



The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers
presents the nation's most creative middle-school students

SPARK **2017**

THE ALLIANCE FOR YOUNG ARTISTS & WRITERS PRESENTS
A collection of award-winning art and writing by America's
most creative and original middle school students.

COURAGE

Courage is a loaded word—it comes with many expectations. At the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers we use this word often. It's the way we define the talented teens who annually submit their works of art and writing to be judged in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. This year, 95,000 courageous teens submitted 185,000 works in 29 categories. These bold students expressed their innermost feelings through photographs, drawings, paintings, prose, poetry, video game designs and more.

This very special publication features work by some of the most courageous of all Scholastic Awards participants, 7th and 8th graders who represent our youngest demographic of budding talent. These middle school students show a depth of artistic and literary talent rivaling their older counterparts. As you'll see in the pages that follow, their works are sophisticated, thoughtful and intelligent.

Thanks to the tremendous ongoing support of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the Alliance is able to feature the work of these students and to provide them with opportunities for exhibition, recognition, publication and scholarships.

We welcome you into the lives of these young teens and hope you will enjoy your journey through *SPARK*.



Virginia McEnerney
Executive Director
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers

ABOUT

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, a nonprofit organization, identifies teenagers in grades 7–12 with exceptional artistic and literary talent and brings their remarkable work to a national audience through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

RECOGNITION

Each year, more than 30,000 teens are recognized in their local communities for their artistic and literary achievements, and 1,500 receive national awards. National award-winning students are celebrated on stage at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

EXHIBITIONS

The ART.WRITE.NOW. National Exhibition features stunning examples of art and writing by national award winners. A segment of this spectacular exhibit travels around the country to renowned institutions and galleries. The Alliance also holds ongoing exhibitions at the U.S. Department of Education and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

PUBLICATIONS

The Alliance annually features national award-winning works of art and writing in the *National Catalog*, *The Best Teen Writing*, and *SPARK*. These publications are distributed free of charge to schools, students, teachers, and arts and literary organizations.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Alliance awards nearly a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships annually. National award-winning seniors can leverage funds from a network of 60 institutions that earmark more than \$3.9 million in financial aid for award recipients. The Alliance also administers ASAP, a program providing scholarships to high-need Scholastic Award winners to attend arts and writing camps.

CELESTE WATSON-MARTIN

Grade 7, Age 13
Landisville Middle School, Landisville, PA
Teacher: Scott Feifer
Affiliate: Lancaster Public Library

The Stars Are Smiling

Short Short Story, Silver Medal

I saw my ma through the window. She was sitting next to Dad, listening to the radio. They were a gloomy sight. My mom lost her job a month ago. The factory let her go, and anyways, the factory had been losing business for a year now. It will probably shut down sometime this week.

My dad still had his job, though. He worked at making airplanes for the army. He started taking late shifts, and he gets home just in time to have supper with us. But rumors have it that they're going to shut down the airplane factory. I reckon they're false, but you can never tell about anything these days.

But we were stuck in these days. I heard of people who died and people that didn't have homes, or people that had no food. Would we be next?

"Buddy?"
"Hmm?"
"When are you moving again?" I asked.
"Next week on Friday."

I looked down in the grass. I didn't want him to move. He was my best friend. And the only person who tried to answer my questions. I had known Buddy since the first grade, and I couldn't go on in fourth grade without him.

"Where are you moving to?"

He puffed a big breath. "Haven't I told you this before?"



"Yeah, but, I just want to make sure I know where. Maybe someday I can visit you or something. If this ever ends."

He stared into the sky again. And I did too. This time I looked at the black nothingness. At least I wasn't that.

CAROLINE LADD

The Soaring Girl

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 7, Age 12
The Portfolio Studio, Austin, TX
Teacher: Nancy Hoover
Affiliate: St. Stephen's Episcopal School



EMMA SCHIFILLITI

Water Dreams

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

Woodward Academy, Middle School, College Park, GA

Teachers: Janie Tutterow and Paul Vogt

Affiliate: Georgia State University

DANIEL KENNEDY

Grade 7, Age 12

Turkey Foot Middle School, Edgewood, KY

Teacher: Angela Brehm

Affiliate: Northern Kentucky Writing Region

The Insect

Silver Medal, Science Fiction/Fantasy

"Mmm, that was a juicy one," he said. "But I have been sitting in this pipe for much too long. My appendages are healed now, so I will leave here." He climbed to the top of the pipe and struck the heavy metal grate hard with his armored head. The grate blew off and landed with a clatter 20 feet away. He crawled down the street, taking in the scenery and looking for any more problems that might need a superhero cockroach's help to solve.

Over the next few days, evil Dr. Heetzar endlessly scoured the media and the city streets for any signs of where the "stupid bug" might be. His frequent patrols were repeatedly unsuccessful, but the newspapers offered plenty of stories about the "unknown creature" and his acts of goodwill. Every day, evil Dr. Heetzar's anger grew more and more as he glanced at the headlines:

Unknown Creature Saves Baby from Burning Building

Unknown Creature Solves City's Rat Problem

Statue of Unknown Creature to be Erected in Town Square

Obviously, that last one pushed evil Dr. Heetzar over the edge.

"I just can't take it anymore!" he exploded. "I'm going to get that...that thing!" He ran to a closet, dug through piles of lab coats, and finally grabbed a hunting rifle buried in cans of hair

And for the first time in years, he smiled and laughed malevolently. He flew to his ancient car, backed it out of the driveway, and floored the gas pedal.

"Next stop, Town Square!" He laughed again. "That ungrateful roach will surely be watching that statue being set up. It's not like he has anything better to do all day, besides..." he shuddered, "...helping people."

Sure enough, there he was, laying on the curb, three of his six legs dangling over the edge. Evil Dr. Heetzar accelerated even faster toward the park at the end of the road, paying no attention to the speed limit. Without attempting to find a parking space, he slammed on the brakes, hurdled out the door, and pointed the rifle at the giant insect.

"You!" he shouted. The cockroach stood up and looked at him. "I spent forty-two years of my dull, boring life making you the most powerful bug in the world and you..." He was cut off by a commanding voice coming from behind him. Evil Dr. Heetzar yelled at the cockroach, "Don't move!" Then he lowered his gun and spun around.

A huge police officer towered over him. Evil Dr. Heetzar gulped, smiled, and in his most pleasant voice, rasped, "Is there a problem, officer?"

"Yes, actually," he replied. "You do know that it is not currently cockroach hunting season, correct?"

"What? Yeah! Yes. I was just, um, I was, oh," evil Dr. Heetzar stammered.

"Well, then, you're under arrest for hunting cockroaches off-season."

NELL HENDRICKS

Untitled Turnip

Painting, Gold Medal

Grade 7, Age 12

Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12, Pittsburgh, PA

Teacher: Alberto Almarza

Affiliate: La Roche College



MADLINE BOURGET

Grade 8, Age 14

Detroit Country Day Middle School, Beverly Hills, MI

Teacher: Charles Duggan

Affiliate: The Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education

Him

Poetry, Silver Medal

The fairyland merged with reality in her younger years.

It swirled around her, in her mind
Like childhood.

Dreams became reality,
Sparks flew from fingers,
And the midnight moon made shadows come
alive.

She would ride to the top of the hill with her
dog,

Blood pounding in her ears, and wait.

Suspended at the top of the world
Shaggy fur waiting at her feet.

Then the tension would break and her bike
would zip

Whizzing down, as if she were flying,

The wind whistling in her hair like magic,
Spells shimmering.

