to get rid of it, some of me wanted it when realistically, I didn't. Now you may not or may know what I'm talking about, I'm talking about love. The love I'm talking about, however, is not what you feel for your family or friends but affection towards someone else. It all started back in the fifth grade and we happened to be graduating that year so we had two trips to celebrate. A trip to Washington D.C and a trip on a boat. The trip on the boat was referred to prom, and people were debating whether to ask someone out or not. I never really wanted to, I mean I didn't care. There is nothing you can really do, we're in the fifth grade! What are you gonna do, take them to dinner? Yeah no. Later that day during dismissal it had been decided that one of my friends would be asking someone out, which kind of triggered the whole thing. After he asked the person out, other people started to ask people out. The thing is, I didn't know any of this was happening. When I boarded the bus the thought finally came to me and I questioned whether I should ask or not. I asked Micah for some help and he kind of said just go for it, so that's what I did. I texted her the words, "Will you go to prom with me" which now I can't regret anymore, and put my phone away. I believe it was shortly after my phone buzzed. I pulled it out to see the word "sure" and my heart skipped a beat. I then texted the words, "Wait really?" because I didn't actually expect that answer. So you might now be wondering, what's so bad about that, she said yes. That's what's bad. From there on out I could not make any interactions with her without me being awkward. Then I was made fun of a lot which triggered my "dark days" and I was constantly miserable. To this day I can't look at her straight in the face during a conversation, and I don't even love her. That's why I regret it, she's fun to hang out with but I can't really hang out with her, because of those seven words.

Kati Lobel

It all started on the day before the talent show. I was going to play on the clarinet. I hadn't practiced in what, two years. Oh well, It's still gotta be in my closet right? It's neon green for goodness sake! Well, that's what I said about my glasses, but I still lost those. What would I even play? Hot cross buns? I know Clarinets are big, but how big? How could my *expensive* Clarinet go missing! I knew it was expensive and I hadn't used it in two years, but, wait... my mom couldn't have. No...right? "MOOOOOOOM!" I called out. "Yes?" my mom yelled back. "WHERE'S MY CLARINET!" I was so frustrated it felt like my head was about to blow off! I spent all my hard earned money on that dumb giant kazoo and now it's gone! I was livid. I rustled through my room searching and searching! I threw the contents of my table to the floor just trying to find it. I tumbled through boxes, papers flying all around. I almost tripped on my own feet running around frantically. I was so mad, it felt like a pound on my neck. I was almost about to have a full on toddler temper tantrum. I tore through the wreckage of my room to my closet. I opened the door. There it was! I saw it, with glee I grabbed it off the shelf. "My Clarinet case!!" I cried out. I almost fell, standing on the tips of my toes to reach the case. I opened it up, almost as one would open a treasure box. There I saw it! A clarinet! Wait... A clarinet? In my hands was a black, shining, beautiful clarinet. I would have been so happy if... My clarinet wasn't NEON GREEN! This isn't my clarinet! This is my sisters! I wasn't even angry right then, I was just very, very, sad. I defeatedly called out to my mom. "Mom... I have to quit the talent show... I can't find my Clarinet!" It was at that moment, my mom burst out laughing. She had it in her hand. I was so much in my violent rage that when I asked her, I didn't even hear her response! Well, that'd be a happy ending... if I knew how to play my clarinet!



Joshua Lou

Short story and Spoken-word poem

Mine, Not Yours

“Hey honey, is it okay if I give your younger brother your old jersey so he can play CYO?” My mom asks.

“Heck no, Mom he’s gonna rip it up and get a ton of stains on it!”

I became furious when it turned out my mom was just willing to give my brother my jersey like that. I have it in an enclosed case with a lock on it for a reason (I don’t even know how my mom opened it). I’ve been through too much with that jersey to just have my brother take ownership of it.

When my mom looks at that jersey, she just sees a piece of clothing I used to wear so I could play a CYO basketball game. When I look at it, I see much more than that. That jersey with the number 13 on it represents the start of my basketball career. CYO is when I was first introduced to basketball and where I really started to develop my love for the game. CYO led to AAU and then one of the elite teams of New York: Riverside Hawks. You know why number 13 is my lucky number? It’s the number I had when I became fortunate enough to play basketball. The number I had on my jersey. The number 13 isn’t just a number to me, it represents the birth of basically everything. I don’t know what I’d do without basketball today.

“Why not Joshua? It fits perfectly on him and he likes it. Plus, I don’t have to pay for anything if you give him your jersey. It’ll save me money.”

“Mom, no! I’m not just gonna let that jersey become another thing my brother messes up! Do you know what that ‘piece of clothing’ means to me? You don’t even know the half of it! It means everything to me! You can give whatever the hell you want to Jack, but he ain’t taking my darn jersey!”

“Wow, I do so much for you and that’s what you say to me?! I’m your mother and you know what I say? I say that Jack gets the jersey and that’s final!”

I’m fuming as I yank the jersey out of my mother’s hand. “You see this number right here? That’s the number of years that I’ve had to deal with this little twerp stealing all of my stuff! I’m not tryna get this jersey stolen!” I turn to Jack. “If you ever lay your little, fat hands on this, you better have your coffin ready and your funeral already organized.”

Carefully placing the jersey back into the case and locking it up, I glare at Jack and Mom as I stomp out the room.

As I’m walking further away from the door, I hear my mother going, “Well, I guess I’m just going to have to buy another one.”

The Start of It All

It was my first real game in Harlem. I was so nervous that my heart was about to spontaneously combust. I knew it was going to be tough because I was new and not like everyone else in the league. I hoped I would do well in my first game with this team and make a good impression. As most of you predicted, it did not turn out that way. It kind of went the opposite. When the coach put me in the game, I was so pumped my heart felt like it was going to jump its way out of my chest. My teammates did not pass me the ball and most of them were a bunch of ball hogs. Finally, I got the ball and as soon as I got it, I lost it. One of the boys just looked at me and said “Dude, what are you doing here?” Another boy from the other team was trash talking and said “Go back to where you came from.” I knew it was going to be tough to play ball in Harlem but was going to be even tougher to be accepted in this hood. It’s hard being an Asian playing ball in Harlem but I knew if I wanted to continue playing with the best kids in NYC, I had to work harder and play smarter and ignore the negativity from other players.



Maleha Marjana

Ode to A Friend

A true friend
Who spent her time
Caring and welcoming me.
Being with me through
The good times
And especially the bad times.
Giving me light
Throughout the darkest parts of life.
She made me laugh
When I thought I couldn't smile again
She was serendipity
I could have the worst of grades,
The worst of looks,
And she would still
Never talk behind my back
Like Atticus always said
True friends
Are burning stars
They shine brightest
On those darkest nights
We laugh
We cry
We eat
We love
But most of all
We are friends.

Praise Poem

I am as neat as a dog is with its food
My flowing locks of dark brown glow red
in the sun

My eyes shimmer a thousand diamonds
What I lack in height, I compensate with
my personality

My bronze shell may seem soft
But I am as tough to break as iron is
My eyes shine bright
But turn pitch black without true sunlight

I am the friend who you can lean on
But also the one to laugh when you fall

I can see through a smile
Both the big and the small
I would cower in fear when I'm alone
But stand tall with friends and family
Don't believe me, but it's written in
Stone

I love myself for not only who I am
But for the people I love and cherish the
most

Nabil Mazumder

Dear Diary,

I think the world is about the end. My nightmares aren't nightmares anymore. They're real.

The rumors my dad told me as a kid were not rumors. Nobody cared for us. For our religion was different than theirs. I didn't imagine the world like this, but it is like this. For people don't like Jews for pretty much no reason. I mean, I'm still so lucky that I'm still alive. The war has left so many dead. I can't imagine that I actually survived. I am literally one out of many who actually survived, which makes me scared but also relieved.

Dear Diary,

I can't believe I'm here writing to you with no scratches or bruises. I actually made it. I literally escaped my death. This morning, I went to school, and I ended up running into Auhsoj and his group of friends and I accidentally stepped on Auhsoj's shoe. I knew this was the end for me, because all he does is care for his shoes. I mean there was nothing else to do than run. My feet were pounding against the pavement. Going faster and faster. The image of my house was becoming bigger and bigger. The door was near. However, the boys were still chasing me. It was like I was a cat, and Auhsoj and his gang were dogs. I was a few feet away from the door. Put the key in. Twist. Open. Go inside. Shut. Lock. I was safe.

Dear Diary,

I have become homeless. I live on a street where everything seems so ugly to me. Coming from a rich family this is hard for me. Know how had I gotten here? I regret my decisions so much. My dad and I decided to go off to drink a bit, but we accidentally got drunk, so we didn't know what in the world we were doing. I rarely gamble, but I ended up doing so. So, I gambled my entire savings on a dumb football match, and I lost. Big time.

He looks down at his shoe.

Thinking of how dumb he was for deciding
to wear his the site, but he had to go where his boss
told him to go. His shoes were just filled with dust
and dirt, so he decided to have them be cleaned, by the unfortunate
ones, cleaning shoes on the side of the road. The stores
were too far away for him to go to. But first, head to go buy a new suit,
since he had every suit color of the rainbow besides orange. So, he went to his local mall and
fought an orange suit he liked. And so he went to clean his shoe, but as he was doing so, he saw
that the shoe cleaner, was in a horrible condition. The cleaner could barely afford clothes. And
the cleaner charged half as much as the stores. So he decided to give the cleaner a 100 dollars,
which he got from his boss as a tip. The face of the cleaner looked as if he hit the lottery. No
words could describe how happy the cleaner was. Not much was lost for the man for he had
made hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. A little gift couldn't hurt anyone.

Rea Milo

500 Word Story

On a very, very cold and much more bitter than usual, Lydia was currently walking to her sister's home because of something the whole family was coming together to discuss. All her family members, at least those still alive, would be meeting up to discover who had the photo album that was very important to them. It used to belong to their long gone ancestor had had when she came to America. She was in a hurry to get there partly because of the grave situation involving that very same photo album, and partly because the cold morning air was freezing her insides. She could smell the scents of street food filling the streets as she walked on.

Every generation updated the album with pictures of their family which was constantly expanding. It had been lost for about five years and the last time they saw it had been at Thanksgiving when they take a holiday photo every year to remember the occasion. Usually, they held Thanksgiving at someone's house. The last person to have it had been one of her many aunts, Gloria.

She finally got to her sister's building after about half an hour of speed walking and trying her best to stay warm. She couldn't even begin to imagine what her tombstone would say. Probably "Number One Most Embarrassing Death Yet" or some other joke her family would come up with (they meant no harm by it, her family just joked around a lot).

She got up the stairs which were smaller than her feet and creaked like a thousand pound bear was using them. Her sister's apartment was on the second floor so she had to climb a whole lot of stairs. When she finally arrived and prepared to knock on the wooden door, she could hear some people arguing inside. *Was that? No, it couldn't be.* That sounded like her two aunts Gloria and Mallory but it couldn't be them. When the photo album was declared lost they both accused the other. Since then they have not stepped foot in the same home with the exception of funerals. She could smell a delicious odor which was probably the turkey drifting into the hallway. She knocked on the door and heard someone yell "Coming, hold on!" Her sister, Anne opened it and crushed her in a giant hug. Hugs were kind of Anne's thing. She was older than Lydia and took it upon herself to always comfort her sister with an extra tight hug whenever she was upset.

She looked a lot like Lydia except she got their mother's blonde hair you could spot from a hundred miles away. Lydia on the other hand, had inherited all of their father's features and his witty personality. They were both of average height and had their dad's sharp features.

As soon as Lydia saw her sister she began to say "Did I just hear..?" and got interrupted.

"Yep, our dear aunts with their feud, back at it again. God, I forgot how annoying it was. You've gotta help. I was about to punch Aunt Gloria. She won't stop trying to start an argument." said Anne with a semi-smile on her face expressing how glad she was to see Lydia. At the words punch and Gloria, Lydia let out a few snickers.

She quickly got in and saw the two old ladies about to wrestle in the middle of their whole family. Her nephews and nieces were even betting on who would win. Since Anne couldn't see her because she was trying to break up the fight she went to the twins, Fred and

George who were leading the bets and placed twenty dollars that Gloria would win but Mallory would punch her fake teeth out. They never ended up finding the album that day.

Yassin Mohamedy

Short story

"Mom, I need a picture of dad's dad for this thing in school where we have to look back on our ancestors and blah blah blah blah blah. Long story short, I need a picture of great-grandpa for school," said young Meadow, in a rush to her mother, Carmela. "I'll try to find one for you but I'm not sure if I can. I put all of my pictures of him in your father's room and his room is a mess," said Carmela, knowing that this thought angered her: her husband's lack of organization. Right now though, there was no point in getting angry. Tony was being a lovely dear in the household so why would she want to spark up a conflict now? "Speak of the devil. Tony, do you know where your father's pictures are?" said Carmela softly, as Tony walked groggily to the kitchen door, probably because he just woke up. His eyes were tired, and he walked incredibly slow, like a tortoise. "Ah madonn', I gave 'em to Janice last night," said Tony sort of angrily, but not enough to warrant yelling. He walked to the bathroom but not before Carmela said, "Well, go to your sister's, tell her it's for Meadow, and come back here and give them to your daughter," grudgingly, kinda like how his mother would say it. Tony nodded and ran to his car.

- 20 minutes later

"I'm hommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmeee!" yelled Tony from across the driveway as he parked his car. He ran to the house and yelled out his daughter's name. "Yeah?" responded Meadow, annoyed that she had to stop talking to Noah Tannenbaum. "Come down here, I gotta tell you a story," said Tony, expecting the only response to be her footsteps down the stairs. Meadow groaned and unenthusiastically walked down the stairs, expecting an hour's worth of meaningless talk from her dad. "Sit down," said Tony happily, as if the story he was about to tell would make Meadow's day better. "Do 'ya know the story of this picture?" asked Tony, gesturing toward the picture of her grandfather under a Christmas tree with her grandmother, uncle, aunt, and father. "No, and I don't care," said Meadow bluntly, trying her damndest to get out of this conversation. "Well, I'm gonna tell you anyway," said Tony, ignoring her clear lack of interest in the picture. Meadow sighed, accepting her fate. "Back when I was about the size of A.J.," said Tony, reminiscing over the past, "My dad and mom weren't doing so good, like marriage-wise. One day though, my dad bought this beautiful Christmas tree coupled with this twenty-four carat diamond ring. It was beautiful, madonn'." said Tony, realizing that Meadow wasn't as eager as he was to talk about the story. "So he waited for her to come home and out of nowhere, the man jumps into her eyes and gives her the ring, all along with the Christmas tree set up in the dining room. Mom was screaming with how

happy she was and could not stop telling everyone. So they invited the family and took a picture right there," said Tony, finishing his story with a smile.

Eugenia Perdikis

Flash fiction The Snake is A Portal?

Today has been the most unusual day of my life! It was incredibly startling. But, it was also enjoyable.

I'll start from the beginning. I'm Anna Morcelyn, and I love to travel to Brazil and explore the exotic rainforests. But today, something VERY unusual happened as I was adventuring through one that I haven't explored before. It was very beautiful, lots of animals and leaves and flowers.

I was looking through my journal while spotting different animals, seeing if I'd already recorded them. While I was doing so, I spotted something odd- a snake that looked like it was made out of wool. I was astonished by it that my eyes didn't move from its slim body.

Wrapped around a low tree branch, it trapped my vision. I stared and stared, and once I looked away from my trance, I was in a world that looked....

...like it was made out of wool? Maybe that snake was like a portal. A portal where I looked at it, and it brought me to a wooly dimension. I was extremely confused. I blinked frantically, thinking I might just be hallucinating. But no, it was all real and soft and comfy.

Luckily, I didn't seem to be trapped there. Afterward, I walked to the nearest riverbank and washed my face in the water. I looked back up at the towering trees and beautiful animals, and it all went back to normal. The same hard trunks of trees, smooth leaves and soft, rich soil.

Heirloom

My social studies teacher assigned us this really boring project about heirlooms. In my opinion, it's pretty tedious. I don't even know if my family has any heirlooms! I decided to ask my mom. I said, "We have a project to do for social studies that I need your help with." Her head barely budged from its position of looking down at her novel. I added, "It's about heirlooms." Her head immediately perked up. "So," I continued, "Do we have any special ones with interesting stories about them?" She smiled, got out of her leather armchair, and gestured for me to follow her.

"You've seen the beautiful china closet in my bedroom, right?" I nodded, knowing she meant the wooden one similar to the one she was previously sitting near. I never really noticed a difference, but I wasn't allowed to go into the library often, so I didn't really know. "That closet was passed down to me by my parents. It is very special." I had no clue why that specific china closet would be significant. It has many scratches and worn out wood. But I let her keep talking since it's probably the only heirloom we have. I know that you know that it was my grandparents that came to America when they were young. They came with nothing but the clothes on their backs. It was very hard for them at first. They really struggled getting basic necessities and had extremely little money." I'd heard this story so many times. Every single time I asked about my

grandparents, the story would be played on loop. Even in basic conversations like what happened in school during the day, the story would somehow make its way into the discussion.

In the beginning, my ears would never stray from the words of the story. I couldn't take my eyes off my mom. It was as if the story was a magnet and my attention was attracted to it. I thought it was an incredible tale, and she narrated it so perfectly. I always felt like I was right there, alongside my great-grandparents. The story felt special, like a connection to the history of my family. In some ways, the story is like an heirloom. In a lot, actually. My great-grandparents passed it to my grandparents, who passed it to my mom, and then to me. But after hearing it so much, I kind of got bored of it. I wouldn't pay attention as much, but this time I was trying to be as tentative as possible.

"Even food was scarce," she continued. "Do you know when that closet was made?" I shook my head, realizing I've never asked. "1880." My eyes widened. I had no idea. Now, staring at it, I realize that it is incredibly beautiful. "That china closet is special because it was the first piece of furniture that my grandparents bought when they came to this country." I never heard that part of the story before.

Franklin Rigoutsos

My Elegy

Just thinking about
your passing away
Makes me cry
I love you, you did
everything for me
Caring
Kind
Loving
Generous
Your death has
changed my life
We may have argued,
But deep down,
I loved you
You did everything for me
I'll always miss you
For ever and ever
You did so much;
You guided me through life
Like birds guide their chicks
Thank you, mom
For everything you did.
From the first day of my life
In the hospital
To the day you died
We did so many things together.
You took me on adventures.
You buy me things I want.
And even at home-
You read to me when I was young
You help me in every way.
Thank you.

26 Line Ode to My Cat

My cat,
Pumpkin. So
Fluffy and cute.
Has a place
In my heart.
I'll never forget
The day
You first came home.
So adorable,
I love you.
You are so
Cute, and playful.
You like to run outside
When we open
The door.
So quiet,
So cute.
You like the windowsill
And watching
Nature around you
Your window seat
Is always there for you.
You keep me company.
Adorable to watch,
If I'm bored,
I just look at you.

Kevin Rodrigues

Ode to sports

I love sports
They make my
Life better
They are
Fun and
keep me fit and
Healthy too
I enjoy the
Feel of the breeze
When it
Hits me while
I run like a horse
It's my love, my

passion
It's sports
I especially
Love soccer
Kick the ball
Then run to the
Goal for a
Chance to
Score
You are face to face,
With the Goalkeeper
You shoot and you
Score as
The crowds go wild

Family heirloom fiction (500 words)

Military security, planes hovering over, thousands of armed men. A man swoops in with a fighter jet and bombs the place. He parachutes off, grabs the teacup and kills anyone in his way. He then boards a private helicopter, flies to his home city and stays with his family. He passed it on to his granddaughter, who knew the secret to it. Every time the past owner got old they would pass it to the next generation and tell them what it was. The man who got it was my great (x17) grandfather. He was one of the most mysterious people in the world, he was top secret. The world governments didn't know about, he hid his identity. He usually got hired to infiltrate bases to spy and retrieve items. That time though when he got that teacup it was for his family. I didn't know about it until yesterday when my father gave it to me. I was surprised because he said, "Son if you lose this item this family has no value." I was confused and asked what was in it. He answered the following, "Inside is a pill that can make you invincible and immortal." I didn't think it was possible, but I did what he said. He died months after and I never really thought of the teapot. Years had passed and I told my sister about it but she didn't care. One day out of the blue, these men break into my house to get the teacup, and I tell my wife and daughter to hide, I know it wasn't the right decision, but I took the teacup and ate the pill. It was to protect my family, but I didn't follow my father's instructions. I had to do something I thought I'd never have to do, I killed them and ran, just ran. I flew away knowing I would never see my family again. Every day I stayed in the same shack in the forest, with no food and no water. But I didn't need any. I was the most powerful man in the world, I didn't plan on doing anything with it. 200 years later I wasn't in a shack anymore, my shack was destroyed. The world was in chaos. There were rich people and poor people, no in between. I had no family alive. The population was 142,785 humans. I was tired of hiding and I have been thinking of leaving Earth forever. I hijacked a space shuttle by walking through 40 men trying to stop me with weapons, but I don't feel pain and I can do anything. I got into the shuttle and made the captain steer the ship to Mars

(the nearest planet). Population 2, me and a little alien I found. When I got there, I saw a shadow behind a rock, then I cautiously made my way over and I saw him. He was lying on the floor injured, so I helped him. Turns out he was very friendly.



Alexander Rodriguez

500 Word Story about an Object with Sentimental Value The Baseball Card

“Dad!” I call out, “I want to go to a Mets game!”

“You know it costs a good amount of money to get good seats, right?” he responds.

“But we haven’t gone in a while,” I complain.

“Fine,” my dad complies. “But we can’t spend over \$100 total.”

I go to the Mets website to look for tickets. I notice two games with promotions. One has a bobble head as the promotion and the other game has a pack of baseball cards. I sit on the couch staring at the screen debating which game I should choose. I really want to get both. But I knew I could only go to one game.

“Which one should I choose?” I ask my dad.

“Just choose the cheaper one,” he responds. It turns out the cheaper one was the game with the baseball cards. My dad buys the tickets and I start getting a sense of excitement. At the same time, I also feel nervous because I know only the first few thousand fans get the baseball card pack.

“Can we go now?” I ask my dad. “I really want to get this baseball card pack.”

“Okay. We can go now,” my dad responds. We get in the car to head to Citi Field, the home of the Mets. It felt like the ride took an hour when we got there but it actually took 15 minutes. During the car ride, my dad and I talk about what Mets baseball card I want the most. I really wanted David Wright. When we get out of the car, I rush my dad to hurry up so we can get on line as quickly as possible. The line is very long and I start to get worried we aren’t going to get the baseball card pack. As we get closer and closer, I notice they aren’t handing out baseball card packs anymore.

“NOOOOO!” I yell. “We didn’t get the baseball cards.” I start to cry a little.

“It’s fine Alex, we’ll somehow get one,” my dad says trying to cheer me up.

“We will probably never get this opportunity ever again!” I yell back in frustration.

While walking around the stadium trying to find a good place to eat at, I notice one of my neighbors and point him out to my dad. We walk up to him to say hello. “Hey! What’s up?” my dad asks him.

“Not much,” he replies. “Did you get the baseball card pack?”

“No,” my dad responds. “Alex is very disappointed.”

“Do you want my pack then?” my neighbor offers.

“Yes!” I scream excitedly.

“Here you go then,” he says.

“Thank you soooooo much,” I respond with the biggest smile on my face. I swiftly open the baseball card pack and the first card I see is David Wright! “YESSSSSS!” I yell.

“What happened?” my dad asks.

“I got David Wright!” I exclaim. I hold up the card in the air like it is a first place trophy.

Haikus

Where I'm From

They make great coffee
It's surrounded by mountains
It's very hot there

Who I Am

I am a sports guy
I am a traveling guy
I am a math guy

My Favorite...

A big Ferris wheel
Its name is the London Eye
There is also Big Ben

Mullika Saha

Flash Fiction

Laughs & Smiles

Isabelle couldn't believe she had to go to summer camp this year. She had everything planned. She was going to go to the carnival rides with her friends and have slumber parties. It was going to be so much fun, but her parents had crushed everything. This was going to be the worst summer yet.

When they got there, Isabelle was so stubborn that her mom had to pull her out of the car. As she looked around, she could only see kids who were in middle and high school. She was only a 7th grader. They seemed to be nice. Isabelle was surprised and happy at the same time. Maybe it wouldn't be as bad as she thought it would be.

As the camp directors were giving her a tour, Isabelle noticed that every cabin was dedicated to something in nature. She was barely even listening to what the tour guide was saying. Finally, the camp director stopped at a cabin. The woman's name tag read Sophia and she was very friendly to Isabelle. Sophia told her that her cabin was called Cherry Blossom. Then, Isabelle took a deep breath and walked in.

Everything here had this certain feeling that she couldn't describe. Suddenly, someone said, "Hi!" and Isabelle almost jumped. In front of her, there were two girls, about her age. Both of them had blonde hair. They introduced themselves as Emma and Olivia. In a while, all of them were laughing at a joke Emma had made. Isabelle knew right then that they were going to be really good friends.

Praise Poem

A Piece of Me ...

I am the shooting star
that shines in the midnight sky
with speed and hope inside me.
I am the baby bird in the nest,
trying to learn how to fly.
I was ready to give up,
but I kept on trying.

Then, the story unfolds as
I fly across the sky.
I am the playful ocean
with waves splashing on the shore.
The water twinkles in the bright sun
and seashells laugh beside me.
I am taller than the trees
and smaller than Earth.
I am part of art,
discovering new things every day.
I am special in very own way.

Sophie Scialla

Just One Egg

I sat, waiting for the correct moment to strike my axe against the bare bark of my beloved oak tree. I had grown it from a seed, which I bought from my cousin Natasha in Russia for ten rubles (equivalent to fifteen cents). Crack! My axe struck against the rigid oak tree. I leapt away, as the long trunk came falling down onto the place where I had last sat. I grabbed my axe once again and chopped off a slice of the tree that was about five centimeters wide.

I sat, again, but at my dining room table. The dining room was sparsely decorated and the only pieces of furniture were my small table and two chairs. I was whittling a round oval out of my newly cut wood. It looked exactly like what I was eating, a hard-boiled egg. That's when it came to me! Easter was coming up soon and I could sell this egg and make a business out of it!

The next day, I went to the closest store. Since I lived in a dense forest, it took an hour to reach the store. I bought some fine paint, glue and a beautiful collection of mother of pearl.

When I went home, I imagined my hometown in Ukraine, with its beautiful red flowers and crisp white snow. I painted all of the pictures that were instilled in my mind, inlaying mother of pearl as I went. When I was done, I felt as if I wanted more. More memories of my happy childhood to be remembered in these beautiful wood carvings. I wanted to keep them now. I made more of these eggs. Soon they had their own room. My husband, Ilya, was becoming tired of the massive pile of eggs occupying the house.

At first, I was holding my stance, not letting him touch my precious eggs. I was like the mother sparrow, guarding the eggs from the huge eagle. Soon, I became bored. I was obliged to stop my egg-creating because there was no room for the rest. I had to sell them. My precious babies.

I went to the market a few days later, and set up my stand. “Деревянные яйца на продажу” (Wooden eggs for sale), I called. People started coming and buying the eggs that I had worked so hard on. At first, I had had one, but now it was more. I had made around six hundred wooden eggs in one year. An hour later, all of the eggs were gone. Except one. One was the runt of the pack but was the first egg I had ever made. I ran my hand along the carved edges of it. I felt the smooth mother of pearl, and watched it glimmer in the sunlight. I watched the paint dazzle my eyes and project a memory unlike any other of my home. I tucked it in my pocket and smiled. I felt satisfied, for I had affected many people's lives with just one egg.

Prem

Prem Krishnamurthy is one of my mom's oldest friends. They were in Berlin together when they did a study abroad. Prem is a graphic designer and has done many cool and interesting projects. He had a gallery called P!, which stands for Prem! In one of the exhibitions there, an artist took a bunch of regular items and put them in the simplest containers. Prem also wrote a 1000 page manifesto that is called a P!DF. It is a pdf and is all online. The font is white, while the pages are black. I think that this is a great statement about classical versus new. Prem is a great role model because he thinks outside of the box. I love how he pursues his ideas and is so proud of his name.

Recently, Prem left his home in New York to go to Germany. His girlfriend (now wife) lives there and has 2 children from a previous marriage. Now, his gallery there is K! (Krishnamurthy). I like how Prem was willing to give up everything for love because it is the strongest power in us.

One of my favorite moments with Prem was when he first introduced me to lactose-free milk. Although this seems like a small thing, this made me realize that lactose-free milk is the best thing ever (since sliced bread)! This also opened me up to coconut milk, which is sooo good. Even though I am not lactose-intolerant, I certainly appreciate Prem for introducing me to the wide realm of milks that there are.

Diego Shirazi

Ode to Basketball

Oh
Lovely
Basketball,
Players
jumping
For the ball,
Each person,
Very tall,
Players running
Down the
court.
To the basket!
Shot is short,
Get the rebound,



Up the court
Twix the basket,
Players look short
It's halftime, mascots rumble,
Players rest, fans grumble.
Fans get food and set the mood
Game resumes,
Ball is shot.
A superb block,
A swished three,
The underdog is back in this thing,
20 seconds left,
Tie games are the best!
A quick steal, dribble and shot
He made it! Underdogs win!

Praise Poem

I am four feet nine inches of heaven,
Born and raised in the capital of the world, NYC.
My roots trace all the way back to the way back to
The land of the camels,
As well as the land of Hispanic culture.
My family tree is Muslim, Jewish, and Christian,
Though I am none.
My past is behind me,
My future in front of me.
My happiness is based on those around me.
Good at some things, bad at others.
My spirit is taller than a mountain,
But my body is smaller than a tree.
My life path is right in front of me,
From skyscrapers to glee,
I will always be me.

Anzam Siddek

The Black Figure (Flash Fiction)

I saw a black figure proceeding towards my bed. Sweat was dripping down my face, but that didn't stop me from pulling the sheets over, assuring myself of protection. I didn't know whether to keep my eyes shut or keep them open on the lookout for this peculiar black figure. My eyes darted from side to side. I didn't dare to move my body the tiniest bit. The figure began to approach my end of the bed. I thought my life would end at nine years old. I felt like I could drown in my sweat. The figure began to climb on my bed, and I, still, stayed as still as a rock even though I was shaking. I was starting to recognize that this figure was a person. I noticed that as the person walked, he/she wasn't facing me, but facing the window. *Probably closing the window, so no one hears me scream while I'm being killed*, I thought to myself. As the person moved, he/she stepped on my foot, and I tried to stay as still as a rock. The person immediately lifted their foot as they felt mine. I started to relax because this person probably didn't want me to wake up, so the person probably wasn't going to harm me. Then, the lamp was turned on. I shut my eyes due to the sudden brightness after sleeping in total darkness for a while. I opened my eyes. I got so scared for absolutely no reason, because the person was my mom!

Embarrassment (Narrative Essay)

I walk into school, and the first thing I see is everyone crowding this one person. I approach the crowd to figure out what's going on. As I get closer, I hear voices yelling, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY!" Then, it struck me like lightning. It was Eliana's birthday. The school day progressed normally, as an old, boring, and tiring day of school.

Later on in the day, the teacher, Ms. Bournias, had decided to sing happy birthday to Eliana, hand out cupcakes, etc. So she let Eliana choose people to help her hand out the cupcakes and napkins. She chose her two best friends, obviously, who were Raya and Claire. After everyone had a napkin and cupcake in front of them, we sang the song. Then we ate our food. Unlike everyone else, who ate like a normal human, I stuffed the cupcake in my mouth and told everyone that I ate like a boss. There were cupcake crumbles going everywhere while I said that. No wonder I had no friends. Eventually, everyone finished eating, and we received the goodie bags. I got up to put mine away and when I approached my backpack, something bad was about to happen and I had absolutely no clue whatsoever.

I needed to use the bathroom. REALLY BAD. Now you might be thinking, "Why don't you just run to the bathroom, what's the worst that can happen? I wet my pants?" I wish it was that easy. I didn't need to go to the bathroom for a number 1, but for the other one. I was in kindergarten, so those teeny tiny little legs wouldn't bring my 80 pound, obese/overweight body to the other side of the floor before you know what happens. So, I had no other choice but to just let "you know what" happen. Keep in mind, I didn't really know anything since I was in kindergarten, so I went up to the

teacher and said these exact words: “I pooped in my pants.” As soon as that “s” at the end of “pants” came out of my mouth, everyone burst in laughter. People were fanning their hands in the air, holding their noses, and pretending to vomit. Who knew kids in kindergarten were so capable of humiliating people? Eventually, my mother came and helped me out.

This experience was one that really taught me the meaning of the word “embarrassed.” I don’t know anything more embarrassing than pooping in your pants in front of a bunch of people. I was so humiliated by everyone laughing at me and telling me I smelled horrible (not that I’m saying I didn’t). This experience also taught how I should act in these types of situations where I’m embarrassed or humiliated. I also learned not to act the way my classmates did in kindergarten. I’m glad that I learned then instead of making that mistake now.

Sofia Spyropoulos

Personal Narrative

The Fall

Just as I'm about to get onto the couch, my grandma tells me, "Sofia eu nu vreau tu sa cazi depe canapea". (Translation: Sofia I don't want you to fall off the couch.) I just nodded back because I knew I wouldn't fall off the couch since I've jumped on the couch before. After a few jumps it feels like I'm falling forward. It happens so quickly that I'm stunned. As I hit the ground, shock flows through my mind as I'm able to figure out what had just happened. I touch my left arm and luckily it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I just ignore it and hope the pain will eventually go away. All that jumping made me hungry so I decided to go get a snack. I head to the kitchen and open the cabinet door with my left arm. I wince in pain as I pull my left arm closer to myself. I then realized that I fell on my left arm. Thoughts start going through my head as I wonder what I could have possibly done to my arm. "Mom, I need ice," I yell as I walk to the living room and sit on the couch. She brings me the ice and as she presses it against my arm, I explain to her what had happened. She looks at my arm and I start to panic because I don't want it to be serious. My mom answers softly, "We have to go to the hospital."

"W-why?" I'm so scared that I can't even answer properly. "I don't really want to get into it, just get ready." As she answers, her tone sounds worried. About ten minutes later we make it to the hospital. My mom signs my name on the waiting list and we wait for about 15 minutes until we get called inside. The doctor then talks to my mom about what happened and takes an x-ray of my arm. After looking at the x-ray, he tells us the results. "You have broken your left forearm" the doctor told us. As soon as he says that I start to wonder if my arm will ever heal. The doctor then gently puts a sling on my arm. "Your arm will be healed in about six weeks," the doctor says. We thank him and leave. As soon as we get home, I tell my mom, "I'm never going to jump on the couch again." A couple of days later we go back to the hospital so they can put a cast on my arm. Six weeks after that, my arm is fully healed and I can use it normally again.

Tamara Tesovic

Haiku

Who I Am

I am Serbian
I love to swim with my friends
I am pretty smart



Ode to My Phone

Bright and electronic
My “best friend”
Keeps me entertained
Plays sweet music to my ears
Has many games
Talks to my friends
Thin and lightweight
Bitten apple on the back
Oily fingerprints all around
Pitch black screen
Gold color of wealth
Glass on both sides
Matte metal around the edges
Large, round sapphire camera
Many background selections
Too many to choose from
Pale pink phone case
Fits just right
138.4 mm
Thin sides
Fits in my pocket perfectly
As well as in my hand
I feel like it follows me everywhere
But no,
I’m taking it with me
An ode to my phone

Poker Madness

Jess was devastated as she watched herself losing at poker. She couldn't handle losing anymore, she lost too much money over the past two weeks. She lived with her mother because of her struggle. As everyone else was calm, Jess was furious. Jess hopped in a cab and drove home.

"That will be \$10.75," says the cab driver. Jess looks in her wallet and finds only \$10.70.

"Excuse me, is it okay if I give you \$10.70, it's all I have" she shows him as she turns her wallet upside down while shaking it slightly.

"I'll take it missy but make a note that not all cab drivers are nice like me. It's best to carry a twenty with you at all times."

"Thank you so much Sir, Okay bye!"

"Have a nice day." He then drives off. Jess has a relieved face as she walks across her mother's lawn. She walks in and lets the door automatically slam behind her.

"Jess? Did you lose another game of poker?" She hears her mother calling. "Well, either way, go to the store and get some milk and eggs, there's a twenty on the table."

"Okay, got you mom." She grabs the twenty and walks to the store. As she walks to the store, little does she know that the same cab is coming for her. He runs Jess over, gets out of the car, and says "You thought you could get away with not paying me the right amount, huh?"

Max Williamson

Dear Diary,

I live on a street where everything seems so ugly to me. Especially the paint warehouse across the street. Especially at this time. There are people in power who listen to nothing but money and work for nothing but money. They really want to hurt us. One of my biggest disappointments is corrupt people with lots of power, like politicians. Well, not all of them are bad, but they are still a disappointment. What have we come to in this world?

Nonfiction 250-word piece

Barack Obama was known to the masses as the president. His high school basketball teammates knew him as Barry O'Bomber, a boy with a love of difficult shots. His parents knew him as a good African American with a bright future. He was a great man who accomplished lots of great things, like reforming health care, regulating banks, and raising fuel efficiency standards, to name just a few. But his best ever accomplishment would be doing all of these things despite racism, opposition, and severe federal issues. And he managed to do it all without a scandal, the 28th president in history to do so. Barack Obama was born to Obama Senior and S. Ann Dunham. When Obama was two, Barack Sr. and S. Ann divorced because of Barack Sr. going to Harvard to study. Shortly after Ann remarried to Lolo Seotoro and had a second child, Maya. Obama, while living in Jakarta, attended an Islam and Catholic private school. He returned to Hawaii

in 1971 and went with his mother abroad before she divorced Seotoro. The family mostly lived a middle-class existence. In 1979, Obama graduated from Punahou School, a college preparatory school. He then attended Occidental College for two years and then switched to Columbia University, where he received a degree in political science. There he received lots of influence from the professors who pushed him to take studying more seriously. Obama grew in intellect for college and years after. He read a lot of literature and philosophy during this time.

Choose your favorite non-fiction story

My favorite story is *They Lost Their Heads! What Happened to Washington's Teeth, Einstein's Brain, And Other Famous Body Parts*. The theme is unexpected. I chose this story because it is really interesting. Seriously, most books wouldn't be about famous body parts. It's about famous body parts, a brief summary of their owners' lives, and some burial facts. What it means to me is that it contains information like what people did with body parts after the person died, which normally isn't true for most nonfiction. A quote from the book is, "If you want to be remembered as a tortured, crazy genius, you better have some serious tortured, crazed hair."

Class 506



Tasnia Ahmed

Flash fiction story

There she was, Amanda, sitting waiting for the bus. Going along with her regular daily routine. But, something odd soon happened.

As a suspicious woman walked up to her, she quickly got up to let her sit, but the woman did not - she stood staring down at Amanda instead.

“Come with me,” she said.

Amanda quickly got up and moved away from the lady. She came back.

“Come with me!” she said more aggressively.

Amanda wasn’t going to go with a random lady. And so, she didn’t.

“What would you like from me?” Amanda asked in a scared but confident way.

“I would like you.”

This is when Amanda screamed. She did not know what was going on. She felt as though she was on top of someone and got slammed down. Her mouth was covered and it was hard to breathe. She was inside something.

She escaped. Bright flashes being directed at her, seeing all her friends start screaming, not in a happy way.

She ran. It wasn’t her friends there and she knew it. She was being chased out of her house. Now, by strangers. They were yelling, but everything seemed muffled in Amanda’s ears. And then, she saw it. The signs. The signs accusing her of murder: Amanda Crells **WANTED, accused for the murder of her family.**”

MURDER OF MY FAMILY? She thought.

The police were looking for her, or someone who looks like her.

That’s why they are chasing me, they think I murdered my family, she thought.

That’s when she noticed it, that picture isn’t even her, it’s a look-alike. She doesn’t have the birthmark that’s down her arm or the dimple the girl had in the picture.

I’m being framed! How were they so mistaken? She thought. She couldn’t let people think of her as such a horrible person. She had to put a stop to this.

“STOPPPPPPP!!!!!!” she screamed.

They did. The screaming stopped and the police slowly got out of their cars.

“This isn’t me, I don’t have that smile or that birthmark. Look,” she said as she shone a bright big smile to prove it and lifted up her sleeve.

Many gave her a chance. Police investigated deeper and found out she was telling the truth. It wasn’t her. It was the lady who abducted her. Her name was Amy. All Amanda could wonder was why, but she never got her answer...

Goodbye!

The day I walked down the stairs,
seeing mom cry.
Wondering why,
but not told.

Eating breakfast, almost crying about the thought of my mom hurt.
I was finally told.
I walked into your cold room,
white sheets on your body.
Your face almost dark blue.

I screamed, I cried, I was dead on the inside.
My eldest brother,
gone like that!

Seeing ambulance cars race down our road to see you.
My dad telling me you were just sick.
But I knew you weren't.

Seeing funeral cars take you away,
Everyone, grieving with pain.
It was hard,
extremely.

I couldn't bear the thought of walking into your empty room without you there.
But it was real, you were gone....
It's almost been a year.
June 26th 2017, the worst day of my life.

Owen Anderson

The Gateway: A 500 word short story

My family is not one that you would call “normal.” One thing that makes us supernatural is my grandfather’s black hematite necklace. My parents have it locked in a dark rusted iron box saying that it “holds the power of the shadows,” or whatever that means. One normal and unsuspecting day, I was walking to my bedroom. As I was walking through the hallway, I saw the large, iron box on the kitchen table. “Huh, that’s strange,” I muttered. “I thought that dad kept it in his office.” So, being the bratty little kid that I was, I decided to open it up. When I opened it, I saw the wonderful black spectral of the gemstone shine in the sunlight like an infinite void of darkness. “Wow.” I carefully put on the necklace with shaking hands.

Suddenly, I’m sent through what seems like an infinite black void. I try to scream, yet no sound comes out of my mouth. Abruptly, I land face first into a black, inky landscape. Amazingly, even though I’m bleeding to the point of collapse, I feel no pain. As I stumble back up I notice an inky, black hand reaching out to me as if to help me up. “Oh God, what is that?” I yell as I quickly retreat back into a dark wall. “Who are you and where am I?” I stammer as I get back up on my feet.

“You know very well who I am, Owen Anderson,” a deep, raspy voice says to me over my shoulder. “I am the demon of hate. And from what I understand you have a lot of that yourself.”

“What are you talking about?” I shakily reply. “And how did you get behind me? And how do you know my name? And..?”

The dark figure cuts me off by saying: “One question at a time, or I might kill you.” This alone was enough to shut me up. “Firstly, I understand that you hate a lot of your schoolmates for teasing you about your, how shall I put this? About your abnormal grandfather. Now as for how I got behind you? I’m a demon. I can do a lot of things that you mortal human beings cannot even begin to imagine. Lastly, I know all mortal humans’ names, although it is such a hassle to speak to them via their names. But I have an extraordinary memory,” the demon replies with a hint of boast in his tone. “Now as I can tell by your face,” he says looking at me, “you’re wondering why I’m not trying to mutilate you. Well, I have much better things to do, like to see the future and other assortments of dark magic,” he said with a laid back expression on his face. “Now, what to do with you? Would you like anything?”

“Yes. What’s your name?”