KARINA FRANKE

Grade 7, Age 13

Hackley School, Tarrytown, NY

Teacher: Nicole Butterfield

Affiliate: Region at Large

The Tale of General Cal Q. Luss

Humor, Silver Medal

Back in the days when children transported heavy books to and from school on their backs in reinforced cloth bags strapped through their arms and over their shoulders, a baby boy was born to Mr. and Mrs. Luss at precisely 3:14 and 15 seconds in delivery room 92 at St. Louis General Hospital. When the clerk in birth records reported the uncanny pi phenomenon to her supervisor, the assistant head of hospital management got so excited that she forgot to move the stack of papers from the left side of her desk

to the right side and back. Bakeries literally burst at the seams with pie requests as pi celebrations honoring the birth of the world's only known pi baby reverberated through St. Louis. Newspaper, magazine, Internet and TV reporters from around the world flooded the city. Hard hit by the declining economy, hotels, restaurants and cab drivers saw the biggest surge in business since the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis! Just a few days old, the Luss baby had already made quite an impact on the world.

In addition to the incredible pi connection, Mr. and Mrs. Luss knew there was something extraordinary about their son, Calvin Quentin, whom they affectionately called Cal Q., from the get go. While other babies delighted in randomly punching the TV remote control buttons, baby Cal was fascinated by the calculator and

shrieked with delight when numbers flashed on the small screen. While other toddlers sorted shapes, little Cal mastered the Rubik's cube and then solved it blindfolded. While the children in his preschool class practiced drawing circles, squares and triangles, young Cal contemplated the unique shape of the M&M. With his teacher's help, he drafted a letter to the country's leading physicists expressing his concern that people mistook the semi-flattened sphere-shaped candy for an ordinary sphere all too often. Blown away by his sound reasoning, the physics community wholeheartedly embraced his suggestion to officially classify the M&M as a "squishy sphere." At only four years of age, Cal Q. Luss became the youngest entry in Who's Who in Science and Technology for his contributions in the category of new shape classification.



CATHERINE CHEN

Nagasaki's Horror

Printmaking, Silver Medal

Grade 7, Age 12

Bak Middle School of the Arts, West Palm Beach, FL

Teacher: Patrick Fallon

Affiliate: Educational Gallery Group (Eg²)

SOPHIA FISHMAN

Grade 8, Age 13

NYC Lab Middle School for Collaborative Studies,
New York, NY

Teacher: Melicca McCormick

Affiliate: Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education

The Hero and the Villain

Personal Essay/Memoir, Silver Medal

Eventually, my dad moved into what is called an “adult home.” This was more because he was broke rather than because of his handicaps. He got lucky finding a place in this home, although it was a dirty place in the slums of Brooklyn. I have only been to this home two or three times, but it was enough to know that it’s not somewhere I’d like to go again. The last time I went was with my brother. We took the subway and a bus to get there, and the few blocks we had to walk to the home were nerve-wracking. My eyes flickered back and forth like a light bulb in need of replacement. My dad saw me stare at the people smoking outside, all with hopeless eyes, looking around, oblivious to what they were doing. I stared in awe. The building was crumbling and there was a fence around it, holding in the residents. I wondered if they wanted something more for themselves. I didn’t think they did because of how out-of-their-minds they were. This was some place in the back of my imagination. It was a way of life I had never experienced. A way of life I never thought I, or any of my family, would be forced to experience. My dad, my brother and I made our way through the building, up to my father’s room. It seemed like a hospital to me. In the elevator, I met a few people. My dad introduced me to them. One old lady, hunched over, replied that I was an evil witch. How she came up with this idea, we did not know. Another woman I met seemed quite normal. She said, “Hi, how are you?”

pleasantly. Once we got out of the elevator my dad let me know that she was insane, although she seemed just a tad eccentric at first. I met a few other residents, but I didn’t particularly like any of them. I was happy to return to my apartment afterwards to see the cheerful souls living in my building. With my dad living in Brooklyn, I continued to see him less often. He didn’t call often, and I didn’t call him often. I was in seventh grade.

The summer of eighth grade, I went off to camp and then to the house in Canada that Jim previously owned. This was my third summer there and my second summer being slightly depressed. Canada depresses me. The summer gives me too much time to think without having a routine. My dad’s problems have made me realize the cruelty of the world. This scared me and changed my life around from the moment I realized it. During this summer, I was away from my dad for two months. My mom and Jim got married. The wedding was a big deal and it was a good time.

I happily returned to New York, but the slight depression lingering at the back of my mind never truly goes away. Several weeks ago, when I saw my dad, he seemed manic because he was acting strange. He was forceful and rude, controlling. He wouldn’t admit to being manic because bipolar people do not admit to it when they are acting up. I had experienced him in a manic stage several times, even as a young child. He becomes forceful and not himself whatsoever. He cannot deal with other people’s opinions. He must have his way in this state and there is no winning against him.

IRIS CRONIN

Grade 8, Age 14
St. John's Middle School, Houston, TX
Teacher: Sharon Fabriz
Affiliate: Harris County Department of Education

The Swap

Science Fiction/Fantasy, Silver Medal

Then she turned to her parents. "We got The Swap Talk today."

Her parents exchanged looks.

"And what did you think?" asked her father.

"Well, it was pretty much the same spiel everyone in our grade has been hearing about for years. I have a, um, informational packet for you."

Blithe got up and rummaged through her book satchel on the counter, and when she had found them, she returned and handed the papers to her mom.

Theresa glanced over them briefly before saying, "Hannah, sweetheart, go get ready for bed, ok?"

Hannah nodded and got up from the table, but before she left, she squeezed Blithe's hand. Hannah knew perfectly well why she was being dismissed.

When her youngest was gone, Theresa turned to Blithe, who sat chewing her bottom lip and anxiously eyeing the packet.

"Let's go through this together, alright, Blithe?"

It took the better part of two hours, for there were many signatures to be obtained, a lot of personal medical information to be written down,

and a few weird decisions to be made. In Blithe's opinion, the worst part was the last page.

"Please write desired name of patient once displacement has occurred," Theresa read out loud. She glanced up at her daughter. "Any ideas?"

Blithe sat for a moment, completely silent. Then, suddenly she burst into tears. Her parents looked at her, stunned, before her father reached over and awkwardly began to pat her back.

"There, there, Blithe. What's the matter?"

When she only continued to sob, Theresa looked over at Joel, a mild panic in her eyes.

"You don't need to be scared, sweetie. It's perfectly natural, and there will be plenty of doctors making sure everything goes great. Why, I barely even remember my Swap!"

Finally, Blithe looked up at them, her eyes swollen, her nose running. "You idiots."

Her parents recoiled, as if slapped. Finally her mother managed, "I beg your pardon?"

"I don't want to think of a new name for my masculine self. I like my name. I like being a girl. And I don't understand how you guys can act like this is a non-event when it's going to ruin my freakin' life!" She buried her head in her arms.



EMMA WAIBEL

Yellow Beach

Painting, Silver Medal

Grade 8, Age 13
Athey Creek Middle School,
West Linn, OR
Teacher: Shannon McBride
Affiliate: Oregon Art
Education Association



OLIVIA HYDE

Treat Street

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 13

Carolina Day School, Asheville, NC

Teacher: Mike Congleton

Affiliate: Asheville Art Museum

TREVOR LEVIN

Grade 8, Age 14

Birchwood School, Cleveland, OH

Teacher: Lorraine Tzeng

Affiliate: Region at Large

The Andersons

Personal Essay/Memoir, Silver Medal

Charles' birthday fell in the fourteen-day span. Anticipation had been building for two days previous, and the day of was marked by, if possible, increased attention given to the Andersons. The crowd swelled to twenty, and 90 percent of all things spoken were addressed to Charles. We proceeded to the beach earlier than usual; Charles had chosen R2-D2 as a model for the day's sand sculpture, the most ambitious project yet, and no time was to be wasted.

At four o'clock Helen realized that her birthday present for Charles, a \$20 Lakeside sweatshirt, was inadequate (I hadn't felt a gift necessary). Running out of time, she hit upon the idea of a sand-sculpture birthday cake (by now, everyone was well-learned in the sand-sculpture process). She needed help and recruited me, as I had no interest whatsoever in the R2-D2 concept. Masking my reluctance, I began to work.

As sand sculptures go, I suppose ours was primitive, especially standing next to R2-D2, but it was a three-layer cake with the words, "Happy 16th Birthday, Charles," etched into the top. As we worked toward the finished product, I recognized the symbolism the simple cake held.

I had followed Helen into the task, which had been built entirely for the benefit of Charles Anderson. During the construction, our conversation had been entirely focused on the Andersons. Slowly other people had joined when they realized that they too could be involved in celebrating Charles. The analogy, or so it appeared to me at the time, worked perfectly: the cake was an icon of the attention and devotion given to the Andersons and the impact their presence had made on the interaction between Helen and me.

In a movie-like moment, Helen and the others working on the sand cake were briefly distracted, and I was left alone, staring at the cake, this sandy representation of my resentment.

I realized that every inch of my body wanted to destroy this cake.

Jump on it. Kick it. Dump water on it. Beat it with a shovel until all that remained was a heap of damp sand. Happy birthday, Charles. Somehow, I felt that if I only wrecked this cake, the Andersons would cease to exist in my life, the crowd would disperse, and I would be able to interact with everyone normally again.

My triceps twitched involuntarily.



Cherryplum trees, known for their distinctive dark purple foliage, are used widely as landscaping trees.

Few people, at least in my experience, know about the cherryplum FRUIT. Because of that, it's easy to scavenge fruit off of other people's trees, which is what I'm going to do for my jam.



EMMA CAPPS

Jam Days (left)

Comic Art, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 13

The Nueva School, Hillsborough, CA

Teacher: Dan Archer

Affiliate: California Arts Project

CHRISTINE DELAY

Letting Go (bottom)

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

Horace Mann Middle School, Franklin, MA

Teacher: Jane Pichette

Affiliate: New England Art Education Conference, Inc.

and the Boston Globe



MARIANA PRICE

Spikes (right)

Sculpture, Gold Medal and Best in Grade

Grade 7, Age 13

American Heritage School, Plantation, FL

Teacher: Shannon Calhoun

Affiliate: American Learning Systems



JACOB CORDER

Family Portrait (bottom)

Jewelry, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

Harding Middle School, Lakewood, OH

Teacher: Jo Ann Hagan

Affiliate: The Cleveland Institute of Art



SAVANNAH QUINN

Grade 8, Age 14

P.S. duPont Middle School, Wilmington, DE

Teacher: Tracy Selekman

Affiliate: Region at Large

***Sunrise Eyes: What a Little Boy
Wanted to Know About God***

Short Story, Gold Medal

Across the way my brother and uncle are fighting. Each day they wake up to the sounds of bombs and the tune of a list of missing and murdered. When sliding on work boots they think of the danger they are about to encroach on. I can see my brother tying up his laces, maybe remembering the time he took a nap in the living room and I roped his shoes together. Maybe he thinks of how he screamed at me and how he would make me pay. Maybe he would remember the threats he never followed through on and the little brother awaiting his safe return.

When my Papa told me of the man in the sky, maybe he was mistaken. If there really was someone perched up above, watching over us, why does he just observe? Does He know that my mother was one floor above me when the phone in the kitchen rang in the middle of the afternoon? Was he aware that at 3 o'clock I was the only one home to know of the call concerning my brother and the folded flag that would be

brought to our doorstep late that night, pardoning the snow? Was it He that encouraged me to creak up the flight of steps, to race to the bedroom, eliminating the separation between mother and child, arriving just in time to see my mother sliding into an eternal sleep? It was He, the blessed figure in the sky that murdered my brother, killed my mother, and pierced the remainder of my dwindling heart.

As it so happened, it was He. He who carried my mother to her tomb, caressed her dying form, and took her to the gates of his kingdom. It was He who swaddled my brother in his clothes and allowed him to rest at His side. It is He who prematurely stole them both, but it is also He who may grant them an afterlife. So why does the man in the sky not understand my pain and hear my thoughts and fears? It is those very sunrise eyes that bring about the tsunami into my world as easily as they can bring about the rainbow. He would know the difference to a little boy, if He knew anything at all.

SAVANNA OSBORNE

Grade 8, Age 13
Charleston County School of the Arts,
North Charleston, SC
Teacher: Sean Scapellato
Affiliate: Region at Large

The Sound of Air

Short Story, Silver Medal

Where did you find that cross?"

He looked down at his chest. The cross was flat out, obvious against his white shirt.

Dayton's heart gave that lurch, that one where it feels like your heart kicks up and restarts, pumping blood five times as fast through your body. "I f-found it."

The wrath of his mother was a scary thing to see, even for a sixteen-year-old.

"It was your father's."

"I know."

"I liked that cross." Her lips were tight. They had already turned out of the neighborhood.

Dayton didn't know what to say. He settled with a, "Yeah."

He imagined foreign memories running through her mind, ones where Dayton was not the only person she had left. But she obviously hadn't cared about the cross if it was lying in the attic, right?

"Yeah," she repeated. He could tell she was lost in

her memories. Each individual person had their own unique world. They were always different, like each snowflake, like each cloud that drifts away over a canopy of trees. But she suddenly turned to him, staring in such a hard way that he turned away in discomfort.

"Do you want this?" Her fingers ghosted to the cross, but dropped, making a fist. He watched her face. Sadness, grief, anger, more sadness. Nothing. Blank, expressionless like a field in winter, its broken stalks breaking down bit by bit until nothing remains. Just deadness.

Dayton had no words for her. But he did want the cross. He wanted it, bad. She had enough memories of his father, he had nothing. She had spent all those years with him, and he had five. Five years.

But as he looked at his mother, at that last glimpse he got out of her eyes before she turned away, he saw that she needed it, too. They were needy, with one thing to partially satisfy that.

As they pulled up into their home, they were silent, with only the usual sound of air in the morning. It was a sound he had become used to. It was the sound that filled his head when he struggled to remember his father.



YURI IKEYAMA

Sunkissed Umbrella

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 14
Park Tudor School (6-8), Indianapolis, IN
Teacher: Kathleen Campbell
Affiliate: Clowes Memorial Hall of Butler University



MAYA PATTERSON

Lines with Cameras

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 13

Savannah Country Day School, Savannah, GA

Teacher: Ann Jones

Affiliate: Georgia State University

CATHERINE ZHU

Grade 8, Age 13

William Annin Middle School, Basking Ridge, NJ

Teacher: Jill Burt

Affiliate: Region at Large

Trains to the Afterlife

Poetry, Silver Medal

God is a stargazer

Drawing maps

Of where the universe ends

Orb in palm, he moves gently

A solitary ecliptic

Tracing his way down

Down the

Atmosphere

We are stardust he whispers to me

We are every

place we've never been

Maybe tomorrow

We'll fall asleep on trains taking us

across the white expanse

Meteors will burn out beside the skyline

I'll listen to your hum as you forget your name

and we'll fall in love with strangers as He falls

out of love with us

out of love with us

SOPHIA SHI

Grade 8, Age 13

DeWitt Middle School, Ithaca, NY

Teacher: Kathryn Cernera

Affiliate: Region at Large

Optical Illusions

Personal Essay/Memoir, Silver Medal

I want a day. A day to myself. A day with no chaos, errands or planning; a day with no one yelling at me, insulting me, broadcasting my inferiority to the world. Sometimes I want to drop everything—homework and priorities and extracurriculars and

acting virtuous and altruistic all the time. I want to forget what assignments I have due tomorrow or what I have to organize or who I have to face or which lucky teacher I get to unconsciously suck up to. I just want to sit on my bed or a sunny hill or a vacant park swing and think about nothing at all. I want to hit the pause button on my life and take a break from it, maybe take a drink of water or a walk around the block before I take up the controls again and spam the A button and beat the level and move on.