“Call me The Shadow Dweller.”

And with that, he opened up a portal and sent me home.



Timothy Ching

The Great Heist

I broke the window of the house as the sound of the glass shattering made me flinch. This window was painted the color of the house for some reason. I whispered to Jones (my partner in the expedition) "I think this is the place. I can practically feel that violin." We went there for a coveted violin. It was passed down from generation to generation in the Ching family - an absurdly rich family. They even dipped their violin in gold. How pretentious. It was worth something like two thousand dollars in the shady markets that we dealt with. They were so rich that they could throw away millions of dollars building the place. Anyways, we kept on walking into the house. It was very dark in there. The only light I could see ahead of me was the massive hallway. I took out a flashlight to see better. The walls were intricately designed with patterns everywhere. As soon as I finished looking at the walls, I saw that Jones almost walked into a tripwire on the floor, and I jerked him back milliseconds before disaster. Just based on that, I could tell the place was filled to the brim with traps. I used my flashlight to check everywhere, and I found a few traps we could easily avoid. The only kind of hard trap was a pit that we had to use a rope to cross.

After a very short amount of time we saw it - the violin. It was even more amazing than I could have imagined. Even in the dark, it still seemed like there was some sort of light glowing off of it. We both whispered at the same time "It's amazing." I turned on my flashlight and scanned the area. No traps. That was quite surprising. We both went up to look at it, and for just a second, we admired it. There was glass surrounding it, so we cut into it and took the violin. Instantly, I heard the ground shaking. I saw a giant trapdoor open above us, the only place I hadn't checked. Instantly, I knew what was going to happen. I shouted "RUN!" We had gotten about ten feet when we heard the crashing of a boulder behind us. I was too afraid to look back. I could feel the boulder's acceleration as the wind was pounding against my face. As we were running, I saw the pit that we crossed earlier. It was our only hope. I climbed down the rope as fast as I could, and Jones came along with me. We saw the boulder pass our heads. We waited for a bit before we heard a thunderous crash. That was our signal to keep going. We walked back and had successfully stolen the violin. We snuck off into the darkness.

Alyssa Chung

Fleeing to America: Short Story

My mother, father, and I all worked at the plate factory. There were very few jobs besides working there. My parents always wanted to live in America. However, we never had the money, plus leaving the country was nearly impossible. Before I started working at the plate factory, we hardly had enough money for food. But now that I am working we have enough.

After another hard day I dozed off very quickly. “Huh?” I pondered. I could hear whispering from the other room. I put my ear to the door and heard Papa say, “We have the money, yet we have no courage.” The floor creaked under me. My parents looked me dead in the eyes. At first they looked angry, then their faces began to soften. They motioned for me to come. Slowly, I began to ask what they were talking about. It was quiet the moment I finished talking. After a while, papa breathed slowly. “Ever since me and your mother got the job at the plate factory, we have been saving money - lots of it. Finally, with the extra money you are making, we finally have enough money to go to America and some extra to survive until one of us finds a job.”

I had so many questions, I didn’t know where to start. “We had plans to leave today, but that didn’t happen. Now that you know,” said Papa, “we can finally go to America.”

“Go to bed,” said Mom.

As I tucked myself in, I imagined so many things. As a thirteen-year-old, I could still go to school in America. The next morning, something was different. Mom and Papa seemed to be putting things in separate piles. I started making myself breakfast, hoping for an explanation. Finally, mom said “we are saving only needed items and selling everything else. We need that money for when we get to America. If any of the government officials ask why, we will tell them that we need more money for food.”

“Will we go to work today?” I asked. “Yes,” said Mama, “nobody can know we are leaving. We do not want to attract attention to ourselves.” We went to work as normal and Mr. Pala was no nicer.

After all our stuff was sold - the apartment was so empty. Late one night, Papa shook me awake. I stumbled over to the kitchen where Mom was sitting. In a low voice Papa whispers, “tonight we are leaving.”

No day had ever gone quicker. At the end of the day, I quickly snatched three plates: one for Papa, Mama and I. As I left the town I grew up in, tears built up in my eyes.

We told the guards we were just visiting my aunt in America. I had no aunts in America, but what did the guards know? As the plane took off, tears of happiness glided down my parents’ faces - as their American dream finally came true.

Homework

Homework really sucks
No homework would be the best
But that is a dream

Escape: Flash Fiction

Three brothers named John, Ben and Mike lived in the middle of a forest. Each of them had special powers. Their mother was an ordinary human citizen who had been separated from the boys. Their dad was a superhero. A group called the Antipower was trying to kill all superheroes. For their safety, they had been locked in by wizards who put a magical force field around it. Each boy tried to escape using their power. John using his super strength, Ben with his digestion, and Mike with his replication. None of them were able to escape the house. One day, they heard loud shouting from outside. There were tall men surrounding the house while holding large guns. They tried to get through the force field. Then, a loud beeping noise came from the kitchen. They went into it. The table opened and a ladder came shooting out. A screen appeared and said *climb the ladder and slide down*. The slide was very long. When it finally opened up they appeared to be in a tight bright room filled with snacks. A video was on the screen. Ben pressed the start button. Their mom appeared on the screen and began to talk. "I am a witch, and we need to get you to a safe area. The force field won't hold them for much longer." The kids sat in a rocket and scrambled to put their seat belts on. They all relaxed as they blasted into the wizard world.

Hayam Elazhary

Just Leave Me Alone

Life is a combination of experiences, culture, tradition, race, ethnicity, politics and much more. Experiences make us who we are as a person. These experiences demonstrate and represent how a person behaves or reacts, and determines their attitude. In my life, I have experienced many things that have affected me in all different forms. For example, how I interact with people, my preferences, my actions, and all about me. With the experiences that I have faced, I have learned many things, such as to always be the bigger person in any and every situation, think positively, take pride in myself, and to be confident. However, the main idea that I will always remember is that everyone should have morals of compassion, kindness, and most importantly, treat others the way you want to be treated.

Throughout my elementary years, specifically second grade, I was bullied whenever the girls had a chance. When I look back at it, what disgusts me the most is that I was bullied because I was a so-called nerd. I wore bright-pink glasses and my hair was almost always in a braid or a ponytail because my hair was so long. Kids would call me nasty names, tell lies about me to make sure nobody was my friend, and even threaten to tell the teachers when I had done absolutely nothing. Now I know, telling the teacher, wow, so scary. However, in the second grade, getting in trouble by a teacher was a huge deal. I would always think to myself, *why me? Wait, no, no, no, why anyone? Is there something so bad about myself that it is necessary for me to be bullied?* I came up with the conclusion that my classmates didn't understand what they were doing. They did not know how much they were hurting the target. This was because they thought it was funny - everything is a game or a joke to them. I am proud of myself that I didn't let these girls put me down because I enjoyed reading or because I actually listened to the teacher and followed directions.

Although I didn't let them get to me, nobody really wanted to play with me during play time or share their toys, or sit with me during lunch. Until one day, two kids in my class came up to me and started socializing with me. I thought the teacher told them to try and be kind by hanging out with me, but this went on for days. That turned into weeks, and finally months. I started to realize that these two girls might actually accept me for who I am, and weren't my friends based on looks or "popularity," but my friends for my personality. Till this day, the same two girls are still my best friends.

Suddenly, the bullying stopped and I was no longer treated like I was not worth anything. The girls that bullied me also wanted to be my friends and they would constantly compliment me on my hair and how perfectly my glasses fit my face. This surprised me because these girls used to make fun of me because of my hair and glasses. I like to think that they stopped bullying me because they noticed that they were not affecting me.

Now, I am in middle school, specifically the sixth grade, and when I see others going through a similar situation, I advise the target by telling them that they are worth it and to not let anyone put them down. I also ask the bully if they really enjoy spending their time making somebody feel bad about themselves and lowering their self-esteem. "What if you were in the target's shoes? Wouldn't feel so good, would it?" I will always treat people with respect, have compassion for everyone, take responsibility for my actions, and have a warm smile!

Kacey Guthrie

My family heirloom is my family, because if not for my family, then where would I be? My family is important because of all the stories that we share, such as when my mother talks about her father's bakery in Jamaica, or the six dogs that she had. My family is important because of the Jamaican music that my father and I share a love for, and the messages that the artists are trying to share. My family is important because of the food that we cook, such as oxtails with lima beans, or red pea stew with pigtails, or chicken foot soup. My family is important because of the way that we act - polite and respectful to all.

My family is important because of the way that we live. We aren't that trademarked, by-the-book family that has a game night every Friday and parties to go to every six weeks. No, my family comes together when we are all home and relaxed, with my father sitting downstairs at his computer, working on the TV, or answering a homework question. Or with my mother sitting at the dining room table grading kids' papers, "writing" lesson plans while half asleep. Or with my sister, who comes home late often, busy with schoolwork and school trips and school drama. Or with my grandmother, who passed away a few years ago, but in her lifetime, kept everything - and everyone - together. Or with me, who is busy with schoolwork and Prep-work and school drama and Prep drama, all bundled up nicely in a small two-family house. Yup. That's my family.

That's the family that I cherish dearly, who I would die for, if I had the choice. That is the family that cheers me on when I get into the school of my dreams, and the one that scolds me when I fall behind. That's the family that will bundle themselves up and drive to New Jersey on Christmas Day, ready to eat good food, exchange presents, and be doted on by aunts. That's the family that held around a large amount of people in August of 2016, when my grandmother passed away, and the family that had to sleep in the basement for a few days to accommodate them.

That's the family who drove my sister, and drives me to Manhattan every Wednesday and Saturday, to go to Prep for Prep and receive an opportunity that I would not have received otherwise. That's the family that's not like other families, and comfortable in being that way. That's the family who (except my dad) would wake up bright and early every Sunday morning, to go down to a small church on Merrick Blvd. to receive the Word. That's the family that has friends all over the place, from Jamaica to Brooklyn, to Florida to St. Albans, the family spread out all over, in New York, New Jersey, Canada, Florida, Jamaica and the United Kingdom of Great Britain. Yes indeed, that is my family and I'd never trade them for another.

Armin Haque

Dear Journal,

I never thought I'd get desperate enough to say this, but I envy you. You don't have to live in this troubled world... and I got many reasons to say why. First, we got Trump as our president. Out of all people, we got Donald Trump. For God's Sake, he thinks global warming is a myth. Like, really. He actually called himself a genius. Also, my little cousin is a complete jerk. Forgive my language... Wait, don't forgive it. He is a complete idiot. He calls women weak! This troubled world has lots of people like Abir and Trump, so it could never be a peaceful place. All you must do is listen to me rant. And school has gotten annoying. Sure, I got great teachers. It can be fun at times. But we get too much homework and tests. I am worried about 7th grade.

But... there are amazing aspects of my life. I have really good friends, a supportive family, and the chance at an education. My best friends who I truly would die for are Maleha, Tim, Mariam, Owen, Rea, Tsesung, and Kacey. They support me, help me at school, and are always there for me. They make me laugh and smile, keeping me happy. I don't know any better friends. **None. And this I swear.** My friends from elementary: Deb, Raashi, Daniel, and Amir, don't bother to call. No attempt to contact me. Can't say that I miss them, because I don't. Huda and I talk sometimes, but not that much.

I have, or had, a best friend named Sinan Khan, or now Brandon Sage, I deeply miss and care about. We had been friends since 1st grade. We had been there for each other for a long time. His grandmother died that year and he pushed me away. God, I tried to get his old self back again, but that was a mistake. In the end, I lost one of my best friends. I just want my friend back now. I remember that in the beginning of the year, when we were in classrooms that were across the hall, we would take notes and look back at each other. Every time we looked back, he smiled. We would silently talk as my friends would wonder what I was doing. I miss him, a lot. Even if he has been acting like a jerk lately, he was my best friend.

This world is troubled, and you, my journal are lucky that you don't have to live in it. But I am also lucky that I do. For life can have obstacles, but we can get through them together. I have Tim, Owen, and Kacey by my side, even if they leave.

Signing off,
Armin Haque

Sarah Haque

Praise Poem

You are unique
Everyone is human
But everyone is different
Different looks
Different personality
Different background

Your hair is like midnight
You make people laugh all the time
Like it's your favorite job
Loves when peoples' faces light up
Helps others
And treats others kindly

Lives in a special place in Queens
Jackson Heights
Met amazing people
Awesome friends
Every turn you take
Has something new
In this community
It's like everyone knows everyone
One of everyone's favorites is Travers Park
Would go there all the time

So proud
Proud in many ways
Proud to be Bengali
Proud of my parents
Proud of having good grades in a good school
Your name is Sarah Haque.

Short Story

I enter the door to my house. I can smell the aroma of my mom cooking something in the kitchen. The rich spices stream through the house. The smell of the spices reminds me of Fall. My brother and sister have already come home from school. I carefully take my shoes off at the entrance and immediately plant myself onto the couch. "Mom, I'm home!" I call out. She walks out of the kitchen and sits next to me on our cozy couch. "Hi honey, I was just making dinner real quick. How did school go?" she asked holding my hand. "Fine," I answered. "Anyway, I have to take a shower and do some homework." I walked down the hallway, leaving my mom in the living room. If my dad was here, he would've given me a big hug the second I walked into the house. I would've told him everything that happened at school and he would've listened. I say a quick "Hey" to my siblings as I walk past their rooms. I shut the door to my room, exhausted from another day of school. I set my backpack down and collapse onto my bed. I spread my arms and legs out, thinking about how many more years are going to be spent like this. I stare into the ceiling letting my thoughts spill.

My dad passed away recently because of a dangerous car accident. We were really close - we would go everywhere together. Right now, I feel empty without him. The world feels colorless without him. My mom and I aren't very intimate. Adjusting to this part of my life has been really difficult for me. Why am I not strong enough? I don't know how long his memories are going to be haunting me. I think about him all the time. My grades in school are dropping, too. He would give advice on my crazy life and listen to what I thought. Friendships and school life, family...I'm still laying on my bed when I hear a knock on the door. "Can I come in?" I hear a muffled voice from the other side of the door. It was mom's voice. "Sure," I reply. She walks into my room and slowly closes the door behind her. She sits beside me looking down for a minute. We sit there for a moment, just staring off into space, thinking. "I get what you're going through right now." she finally says. "When I was about your age, my grandmother passed away. I had a relationship with her just like the one you had with your dad. I became just like you, hurt and empty." she comforted. Then she took out a box. The box had beautiful wood engravings flowing through it. "When my mother noticed this about me, just like I noticed about you, she gave me a special

ring.” She took my hand and put the ring around my finger. “I want you to look at this whenever you feel upset to feel stronger, stronger than this ring that survived all these years. From my mom to me and now to you,” she explained. I looked at the ring and then at my mother and then back at the ring. I leaned into my mom and embraced her. “Thank you, mom. I love you.”

From then on, I always wear that ring. Whenever I feel that dark cloud of negativity come by, the ring reminds me to stay strong. In fact, I’ve been doing a lot better in school. Although I didn’t get the National Junior Honor Society, I’m proud of myself. I’ve been more alert during class. I never thought Science would be an interesting subject! My grades are all in the 90s right now, nothing is stopping me from trying to get good grades. I just finally realized that I shouldn’t let one thing take over my whole life... my dad is in a better place anyway.

Ryan Huang

Dyatlov Pass Incident

A group of explorers, sent by Ural Polytechnic Institute, were to explore an area now called Dyatlov Pass after the expedition's leader, Igor Dyatlov. Let's just say, all these people didn't come back alive.

The group was camping in a tent in a remote area they were sent to explore. After an unknown cause, the group tore their way out of the tent. Some members were shirtless, wearing only underwear in the below freezing temperatures. They soon fell to hypothermia. This fate came upon six out of the ten members of the expedition. One had left earlier, so nine were in the incident. This one lucky person felt a bit unwell during the journey to the pass.

In this expedition, three members suffered a terrible fate. Two had severe chest trauma, one had their eyes torn out, leaving dark empty spaces. Another member had their eyes and tongue torn out, also suffering from severe chest trauma. Both of these bodies were found by the river, face down. Surprisingly, these bodies had clothing on, suggesting these members had time to put on clothes before they tore out of the tent.

Lastly, there was a member who died of a fatal skull injury. This member had fallen out of a tree.

It is speculated that the members with clothing took other members' clothing when they died, and it is confirmed that the tent was ripped from the inside, not from the outside.

The tragedy was discovered by some hunters in the area.

Many speculate that the military or aliens had something to do with this, but no evidence can yet confirm these theories since there is no sufficient evidence to prove so.

Will Itskovich

Broken Christmas

Little Jenny was waiting for a happy holiday,
a beautiful Christmas.
Her parents smiled at her, clutching her small body in their hands.
To her joy, she saw many gifts at the Christmas tree.
It was a full Christmas.
Smiles, happy breaths,
frowns, horrible deaths.
By evening, the Others had attacked their family.
Bombs over their house and broken glass on the floor.
Her parents had passed away.
Little Jenny walked near the fireplace and waited for Santa to come.
She sat there, frowning.
He never came.
A broken Christmas.
A broken Christmas, a broken world.
A broken life, a broken girl.

It Might as Well be Never

My best friend is right here, smiling.
My best friend is right here, very happy.
I break my mirror, where's my best friend?
I look around the room, no one is there; a blank face.
A reflection that's distorted.
Everyone is gone, shattered with grief and everyone was never not scared.
Everyone is blank, like a white canvas.
Everyone is like the couch or the sofa, with no feelings.
That made this community a decoy for what was true and what was real:
pain, hunger, music, joy, but I guess it's no big deal.
I guess a perfectly fine community is no big deal.
But is it no big deal if no one feels anything?
Is it no big deal if there is no love, no joy?
We might as well. Be. Dead. Color.
We take advantage of that, but that community doesn't have it.
Like an old television show, their world is black and white.
Like a rough piece of wood, their world is bland and not quite right.
They might as well. Be. Dead. Music.
We sing every day like everything is normal and like we do it all the time, which we do.
Like a silent room, their world has no meaning.
Like a disturbingly serene dystopia.
They may scream and shout all they want, but they will never get what they want.
Friendships.
We have friends and people we care about very deeply like our families.

Like a stale loaf of bread, their world has no love.
Like false relationships, their world has no true friendships.
Maybe one day they will live normally once again, but one day isn't soon.
Maybe is just a word. It might as well. Be. Never.

Alexander Kasapis

Ode to Memes (There Are Hidden Memes in This Piece)

OH! My dear memes,
Without you I'm,
Forever Alone,
OH YEAH!
I tell the truth,
Take a Kowalski analysis,
I'll give you some proof.
Old memes or,
New ones,
Which type,
Does not matter,
They are my spagett,
That you shouldn't touch.
In this world,
I own the memes
They bring me happiness,
In the darkest hours,
But they're not just mine,
They are ours.



250 Word Story (My Stitches)

When Alexander Kasapis was only two years of age, he had experienced an extremely traumatic event. His brother, Peter Kasapis, had his Pre-kindergarten graduation which he was about to go to. He woke up nice and ready to go, next he needed to get his parents so he embarked on a mission to wake them from their deep slumber and succeeded, kind of. He managed to awaken his mother, yet his father slept like a rock, so they decided to leave without him, and told him to come later. So, with Alex strapped in his stroller, they left, but without

closing the door. So his mom went to close the door. Without holding onto the stroller, it only took a small gust of wind to blow him off.

He violently crashed against the hard stone stairs in the stroller, and his head banged across one of them. Soon as he knew it, his brightly colored t-shirt turned a dark black and his mother rushed to get the ambulance. When they got to the ER, the doctors quickly tried to stitch his head back together, stroke after painful stroke. After an hour, Alex was finally stitched together and made it seem like it never happened. With him running around and jumping from chair to chair like he was fine all along. So, he headed home with his brand new stitches missing his brother's ceremony, but keeping his life together, so a pretty good trade. Moral of the story - never trust your brother.

Tazriam Khandoker

Where I Come From

A place lush, green, blue,
crowded, strict, and cruel indeed
is where I am from.

Ode to Opals

So pretty, so bright,
even in the night.
From light purple to glittering silver,
a dark red and black glimmer.
To metallic colors that shimmer,
are the colors of an opal, never dimmer.
Sparkly and shiny,
so precious and tiny.
With a twinkle so bright,
it shines in the darkest nights.
These gems are a queer work of art,
that never fall apart.
The colors dance in my eyes,
a dance that never dies.

Alone

I was always alone.
That's me.
Alone.
As if I never existed.
They don't care about me.
They left me.
As if I had no feelings.
But I did.
I wasn't sad.
I was depressed.
I wasn't angry.

They are so calm,
yet fiery like a firebomb.
They are dark,
yet happy like a monarch.
They are crystals of purity;
of love, of hope.
They are stones of beauty
are these opals indeed.
They never show greed,
and their glamour never bleeds.
Rather, they modestly show
their grace and authentic glow.
Their elegance allures me
to see their wonderful, glamorous sea.
Their power is mighty, yet free,
as an opal should always be.

I was furious.
But I was scared to show it.
They may laugh.
They may talk behind me.
But as I grew older
my feelings grew intense.
I couldn't take it anymore.
My heart of Athena told me it was time to
let go.
And I did.
I told them everything.
How I felt.
How my grades were affected.

How I cried nearly every day.
Everything.
But did they care?
No.
All I felt was regret.
I thought that if I told them
everything would be fine.

At least they would care.
Or they would understand.
But no, not at all.
I'm back to square one.
Alone.