* * *

I want proof. Proof that you really do like me for who I am, that everything positive you say about me is true, that you really do enjoy sitting with me at lunch, that you don't judge books by their covers. Proof that I can be a competitive player in this world, and not just a space filler to make all the other child prodigies look good. Proof that I'm not selfish and spoiled and arrogant and pretentious and self-conscious and hostile like I think I am. Proof that you actually appreciate my random facts and my superfluous verbosity and my sense of humor that's drier than the Sahara Desert. Like a scientist, I need to gather a network of concrete data before drawing a conclusion. Ambiguity doesn't work for me.

I want to say everything. I want to find someone—someone who I can trust without caution and pour everything out to them. Not a relative, because they would love you by default. Not a friend, because they would lie. Not an enemy, because they would be honest. I don't want to be comforted. I just want to be heard out. Don't let them console me. Just let me scream in their face and whisper in their ear and cry into their shoulder. They need to understand all my metaphorical phrases and my hypocritical thoughts and my obsessive-compulsive behaviors. I've got to matter to them, and not be an anorexic folder in a disorganized filing cabinet in the back of their brain. I just want someone who gets me.

MADELEINE LECESNE

Grade 8, Age 14
Lusher Charter School, New Orleans, LA
Teacher: Eric Flynt
Affiliate: Greater New Orleans Writing Project

Khan's Sestina

Poetry, Silver Medal

Kill your brother
And blow on the kindling to start a fire.
Remember the color of his blood,
That seeps through the dirt of the river.
Take what he was and start an army,
Never washing your warm arrow.

Use your arrow
To lead your brothers
And step over the tired armies.
Light a fire
Near the river
And put it out with blood.

Clean off the blood
That touched the feathers of your arrow
In the gray morning's river.
Slaughter those who are not your brothers
Before they can look up from the fire.
Turn your head and march on with your quiet
army.
Call your army
Like rushing blood,
Raging through, catching fire.

Call them with your singing arrow,
Across the mountains to your brothers
And down the valley's river.

Take the village by the river
And clean it out with your army.
Burn the homes of their people's brothers,
Letting the ashes hide their blood.
Look at their children through the tip of
your arrow
And warm their throats with its fire.

Cool your fire
And wash away your kill down the river.
Blow off the soot from your arrow.
Move westward with your army.
Don't stare at the blood
That sticks to the armor of your brothers.

Pour the river's water over your fire,
Starving the flames, like the blood drained bodies
of fallen brothers.
Sharpen your arrow in the forest's night and
clear out with your army.



ARI TILL

Cubist Contour Drawing

Drawing, Silver Medal

Grade 7, Age 12
Barker Road Middle School, Pittsford, NY
Teacher: Maribeth Curran
Affiliate: Region at Large

LILA TRIBE

Grade 8, Age 13
Clinton School for Writers and Artists, New York, NY
Teacher: Emily Strang-Campbell
Affiliate: Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education

Is Daddy Coming Home?

Short Story, Silver Medal

“When’s Daddy going to be home?” I asked again.

Mommy ignored my comment and began talking. “When I went to pick your daddy up at the airport, he avoided me. He had to have left the airport through another exit or something. Anyway the point is your daddy had some tough things to handle while he was at war and we need to let him have some time to settle back into regular life. I don’t think that he’s quite ready to see us,” Mommy said. She had a pained expression on her face like she was almost desperate for me to understand.

My mind already began to race faster and faster. How could Daddy not want to see me? I want to see him so badly; doesn’t he want to see me?

“He’ll be home when he is ready, Wilma,” my grandma said softly.

“NO! You guys don’t know what you’re talking about! Daddy wants to see me and he’s NOT avoiding me because I love him!” I screamed, jumping from my seat. I could feel my cheeks burning and I felt like violently throwing things. Mommy’s and Grandma’s eyes both widened.

“Wilma, you’re not being fair, you know that we all would prefer if Daddy never went to war. He

is not avoiding you. Daddy loves you. He just needs time to be by himself for a while,” Mommy exclaimed, rising from her chair.

“NO, NO!” I screamed, violently shaking with anger. Hot tears began trickling down my face and once I started crying I couldn’t stop. Grandma held her arms open, welcoming me into a hug. But that was the last thing I wanted. I ran. I ran towards my room as fast as my legs could take me.

“Wilma!” Grandma shouted.

“Mom, let her go. Let’s just call the school. She won’t be attending today,” said Mommy.

That was the last I heard before I slammed my bedroom door closed.

“Lucy, they don’t understand! Daddy would never need more time away from me. I bet he actually was dying to see me!” I explained to my stuffed rabbit. I lay in bed with Lucy snuggled close to my body. “Don’t you agree?” I asked Lucy. I placed my hand on the back of her neck, making her head go up and down as if she were saying yes. I pressed my face into Lucy’s stuffed fur. All the anger was out of me and in its place was sadness. I spent the next few hours crying silent tears.



ABRIL CARMONA

Untitled

Mixed Media, Gold Medal

Grade 7, Age 12
Concord Junior High School, Elkhart, IN
Teacher: Neil Boston
Affiliate: Regional Scholastic Art Awards Advisory Board



KIRA BAILEY

Skateboard

Photography, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 13

Shelby, Township, MI

Teacher: Lisa Grunewald

Affiliate: Macomb Community College and
College for Creative Studies

JOSEPHINA LIN

Grade 8, Age 14

Wellesley Middle School, Wellesley, MA

Teacher: Anne White

Affiliate: New England Art Education Conference, Inc.
and the Boston Globe

Guardian

Short Short Story, Silver Medal

I met that little boy eight decades ago, but I remember it like yesterday. I can feel that crisp November air and the dusty road beneath my feet. Oh, I can smell the steam of the warm apple pie that wafted from my mother's oven as I ran out the front door. I can see clearly the edges of the woods where I ventured to play. And there he stands. I'm battling dragons when he appears under the bending branches of a sickly tree. Wearing a mess of strings, it seems. It is supposed to be a coat. His chestnut hair, grimy, sticks to his face. It is the same color as the dirt we stand on. I recognize who he is instantly: a young Jewish boy escaping the terrors of the concentration camps and forced labor. All the families on my street know of these people who beg for a place to hide in attics, cellars, anywhere. When he looks up at me, his eyes wide, I see fear, hope and a spark of something. Anger, maybe. I am frozen, my stick of a sword paused in the air. Daring plans rush in my brain. Plans where I fight the Nazis and lead the boy to safety, shielding him from all the dangers. But I know I cannot bring him home. My mother, protective of me, will turn him in at once, rather than risk our own lives.

CARA MAINES

Grade 7, Age 13
St. John's Middle School, Houston, TX
Teacher: Amy Gray
Affiliate: Harris County Department of Education

Memento

Short Story, Gold Medal

"Where am I? Who are you?" inquired Laura.

"I am Gwynneth, daughter of Master Tholton, the apothecary. I know you are a witch of sorts because of your strange costume and odd manner. I do not mean you harm or to frighten you, but you must come to cure my sister. She is suffering terribly."

"My name is Laura," replied Laura, deciding that it was perhaps in her best interest to befriend this girl. She appeared kind and non-threatening, and Laura, deeply troubled by her own confused circumstances, needed an ally. If she agreed to help this girl, maybe this girl could help her.

Without warning, a man darted through the alley shouting, "They are coming! The king's knights! Make way for the stampede!"