Samuel Libert

Spoken Word on Video Games

Hi guys
Do you like video games?
What lots of kids love
And parents think is lame
Tutors and studying
With no breaks
Playing a game's
Not a piece of cake
The thing with our generation
They don't understand
The skills in gaming
That you need to have
It isn't easy
To shoot and to aim
Here are some good things
From video games
In many games you need confidence
You need to work to achieve a goal
Take shooters, not all you do
Is learn to aim a pistol
You need eye-hand coordination and you need focus
You work on these things from playing a shooter
One thing that at least my parents don't understand
Is that technology is this school, this city, this world, and it is our future

26 line ode to memes

Memes are wonderful so I will not forget
Even dead memes like "touched my spaget"
Memes can be awesome
And memes can be dank
That's what she said
And flextape
Baby a triple
Aw hell no
Need Some Milk
Crash woah
Megolovania
High noon

Sanic and Oof
Kazoo
Big Chungus
Hit or Miss
Yeet, Vsauce
Just do it
I be flossin'
Illuminati
Omae wa mou shindeiru
Nani
Mining Away
Lamb Sauce
These memes
Have changed us

Haikus

Cold breeze in the air
With a blue and yellow flag
Welcome to Sweden

With red and white stripes
It is the land of the free
And home of the brave

Home of Taekwondo
Kimchi, Mandoo, and Japchae
And home of Samsung

Alyssa Luk

Ode to Bulldogs:

You make humans so happy
 You're lazy
 You're silly
You drool everywhere
But you're really cute
 Your face is wrinkly
Your eyes are covered
 Since you're lazy
 We drag you
 Especially to train
You're everything we'd wish for
Or at least what I'd wish for
 You make us laugh
 And yes
 All of us
You seem to be very heavy
 Although you fart a lot
 You're still a dog
 Nothing can change that
Nor can a human change you
 We try to dress you up
 We just can't get you up
 You are healthy
You seem to live very long
 You eat a lot
 And drink a lot too!

All about Me!

My name is Alyssa Y. Luk. I was born and raised in New York. My birthday is 12/19/07. I am a mix of Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, & Laos. My dad was also born and raised in NY. I speak Cantonese and English fluently, and am learning Japanese. My mother is from Thailand, but raised in NY. With my father, we've traveled to Orlando. In Orlando, we visited Disney and Universal. We used to go every month. This year in the summer, we will travel to Hawaii for ten days for my dad's marriage to my soon-to-be stepmother. We also have been on many cruises with my family. My mother and I have been to Japan and Thailand. I have been to Orlando, Japan, Thailand, The Caribbean, and Hawaii, etc. many times. As a hobby, I like to: dance, do acrobatics, gymnastics, paint/make Chinese art, play the taiko/Japanese drum, Lion dancing/Chinese martial arts, Diablo/Chinese yoyo, kickboxing/ boxing/ Muay Thai, karate, and swimming. I used to play the piano, ukulele, and the violin. My favorite food is pad Thai and ramen. ***I eat rice every day.*** In my free time, I eat a lot. I have lots of interest in Fashion Designing. I use social media very often.

Katerina Martinez

A Precious Heirloom

As a young child, I awoke to the aroma of my grandmother's irresistible pancakes. I used to observe her careful techniques as she drizzled her fresh maple syrup onto the pancakes. I remember her joy as she made these, lobbing sprinkles everywhere, and pouring light, Fluffy whip cream in a heart shaped motion. However, my siblings were too small to care at the time.

These mornings made up my favorite memories of my grandmother. One morning, like any other, she was there. The next, she was nowhere to be seen. Since I was only seven years old, I didn't have a single clue to what death was. No one ever had the courage to explain it to me. My family members didn't even tell me about her funeral. Months afterwards, I still waited for her arrival. I expected for her to come back and cuddle me up in her arms. I imagined that she would have bags of candy sitting in the trunk of her car just for me.

Every night, I waited for her at the dinner table, and for my grandmother to tuck me into my bed. When I found out that I wouldn't be able to see her again, I took my pain and anger out on my father and little brother. For weeks, I never spoke a word to my dad. When he gave me a hug, I pushed him away, and stared him down as I ran to my room.

The night of my grandmother's birthday, I attempted to run away from home in order to find out where she was, and why she had been gone for such a long period of time. Since I was a reckless child, and still am, my father caught me stumbling down the stairs of our house.

Since that night, I could never forget the expression on his face. Tears ran down his cheeks. I hadn't understood why he was so upset and continued struggling to get away. I learned to forgive him as I grew older. Instead of blaming others, I relied on the most precious memories and objects I had left of hers. This included her pancake recipe. For several days, I searched for it. In the cabinets, under the beds, in the closets. It wasn't until I paid close attention to the objects that remained in her closet that I found the recipe. Once I found it, I ran to the kitchen, grabbed the ingredients I needed, and tried to recreate her pancakes with the careful techniques she used. After I finished, I was hesitant about tasting them. I was overwhelmed by confusion and pain, before eating the tiny piece of her pancakes I cut. A wide smile spread across my face. It was the first time I had felt joy since her death.

Since then, I learned to appreciate the time I spent with my grandmother, and her most precious possessions. I would have never guessed how precious a recipe written on paper could be.

An Ode to Cookies:

Warm and savory
Rich with flavor
Chewy goodness
The chocolate melts in your mouth
It's true happiness in your hands
The aroma overwhelms me with joy
I crave for its taste
A sweet treat lies in the oven
Over a baking sheet
The dough begins to rise
And I begin to smile
Impatiently I wait
Snacking on the chocolate chips
The timer dings
It hits two minutes
The edges start to become even crispier
I imagine the soft, creamy cookie in my hands
Its texture is softer than silk
I make preparations
I clear the table
Set a plate on the counter
My eyes are now focused on the oven
The joy of Winter has truly come
The timer dings, and it is done
The best possible treat has come for me to eat
The soft, creamy, rich, chocolatey flavor and texture makes the wait truly worth it.

William McGarvey

Non-Fiction Writing Piece

Food. Everybody loves food, but in China, it comes to life. The second you walk out the door, the scent of dumplings and noodles fill the streets. We people take food extremely serious. As we carefully shape the dumplings, we pretend like it is the baby in the short film Bao. When the dumpling finally leaves the kitchen and onto the table, we feel pride in our work. As we cook the pork and hand make the noodles in the kitchen, we are still at home, but in a home that's scent wafts through the air. There are so many pots and pans in the kitchen for every style of cooking. From fried to steamed to broiled to raw. The only thing heard in the restaurant is the sizzling and snaps of the food in the wok. When the day is done, we clean our tools with delicacy. We get every last atom off. When we eat, we have explicit rules. No crossing chopsticks and no bad manners. Or else, you can get kicked out or you get bad luck. We wash our aprons to we look even more professional than we already are.

Spoken Word Poem: Tennis

It takes footwork,
skill, pace, love,
care, and much more.
As soon as you hit it,
it's already been
returned and as soon
as you think you have
won, you haven't.
Silence fills the air as
you serve the ball.
With a few quick shots the
point is over. The crowd
claps for the amazing shots.
Once the match is done,
you shake the umpire's hand.
This is the game of tennis.

Ode to Baseball

Nine and extra innings
The first
Pitch Whizzes down
Home plate. The game is off!
The crowd screams
And cheers
For the home team.
The fielders are playing at their
Very best, ready to sprint,
slide, and dive. Sunflower seeds
are flying in the
Dugout. Thousands of
fans screaming in the crowd.
The ball is hit hard and the home
Is in the lead! It's the ninth inning
And the home team won.

Tenzin Menlha

Dear diary,

I thought the world would just stop for me to catch up, but it didn't. I had so much to do in such little time. I thought when my time had finished I would get caught. But even if I did hurry, I might not be able to finish everything. It would be just as it is, and I can't fix it anymore. One more thing, homework was the thing that I might not finish.

My Ode to The One I Love

My dear iPad,
I love you.
I get restless
whenever I'm near you.
I want to watch you
day and night.
All the shows
I can watch on you.
All the millions of games
I can play on you.
I would say you are God's creation,
but you are Steve Jobs.
You can do anything
I want.
Options are endless
with you.
The bright screen
hypnotizes me
and you make me
long to watch more.
I don't know what
I would do without you.
Oh, all the moments
I shared with you.
I write this tribute
to honor you.

Where I'm from

Tibet, the country
up on the roof of the world,
is where I come from

SPOKEN WORD POEM/SLAM POETRY

The Bullets of Your Mouth

I am not shot by the bullets of a gun, but the words that come out of your mouth. I am a joke to all with no meaning at all. I live to be a source of entertainment for all. I am viral - not on the YouTube trending page, but the one with the most hate notes on her locker. Every day a new scar forms on me as I get thrown a few more words of hate. I walk home wiping my tears and enter the house like everything is okay and no such thing happened at all. Why am I different, why can't I be like the others at school? Why do I live a life with no meaning at all? I walk in to school the next day thinking everything will be okay. Read this over and you will know what will happen today. But I know one day things will be different.

ELEGY: Wish

1-You left before I got a glimpse of you.
2-You didn't let me see you,
3-You hid from me my whole entire life.
4-Yet till this day I still want you-
5-I can't say that I want you back,
6-because I never got you in the first place.
7-I hear from others recalling who you were,
8-but I have always wanted to share
9-something I knew about you.
10-But I never was able to,
11-At least from my own words
12-Only from others words I speak about you.
13-I see you in my dreams,
14-Making everything wrong in the world, right.
15-Though everyone says you are gone and will never return,
16- Still believe you are somewhere in the world waiting for me.

An Ode to A Clock: Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock

1-Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock
2-you say all day and night.
3-With the Roman numerals on you
4-you look even fancier.
5-And the blue that surrounds you,
6-you look like a peacock.
7-The crystals on you,
8- That are so delicately put,
9-one by one make up your shape.
10-You stay in the shape of a circle,
11-the perfect match for you.
12-Sometimes you make time speed up,
13-and sometimes you make it go so slow.
14-You make the living room stand out
15-with your bold personality and look.
16-Every once in a while I check on you
17-to stay on top of time.
18-You make me understand that
19-time doesn't wait for anyone,
20-but you need to race with it.
21-I change the time for you
22-during daylight saving.
23-With the two hands you have,
24-you move around the whole clock
25-twice a day.
26-Tick, Tock, you say.

Shihab Noah

First Fortnite Victory Royale

Today I was going to get my first Fortnite win and no one was going to stop me, even my family. I just came back from my breakfast and had a bottle of Gatorade with me. I locked my door so nobody would try to come in and annoy me. I loaded up my PC, which took about one minute. My mom was already calling me down to help her. While my PC was loading, I went down to tell my mom I was doing something important. Then I went upstairs and loaded up epic games, which had Fortnite downloaded on it. It took about two minutes to load up. I was getting spammed with party invites by my friends. I put my party settings to private so no one could join me. I played five games since when I play my first matches it is really laggy. When my lag went away, I dropped to Lucky Landing. I heard my brother knocking on my door to go downstairs to help my mom. My brother was my mom's pet. I told him to go away. I was really lucky and got good loot. My load out was a scar, blue tactical shotgun, tactical SMG, and a rocket launcher. I also had full shield and full HP. Luckily, I was in the circle where the storm couldn't kill me. I moved to the factories and found someone. I launched my rocket launcher at him which did a hundred and fifteen damage. Since he was low on HP, I rushed him with the tactical SMG. Then I broke his 1 by 1 by spraying him and hoping it would damage him. Spraying and praying was a meta at the time. I hit most of my shots and eliminated him. I did the default dance on him. He was spectating me for the rest of the match. The third circle was around Shifty Shafts and Tilted Towers. I decided to go to Shifty Shafts since nobody goes there and a lot of people go to Tilted Towers. I went inside the shafts and found a person healing, so I eliminated them with my shotgun. I wasn't hurt so far, so I had still full shield and full health. I still took the ministry just in case. I hid in a 1 by 1 waiting for the final circle to appear. Luckily the final circle was on Shifty Shafts. There were five people left, including me. I heard them building bases and gliding around. I waited for one person to be left. There was a build battle near me, so I had to keep on replacing my wall since it kept on getting broken. When the final person was alive I was looking for him guessing that he was weak. He had a huge fort. It had three towers of 1 by 1s. I broke it down with my pickaxe and rocket launcher. He took fall damage. He shot me with an assault rifle and did about sixty four damage. I built a 1 by 1 and used my mini shield and big pot. I shot him with the scar when he peaked and did ninety six damage. Then he had storm pressure on him so he had to go down. In that moment I eliminated him with my rocket launcher. I danced on him. There were about four spectators. I took a screenshot and sent it to my friends.

Mohamed Ommran

The American Dream

Alaa Omran. He was born in Kuwait May 6, 1970. He was raised in Kuwait for three years and he went to Egypt. His father, Mohamed Omran, left Egypt because of a war between Egypt and Israel from 1968 to 1973. Alaa spent most of his extra time away from school, work, and chores either reading Mickey Mouse magazines or playing table tennis. Alaa grew up in a house with his parents and his brother and two sisters. It was Alaa's dream to come to America. But there were some stuff blocking him from coming here. First, he could not get an immigration pass to come here, not even a Visa. So he decided to go to different countries such as Turkey. From there he took a boat to Italy. He then took a boat from there to Greece. He spent there three months and off back he went to Egypt. He made an oath to himself, if he turned twenty eight in Egypt without going to America, he would not go at all. On April 16, 1998, he got an immigration pass to come to America. That is less than one month away from his birthday. Alaa arrived at JFK with only twenty-six dollars in his pocket. He went to stay with his friends until he could find a job to buy a house. He studied to be an engineer, but instead came here for only his childrens' futures. Here he works as a cab driver.

The Pocketwatch

A century ago, in April, 14 1919, there was a man named Omran. He had just bought a new pocket watch. It was a limited edition. It was all gold with diamonds of the best quality. Omran was expecting a baby boy on April 15, 1919. That was the day after. He heard that pocket watches were getting rare because wrist watches were very popular those days. He thought that after a long time, pocket watches would be rare, and his kids would have a fortune. Omran was a middle-class man, so he had to save up to buy this pocket watch. Once he had bought the watch, he immediately gave it a name. Omran named it Adel. He looked into Adel and he saw it was 5:00pm. He had to rush home to help his wife with the food since he was expecting a baby. He came home and saw the ambulance outside his apartment. He asked what happened and the doctor said, I'm sorry for your loss. Your wife has just passed away, but the child is still alive, so we have to rush her to the hospital. On the way there, Omran saw the boy's head peeking out. She gave birth while dead on the ambulance truck. Years went by and Omran had become old. His son, Adam, was twenty during World War Two. Adam was called to war to serve for America. Before Adam left, Omran gave him the pocket watch to take to war so he would never forget him. Adam took it and went to war. He was in the Air Force, fighting in Germany. Omran was worried. One day, when Adam was fighting, his plane got shot and he fell. Luckily, he fell into the Atlantic, right next to Sweden. He went over there and took a boat back to Germany to complete his mission. On the way there, he looked at the watch his father gave him. Not even a

scratch. He also met a woman. Her name was Eman. He liked her and married her on the boat. She got pregnant right when they were about to enter Germany. He told her to go back to America and go to Omran. He gave her the address and she went. On the way there it was about nine months and she was due in a week. She did not make it. Her son was dead right when she gave birth. When Adam heard the news, he thanked God that he and his wife made it. They had another baby in 1978. Seven years later Omran died. Adam died once he had heard the news. Mohamed, Adam's son, was in so much sadness at the age of seven. It was 1998 at the time Mohamed graduated college. His mother gave him something on graduation day; it was the pocket watch. She said to take good care of it and to pass it on.

James Rednic

Person You Admire

The person I admire most in this world is my dad. I love and respect him because he did so many things for me. He has always been at my side ever since my birth. One thing that I remember was that when I was six months old, I was crying really hard so my mom forced my dad to go out in the pouring rain to CVS to buy me one of those baby chairs that play music and stuff. He went off course and came back as quickly as he could. He built it and put me in it. It worked...for ten minutes, and then I went back to crying.

I also remember the first time I went to the hospital for getting hurt. When I was three, me and my dad were playing tag inside the house and I wasn't looking straight so I bashed my head into a wall and started crying and bleeding. My dad took me to the bathroom and he was crying too, but not because I got hurt but because he was thinking about how ugly the scar it would look in the future (luckily my hair covers it now). After a while my parents called an ambulance. It came, picked me up, stitched it up (luckily I was under anesthesia) and I was back at school the next day.

Those were two of my most memorable stories.

Important Object

An important object to me is something I play with every day and I use it all the time for school work. This important object is my PC. I got it when I was seven on Christmas morning. I remember it like it was yesterday.

It was the last present of the day, and when I opened it I was surprised to see a Dell laptop. After I got it, I realized that I never used a PC before, so I really didn't know what it did. Then I just searched "game" on Yahoo instead of Google. And when I did, it brought me to the magnificent world of flash games. Flash games are video games that are made by one person. The first websites that I found when I searched were addicting games and miniclips. Those two websites changed my gaming life forever and the time I spent on them was beyond crazy.

Then the most interesting games on those websites for me were "the world's hardest game" and "swords and sandals." The world's hardest game is, as it sounds, a very hard game where you have to get your square to the end. "Swords and sandals" on the other hand is a game where you create and train your character to fight in an arena. After that I learnt about YouTube, where I pledged that one day I would start a channel, but I never did. After a while I learned about another gaming world which was the world of downloadable content and with that, I learnt about paid games.

I then was searching for a game that was free, downloadable, and could run on my laptop. I was searching and searching and then I discovered Fortnite. I downloaded it, started it up, and went into the game, but there was another problem - it did not run on my computer. So, I made my dad get me a new PC that would run it. It came one week later and I was super happy. The first time I played Fortnite it was amazing with the graphics and controls, it was the best game I ever played. Waluigi is so epic

Seba Selim

Elegy Poem

He tied my family together
He was the tape of our picture
When he was gone
It all fell apart
I wish we had more time together
You were too young
I was too young
It was all too early
I wasn't ready
None of us were

Flash Fiction - The Adventure

My birthday was coming up and it was all I could think about. I was turning ten, which meant it was the start of my double digits. I was so excited. "Only two days left," I said right before my aunt pulled me over. "I know it's two days early, but I really wanted to give you your birthday gift" my aunt said as she hands me a tiny little ring box. I opened the box and inside was a gold ring with little clear diamonds and a turquoise stone in the center. "Wow, this is so beautiful, I don't know what to say. I...I love it." I put it on and it fit perfectly. "Thank you, Aunt Josephine!"

"You're welcome, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did, it took me on many adventures, I'm glad I finally get to pass on the family tradition to you." I stare at her confused. "What do you mean it took you on many adventures?"

"Oh you'll see," she said with a chuckle. The next day was outside on the front yard playing with my best friend Angelina and she noticed my stunning ring. "Oooo is that ring yours?"

"Yup, sure is. My aunt gave it to me yesterday as an early birthday gift. Isn't it beautiful?" She holds my hand to the sunlight as she admires my ring. As we admire it, I push down on the stone a little bit and it actually goes down like a button. As I push it all the way, something happens to me and Angelina that is unexplainable. When I open my eyes, I'm standing on a street that isn't mine and I don't recognize anything around me except for Angelina who is as confused as I am. Angelina immediately started panicking. "Where are we? What happened? How did we get here? How do we go home?" Meanwhile I was pretty amazed, but still really confused. "Whoa, what is this place?" After we were done being amazed and panicked, we started getting scared. We didn't know where we were, how we got there, or most importantly, how to get home! We thought maybe if we walked around we could find someone

who could help us get home or at least tell us where we were. As we walked, we found an old man. "Excuse me, sorry to bother you, but we seem to be lost. Can you tell us where we are?" The old man looked at us as if we were joking. "Well, this is the Magical Land of Lakoof, of course," he said with a chuckle. "Oh yeah... right, the magical land of... Lakoof." After that we were even more scared. I wondered if this was a dream or a nightmare. We both hoped and wished that we could go back home, and once I pushed on the ring, Angelina and I woke up next to each other on the sidewalk right outside my house. "What the heck just happened?" I had no idea what happened, but I finally understood what Aunt Josephine meant when she said that that ring had taken her on adventures, and I was just glad to be home. As I walked into my house, my mother looked at me and said, "Why aren't you in your birthday party dress? The guests will be here any minute." "What do you mean? That's tomorrow."

"Sweetie, today is 'tomorrow.' Remember, two days ago Aunt Josephine gave you an early birthday gift, and now it's your birthday. Now go get ready." It seems like we were in the magical land of Lakoof for a whole day! And now it's my birthday. As I went up to my bedroom to get ready, Aunt Josephine smiled at me and winked. Best birthday present ever.

Sophia Shakarov

Surprise!

I walk into a large building with my mom, not knowing the marvelous adventure that awaits me. I am not that excited even though I really should be. My mom walks up to the front desk and picks up two tickets. I still have no idea what is happening. My mom and I sit in the waiting chairs. When our number is called we go through this short tunnel-like place that leads to an outdoor area where a bunch of helicopters stand. I got super excited, because I figured out that I was going to ride a helicopter for the first time. We walk inside the helicopter with three other people. The workers give all of us noise-canceling headphones. When the helicopter starts flying, I take off the headphones for a couple of seconds to see how noisy it really was; it was loud. I put the headphones back on and look outside the window. It's beautiful! There are lots of tall rocks and cacti all around. IT'S THE GRAND CANYON! As we land, I almost jump out of my seat from excitement. I run out of the helicopter and hug my mom. She automatically knows that I figured out where we were. We explore the area. I see tons of cacti, bushes, and cute little animals that look like small meerkats. We take a small break to eat with the group, then we continued exploring. After a while, the group leader called us over and told us that it was time to leave. We go back home and this beautiful day is over.