"Come with me," urged Gwynneth, as she held out her hand.

It was now or never. Laura grasped Gwynneth's hand, and with as much courage as she could muster, relied on her instincts and trusted this girl. Holding hands, the girls hurried back over the bridge. Laura caught glimpses of the happenings around her as they ran. She was overwhelmed with awe. Minstrels dressed in jade doublets played lutes, and the wind carried their joyous tunes. At the end of the bridge a woman sold meat pasties, the delicious odors of which wafted through the air, begging passersby to taste them. The sights, smells and sounds around her were more magnificent than what she had ever imagined. She was in Medieval York!

HELENE LOVETT

Grade 8, Age 13
Lusher Charter School, New Orleans, LA
Teacher: Eric Flynt
Affiliate: Greater New Orleans Writing Project

Twenty First Century Evolution

Poetry, Gold Medal

We've lost their wings
So we sprout plastic ones,
Grow radar goggles to see
What we want
Through the film
Plastered
On our airplane windows.

Try to ignore nature
Knocking. Facing
Our own destruction
Hurts too much. Yet haze
Threatens us. It'll engulf
Our precious cities.
It's already started.
We shut the shade
To sweep over the gash.
We want to ignore
Nature screaming, curled
Up in a corner.

But it bangs
On the glass. Claws
Us to wake our dormant
Brains, to open
Them to scarred fields
Below. It begs us to hear over
The propellers, to not
Let them shred
Mother into withered husks.

It tells the bubble people
They've broken one wing.
It pleads with our closed eyelids
To protect the other.



BARRY KINGSTON

To be or Snot to be

Fashion, Silver Medal

Grade 8, Age 14
Stivers School for the Arts High School, Dayton, OH
Teacher: Gwynne Rearick
Affiliate: Art Machine, Inc.

ELANA MITCHELL

A Moment or Two in Time

Photography, Silver Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

Bak Middle School of the Arts, West Palm Beach, FL

Teacher: Stephanie Chesler

Affiliate: Educational Gallery Group (Eg²)



KENNY XU

Grade 8, Age 13

Moody Middle School, Richmond, VA

Teacher: James Coe

Affiliate: Region at Large

Not Truly Free

Persuasive Writing, Silver Medal

Why do Americans still live in enclaves, closing their doors to the many other diverse people just next door? Because, in their mindset of comfort, rather than ambition, they have not experienced the joys of another culture; to them it is seemingly another world. That is why in order to really understand people of different cultures, we must educate ourselves about them. As Muslim activist Ali Bin Abu-Talib said, "There is no wealth like knowledge, no poverty like ignorance." And with the birth of the Internet Age, information is easier and faster to collect. Therefore, it is completely fitting to educate ourselves about other cultures. Why would one laugh at a Muslim's turban if they knew that they wear their headdresses to represent their religion

and class? Once we educate ourselves in the customs of other ethnicities, acceptance and fairness will come naturally, as we already know their traditions, and we will be able to communicate with them more easily. For those who can afford it, traveling to other countries, allowing the mind to swim in stranger seas, soaking it all up like a sea sponge, is essential to breaking down the barriers that hinder communication between two different cultures.

However, once we have learned to appreciate America's vast diversity, as a community, it becomes our duty to advocate our respect for different cultures and ethnicities. When there are divisions between ethnic groups in a community,

such as the division between white and black Americans before the 1960's, and that community truly believes in and respects diversity, rather than adhere like glue to their own traditions, they must act to end those divisions.

It has been said that there is "strength in numbers." In the civil rights movement, entire groups of people from nations around the world, tired of injustice, organized sit-ins and boycotts to cry out against the atrocities committed to minorities in America. Today, our community can do the same by organizing inclusive events that help the diverse people in the area interact with each other—or even writing articles revealing the inner hardships that cripple minorities these

days. And there are, in fact, many hardships that neighborhoods of color are now facing. New studies done in California in 2010 show that racial redlining, the act of banks denying credit to certain ethnic groups more than others, has resurfaced with the coming of the recession. And the biggest banks—Citibank, Wells Fargo and Bank of America—denied almost 40% of applications to residents of color. These are issues that plague these ethnic groups even today, and if we bring light to these issues, then it proves our respect for the struggle of these ethnic groups. When a community advocates the respect for diversity, it will have the same effect to everyone: an enlightening inspiration to others.

ERICA NG

Grade 8, Age 13
University Prep, Seattle, WA
Teacher: Alec Duxbury
Affiliate: Region at Large

Mars Mission

Science Fiction/Fantasy, Gold Medal

The words “SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER” could be distinguished on the sides of a worn cardboard box as the flaps on the top shut from the inside, and the adventure began. “Mission Control, I’m ready for takeoff.” He held on tight as his spaceship rocked and trembled. The rumbling of the craft grew louder and louder, “3...2...1...” He braced himself against the strain of gravity; it tugged at the spaceship, begging it not to go, the way a small child holds on to his mother on the first day of school. Once the tossing and jostling stopped, the boy reached around and punched the brightly lit buttons in his craft, “Beep bi-oop. Everything is a go! Launch successful!” He cheered, but he kept his hands on the steering wheel. He was responsible with the expensive equipment; all the years in space academy had taught him well.

He glanced around the wide dark expanse of space in awe. Earth looks so tiny! I could just pick it up between my fingers and move it! But that was a mission for another day; today the earth was not in peril. Today his adventure would take him to Mars.

This spaceship was absolutely beautiful; expertly crafted to be the fastest spaceship ever made. It

was of course the latest model. Nothing less for the greatest astronaut the world had ever seen. He gazed at the countless dazzling stars that whizzed past his sleek light-speed spacecraft as he raced towards Mars. They were the loveliest things he had ever seen, each of them shone with a blazing brilliance to which all the telescopes had not done full justice. The silence of space all around him was lit with a Christmas light kind of glow, and he absorbed the mysterious quiet. Before he knew it, rusty colored Mars loomed up ahead.

He breathed a sigh of relief. The landing was smooth and nothing seemed to be broken. He put on his helmet, smoothed his spacesuit, and checked his oxygen levels. The boy exploded out of the spaceship holding his space radar gun. He scanned the desert-like surroundings for signs of life, but he saw none. He continued on and climbed up a large hill for a better view. There, out of the corner of his eye, he saw something move! He gripped his gun tighter and froze, when suddenly he was attacked! He shot his laser but there were too many, the gravity of Mars with the combination of his stiff spacesuit made him extremely awkward, and the attackers overwhelmed him.



JEREMY GIPSON

Night Crossing

Sculpture , Gold Medal

Grade 7, Age 13
Orefield Middle School, Orefield, PA
Teacher: Adrienne Feeser
Affiliate: East Central Pennsylvania Scholastic Art Awards



DAVID MEALS JR.

Cold-Hearted

Sculpture, Silver Medal

Grade 7, Age 13

Bloomfield High School, North Bloomfield, OH

Teacher: Leanne Thomas

Affiliate: McDonough Museum at Youngstown

State University

SOFIA LAGUARDA

Grade 7, Age 12

Writopia DC, Washington, DC

Teacher: Melissa Wyse

Affiliate: Writopia Lab

A Life Apart

Short Story, Gold Medal

Avishi is fixated upon the puppet show in front of us, but I choose to watch the people around me. I remember how I used to believe I would really run away some day if I wanted to be a normal child, but I had never realized how much fun and community I could feel in my own home.

The puppet show ends too soon, and Avishi, eager to show me everything, points to a tall building.

“The fireworks will start any minute,” she says. Sure enough, at the same moment, all the music stops. No more dancing or singing, as everyone waits for the fireworks. And then the fireworks come.