The Prayer

Mary ran to her car and drove to the hospital with tears in her eyes. She had just gotten a call from the hospital saying that her boyfriend, Richard, just got shot. She didn't park her car or lock the door. She got out, ran up the stairs, and barged into Richards's room. She fell on her knees and sobbed when she saw him on the bed with closed and calm eyes. She couldn't bear to look at

him. She cried and cried, hoping that he would wake up and everything would be just like it was the day before, just like it had been for the past two years. Mary stared into the ceiling and remembered all of the good times that she and Richard had. Finally, she woke up from her fantasies and looked at Richard. Mary went on her knees and started praying. Richard slowly opened his eyes and took a small box out of his pocket, Mary couldn't hear. Richard snuck out of the bed just in time to go behind Mary while she was praying. He got down on one knee and held out the small box. Richard waited and waited for Mary to turn around. When she did, he opened the box and said "Will you marry me?" with a smile on his face. Mary cried tears of relief and happiness and said "YES!" She was happy. "Thank you God" she whispered while looking up. They lived happily ever after.

Marissa Talushllari

What is the story of this song?

As the girl stood in her tower, glancing out the window anxiously, her friends were scheming to sneak her away from her prison of a tower. Their backpacks held long ropes that they planned to braid together. The window was fifteen feet high. And the ropes, when braided together, were only thirteen feet high. They planned to ask their imprisoned friend to jump about two feet down and grab onto the rope. If she missed, at least she wouldn't be trapped anymore. The girl knew better than to jump out of the window with no rope that her friends would lower her on. There was a small peg that her friends would swing the rope around. But the girl wanted to jump outside so badly. She hadn't been outside ever since she was two years old, and longed to run to her friends, the sun warming her shoulders and the grass pricking her feet. She would pick the flowers that she always saw, overcrowding her 'lawn.' Just that moment, her friends hoisted the braided rope, and it perfectly wrapped around the peg. "Rapunzel!" they called. "Jump!"

Rapunzel fearlessly jumped out the window, shrieking with joy. She felt free as the wind, and as wild as the monkeys she had read about when she grabbed the rope. She climbed it all the way down, and joined her friends, finally out of her prison.

Ode to my Sneakers

Sneakers, with you I can run and play,
In the sunshine all day.
I can do anything with you,
From climbing a mountain
To climbing up the stairs at school
There are so many different types of sneakers
All of them amazing and unique,
But the sneakers for me
Are the ones that have been mine for months,
The ones that you can do anything in.
You keep me on my toes all day long,
They're so fun to wear,
I'd even dare myself to wear you, sneakers
All days of the year,
Even in the cold winter and harsh rain.
In the sun I would play,
In the water I would swim without fear
Of hurting my feet, thanks to you.

Every day I'd run around, fast as can be.
Sneakers, your laces are fun, too.
Like a puzzle that I solve each time you
take them off but put them on.
You would give me the power to try new
things
And whether you are scuffed up
Or almost falling apart,
Sneakers, you will always have a place in
my heart.

Maisha Thakur

ELEGY

Death of My Grandma...

The death of my grandma
brought pain and sorrow unto my family.
We cried, we had mourned.
Her beautiful face would never be seen again.
Shivers still run up our spine.
Oh, grandma,
we wish you could stay longer.
Oh, the way you held me when I was little,
and fed me the vegetables I would despise
(but somehow you made me like them).
We miss you and hope you would come back
but you can't, so rest in peace.

500 WORD STORY

The Prayer Beads...

Amirah stared wonderingly at the prayer beads that hung on the wall. It was an understatement if you said it was beautiful. It was delicate - the dark wooden beads with a reddish tint, with a thin layer of golden string on which the beads were strung on. Amirah had a million questions, and a strong desire to touch it. Why couldn't she? Where did her family get it from? Her family did not steal it, did they? Who made it? Would the police come looking for them if they stole it? Where was it made? As the questions raced through her mind, she heard a strange, overwhelming order from a commanding voice in her head. She opened her eyes, and though she knew she was alone, she thought she saw a man. A man of the palest color, wearing all black: black jeans, black sweater, black shirt, and even black eyeliner.

The man gave her a bone-tingling stare and hoarsely whispered, "Careful."

Amirah blinked and opened her eyes once more, and the man was gone. *How strange*, she thought. With fierce determination in her eyes, she reached out a hand and lunged for the prayer beads.

Just as her hand was a millimeter away from the beads, her mother's voice could be heard. "Wait right there."

Amirah froze as if she was a deer in headlights. She quickly put her hand behind her back and smiled guiltily at her mother.

“I uh----”, she started to explain, but her mother’s intimidating stare cut her off. Her deep violet eyes glinted as if she was angry but amused at the same time. Amirah finally hung her head down in shame.

“How many times do I have to tell you, Amirah? Those prayer beads are too precious to be touched. I love you, dear. It’s nothing personal. Nobody can touch it. I’ve never touched it either,” Amirah’s mother started to comfort her.

“There, there. There is nothing I can do about it other than to tell you how it was found. Those prayer beads have been passed down from generation to generation, and first belonged to one of your ancestors. As you should know, your ancestors were famous Muslim archaeologists in Saudi Arabia. They would always dig for things like fossils to find out more about the animals that went extinct. So, one day, they kept on digging in the desert, when Omar, one of your ancestors, had to take a water break. He went up to the well and drank. As he was about to come back, he saw a man looking at him. The man was really pale and was wearing nothing but all black. Even black eyeliner.

The man said, “I have been waiting for you”. He reached in his pocket and threw an object. Can you guess what it was? The prayer beads. Omar grabbed it and ran through the desert, and when he looked back, the desert was empty. Those prayer beads are the ones hanging on our wall this very day.”

Amirah’s eyes had gotten bigger with every word her mother had said.

“I’m sorry, I think I have to lie down for a bit.” She slowly traipsed to her room, her mother’s concerned eyes following her. She carefully climbed onto her bed and stared at the ceiling. She closed her eyes for two minutes, and then looked back up again. There he was! The same man she had seen before, with the pure white skin and black clothes. The same man who her ancestor had claimed he had seen. This time the man reached out a hand and opened his mouth, and as if following his command, her body felt weak. He closed his eyes, and it was as if he had devoured the light, for it was gone.

Everything went black.

FICTION

The Day a Pigeon Pooped on My Head

It was a warm day in Central Park. I was very young then and I had a lot of fun. My family and I played a lot of games like tag, racing, and freeze tag. Before we knew it, it was lunch time and we sat down on a nice shady bench. Not shady as in mysterious, but shady as in a nice tree covered area. We sat down with tasty sandwiches. As I was eating, a group of pigeons flocked together in front of me. It was very intriguing, so my instincts took over and I chased them away. I then sat down, satisfied. The pigeons came back, and my instincts took over once again. I chased those pigeons away again and again until they didn't come back. I didn't care, for I was finally at peace. Then, I felt something fall on my head. I thought it was a stick, so I tried to whack it off. It was gooey. I showed my mom and she exclaimed "You have pigeon poop on your head!" I was flustered, and I got a napkin to wipe it off. When I was finally clean, more pigeon bombs hit me. I ran away from the tree and we went home to wash me off. I guess the lesson was to never bother the pigeons!

Flash fiction (A Monster)

Bob was running for his life. His breathing harsh. He heard the monster's roar that shook him to the bones. The monster was a half cyborg and the most terrifying thing of all time. He dove into a bush to avoid the monster's deadly laser beam. He drew his sword, for he was near enough. He charged towards the dreadful being and swiped his mighty sword. His sword was made of diamonds and shone in the light. Sadly, it had no effect.

He faced the monster after the attempt and the beast stared back. The beast breathed in and blasted his mighty beam at Bob. Bob felt no pain, as if he were being transported to another place. He opened his eyes and saw a beautiful place. There was a mother and a small child playing with no care in the world.

Soon, a shadow overlooked the land and Bob knew what it was. It was a ship from his world. The ship burned down the homes and obliterated the mother. The beast took off into the sky, weeping.

I need my revenge, ringed a voice in Bob's mind.

"How can I help?" asked Bob.

"Destroy the village in which you live in and leave me at peace," replied the beast.

Bob was thinking of how he would feel. He felt angry at his own people. A monster purred in his gut, urging him to say yes. He was motivated by how bad the monster felt and how he could help. He finally decided to say yes. So Bob helped and destroyed the whole village. He helped the monster by breaking all means of communication. He then rode the beast off into space. He became a different person. He chose to do the wrong thing...revenge. He was a monster.

Tenzin Youdon

My Brother

My dear brother,
How I miss you so
I wish you could come back
We should've had more time together
I had just met you
And you had to leave
My only brother
Don't worry...
I'll always keep you in mind
You left one day
The ending of Summer and the beginning of
Autumn
It wasn't fair you had to go

You barely had any time to live your precious
life
I hadn't shed any tears, I'm sorry...
I was in shock

You were lying there, slightly breathing...
Beneath all those tubes,
There you lay,
Stiff as a rock

I called you, but you didn't hear me
I couldn't come close
I wasn't allowed to
I was sad and angry,
But most of all, I was scared for you,

You shouldn't have died, you were
innocent, the start of a new life
You'll always be in my heart, never
forgotten

His name was Namsay
He died one day in August
"He" was my brother

One day in August, there was a death of a newborn baby. He had been born a few hours ago. His name was Namsay Dakpa. He had three sisters and was going to be a big brother in a few years. In fact, that he was my brother. I was just in first grade when it happened and I had just turned six. My little sisters (twins) were two years old. I did get to see him, but my sisters didn't. There were so many tubes around him and he was so small. There was a continuous positive airway pressure machine (CPAP), an endotracheal tube, a central line, an arterial line, and much more. He was asleep when I saw him. My parents grieved and were crying silently when we were waiting to go check on him. My aunt was crying as well and was very sad. My sisters were asleep when this whole thing happened. I could see through the window on the door him in that clear box. I couldn't cry. I was just in shock. I watched as the doctors were moving around the room, looking at my brother and then finally came towards the door. I was scared if the news was good or bad, if my brother was okay or not. I knew my parents were terrified for the news. They must've been anxious for the news, hoping with all their might that he would be alive and stay alive. I felt that way. The doctors said we could come in but in groups (my sisters couldn't come with us). My aunt, dad, and mom took me with them since they wanted me to see him. I then saw him up close. All those tubes and machines to help him thrive in there, and him. He was so cute and tiny yet so fragile. We stayed for a while when the doctors rushed over to check on him and we left. My parents were hysterical but weren't screaming and were crying more than before. They were freaking out and clutching their heads as if all their hair would fall

out. I tried to look through the window again but I didn't see much since the doctors were in front of him. The doctors came back and said "You can come in now, but this might be the last time you see him." My parents and my aunt breathed heavily while they rushed in and tried to not look like a complete mess by wiping their face. I followed them in. We could see him still asleep and him lightly breathing. Then he stopped breathing and the doctors said to leave right away so they could check on him to see what was wrong. We left and my parents were devastated that their son was going to die. I followed them, still not crying, just in shock of what the doctors had just said. I watched through the window the doctors hard at work, trying to keep him alive. They came back and we were all anxious for the news, hoping for it to be good. The doctors had a sad look on their faces so my parents and aunt already knew from that that he had died. They sorrowfully said he died and my parents knew their little boy was dead. My parents seemed to cry endlessly while my aunt tried to comfort herself and them. We eventually left the hospital, said our thanks to the doctors for trying their best, and left sadly with my little sisters who were still sleeping and wouldn't understand a thing. My parents mourned the death of their only son as did my aunt. I did as well. That is the story of the death of my brother, Namsay Dakpa.

Tanvi Zakir

Ode to Oreos

Thick or wide,
Good when fried.
Birthday or mint.
With or without the frosted
cream in the middle.
Wet or dry,

But body says no,
My mouth says yes,
Dipped in milk,
The flavors great,

The more I eat, the bigger I
grow.

White in the inside,
Black on the outside
But it's all good everywhere,
All we must do is eat,
And grow stronger.
Eat as many as you wish.

Make it into anything
your heart desires,
A cake,
An Oreo sandwich,
And even an ice cream
sundae.
There are so many more
options for what you can
eat with these little tiny
circles of goodness.

Dear Diary, this break was one of the best weekends that I have had in a long time. On

Saturday I woke up at 4:00 PM and played video games for over two hours! At 6 P.M. I went to go to the airport to pick up my Uncle and his family. We brought them back to our apartment so that they could eat something after their long flight. After they ate, we would go upstate and go on a long journey to Niagara Falls. We would be in a car for ten hours and sleep. It was all worth it because we would be in a hotel for two days, and that hotel would have a pool in it and breakfast. After we arrived at our destination, we were greeted by a Dunkin Donuts. So hungry and tired after a ten hour drive, we entered the store and left with a full stomach. We checked into our hotel rooms and took a nap for four to five hours, then we headed off to see one of the seven natural wonders of the world. When we arrived at the Niagara Falls, we were greeted by a beautiful view. But all good things come to an end, and when the end came me, my family, and my uncle all left the beautiful falls. After the long ride back to the hotel, we went to swim in the swimming pool. But that was the last night there. So after we got some rest, we woke up the next morning and we had to get up and drop off our uncle at the airport.

Dear Diary, I thought I would never say this but I envy you, you don't have to wake up every single morning, look up at the sky, and hope night falls because you're tired of going to school. You don't have to live in this troubled world. You look at the people around you and see them all joyful while you are sitting by yourself and eating your sad peanut butter and jelly sandwich. All you need to do is read about it in my diary. You probably are just relaxing and just reading what I have wrote down.

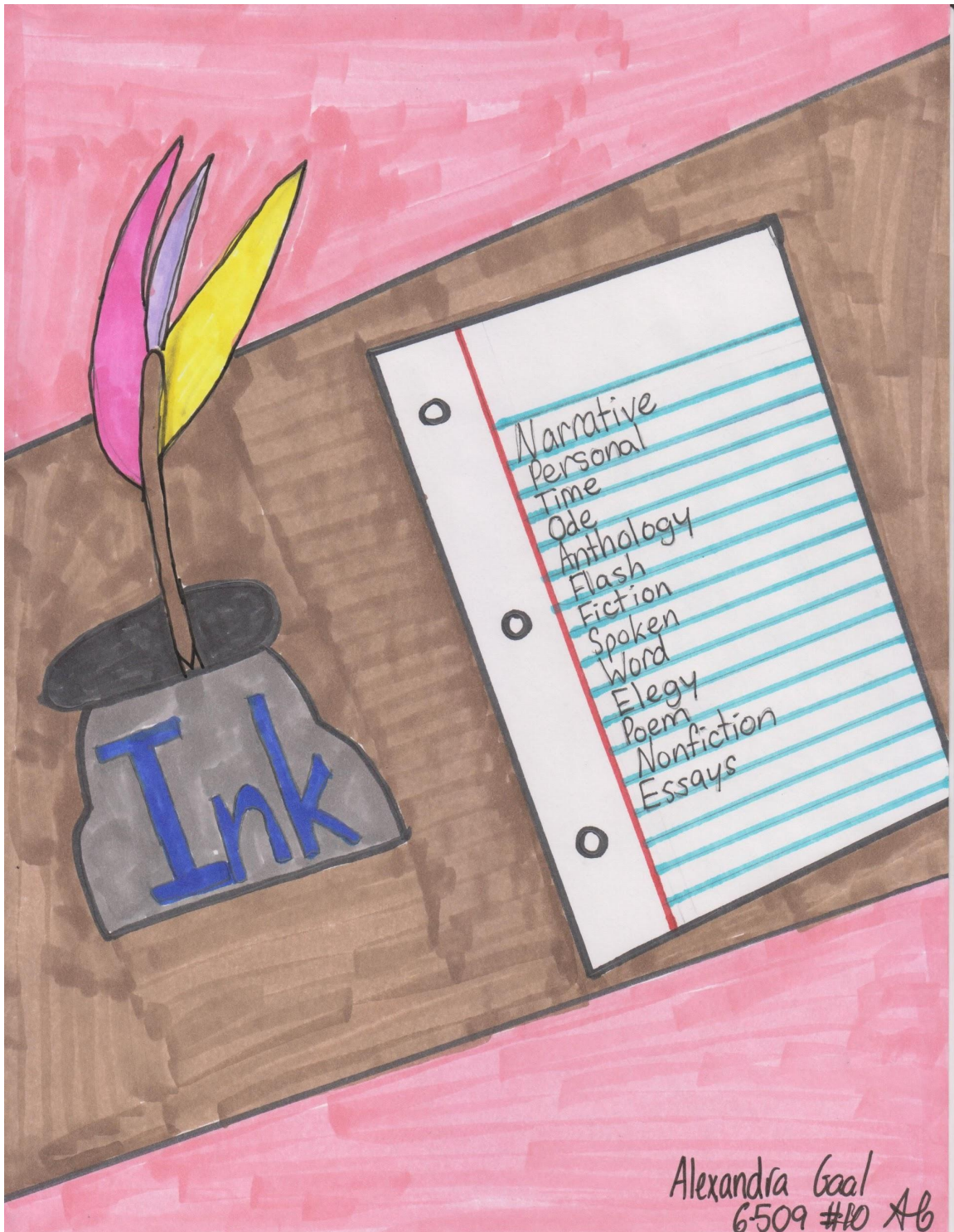
Dear Diary, is it strange for someone to get sick so they can't leave their house for a day? Well for me I don't think it is very strange because I am always so tired and I never want to go to school because I find it very boring to have to listen to a numerous amount of teachers in 1 day and stay there for seven hours. Then take two tests or more per week and do homework every day unless it's a lucky day and we don't have to.

Andy Zhao

Flash Fiction- The Ancient Plate

There it was – the ancient plate that was made by my great, great, great, great, great grandmother. I stared at it in awe. It was so perfect. I wish that I could touch it, but it was forbidden! Whoever touched it would be extremely and severely punished! I wanted to feel the smooth surface of the ancient plate. *It couldn't hurt to lift up the case and examine the plate, could it?* I thought. I guess there was no harm, so I lifted the case very carefully. Out of nowhere, an alarm went off. I ran around with the plate in my hands like my head was on fire. An army of guards appeared behind me and started chasing me! “When did those guys get in the house anyway?” I kept on running. I couldn't believe this was all because I touched an ancient plate. I also couldn't believe I was being chased by an army in my own house. I kept on running until there was a dead end and all I could do was climb up a suspicious rope ladder. “This is not going to be good!” I rushed up the rope ladder just as the guards reached the end of the hall. This was my first time going up this mysterious rope ladder. *Just great*, I thought. It led me up to the roof which was a few thousand feet above the ground level. There were three things - a chute leading all the way down the building, a private helicopter, and a blanket which can be used as a parachute. Not going with the helicopter, who knows what can happen. I could end up crashing into the ground on a helicopter and get hurt more than just jumping off right now! The chute can lead anywhere in the building, so I guess I am going to be using a “parachute.” I grabbed the blanket and ran right off the roof. The blanket held me in the air for a few seconds until I heard tearing sounds and I fell straight down. I was screaming as I was falling faster than ever. There was a giant lake that looked so aggressive that it looked like I was better off face planting on the sidewalk. I braced myself for the impact. I wanted to shatter the plate in my hands for getting me into this mess. Who knew an ancient plate could cause so much trouble? Everything suddenly slowed down, even the raging river as I floated gently down onto the water. “He has the ancient plate!” “I know!” I looked around and saw gnomes looking right at me. “He has the ancient plate that brings fortune to only its master! However, it brings disaster to all around him in exchange.” I was the owner of an ancient plate? I was so confused, I threw the plate on the ground because I didn't want everyone to suffer. However, the plate floated right back up to me. The plate hissed that I would regret if I didn't accept the fortune. I was so tempted and I accepted the plate's abilities and the world became super dark. I felt exhausted and drowsy. I fell to the floor with the plate in my hand. The plate hissed, telling me that that my selfishness brought the world to an end.

Class 509



Syeda Ali

Ode to my family

As close as we are
We will always stay together
Getting through hard times
Our bond is inseparable
There will always be ups and downs
But we'll get through them together
No matter how hard it is
Nothing's too challenging for us
We're meant to be together
We have each others' backs
We help each other through hard times
We make hard decisions
And we're always supporting each other
Our bond and love is too much to express
A gift, a kiss, a hug, is nothing compared
to this

Even though other people will always
enter our lives
My family will always be number one
We will get older and older
However, that will never separate us
We all have fights
And disagreements
But does that matter?
We are perfect in our own way
Unique and different



500 Word Story- The stolen heirloom

Allah - to Muslims, this is a very powerful and important word. This is our God, and we always believe him. Allah is not a person nor a thing. None of us actually know what he is besides the fact that he's our God. He leads us towards the right path and tests us through our actions in life. We will never see him, but he will always have his eyes on us. Out of all his creations we are his favorite. Most of us are scared of Allah, but there's no problem with fearing Allah as long as we obey his rules. Allah is happy to forgive people for their mistakes when asked for forgiveness. As we obey him, he will obey us. None of us will be able to see him, but do we care? No, because we will always believe in him. Us Muslims can always wish for the best by praying to him. Allah is always grateful to help. He made many prophets for us as a guide towards the right way. He also sent us many books to help us through our lives.

This object represents our God, Allah, and all his ninety nine names. Some examples of these names are Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, and Al-Malik. I hang it in my room to show my loyalty. Some Muslims even memorized all of his names to show respect. The ninety-nine names

of Allah also have a connection of another importance in our religion. We use a beaded necklace that also has ninety nine beads. We use this while praying and say “Allah” ninety nine times. It help us count or keep track of how many times we have said the word.

As you can see, this is a very important object in my life and for many Muslims. One year ago today, it was gone. I had just woken up when I saw that the object had disappeared. In shock, I went searching in my house and all I saw was everything scattered on the floor. I realized I was robbed! I panicked and ran to my parents in bed sound asleep. I kept screaming until everyone finally woke up. We all looked around my house, trying to see what was stolen. But later on, we discovered that they only stole our heirloom that was hung in my room. This is a very important object for my family and I, but it's just scary thinking that a stranger was in my room while I was sleeping. I'm just happy that I wasn't harmed.