Never in my life have I ever seen anything so beautiful. The stars are dimmed by comparison as we watch explosions of red, green and purple sprawl across the sky, accompanied by loud bangs. I gasp and sigh as showers of shimmering lights seem to sprinkle down from above. I’m amazed that all my life I have never seen something like this.

The fireworks last for an hour, and when they are done, people pack up and leave, but Avishi has one last place to go.

She takes me to one of the last bonfires, where a cozy ring of people sit around an American man who is telling stories about his adventures as a cowboy. Half the things are hard to believe, but Avishi listens with rapt attention to his tales of a faraway place with a dreamy look in her eye, and when we head home, she remains silent with a longing look in her eyes.

“Avishi?” I ask cautiously.

“Yes?” she responds with a far-off look.

“Why did you like those stories about America so much? It’s perfectly nice here. What’s so great about being over there?”

Avishi looks startled for a moment, and then sighs.

“The truth is, I’ve always wanted to travel, to see the world. If I were rich like you, I could, but...,” she sighs. “I’ve got no money, and I’m stuck here.”

I’m silent for a moment, thinking back to the day I was given a beautifully framed map of America. I had always thought of it as junk, but...

“Avishi, how would you like it if I gave you a map of America? You could look at it and choose where you want to go, and then maybe one day I’ll take you.”



MIMI SHANG

The Sunny Entrance (left)

Mixed Media, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

J Art Studio, Annandale, VA

Teacher: Ju Yun

Affiliate: Fairfax County Public Schools



DAMON SMITH

Out of Chaos 2

Digital Art, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

Brownsburg West Middle School, Brownsburg, IN

Teacher: Suzanne Whitton

Affiliate: Clowes Memorial Hall of Butler University



JULIET FONTANA

Grade 8, Age 13
 Greens Farms Academy, Greens Farms, CT
 Teacher: Robbi Hartt
 Affiliate: Region at Large

The Sauce of Our Italian Lives

Personal Essay/Memoir, Gold Medal

Every year on their anniversary, my Nonna and Nonno gather up the family to make 500 jars of tomato sauce; this year it will represent the 50 years they have been together. No one else can truly understand how much love is inside 500 jars of tomato sauce.

boiling water to keep it sealed and fresh forever, as if it's in the safety of their everlasting love. I stop to admire everyone working in unison to create the sauce of our lives, the sauce that kindles and protects our family connections. Each person is doing something different, but all under the steady watch and protection of Nonna and Nonno.

To prepare for a hard day's work, Nonna is up early cooking meatballs to snack on through the afternoon. She squeezes me into a hug as I steal one, and repeats, "*Bella di la Nonna*," as she often does. Crates and crates of tomatoes are delivered to their backyard. Imagine how many tomatoes are needed for each container!

What to do with the jars after they are each carefully made is easy. Some are stored in the sauce pantry with others that haven't yet been used over the years, so my grandparents will always have some for each other or extras for anyone who may fall short. The other jars are sent away overseas and across borders or given personally to friends and family.

Nonno examines them gently with his rough hands and claims, "This one is too ripe," in his thick accent. The tomatoes are tokens, not yet peeled into raw affection. That's the next step—placing them in a machine that separates the skin from the pulp so only the good part is left.

To share the love is one of the most important parts of this ritual, to show that even the people not there with them on that day are remembered. If there weren't restrictions against it, we would receive three pounds of Parmesan cheese and a dozen jars of sauce every month because the distance between us doesn't numb the feelings felt. The last jars of tomato sauce are opened and heated for dinner that night, so my Nonna and Nonno can enjoy the same circulating love as everyone else affected by them and their tomato sauce does. Then come the words that put an end to the day, yet make the connection of our scattered family's bonds tighter than ever, "*Buon appetito*."

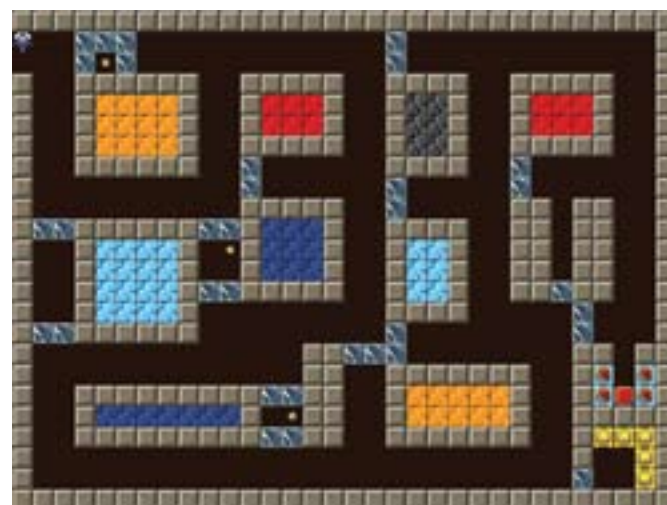
The machine is like my grandparents' eyes, taking away all the bad things and only seeing the positive in everyone around them. Then a little something special gets added, some herbs and basil that spice up our days and make them a unique part of our family. Everyone contributes something different; not one of our sauces taste the same, but each one is important for the circulation of our lives together. This pulp is captured in a jar, which is then put into a pot of

CHARLES ROUSHEY

Speed Demon

Video Game Design, Gold Medal and AMD Game Changer Award

Grade 7, Age 12
 Grand Valley Middle School, Orwell, OH
 Teacher: Kris Doran
 Affiliate: McDonough Museum at Youngstown State University



www.artandwriting.org/Media/5266

MADELINE DEPUY

Grade 7, Age 12
Charleston County School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC
Teachers: Francis Hammes, Rosemarie Miles, Sean Scapellato
Affiliate: Region at Large

Down the Rabbit Hole

Short Story, Gold Medal

“Remember, Sahira,” mum says as she pushes me out the back door. “Remember wonderland, remember Grandma, remember the music of the words. Now go. Run. They are here.”

Now more than ever I want to be Alice. Want to dive down the rabbit hole into Wonderland. Want to be anywhere but here. But I am here, and so I want to run. But I don’t get the chance because a moment later the sound of a voice, a strong low, drumbeat cuts straight through the thick, violet, Indian air and heavy wooden door of our house. It feels as though the whole house is thumping along with the beat of my heart, Mum’s too. I start to panic even more when I feel the house start to shake, but realize that it’s really myself trembling so much it feels like an earthquake. But I remember Mum’s words, and they shoot through me, snapping me back to attention.

Run. They are here.

And I do. I run up the hill, into the forest, and as I look behind me at the trail of people and flames standing before my front door, my dark eyelashes flutter shut for a brief second. I wish once more, with all my might that somehow I could run into these woods and emerge in Wonderland. Galaxies away from here. I wish that I’m not going into the shadowy woods to hide the book, my little piece of radiant joy diving into the blackness. But I have to. So I plunge forward into the darkness.