However, as I was helping my parents clean the house, I found a piece of paper on the floor. It was an address! What if it was info about the robber? I didn't want my parents to know, so I kept the paper to myself. The next day, when I went to school, I stopped by the police station and told them what happened. I gave them the paper and my information. A few days later, we heard a knock at the door. It was the police! The policeman told us that the robber was the most wanted criminal on the list and I helped them find him. I was shocked and proud of myself. We got back our heirloom, but I'll never look at it the same way.

-Syeda Ali

Jennifer Arriaga

My Fifth Grade Yearbook - Short Story

Fifth grade, what an exciting year. I was excited because it was the year we would graduate from elementary school. I couldn't wait until we got our yearbook. The day we got our yearbooks and cap and gown, everyone was so excited, but nervous.

We all wondered what the cover of the yearbook looked like.

"Oh! I see them! They have emojis on the cover!" My friend exclaimed.

"Even though we didn't vote for that, it's still nice!" My other friends exclaimed.

"It is nice!" I replied. "I can't wait to look inside!"

"Yeah!" my friends agreed.

Finally, when we all got our yearbooks, caps, gowns, and invitations. We all looked at the yearbook in delight. We couldn't wait to get our autographs from all of our friends. The smell of new pages was everywhere. At the end of the year, we were all happy, but a bit sad since we weren't all in the same school. We were all around the school getting our yearbooks signed by teachers and our friends.

In sixth grade, I still look at my yearbook. My yearbook is strange. Every time I open it, it's like I travel back into fifth grade. I think my friends experience this too. When we're inside, we don't really feel the stress of sixth grade since we're back in fifth grade again. Every time I open my yearbook, a calm, cool breeze comes out of it and my sixth-grade stress/worries are relieved. When I go inside my yearbook, time pauses. It's like entering a calm, joyful world without stress. When I'm "in" my yearbook, I remember finishing the "Go Math" lessons. I remember lunch and recess. I remember graduation. I remember our senior trip. I remember the first day of fifth grade. When I think about all of these memories, my heart leaps with joy. On the last day of fifth grade, we feel free - we have finally finished our journey called "Elementary school". The feeling of fifth grade is over when our yearbooks close, but the memories will never leave our hearts.

Fake Friends - Poem

Fake friends
shred you to pieces.
Break your heart.
Make you cry.
Because
all that time you spent together,
all those tears you cried,
all those secrets you shared,
all the times you laughed
were all
a
waste
of time.

They were fake,
they talked behind your back,
told all your secrets.
They betrayed you,
they hurt
you.
They left you out,
they ignored you,
they were mean -
but you kept forgiving them and you kept
being their
friend.

Prajusha Azeem

Ode to Classical Music

As notes fly by
and suspense builds up,
pieces of the past fill the room.
Beethoven, Chopin,
 Vivaldi, Mozart, Rachmaninoff,
 Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Paganini,
 Brahms
dance in my ears.
Passion,
 love, and
 excitement flow throughout me.
The softness of the vibrato on violins, violas,
cellos,
feel like a soft place to sleep.
The drums wake you up in a beat.
Flutes, piccolos, clarinets wash you in their
 high-pitched squeals.
A concoction of different ingredients
can make a very sweet cake.

Just the right amount of sugar and frosting,
and the butteriness and
 softness
 compliment your mouth and
 delight your taste buds.
The feeling music gives you lasts a long time,
just as the sweetness of a cake does.
The flavors jump around from an E to a G
sharp and staccato
 to legato
 and back again
As the instruments take a rest,
it will not be much time till they start again.
As the standing ovation occurs, the whole
performance goes through your mind again,
 and again,
 and again
until something new pops up.

A Pencil Made of Gold: Short Story

A pencil made of gold was held in King Bob of Ukg's hand. "Well, it indeed does seem as if it is actually made of gold," observed the king.

"Sir, I bestow upon you a golden pencil that automatically writes whatever you say! Except, it can only be used once," The poor merchant said smirking. No one ever believed that the pencil was truly magical, so no one bought them, leaving the merchant penniless.

"And how much will you take for it?" questioned the King.

"Two thousand five-hundred gold Ukgians?"

"Two thousand?"

"Two thousand two-hundred?"

"Two thousand one hundred fifty?"

"OK, sir. Two thousand one hundred fifty gold is fine." grumbled the merchant.

"Servant! Count out two thousand one hundred fifty gold for this merchant!" King Bob demanded. "I will give you the payment this evening. It will take a while to count out the gold." the King snapped.

"Of course, your highness," peeped the merchant.

That day, the King stared at the pencil. He knew that this pencil can only be used once so he knew better than to not test out the pencil. It was heavy and shined very brightly.

Meanwhile, at the merchant's shabby home, he was crying from joy at his victory. Next to him was a can of gold paint. Yes, gold paint. He held a pencil he carved himself, with very thick lead in it to make it seem as if it was heavy like gold. He has managed to trick the cruel king into thinking this heavy pencil was made of gold and was magical. It was payback. Before he became a merchant, he was the King's servant. No one knew how poorly the King treated his servants. They ate stale bread for lunch and wore itchy, rugged fabrics. The merchant smiled. He imagined himself swimming in gold. He would have his own, expensive house with a million servants and a giant, green garden. He walked to his bed and crawled in his sheets and slept till evening.

Back at the palace. "Your Highness! We have a message from the kingdom of Xania." declared the King's messenger holding a crisp white piece of paper in his hand.

"Then read it to me, you fool!"

"Queen Luvendeer says, 'Beware, King Bob. My troops are coming for you. After you have taken some of my subjects as prisoners for no apparent reason, I will get them back. I now declare war until you have handed them to me. I suggest you start to plan a battle tactic. Your (higher) Highness, Queen Luvendeer.' We haven't been in war with another kingdom since a few years ago! "

The king tsked. "I will write a letter to her later. I'm too tired now." The hours passed by and soon enough it was night. The King nestled in his silk covers.

"Servant! Will you bring my golden, magical pencil?" The servant put the pencil and a piece of paper on his side table. The king said, 'Dear Queen Luvendeer, comma, next line, I can tell you that we are fully prepared for your attack. I understand that you are concerned about your citizens. I believe it will be better for both our kingdoms if I give back the prisoners nicely. Your, parentheses, even higher, parentheses, highness, comma, King Bob, stop.' He called for his messenger to take the paper away. He did not question the King in fear that he would wake him up. With a confused look, he started his journey to Xania, taking a blank piece of paper with him. They did not live happily ever after. In fact, Xania conquered Ukg. Don't worry, the merchant didn't die. He ended up living in a big, grand house with a million servants and a big green garden. The cruel king was blind and selfish, if Queen Luvendeer had not killed him, he would have learned to be more thoughtful and to be careful with whom he trusts.

Araf Chowdhury

Nonfiction

Araf Chowdhury was born in July 13, 2007, on a summer day. He was born in Flushing, New York in the USA. His parents were born in Bangladesh, his two sisters born in America as well as him. He lived in Sunnyside 40th street, but has moved and is living in Woodside currently in 2019. During his education, he has gone to three schools so far. For kindergarten and 1st grade, he went to P.S 199. From 2nd to 5th grade he went to P.S 150 in Sunnyside. Currently, he is enrolled in P.S 122Q in Astoria. He is seeking to be a pediatrician when he is older. His older sister, being twenty-five, is a doctor. The other, fourteen, goes to Bronx Science and also wants to be a doctor.

ODE

He is the youngest in his family. He has many relatives: sixteen uncles and six aunts - twenty one in total, with many cousins. He has one living grandparent, a grandmother on his dad's side. He and his family go on many fun trips, his favorite being going to Disneyland for his third birthday. He loves soccer and European handball. He plays soccer every weekend with his dad. He also loves watching Youtube and movies. He loves watching comedies. Like any other kid, Araf also likes to play video games. He likes playing online games with friends from his different schools. Araf is like any other regular kid who like video games, sports, and playing with friends. He also goes to school like any other kid.

1. My family is caring.
2. We love each other.
3. I have two older sisters.
4. One is fourteen.
5. She is in Bronx Science.
6. Another is twenty four.
7. She is a pharmacist.
8. Two hard working parents.
9. My dad is a waiter.
10. My mom works as a manger.
11. I am the youngest.
12. I have one grandmother.
13. Communicating is hard.
14. We are from Bangladesh.
15. Most cousins live in Bangladesh.
16. Others live in Atlanta or New York.
17. We go on fun trips.
18. Our favorite is Miami.
19. We go to our home country often.
20. We love to see our cousins.
21. I have eleven uncles on my mom's side.
22. Zero aunts on my mom's side.
23. Five uncles on my dad's side.
24. Six aunts on my dad's side.
25. I have many cousins.
26. We are a big happy family.

Serena Crescimanno

This Is Me

Praise Poem

I am
Serena Louisa Crescimanno
I have dark hair
Like Nutella
Tall like a tree
I am as
Confident as a Cheetah
Brave as a Fox
Loyal as a Wolf
And much more
I'm from India where the food is spicy
And Italy too where they say the pizza is divine
But I'm mostly from red, white and blue
I am
A dancer that can spin like a top
And I can tap until my feet will break off
I am
Serena Louisa Crescimanno

Dance

Ode

Dance is my passion
Nevertheless
When I hear the feet tap
I have an urge to tap with them
And when the jazz music plays
It makes my day
When I feel the floor burn
During my modern class
That's my trophy and my award
When I do lyrical
My heart fills up
With joy and challenge
Ballet is my strong spot
When I rise, I'm in the sky

When I come back down
I'm in the core of the Earth
My teachers are my family
My classmates are my sisters and brothers
Dance is my world
Dance is my life
Dance is my love
Dance is my friend and teachers
Dance is my Universe!

Mom

Elegy

Her name is Vanita
Also known as my mom
I have a roof over my head
Because of her
I have food to eat
Because of her
I have clothes to wear
Because of her
And sometimes I wonder
What will happen if I lose you?
Where will the roof go?
Its gone
Where are my clothes?
Its gone
Where is my food?
Gone, it's all gone
She is my supporter
My hero!
She helps me when I'm down
Congratulates me when I do well
Calms me down when I'm angry
But there is one thing
That will never change
She will always be my mom

Angelyn Diep

250 Word Piece: Light or Dark

Krystal had never felt so many emotions, as her life slipped away. How would you feel if you died? No one ever knows until they died. Some say you just die, get buried and decompose. And maybe that's true, maybe Krystal was chosen to go to this afterlife. Though the only thing she thought about was what side she would choose. You're probably wondering what on earth is going on? Well, Krystal here had a very tough life. And you may be underestimating what a tough life means. She had the most amazing life as a little girl until she was diagnosed with cancer at six, and everything changed. Everything after was spent in a hospital bed, until her mother died. It took all her strength to attend the funeral. Soon after, she died on a rainy cold day. It was 4:27 a.m., and she was having an emergency surgery. She died while being operated on. She knew what was happening around her, she knew she was about to die. When she did, she saw that she was standing in the middle of a parallel universe. On her left side, it was complete darkness, and she barely saw the figure of a person. On her right side, she saw a person too, and behind them was all white. She realized it was the light or dark side. She was angry and wanted revenge on the world. I won't give too much away, but her choice wasn't a good one.

Ode: Food!

Your stomach starts to rumble
As you drool
You smell the fresh baked cookies
You hear the ding as you take out the perfectly toasted bread
You feel the warmth as you hold it up to your mouth
You taste the sensation of all the flavors working together
You see it, as you enjoy another bite
It brings you joy
It brings others joy
There are so many different kinds
Sweet and sticky
Sour and soft
It can be perfect, just the way you want it
Hot to cold
Cold to hot
So many recipes just waiting to be made
The success as you come out of the kitchen holding the perfect dish
They notice you march out with a smile
And they notice you holding it
You carefully place it down, right in the center, to praise its glory
As you lift the lid,
They stare in "awe"
They dig in, as joyful as can be
"Why?" you ask?
Food!

Eilean Faltin

Happier (Flash Fiction)

A little girl stumbled across a field.
Her face was dirty and the soles of her shoes were worn to the point of tearing.
Every bone in her body was visible, you could count her ribs.
She looked back at her home going up in flames, fire licking the walls.
There was now a fresh slate.
A new start.
Away from pictures of a dead father she never knew.
Away from a mother with coarse hands that had left tattoos down her back.
And away from a TERRIBLE uncle.
She didn't want to remember what he had done to her.
She was filled with hope for a new beginning.
With every ounce of her body she believed that she would find a family, a perfect family, who wanted
her, who trusted her.
She believed, even though she could see only grey field for miles in every direction.
The very picture of "desperate", she walked as if she were intoxicated.
But she wasn't.
She was starving, and even worse, clueless.
She didn't know that these were the last hours of her life,
or that she was dangerously famished.
The hope seemed to numb the pain.
All that she knew was that at the end of the road, there was a meal, and a bath, and
everything she could ever want.
There was a loving mother with soft hands and
a father that existed outside of a cold, hard, picture frame.
An uncle who knew how to love the right people in the right ways.
She became further entangled in the fantasy.
There would be a dog, or a cat, or even a sister or brother to play with.
There was a school where she would be enlightened with all the knowledge in the world.
But as she walked along now, she fell to her knees, then to the ground, and finally up, up, up to the place
that she had always wanted.
She was happy.

Oliver French

Ode to Baseball

As we drive
to the field,
my heart starts pumping.
Getting ready
for the game.
With glove in hand,
I rush to the diamond,
the dirt crunching under my cleats.
I shout to my friend Chris,
“Let’s warm-up!”
I take the mound,
get into my windup,
and throw.
“**POW!**”
As I finish warming up,
My coach tells me to do batting practice.
I grab my helmet and my bat.
I rush to the batter’s box,
Dig my cleats into the dirt.
The pitcher releases.
I see the ball,
It’s a fastball.
I swing and connect.
I drive the ball deep,
past the infielders, back to the warning track.
The right fielder fields the ball and makes a
perfect throw to the shortstop.
Still too late,
I’m already crossing the plate.

Haiku: My Favorite

My favorite game
Baseball the best sport ever
It’s my favorite.

Haiku: Where I’m From

I live in New York
A nice place called Jackson Heights
It is very nice.

Alexandra Gaal

Ode to Baking

When I flip the mixer on
The flour goes everywhere
The whole room smells of spice
The batter is so lusciously soft and smooth
It pours into the crust that is laying over the
side of the bowl
I wrinkle the crust and put it in the oven
Pumpkin pie is made.
The mixture goes in and the batter comes
together
It is a sticky mess with chocolate chips
bulging out
It is soon to become beautifully shaped
The cookies go into the oven
You turn the oven light on and all you see
Is golden brown puffy chocolate chip cookies
The cookies come out and it goes well with
milk.
The pastry dough is made
It goes on the round metal cylinder
Ready to go into the boiling hot blob of oil
It goes in and it sizzles
The soon to be cannoli shell comes out
The cream is mixed together in a mixer
Vanilla and cinnamon go in
You carefully put into the piping bag
It gently comes out and you fill one side up
Then the next
It is looking good but it is not done yet
Put small chocolate chips on each side
Ready to eat
Baking is my life!

I Am

I am who I am
I am the adventurous girl
The girl who can drive a quad
I am the baker
I am amazing
I play the piano and shoot the bow and
arrow
I am from Ireland and Hungary
En vagyok kedves es eros
I am me
I am fun
Fun is the girl that laughs
I am a person who loves their family.
I am five feet two inches
Tall and strong and made of muscle
I am spectacular
I am me!

Flash Fiction Story

An elephant with its mother is traveling with a herd. They come upon a river and the baby does not follow the herd. She gets lost and starts to walk down on the river's edge looking for her herd. She takes some water in her trunk for later as she walks inland. She comes up on banana trees and sees a crying monkey. His family got killed and now he was alone. The elephant took the monkey with her.

They were on their way together and they got really thirsty. The elephant gave some of the water saved in her trunk to her and the monkey. They were refreshed. They kept walking, looking for her herd. The elephant said to the monkey if you do not find other monkeys you can stay with my herd. As they were walking, they heard a whimper. It was a baby bird crying out. The bird said its mommy left looking for food and never came back. The elephant and the monkey said you can come with us.

The bird came along. After a long time of walking they were thirsty. The elephant used the remaining water to quench their thirst. Elly the bird went flying overhead looking for water and Elsie's elephant herd. Elly saw a river in a distance and told her new friends. They came upon the river, got water and crossed it. When they crossed the river Elsie's herd was there. Then, Elsie's mother said next time stay with me and the herd and do not wander off. They all reunited and lived a happy life together.

Margareth Girsang

Flash Fiction

The haunted house was quiet. The sway of the trees and the distant sound of howling wolves. It was probably just a couple of kids howling because of the full moon. Ira was a fourteen-year-old girl with dark brown eyes, auburn hair, and known to solve the hardest mysteries. As she set foot into the house, she sensed a loud munching sound. As she stepped back it grew louder and louder. She looked back, and can you guess the horrifying thing she saw? Her partner eating a bag of chips.

"How can you be eating at a time like this? There is a haunted house right in front of us and you're eating sour cream and onion chips?" Ira asked, as she stared at him with a questioning look.

"Don't worry, we have solved many cases I'm sure we can do this one. Plus, I eat a lot when I get scared," her partner, Otto said as he munched away.

"When do you never?" she said in a whispered voice as she walked into the haunted house of Eraton. The halls were empty. The strong wind blew in from the window and the door. "Aww, I finished my chips. Ira, do you have anything to eat?" Otto said as his stomach growled. "Oh yeah, I have a couple bags of chips," she said as she took one out and popped it open. "Um. Ira, can I have it?" Otto begged. "No, it's mine. Let's go inside." She said.

Where I am from

I'm from the islands,
the islands of the spices -
Indonesia, home.

My favorite

My favorite thing
is to play songs or music.
It helps me calm down.

Who I am (about me)

The person I am
is extremely artistic.
I enjoy music.

Raida Hasan

Why Nora HATES Grades

Why are grades so important? Nora asks the same. Her friend was always pressured by his family to get good grades. Nora would do anything to help her best friend, Steven, feel better. Nora was a smart student but didn't show it. She was in 6th grade but had an IQ equal to a sixteen-year-old, and that was when she was trying to make as many mistakes as someone her age should. She did her best not to show her intelligence. All her determination went to proving grades wrong. She wanted to show that grades didn't matter. Not at all. What she did, didn't end up how she wanted it to. Nora, a perfectly average seeming girl, with average grades, and an average family, was a genius? How does she end up in the principal's office with her parents, and her teachers, with her best friend, all with concerned looks on their faces? Read to find out the answer to this mystery.

Dude with the Glasses (short story)

"Once upon a time, there was a dude with glasses. He sat on the ground against a pole and three people asked if he was okay. He stared at the sky and said nothing. He got up and ran to the courtyard, along with hundreds of other students. He then walked about, but had no friends, so no one talked to him. They went inside, so that dude went inside too. He hid for a while so the writer of this could not see him. He hid until he had to get his lunch. He went in line, got lunch, frowning through all of this. He then goes to his table looking sad, depressed, and mad at everyone (he wasn't). He ate and ate. Remember, he had no friends and nothing else to do, so all he could do was eat his burger or peanut butter sandwich (the writer doesn't know which one he took) and French fries with no ketchup. He went to his classroom.

The next day, the whole school had indoor recess. Even though this dude with the glasses had no friends, he knew lots of people and lots of people knew him. However, he did not stay with anyone for more than five minutes. That day, the writer of this asked him if the writer of this could call him dude with the glasses. He said he didn't mind.

He then proceeded to steal someone's notebook and ran away with it. The notebook's owner tracked him down, beat him up, and got her notebook back. He then sat down and talked to some people. Then it was time to go to lunch and eat, and the writer of this did not see the dude with the glasses after that. The SPEAKER said, "Keep in mind I am the speaker, and the writer of this shared this anonymously."

Joy Herman

Ode to my Mama: My MAMA

How I love my Mama
She spends the most time with me
Can I ever love her,
as much as she loves me?

She makes me food
Oh how tasty it is
Oh how I can taste it
Right now

My Mama, the sacrifices
She makes for me
She teaches me all she possibly can

How I love her dearly
I do the best just for her
Just for my one and only
MAMA

Haikus:

Where I'm from:

Hm...where am I from?
I am from Indonesia.
It is very hot

My favorite vacation:

Hey Indonesia
How fun it is to be there
You cannot miss it

Who I am:

Who am I – Joy
I'm the happy one, I'm Joy
That is who I am

Myron Hill

Short Story

The sextant has been passed through my family for who knows how many generations. The brass is worn smooth and clean where so many hands of my family have touched it. The crevices of the machined metal are dark with dirt and dust. I have often wondered when the tree that the sextant handle came from grew and where. But no one knows. There has always been a slight split in the brownish orange wooden handle.

I was looking through photos my great great grandparents took and found a photo that had the sextant looking just as old sitting in the background. It looked different though. For a while I simply ignored the photo. Soon I found myself comparing the blurry image and the actual sextant. In the photo there was something else, an extra lens right in the middle. I checked the sextant and saw no evidence anything had once been there. I then focused on the background of the photo and noticed it was taken at a beach that I recognized.

After a year of planning to take the journey with my family to that distant beach, I finally was on my way. I looked closely at the photograph as if staring hard enough would reveal the blurred out details. The picture simply wouldn't give any more details. After our flight, we drove to where

the beach should be, but could not find it. All of the maps said we should be there, but there was no beach.

About to give up, I thought about what a sextant is. It is a tool of navigation, used by

sailors to find their way on the sea. So I picked it up and looked through the lens and pointed it where the beach should be. There I saw the same beach in the photo and what looked like my distant relatives in the same clothes of the picture. When I looked away from the sextant, the beach was gone again—just a brick wall.