MALLORY LATSKO

Grade 8, Age 13
Booker Middle School, Sarasota, FL
Teacher: Joanna Fox
Affiliate: Region at Large

Ripple

Poetry, Gold Medal

The still water ripples
And I wonder why

Did a silver fish
Rise to the surface
For a glimpse of the sun
Before sliding back down to the depths

Or perhaps did the breeze ruffle it
Then die
Or did a solitary raindrop
Leak from the clouds above

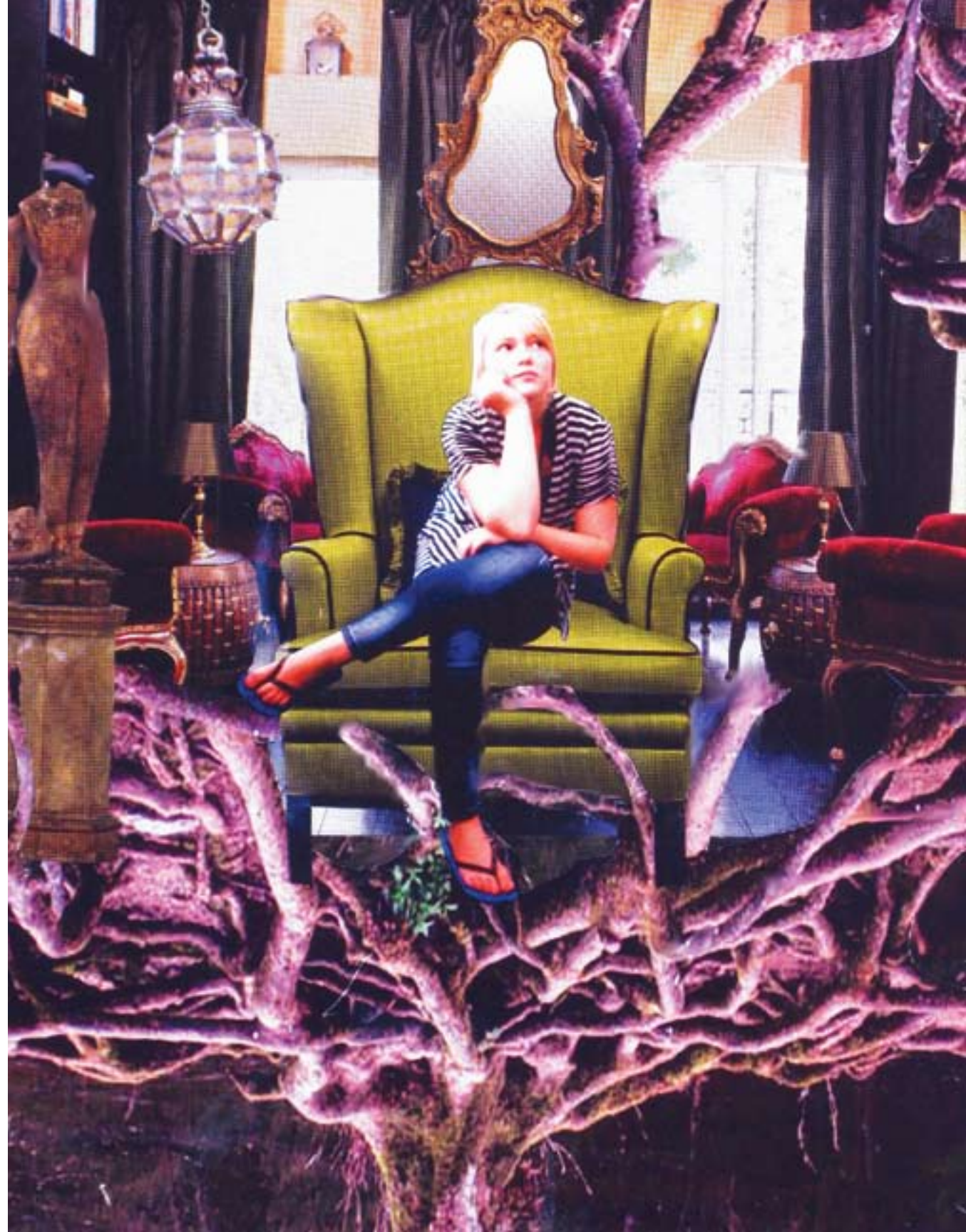
I guess I will never know the answer
But maybe, just maybe
My question is incorrect
Maybe I should wonder
Why the water was still
In the first place

BRIANNA DRINSKY

Deeply Rooted

Digital Art, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 13
Concord Junior High School, Elkhart, IN
Teacher: Mary Amador
Affiliate: Regional Scholastic Art Awards Advisory Board





DAVID WEAVER

Flower 1

Photography, Silver Medal

Grade 8, Age 14

St. Margaret's Episcopal School, San Juan Capistrano, CA

Teacher: Josh Friedman

Affiliate: California Arts Project

ELIZABETH YU

Grade 8, Age 13

Home School, Cary, NC

Teacher: Clarissa Ngo

Affiliate: Region at Large

Somehow the Longan is Bitter on My Tongue

Poetry, Gold Medal, Creativity & Citizenship

the word for "woman" in my tongue is
nu ren ?? and xiao ren ??
"inferior man" and "person for the inside of the
house"

i am a prisoner of my gender
a product of a culture that fears women
and therefore punishes them

when i was five years old
my mother dipped my feet
in a warm bath of blood and herbs
i remember her tears like rain
splashing about my feet
like a timid absolution
"this is mother love," she whispered
her hands shaking as she
gently curled my toes under my feet
and cracked my arch in half
my scream shattered the peace
of the two white doves
nesting in the peach tree
outside the rice paper windows
they flew away
never to be seen again

my mother bound my broken feet
in bandages soaked in blood, herbs and tears
in a figure-eight motion she wrapped
thanking god it was winter
yet the cold was but a weak anesthetic

round and round she wound
the blood soaked bandages
around my weeping foot
the servants scurried away

unable to bear this "mother love"

my mother knew
no respectable man
wanted a girl with big ugly feet
such girls became prostitutes
in their own homes
any man could use them

to become a respectable wife
my mother must cripple me
hobbling on my tiny three-inch lotus feet
i become a tottering willow of fascination
my feet that reek of death
to men are perfumed lilies

my toes fall off
my mother applauds
now my feet will be even smaller
all the women in the village
praise her

every night, my mother unbinds and washes
my feet
soaking them in a concoction that makes my
dying flesh fall off
like meat from the bone
the recipe has been lovingly passed down from
mother to daughter
to two billion women
for twenty-five generations

she beats the soles of my feet
to ensure that my feet remain in pieces
then breaks each of my toes in at least two to
three places
she then places shards of glass and pieces of
broken tiles
within the bindings and between my toes
so that every step is beautiful agony
one in ten girls die from such beauty
their three-inch lotus feet encased in
embroidered silk
today is my wedding day

· **BELEN MELLA**

· Grade 8, Age 14
· Sunny Isles Beach Community School K-8,
· Sunny Isles Beach, FL
· Teacher: Johanna Morales
· Affiliate: Miami Writes

· ***La Vida Es Un Carnaval: Life is a Carnival***

· Personal Essay/Memoir, Gold Medal

That was the case in parties like these. All the men would crowd the small balcony and scream into the night like only Cubans can. The women took control of the kitchen and the living room, talking for hours about whatever crossed their mind. At a certain mystical hour, the two groups joined for a salsa dance that shook the earth. The neighbors would stop by to complain and end up leading the conga line! The toddlers joined the dance, smearing footprints of dark chocolate cake across the white carpet. The next day, however, we all came back to leave his carpet spotless, not motivated by guilt, nor force, but by the way he didn't get upset the night before and would simply smirk with love.

All the birthdays, holidays and daily summer vacation parties were hosted at Julio's house. It wasn't the richest house, or the nicest, and certainly not the largest. It was, however, the richest, nicest and largest when it came to love. It was precisely this love that made it all the more difficult when we saw the sign on his door. A few kids, Julio and I were heading to the pool when we noticed the yellow note. Julio looked at the paper and back at me, and among the silence, I could tell that he knew. Still, being the only English reader in the now silent hallway, it was my duty to read out the words "foreclosure"

stamped in faded black ink across the letter. How do you say *foreclosure* in Spanish? What does *foreclosure* even truly mean? I struggled, trying to find the words to explain something that I too found difficult to understand. How could it be possible that Julio's home—my home, was to be brutally taken away?