I looked back through the lens and when I focused hard I saw the sextant on a table and a child running knocked it off the table, breaking off the missing lens. I realized that one of the people flickered like a hologram. I could see the broken off lens laying in the sand. I asked my brother to look through the lens and tell me what he sees. He sees the sextant being made by a man with a large beard. We give it to our cousin and she sees it in a glass case in a place like a museum. When I look back again, I still see the broken lens glittering in the sand. I walk to it holding the sextant, but bump into a wall. Looking down I see the lens.

Ode to Games

Everyone older than 4 has played a game, games fill our lives.

Video games are really popular, but what are they?

Colors that come up on a screen that react to what you do with a controller?

Consider in comparison to a game like tag.

Almost all animals play such games; lions and cheetahs practice running and wrestling games when young, and birds of prey practice flying while tackling each other in midair. But these animals play these games to be better lions, cheetahs, and birds of prey. Why do we play video games?

Have you ever thought life could be just a game, or a simulation, or even a test?

We learn to be good at these games but in that process we can get addicted to them.

What is addiction?

How do we get addicted?

Addiction is when the part of the brain called the nucleus accumbens is stimulated.

A game could take over your life and you will feel that you deserve to play it.

You can get addicted very easily if you allow yourself to.

Addiction is plainly something that makes you feel good.

If something makes you feel good, then you're likely to do it again, right?

That's how people get addicted.

We might even say we are really addicted to getting addicted. Everyone's addicted to a few things, no matter how small they are.

Tawseef Jadid

Image Interpretation

It was almost as if everything was moving in slow motion. I heard a bunch of screams mixed with people yelling angrily. I didn't know what to do. Should I run back and try to get out of sight? Or should I blend in with the protestors? BOOM! Tears started to roll down my eyes. It was the loudest noise I had ever heard. I heard glass shattering and saw parts flying. It seemed as if no one else was there, and it was just that beast and I, Just standing there, staring at me. A sight I never thought I would see. A sight I never would have imagined seeing.

Ode to Nature

Oh, how beautiful
The world can be
When it comes to things like animals and trees
Bright blue skies with a glaring sun
Followed by freezing cold blizzards, which may not be fun
Every day brings something new
So much to look forward to
Mother Nature brings wonderful places
Skipping through the fields in grace
Howler monkeys jumping from branch to branch
Injuries caused by an avalanche
The world can be a mysterious place
Like animals like deep sea creatures
To savannah animals' cool features
Oh, the beauty Earth presents to us
In Spring, beautiful flower fields
In Fall, apples being revealed
In Summer, a blazing hot sun
In Winter, the cold has begun
Nature can really be a surprise
One day it's hot
The next day it's not
One day it's pouring
The next day the sun is roaring
Oh, how beautiful
The world can be
When it comes to things like animals and trees.



Kenneth Jusuf

My Ode to Potatoes

The juicy potatoes
The many varieties
of tiny ones
that are so delicious
they make me happy
Mashed are good
so are baked and fried
May the mashed be with
the great gravy
Potato chips
crunchy and tasty
while being salty too
Potato Idaho

the capital of potatoes
French fries
served around the world
are all potatoes too
Sweet potatoes
are good ones
Peel the potatoes
then eat them up
The potatoes walk across the world
with everything behind them
The potatoes have everyone
under a trance
Potatoes are so delicious!

Haiku

Where I'm From

Summer all year long
Place of a thousand islands
It's Indonesia

Favorite Thing

Lobster is tasty
I like lobster that is fresh
I like whole lobster

About Myself

I think I am kind
My family thinks I'm nice
Sometimes I am shy



Azana Karim

Non-fiction piece 250 words:

I was born in Flushing Hospital with a sweet smile and a handful of spiky hair. There my mom brought me home to our apartment. Where I was loved by my mom, sister and most of all, my precious father. Or so I thought. At two years old I was able to memorize all the curse words used between my parents and the words my mother often used when she dropped something. By the time I was three years old I had heard enough arguments between my mom and dad that I ever needed to hear. April 11th, 2011, I moved out of Astoria to Jackson Heights with my mom and sister leaving my father in a small, roach-infested, mice-crawling apartment with his guilty soul. For the next two years we visited him on the weekends. And I was content, never really affected that my parents were separated. That is until my life hit a turning point. After this abrupt U-turn everyone in my family was affected in drastic ways. My sister with depression, me with anxiety, my mother with worry and anger and most of all my dad, no longer a father. Only a man who had children he didn't deserve, only a man who forgot to love his family. But it doesn't make me sad or hateful...his stupidity gave me a lesson of the world. The empty seat at the table couldn't possibly make me cry, because I can barely remember when it was full. Oh well. . .

Ode to Keri: by Azana Karim:

Your smile is brighter than the sun,
Filling me with warmth and love.
A writer,
An artist,
A baker,
The best me.
You've inspired me to be it all.
You once said,
It doesn't matter potential but the action
To you I owe everything;
You're the one who made the clouds clear,
The one who made the sun shine
The one who made it all happen.

So here is my thanks
In 26 lines of my gratitude
My ode to you
All for you
I miss the smile that filled the room
The smell of happiness that wafted in the air
Making all 29 students smart and aware
So I'll say it again, and again,
Thank you
For everything
Now here is something that fits you perfectly
Something that reflects your image,
Best of teachers and the best of people.

Dear little book,

Now, **I live on a street where everything seems so ugly to me.** Well not ugly but different. The moving truck was still on its way. I miss Astoria and Aladdin and the Key food with the best berries. I missed 36th Avenue where we had lived. How come Jackson Heights doesn't even have a 36th Avenue? Well I guess that is better than having a 36th Avenue as if I had to make new memories of this new avenue. Instead we lived in between 35 and 37th Ave on 80th Street. Now I have to say I do miss my home, but I don't actually miss him. At 4 years old living separate from my father, and I don't miss him. I told him that, and he asked me if I was actually his child. In return a few years later I had asked him how could you actually be my father?



Melda Kayatekin

Twisted

Chapter 1: The Doctors

_____A big, bright smile. I can never forget my sister's smile. A smile that can light up the world. She still wears that smile as bright as the Sun. But that day my sister couldn't smile. The only expression on her face was fear.

A scorching day in August of 2015. School's out, and it's summer vacation. Me and my sister were chirping away like birds. Today we had a regular doctor's appointment, we had nothing to worry about. Or so I thought. I was just any regular 8-year old who didn't have a care in the world. My sister was soon to be eleven. We approached the doctor's office and entered the waiting room of crowded children playing with toys and eating their boogers. The nurse called our names and we did the height and weight, blood pressure, that kind of thing. Once that was done, she sent us to a room to wait for the doctor.

Chapter 2: What Came After

_____After that day, everything changed. My sister wouldn't smile anymore. I remember her cries and her tears that could fill a river. My parents, who didn't understand how this could happen because scoliosis is usually hereditary. That's what my sister was born with, but only showed up during puberty due to growth spurs. Scoliosis is when your spine curves into an "s" or "c" shape instead of straight. It is not really curable. You can't ever get the curve to become completely straight. My sister didn't want to tell anyone. She believed that her friends would treat her differently. Which, in a way, was true. My parents started to treat both of us differently. My careless 8-year old life was crashing down and it was time for me to grow up.

We went to hospitals and my sister got x-rays and the doctors decided to get my sister a brace, which keeps your back straight. It was supposed to be worn for most of the day, however like I said before, she wanted no one to find out. So, she wore it when she came home from school. That leads to my role in this. When she got home, I usually had to put it on my sister, no matter how much she complained, which was probably where us fighting started. Before of course, we were in oblivion and got along nicely, but after the news, my sister and I fought a lot, like we still do now. That wasn't my only responsibility. Like I said before, our parents started treating us differently. When we went shopping, I always got heavier bags and my sister got the lighter bags. Whenever my mom or dad needed help with something, it was always my job. Any responsibility my sister used to have fell on me. But my sister was going through so much worse.

Huda Khan

Summary of Non-Fiction Book: I Am Malala

My favorite non-fiction book is *I Am Malala*. It is an autobiography of Malala's life. I picked this book because Malala fought for equal rights and she is a very inspirational person. She is also very brave because she got shot by the Taliban just for going to school. Also, she stood up for education. This means a lot to me because Malala reminds me of my mom. Sure, my mom didn't win the Nobel Peace Prize or get shot in the head, but she still fought for her education by going to medical school to pursue her dreams. In the book, Malala revealed that education isn't always easy to receive in some countries even though it should be. In fact, it is used as a system for oppression where she lived. My favorite quote in it is, "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."

Ode to Pizza

When I am waiting for you, my stomach
growls.
I can smell the aroma of you anywhere I go.
When it is time to eat you I can't help but dive
in.
Your stringy, gooey cheese melts in my
mouth.
The fresh tomatoes in your sauce add
sweetness.
Toppings can add a little twist.
Olives, mushrooms, green peppers, all kinds.
Your crust comes in thin, cracker, stuffed, or
regular.
Deep dish or thin crust, either way just as
good.
The perfect balance of aromatic flavors.
Comes in all sizes, don't forget sizes.
The dollar slice is a New York classic.
The two-foot-long is a dream come true.
Whenever I have you, there is none leftover.
Because I can never get tired of you.
I could have you any time,
On any day, you would be great.

For breakfast or lunch,
A meal in between,
Dinner out at the pizzeria today.
My mouth waters just thinking about you.
I wish to have you right now.
But no vegetables, or filled crust.
No toppings are necessary.
Simple is already perfect.
Just cheese, please.

Miles Lehoczki

“Where I’m From” Haiku

I'm based off of Europe

But New York is my hometown

Noisy streets, fine eats

Ode to Athletics

Athletics are like the four bases of stereotypes

You've got "classics" for all the greats

Baseball

Soccer

Hockey

Football

Swimming

But really, what matters?

The jerseys?

The players?

The team itself?

No, none of those matter

Because what really does isn't preference

You like the sport

Because you play it

Gliding through water

Dribbling a ball to the net

Passing one for a TD

Slamming it out of the park

Or kicking it smoothly

Any of these things can make you favor them

Because sports aren't about the people

Who decide to play them

Sports are only about one thing

YOU playing them



Naveen Mathew

Elegy

The last time I saw my dog, he was happily playing fetch with me. Oh, how I loved him! He was a very obedient dog. He followed the closest person around like a magnet. It felt as if he could sense your emotions upon mere sight. If you cried, he would whimper, and if you were happy, he would run around excitedly. He was like a metal detector, but for feelings, and even if your closest family members couldn't decipher your feelings inside, he could. Oh, what a companion he was! He was like a best friend, and he would go wherever I pleased. He didn't really care where I went. As long as I was going, he was going, and so I never was lonely. If only one day I hadn't decided to play fetch while facing the driveway. I threw the ball a little too hard, and when he went into the road to get it, a car hit him. Part of me died that day. I shall never find a companion that can replace him. I would run to the ends of the Earth to reunite with him.

Ode to Super Smash Bros

At age seven,
I was introduced
To the meaning
of life itself.
Until this age,
I never realized
life was a
plumber shooting fireballs
at a robot
firing bullets out
of his hand.
The greatest crossover
ever possibly imagined
has come to

life. As soon
as the game
turns on, I
feel my heart
going into overdrive.
I feel my
soul soar above
the rest of
the world. My
face lights up.
This is the
true meaning of
what I know
as life.

Geneva Mommaas

Flash Fiction

My name is Clair. I'm like any other sixth grader, I give in my assignments on time, and I'm never late for class. But I have a secret that nobody knows, except for my twin sister Clara. Technically, it's our secret. I made Clara swear that she wouldn't tell anyone about it. I don't want people to think that I'm weird, and I don't want to stick out, I just want to fit in. I'm not that popular, Clara is, but I'm just not. I eat my lunch by myself, and nobody ever passes notes to me during math, but at least I blend in.

I got my math test back and I got a 99%. I find that kind of annoying, because you're only one point away from victory. After school, I get on the bus and look for a seat. I always sit alone, but Clara always sits with tons of people. People just can't get enough of her.

When I get home, I show Mom and Mum my grade. Yup, that's my secret. I have two mothers. I love them both a lot.

I am once again back at school. At least it's Friday, and it's already lunch! I sit down and unwrap my sandwich. Ugh, it's tuna. Surprisingly, someone sits down next to me. "Can I sit here?" she asks. "Sure" I say. We talk the whole time through lunch, she's really funny and smart.

Now I'm sad because now I have to wait until Monday to see her again.

Ode to Sobe

Sobe
fluffy, furry, funny cat.
Seeing her brightens up my day.
Sobe is very affectionate,
That is she will sit with you,
but only if you pet her in the perfect spot.
I love my furry friend,

I love her to the earth's end.
Sobe's always nice and warm,
but not as warm as her kind heart.
Sobe, I love her, more than she will ever
know
I wish Sobe could read,
so she could read this,
and I know she would love it,
because it's all about her!

Saymaa Nazrul

Why Capitulate? A nonfiction piece

I felt my head bat against the wall. I could hear the ladies of the lobby clatter their heels on the marble floor. My father's soft muffled voice being able to be heard through thick walls. I was standing and pondering. I can see the ineluctable labyrinth approaching my face. I can feel the talking abate. But why? These were only feelings that were uncommon though for such a time period it shouldn't be this quiet. I must capitulate, it was like a signature on a blank piece of paper. I felt the visitor's compassion for the patients. I couldn't sit still. No honking of cars, no bustling of cars, no road rage. It was a simple conundrum. But before I can go to the water fountain to refill my cup for the tenth time, I heard a crash. That was it, my cousin held my hand and brought me downstairs while I screamed for my parents. It was one color, that was all I saw, grey. There was ash, people, items, animals, plants, and me. Who knew that most of this colorful scenery will be gone? My cousin took me to an auto-rickshaw, but where was the man, oh yeah, he was ash. My cousin and I race to wherever we thought was safe. I almost lost my cousin because of how fast I was running. Then the straps of my sandals broke, so I stole some from a store that was about to become ash too. It was sad seeing that what can run, will run away from ash. But what cannot run, will become ash. I ran fast holding my cousin's arm, I was only six years old. By the time we reached home I was in tears. I knew that at least one of my parents wouldn't be able to come out alive. I remember standing by the window listening to the cries and buildings falling. I had enough brain cells to show me a scene from Cinderella. Now I knew that peace must be broken, and at that point I wish I was at least able to fill that cup a couple more times before racing out of the building. I was too scared to realize the huge cut on my forehead. Even when it's one hundred degrees outside, fear is able to keep everyone cold and shivering. I still had that plastic cup in my hand. I couldn't look into the mirror, I knew that all I would be able to see is a lifeless creature. The digression was only the air. It was cold, it was thin, and it kept me away from my train of thought. I have always seen orphans in movies and in real life, but being one and just thinking about becoming an orphan makes your brain cells vanish into thin air. My aunt entered the room, hugged me, wiped a tear and shed another, and said "they're safe." I didn't say anything except nothing, I smiled and the enervating atmosphere disappeared. Though even after hearing that my parents were safe, all I wanted was for the doorbell to ring. After two hours of cold sweat and thoughts of the newborns at the hospital, I guess they were just ephemeral. It was all fate that brought us here. You could tell the difference between tragedy and fate by seeing how only some people have lived and others are just ash. Whoever caused this should know that their evanescent behavior will come to an end. An end where they will be questions for their actions, thoughts, personality. But why be questioned and why question yourself when the wrong has been written. You know that I will never forget, and that I'm going to write about you one day. Why exemplary negative thoughts when you have seen history and all the perfidious humans. A message for all the people who think about such things, imagine yourself in a landscape only made of ash, I can see your prosaic imitation. I would like to tell you the feeling that I had when my parents knocked on the door. I leaped from the rooftop, didn't even bother to drop the ladder to get down. I jumped from the little

house on the rooftop to the 7th floor which was 20 feet. I raced down the steps not realizing that I wasn't wearing shoes. I accidentally stepped on a painting that was blocked by caution tape, I didn't care if I ruin a painting and get paint all over my feet. I saw them and I hugged them as if I never saw a living being ever in my entire life. So what does this mean, it means that living in a society that is so advanced, if you still can't find a way for people to visit places safely I have no excitement to live there. Sadly terrorism is everywhere and you can't avoid it. You just have to silently pray that their shadow won't block your path...but why anachronistic adversity over amicability?

Gabriella O'Neill

It's been three days since I've run out of food and water. All of the people on my crew are dead. That *thing* came after them. I didn't get to see it, because if you look at it, you turn into stone. At least, that's what happened to my crew. I was sleeping in my living quarter as I heard a bang on the walls of the spacecraft. Had it come back? Was it after me? I went out of my bed and grabbed my flashlight. I heard it. I heard its nails scratch along the floor, I heard its deep breathing. I closed my eyes and started running. I tripped over a box with safety supplies. I ran into a closet, put a spacesuit on and my helmet. I slid an oxygen tank on, the biggest I could find. I grabbed my radio. I then opened the doors to leave the space craft. "Doors opening in 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1," said the ship's computer. The doors opened. I glided out into space with nothing but my space suit, helmet, oxygen tank, and radio. I knew I would be floating in space endlessly, but I just hoped that a bigger spacecraft would receive the calls from my radio that I was sending. "Hello! Hello! If you are listening, my name is Tilly Rachel. I am the mission commander of the Apollo 59. I am the last person of my crew. Please help me before *it* gets me." No response. I don't know if anyone can hear me, and if they can, why would they go after me? What hope do I have? I don't have any.

I am Gabriella
Tall but not the tallest
Toffee colored skin
Brunette at heart
But there are still some highlights of
Mahogany and dirty blonde
Soft oval face and thin lips
Medium sized eyes
Thick and round shaped eyebrows
Curled and short eyelashes
Upturned nose
I always practice gymnastics
I balance, flip, jump and swing
I love Hispanic food.
Fried rice and empanadas
My favorite treat
Born in America
Established in Ecuador
Countries apart
Seas away
Sandy beaches and towering skyscrapers
This is me
Häagen-Daas ice cream
Many flavors, all in one

Vanilla Bean is a classic
Simply sweet and creamy
White soft ice cream.
Chocolate,
A rich flavor
Deep and intense
A dark colored treat.
Cherry Vanilla
A mix of a classic,
with juicy cold cherries
Creates a light pink ice cream
That I enjoy on a hot summer day.
Next up is Dulce de Leche
Very simple, just caramel and vanilla
Makes a good combination
Basic but mouth-watering
delicious.
It is an original.
I'm only naming just a few,
Of a variety of amazing
flavors.
That make my day no matter what,
And I am grateful for Häagen-Daas.

Paul Perdikis

Ode to comedy

Comedy plays
A very important
part in our lives
Sometimes we don't
Realize that our primary
Source of joy is
Laughter
And comedy brings people joy
And laughter
Not only when others
Make us laugh
But the feeling
When you brighten someone's

Day, might just brighten yours
Even in the
Darkest of times,
The saddest of moments,
Even a little chuckle
Can make the difference
Between a good day
And a bad day
A good week
And a bad week
A good month
And a bad month
Or even a good year and a bad year

Invasion

My name is John. I was watching TV when the room turned dark. I looked outside and the sky turned black. Weird robot-animal hybrids dropped down from spaceships - no two looked alike. They said in a monotone voice "Your species lacks intelligence even close to ours, and therefore we deserve this planet." They started executing everyone in the area with some type of toxic gasses, but I ran and didn't breathe while they threw them. It's five months later, and I've been on the run since. Today is different though. The few humans still surviving have spread rumors about the device powering the computers in the mothership. No ships ever touch ground, so I would need to find a way of getting up there. Then, I thought about pretending to be a guard and get what I like to call "beamed up." Luckily the aliens never invented uniforms, but trying to look like one of the creatures would be a hassle. In one month I used some old computers and animal costumes to make a decent disguise. I learned that their language is binary and used that to my advantage when asking the other guards to push the button to beam me up. I got up and ran to the obvious room with the device and I saw that the device was a chocolate frosted donut. Of course, I was surprised, but I was also very hungry and ate it immediately while the aliens nearby powered off and fell to the floor. Decades later, our society is thriving and flourishing.

Dionisio Rolls

Ode to Science

As everything was created
Every atom and every star
It all needed to be observed.
So much happened in a second
Even more in thirteen billion years
You may think of the universe as a bland, boring
area
But from what we know it is quite the opposite
Everything you do every day has to do with
science
From the ability to even read or hear this ode
To the expansion of the universe we all live in
Have you ever thought about how much we take
science for granted?
When it makes everything we do possible
And explains the big questions
We may not have all the answers
But that is still no reason to give up on it
Science can be amazing if you see it the right
way

Like a coin
In one point of view it looks like an engraved
piece of metal
but in another it could be worth its weight in
gold
When you look at science one way it is
something you learned in school that seems
useless
Another way it looks like something as
spectacular as life itself
An infinite painting on the canvas of the
universe
Everything from the wondrous big bang
And ending with something we may never know
So take a minute and thank and appreciate
science
For all it has done for us.

-Dionisio S. Rolls

Praise poem

As I move through space
A bunch of atoms moving effortlessly
Seemingly just tissue and blood
But as science has yet to find
I am more than that, just as everyone is
Than the subatomic particles that make me
My personality is more than
The neurons in my brain firing chemicals

But rather a collection of creativity
Not quintillions of calculations
But an ocean of intellect
You can't describe a human
Based on their neurons and their atoms
But rather by who they are
They say all that glitters is not gold
Well we are the gold that doesn't glimmer

Humza Shah

My Parents' Divorce

The event that changed my life the most was my parents' divorce. My parents' divorce was a major factor of what made me the Humza Shah that I am. It happened when I was very young, about two to three years old. I never really knew what it was like to have two parents in the same home. I didn't feel like I was different than anyone else. I thought it was like this for everyone. As I started growing older and talking to my friends, I realized that not everyone had to switch from house to house every weekend. I was not sad about this, it was just normal for me.

I never felt like this was a bad thing; at least I still have both my parents alive unlike some kids whose parents have passed away in horrible accidents or some disease or others who don't even know who their parents are. Some kids live in homes where both of their parents are around but are unhappy and the kids in that home have to suffer and feel sad. I am lucky, both my parents are always happy, especially when they are with me.

I remember when I was younger, my dad would take me to the park. We would spend time running and playing so much. One day I remember asking my dad while we were on the swings, "Why do I have two homes?" My dad, replies "Humza, you don't just have two homes, you have many homes all across the country. You have two homes in New York, you have two homes in California (my aunt and my cousin), and you have a home in Texas (my uncle). You also have homes in other countries, like Pakistan, (my mom's entire family)." I remember feeling relieved, happy, and excited when he said that. I remember thinking, *Wow, not a lot of kids even have one house, my parents have so many good homes for me. I must be the luckiest kid on earth and I can travel anywhere and live there too!*

When I think of all the things my parents have done to make my childhood as "normal" as possible, I think how lucky I am as a kid. The best part of having two separate set of parents is, I get two sets of gifts from both of them! Have you ever celebrated a birthday or graduation and received a gift from both your mom and your dad separately? I have, and it is amazing. Have you celebrated two holidays and taken two big vacations every summer? I have, and it is amazing! A couple of years ago, I went to Puerto Rico on summer vacation and stayed in an all-inclusive resort and enjoyed the pool and all the great fun things in Puerto Rico with my dad, and a few short weeks later, I went to Jamaica with my mom and stayed at a resort also.

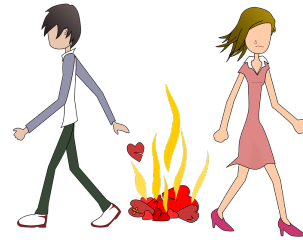
I know this may seem selfish to some and it may not seem normal to others. I didn't choose for my parents to get divorced, this was a decision that was made before I could even speak full sentences. If you asked me today, could I see my parents living in the same home today and being together, no, I really can't. I've only seen some videos and pictures of my parents together when I was really small. I can't picture the thought of my mom being with a guy like my dad, who seems like the complete opposite of my mom.

My parents have always been friendly with each other as far as I can remember. The thing I like most about my parents, besides their personal differences, they have never shown anything but love and happiness around and about me. I have two of the best parents in the world and I love them so much.

I know what they have done for me, and as separate parents has been for my best, so I would become a good person when I grow up. I know my situation may

not be typical, but I can't imagine a different one for me.

Sometimes kids grow up in a home with two parents and they don't even speak to each other or fight all the time. Sometimes kids grow up in a home with two parents and they fall out of love. Other times, kids like me grow up in two separate homes with two loving parents and feel all the love from both of their parents.



Luke Skouras

When I went to Cuba

I got into the plane flying to Miami to get on the cruise ship to Cuba. When I got on the ship, I was thinking about how nice and big my room was going to be. It had two beds and a bathroom luckily – for me and my brother. I unpacked as quickly as possible to explore around the ship. The next day, we arrived at Cuba and were waiting to go inside because they had to check our passports. The colors of the houses and the cars were so beautiful. And add onto that the weather was really nice too. So we walked around the city and stopped at houses to take pictures. We went past cars to take pictures and went inside of some of the buildings. After the trip, my phone had no more space because we took so many pictures of the buildings and cars. We got to ride in one of the really old cars that they used in the sixties. The car was painted PINK and it had no roof. Before we went back on the cruise ship, we went on top of a mountain and we could almost see all of Havana. We went through a place like a mall but with like fifty little places where one person was selling different stuff. I bought two hats that are worth like three times more in America. We headed back to the boat and ate there. At night, Cuba looked just as beautiful as in the day. We got on the boat and went to the Bahamas, then back home. But overall, it was the best trip I have ever went on.

Kartik Wahlin

Flash Fiction

It had been a while since Bob had eaten. His clothes were in rags. His tent was peppered with holes, reminding him of the attack. But he knew that there was no backing out of a war. So, he would end it. It had been a while since the Enforcers of Justice had figured out that the citizens of Jupiter had hidden large masses of plutonium in its moons. Bob realized that life wasn't much better before the war. Creatures inhabited every planet within the Solar System, and they had all come for one thing - Earth. Back in the early years, humans sent out machines that transmitted data back to Earth. They were like glowing neon signs that said "we have a planet with life-sustaining conditions that you can only find here!" Other planets did have life-sustaining conditions, but Earth was the only planet with conditions that could support any type of life. It was well protected, though. Since the first satellite was sent past the exosphere, all types of creatures had been trying to get in. But even the Grott, a species who lived their whole life in acid, were burned up in the air surrounding the planet, known as the ozone layer. Now that humans had torn apart this powerful layer of armor, they were under constant attack. The only thing that went in their favor was that each species wanted the planet just for themselves. One of the major issues was that each attacking species had technology that was about twenty centuries ahead of the humans.

Ode to Bushes

The hidden plants of the earth.
With a pair
Of shears
Any shape
Can be achieved
From a roaming elephant
To a leafy hut
Or a green statue
The possibilities are endless.
In some video games,
You can hide in them.
In others,
You can wear them.

They have benefits
In reality, too.
Block out intruders
With a wall of leaves!
Hide behind
A shield of plants!
Or go for a thicker version.
The shrub!
Dense plants
of wood and leaves.
Their many branches
letting no one in.

Charlotte Wyles

My Personal Narrative: The Time My Brother Almost Died

“I want one too.” These are the first words that come to my mind when I think of this scary time for my family and me. My brother said those words when he was only two. It all went downhill from there.

Let me tell you where it all began - on a plane headed to Buffalo, six years ago. Vacation time! I couldn't wait to find out what I was going to do, but I knew that whatever it was, it would be exciting. I had just arrived in Buffalo with my mom, dad, and brother. I was my typical five-year-old self: excited, and twirling all around the airport, after all I had been sitting in a plane for two hours (that was a long time for me to be sitting down when I was younger). I did not know that that vacation was not going to be like any other.

It started off as an amazing day; I was in my uncle and aunt's car driving to an amusement park with my cousins. I immediately ran out of the car with my family, and then I halted back. My cousins and I quickly realized that it was the biggest bouncy house we had ever seen and it was right in front of us. We all knew that it was going to be the best day ever, or at least that's what we thought.

It had been an hour and I was getting hungry. I walked up to my mom and asked if she brought any snacks. I was relieved when she said yes, then I was handed a peanut butter granola bar. I gobbled it up in thirty seconds flat. Then my brother spotted me and ran over begging. “I want one too,” he said to my mom. She handed my brother a bar and he began to eat it.

It's always hard for me to talk about this because of how shocking this event was. As my brother began to eat he also began to swell up all over. He had large red bumps all over his body. The area around his eyes were so swollen that his eyes were almost completely shut. My mom immediately stopped and looked for the closest hospital near us. “Everyone stay calm,” she would say over and over again. But the last thing I could do was stay calm.

Luckily there was a hospital only a block away from the amusement park. Everyone went into the car and my grandparents gave my cousins and me all lollipops to reassure us that everything was going to be alright. We all went home to my grandparents' house except for my parents and brother.

We all panicked and thought that the worst would happen. For a good fifteen minutes I did not believe that there was even a slight chance of this outcome being true. But then I wondered, I panicked, and I ran over to the house phone and stood there for what seemed like hours.

Finally the phone rang. It was my mom's phone number. I grabbed the phone and immediately asked if everything is going to be fine. My mom assured me that my brother was fine and that he just had a very deadly allergic reaction and he would be seeing an allergist soon.

When I saw my brother I gave him a big hug and I was so thankful that nothing too bad happened. My parents, brother, and I have not eaten peanuts since. My parents and I are not allergic to anything, thankfully. So it's just my brother's severe allergy to peanuts that my family has to deal with and worry about. Now my house is completely peanut free and everyone in my household has adjusted to that.

500-Word Valuable Item Fictional Story

In my house, the most valuable thing to me is a photo. The photo is in a diamond photo frame. The photo shows a picture of a young man in his twenties. He is wearing trousers and long, baggy pants with black boots. In one hand, he is holding a shovel across his shoulder and with the other, he is holding a handful of diamonds. At his feet is a huge golden chest containing gold, silver, diamonds, crowns, necklaces, and even a huge golden sword embedded with emeralds. Behind him are trees of different sizes and colors. His face can only be described in four words: pride and pure happiness. I knew this man well.

This man loved forests and searching for pirate treasure. One time, he went to the Bahamas and found the bones of an undiscovered species of dinosaurs. He loved exploring and ever since he was four, he went to the park every day and shoveled dirt everywhere. He loved riding planes and hot air balloons. He loved flying so much that he started making his own prototype planes. He was also a daredevil. He would jump off waterfalls, have a person shoot an apple off his head, go inside unexplored caves, and more. Sometimes, he would be put under criminal charge for doing illegal stunts and going into illegal areas such as climbing tall buildings, and going into construction sites, but he was still a great person.

Then one day, he found something amazing. It was a beautiful Saturday morning and he was walking in the woods looking for caves. Instead, he tripped over a rock, and after carefully examining the rock, he realized that he had found a treasure chest, and in it was real treasure. He sold all the contents in that chest for almost one octillion dollars (twenty seven zeros after the one). He turned world famous and became a celebrity. He was a great man and donated half of his money to charity and used the rest to explore the whole globe. While he was in India with his friends, something tragic happened. He came across a king cobra and, being the daredevil that he was, instantly picked it up and started to use the snake as a lasso. Of course, the king cobra didn't like this and did what any snake would do. But the snake didn't bite once and slither away, it was vicious and bit him everywhere, toes, finger, legs, belly, arm, etc. The snake then ended his performance by biting his right eye and holding on. His friends called the ambulance, and he eventually couldn't take all the poison and fainted while the ambulance was arriving.

Do you know how I said I knew him well? He is me. Yes, I was a celebrity and extremely rich. Yes, I loved flying and exploring. I am now currently in the hospital writing in my journal. I have been hospitalized for about a week, doctors have been trying to save me, but none can help me escape the powerful grip of death. My injuries are getting worse each day and my heartbeat is decreasing. I am finished. I requested to be released from the hospital but the doctors insisted that I not move or go anywhere. Breathing and eating is hard. My vision is turning black by the second. I'm dying. All I want and need is the photo of my huge treasure find. That is the most valuable item to me.

Haikus

Where I Live

I live in New York.

I live in Astoria.

New York is busy.

My Cat

My cat's name is Tate.

He is white and grey with blue eyes.

My cat is so cute.

Who I am

My name is Joel.

I am eleven years old.

I am smart and kind.



Jocelin Zhuo

Her gray hair was whipped and thrashed by the fierce wind. Strands of white were creeping on the fading gray on her scalp. She had a ghost of a smile plastered on her face. Her eyes were lifeless and empty. Her skin was ghostly pale and withered. She looked incomplete. Broken. She didn't look right. She didn't look like the person I knew her as. That person is long gone.

It was this photograph that I'm holding that has brought back these forgotten memories of grief and loss. It brought back memories of her. The grief of losing someone who cared and loved you all their life. Someone that spent countless mornings making intricate braids along my hair. Someone that woke me every Sunday morning to the sweet aroma of tea and homemade cakes. Someone who spent every night telling me stories of her adventures throughout her childhood. Someone that I miss terribly. Someone that is gone.

My chest tightens as those memories of happiness and joy come flooding back to me. Memories of love and compassion. Of care and hope. Memories of her.

When she disappeared and vanished from this world, I was tempted to follow those footsteps, too. But a voice in my head told me not to. Her voice had stopped me from making a choice that could've ended my life. A choice I would've regretted. A choice I didn't make.

I had mourned for her presence for weeks. I became a shell of who I once was. But I broke out of that shell soon enough. Those memories are what kept me going. But those memories also started to fade.

Seeing this photograph has made those fading memories in my mind become as vivid as it once was. Happy memories. It has sent waves of emotion crashing back to me. Feelings of grief and sorrow. Of pain and loss. Feelings of joy and happiness. Of compassion and hope.

It is then that I realized that those memories weren't what kept me going, but rather the love and affection displayed in those memories. It was the memories of my great grandmother.

I AM

I am

I am what I am

There is only one me

I am from a country

That great walls connect

From one place to the next

A great part of Asia

A massive country

I am what I am

With short sleek black hair

A size seven in shoes

With a certain taste for friends

A positive attitude

I am what I am

There's only one me



Spoken Word Poem

Family

A tree that keeps on growing

A foundation that I build upon

A light that guides me

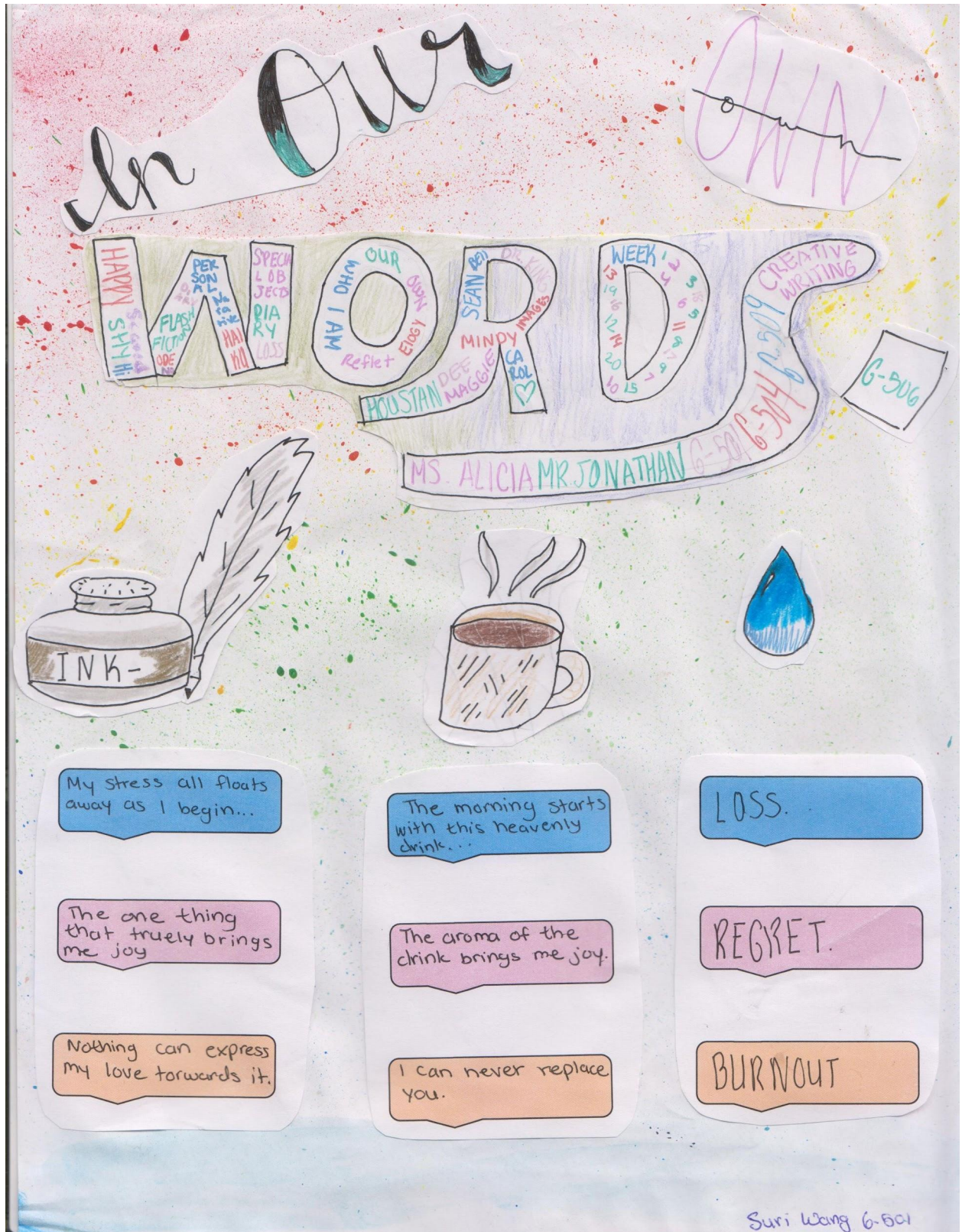
A back that shields me

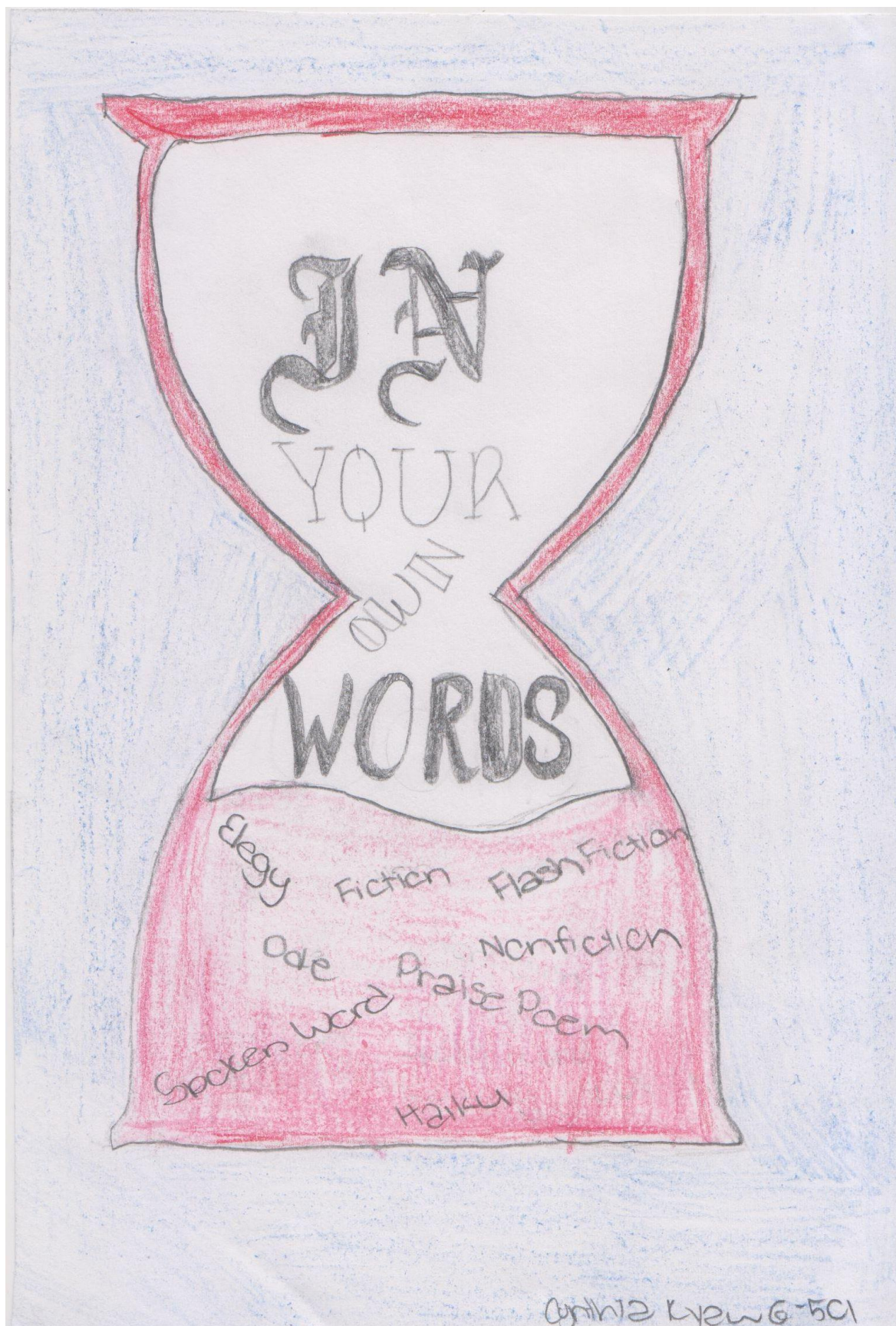
The ones I love



My genes and race
My eyes and hair
My body and face
I wear the shoes that they've walked in
I bear the weight that they've all carried
I see the path that they helped create

My hope and faith
A path that leads to success
A rainbow in the night sky
A rainbow that leads to a path
A path to my future
A path to my home
A path to my family.







P.S. 122 Artists

Cover art: Natalie Lai

Illustration #2 by Saymaa Nazrul--- page 10

Illustration #3 by Reema Kaur--- page 58

Illustration #4 by Catinca Balasov--- page 108

Illustration #5 by Alexandra Gaal--- page 153

Illustration #6 by Suri Wang--- page 194

Illustration #7 by Cynthia Kyaw--- page 195

Illustration #8 by Anonymous Artist --- page 196

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Sometimes as adults, we take for granted the creativity and playfulness that the young express so effortlessly. We will never forget the experiences and memories (and personalities) among you 6th grade students who have surprised, amused, and impressed us time and again. You are gifted and talented beyond words and fill us with pride. It has been an honor and pleasure to share the classroom with you, our newest authors. We are also indebted to P.S. 122 (which has always been a welcoming and friendly school) and Ms. Irene Pappas for her understanding, patience, assistance, and the space to conduct these classes. We are also grateful to Teachers & Writers Collaborative for this unique teaching opportunity and for fostering an environment where these students could learn creative writing skills in a world that doesn't always seem to appreciate the value of the arts.

These writers have inspired us, filled us with hope, and assured us that the coming generations will be more than suitable heirs and stewards of this planet through their spirit, work, and their art, which has been assembled here for future posterity. HAVE AN AMAZING SUMMER! Set your timers and go!

With love and respect, wishing you all the best,

Ms. Alicia & Mr. Jonathan