Like most things in life, my question remained unanswered, but as the days of packing progressed, I learned something else. Behind the screeching, sticky sound of scotch tape being stretched out and cut, you could still hear laughter. Behind the smell of the dusty, ancient closets, you could still smell the delicious aroma of the pastelitos overtaking that of the grand pork. Behind the heavy, brown cardboard boxes, you saw each and every one of the friends that Julio had taken into his home. That day, we took him into our homes. We proved that friendship goes a lot farther than wild good times and crazy midnight dancing. We proved that friendship represents care and love that is unparalleled by anything else in this world. They might have taken Apartment 314, but no one can take the memories and friendships created within it. I can still even hear Celia Cruz singing, "*No hay que llorar, que la vida es un carnaval, es más bello vivir cantando.*"



· **GENEVIEVE SMITH**

· ***Stop Sign***

· Photography, Gold Medal and Best in Grade

· Grade 8, Age 13
· High Desert Middle School, Bend, OR
· Teacher: Marcy Monte
· Affiliate: Oregon Art Education Association



CHLOE CORRIVEAU

Many Me's

Digital Art, Gold Medal

Grade 8, Age 13
Santa Catalina Lower School, Monterey, CA
Teacher: Susan Kendall
Affiliate: California Arts Project

HANNAH BALDUCCI

Grade 8, Age 13
Shahala Middle School, Vancouver, WA
Teacher: Brian Goforth
Affiliate: Region at Large

Mourning in Binary

Short Short Story, Gold Medal

There were always the conspiracy theorists who said it was all a hack. An inside job, of course, by someone close to her. Someone who had the opportunity and motive to make a computer mouse sharp as a machete, sharp enough to puncture Marina's sputtering heart and murder her with a few clicks. They created many Facebook pages, some titled "R.I.P. Marina Campbell" and others writing vulgar things about the supposed heist. Her followers created websites brimming with forums, an electronic ocean come alive. Stoners used 80's slang to explain their sorrow. They discussed her suicide in emoticons, acronyms, weird neologisms so warped and twisted that it was a language in itself. Someone on YouTube video blogged about it, claiming they were her killer. No one really believed the boy with frantic eyes. Still, though, his rant made it to YouTube's featured videos. He got on a talk show a few days later, that one with the girl from Alaska. Nobody watched it.

Marina had a virtual funeral on blogTV. It was quite tasteful, really. There were truckloads of video montages from her supportive fans. Someone had done a superb ukulele cover of a song from her favorite band. They played it softly in the montages, pictures of Marina mingled with the photos of her worshippers holding handmade signs. Marina had canceled her YouTube page awhile ago, but a few people had saved clips of her videos on their hard drives. Marina was immortalized. In the video montage, they added in a part where Marina kissed her camera good-bye.

A boy titled "ComputerWhizz212" edited Marina's kiss in slow motion, the topography of her cherry lips vivid in high definition. Also, if slowed, the viewer got a clear view down her shirt.

Marina's new funeral song was available on iTunes. The voices of her fans had been edited together, creating one soaring voice. The electronic bits of sound resonated through speakers, oscillating furiously like loose bees buzzing. The crystallized music seemed to quiver in the air—electronic, synthesized and undeniably raw. It was a pleasant sort of church dirge that spoke of Marina's rise to heaven. Soon, though, it was downloaded illegally and auto-tuned. The song was blasphemously remixed until the words were indistinguishable. Someone else posted the new version on Vimeo, the video tag a picture of Marina donning a bikini.

No one truly knew if Marina was alive in reality. All her fans could deduce was that Marina's online self (the only part of her they loved) had broken down, her pixels reduced to ashes. They wired PayPal accounts to her memorial website, selling t-shirts and various kitsch. "ComputerWhizz212" even wrote up an obituary complete with Marina's face formed out of typography art. He sold that picture on his personal site, raking in the revenue received from the pop-up ads. It was all a beautiful remembrance. Marina Campbell's memory was cherished with each and every sale made.

DIANA HUEFNER

Grade 8, Age 14
Bexley Middle School, Bexley, OH
Teacher: Linda Kelley
Affiliate: Region at Large

Wild and Free

Personal Essay/Memoir, Silver Medal

I dismounted my horse, took my lunch and headed for the other side of the hill. I found myself a nice little rock to perch on, and while I ate my peanut butter and jelly sandwich I thought about the world and how much it was changing. Maybe in a couple of years where I stood would be covered in vacation homes or something. This thought frightened me. So instead of thinking about the future I thought about the past. My mom used to tell me tales of how small the ranch was years ago. How she would spend her whole summer there every year. She told me about her collie named Callie and how the dogs would help them round up the horses and come on the rides with them. But my favorite memory she told me about was when she was young, she and her siblings and cousins would line up their horses against the back end of the pasture and race to the other side. It sounded wonderful to not be following a specific path. Now my grandpa wouldn't even hear about running in the pasture anymore. "It's too dangerous," everyone said. "The horses could lose control, it creates a bad habit." I was tired of these silly excuses. They were frustrating to me.

When we were done eating I made my way back over to Keena and hopped on. I waited for everyone else to get on their horses and for them to be ready to go. The wind was whirling my hair over and across my face. I felt like the queen of the world up there, with mountains on every side. And the valley. And the trees. But most of all with Keena. I knew she wouldn't live forever though I also had no idea when that forever

would end. But I did know it was near. I grasped a clump of her long thick mane and dreaded the moment when I would have to let go.

SPENCER EVANS

Grade 8, Age 14
Delta Middle School, Muncie, IN
Teacher: Angela Decker
Affiliate: Fort Wayne Museum of Art

Peaking at 5'2"

Poetry, Silver Medal

Peaking at 5'2" tall
Nathan Brown has quite the charming appearance.
His hair is put together as if 1000 angels Laid their heads on it to rest and Slept so well that they never woke up. His dark complexion is daunting, making Him what some would call a "womanizer."
Nathan's smile is so appealing, sources Have said that it might be able to cure cancer. His teeth are so white I've had to have Lasik surgery 3 times because Nate Looked directly at me and smiled.
His Volcom, Fox Racing and Alpine Star t-shirts really tickle the fancies of His peers all over the school.
On a good day, Mr. Brown might even Sport a plain white t under these shirts. His shorts, that hang lower than his mother Would like, are quite dumfounding, And his Air Jordans light up the whole room.
Occasionally, Nate will "rep" a Flat-bill New Era hat. While doing This, he will almost definitely point at you, As if it adds a dramatic effect.
His brown eyes are as dull as my Pencil is now after writing all of this.
I present to you,
My good friend,
Nathan Brown



HYE MI LEE

House and People

Drawing, Silver Medal

Grade 8, Age 13
Aliamanu Middle School, Honolulu, HI
Teacher: Ted Uratani
Affiliate: Hawai'i State Department of Education

THE ALLIANCE FOR YOUNG ARTISTS & WRITERS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE VISION OF OUR DONORS

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which has been instrumental in our ability to reach young audiences through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and bring their remarkable work to a national audience.

Assistance from the Foundation allows the Alliance to produce this incredible publication of middle school works of art and writing. Now in its sixth year, *Spark* showcases a selection of the most outstanding work by 7th and 8th graders across the nation. Not only does *Spark* raise the profile of the excellent art and writing submitted by middle school students, it also highlights the superb instruction of middle school teachers.

As part of the Alliance's partnership with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, we nominate 7th-grade candidates to participate in the Foundation's Young Scholars Program. Through this initiative, the Foundation selects high-achieving youth with financial need and provides them with individualized educational opportunities and support throughout high school that enables them to develop their talents and abilities.

The Alliance also works closely with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to develop our ASAP Awards, a special program that offers summer art and writing scholarships to hi-need Gold Key winners in grades 7–11. To learn more about our middle school program, visit www.artandwriting.org/ORGPrograms/MiddleSchool.

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