THE NEXT GENERATION OF GREAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND WRITERS

artandwriting.org
Artists don’t spring to life as fully formed adults. Instead, they grow through formative experiences, important introductions, and ample resources. For nearly a century, these opportunities are exactly what the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have provided for countless creative young people.

Although neither of us received Scholastic Awards when we were in high school, we firmly believe in the transformative experience that is the hallmark of the Awards. Meeting students, educators, and families from across the country gives us the chance to see firsthand—over and over, in new and unexpected ways—just how affirmative and life-changing the experience can be, strengthening our commitment to bring our program to even more young artists and writers.

We are moved each year by the intensity of the feedback we receive from our community of partners, who tell us stories that are joyous, sometimes heart-wrenching, and always highly motivating. We’ve had educators tell us of students who were homeless, or who had lost a parent, whose lives were affected immeasurably by recognition of their creative work. All of these individual stories make clear the positive, profound, and lasting impact of a Scholastic Award.

We also honor the work of dedicated educators, Affiliates, jurors, and supporters who have championed and mentored our Awards participants, and we seek to amplify our gratitude by providing meaningful opportunities—from residency programs to our annual Educator Awards.

While the program continues to evolve, we remain rooted in the vision of our founder, Maurice R. Robinson, who wanted a program that, as he said, gave students “who demonstrate superior talent in things of the spirit and of the mind” an opportunity to be validated and celebrated. We deeply appreciate the tireless work of our supporters and partners, who continue to validate, celebrate, and, ultimately, nurture future generations of great American artists and writers. Thank you.

Gregory R. Miller
Chairman of the Board
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers

Virginia McEnerney
Executive Director
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers
ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS 2008–2017

2017
Paul Chan

2016
Ken Burns

2015
Donald Lipski

2014
Kay WalkingStick

2013
Zac Posen

2012
Edward Sorel

2011
John Baldessari

2010
Mel Bochner
Carolyn Forché

2009
Tom Otterness
Thane Rosenbaum

2008
Philip Pearlstein
Joyce Maynard

NOTABLE ALUMNI

This year’s recipients join a group of notable Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Alumni—all of whom received the Awards’ special recognition as teenagers. Many Award recipients pursue degrees and careers that focus on their art and writing, but countless others become inventors, innovators, scientists, public servants, engineers, entrepreneurs, and creative leaders across new and changing fields.

Frances Farmer, 1931
Bernard Malamud, 1932
Robert McCloskey, 1932
Jacob Landau, 1933–34
Harry Bertoia, 1934–36
Ezra Jack Keats, 1934
Hughie Lee-Smith, 1934
Truman Capote, ca. 1936
Charles White, 1937
Maureen Daly McGovern, 1937–38
Richard Avedon, 1941
Philip Pearlstein, 1941–42
Mozelle Thompson, 1944
Andy Warhol, ca. 1945
Lennart Anderson, 1946
Robert Indiana, 1946
Richard Anuszkiewicz, 1947–48
Sylvia Plath, 1947
Edward Sorel, 1947
Idelle Weber, 1947
Cy Twombly, 1948
John Updike, 1948
Kay WalkingStick, 1948
John Baldessari, 1949
Donald Barthelme, 1949
James Hiram Malone, 1949
Alan Arkin, 1951
Stan Brakhage, 1951
Red Grooms, 1952
Robert Redford, 1954
Peter S. Beagle, 1955
Joyce Carol Oates, 1956
Peter Stein, 1956
Ken Burns, 1971
Michael Bierut, ca. 1974
Mel Bochner, 1958
Thane Rosenbaum, 1976
Catherine Murphy, 1959
Rodney Alan Greenblat, 1977
Arnold Hurley, 1962–64
John Currin, 1979
John Lithgow, 1963
Joe DiMaggio, 1979–80
Stephen King, 1965
Audrey Niffenegger, 1981
Donald Lipski, 1965
Myla Goldberg, 1989
Joyce Maynard, 1966–71
Carolyn Forché, 1967
Tom Lichtenheld, 1967
Martin Friedman, 1968
Gary Panter, 1968
Dan Fogelberg, 1969
Erik Madigan Heck, 2002
Kevin Bales, 1970
Tom Otterness, 1970
David Salle, 1970
Ned Vizzini, 1996
Paul Chan, 1992
Lucianne Walkowicz, 1996
Zac Posen, 1998
Lena Dunham, 1999
Myla Goldberg, 1981
Audrey Niffenegger, 1981
Thane Rosenbaum, 1976
Rodney Alan Greenblat, 1977
John Lithgow, 1963
Joe DiMaggio, 1979–80
Stephen King, 1965
Audrey Niffenegger, 1981
Donald Lipski, 1965
Myla Goldberg, 1989
Joyce Maynard, 1966–71
Carolyn Forché, 1967
Tom Lichtenheld, 1967
Martin Friedman, 1968
Gary Panter, 1968
Dan Fogelberg, 1969
Erik Madigan Heck, 2002
Kevin Bales, 1970
Tom Otterness, 1970
David Salle, 1970

ALUMNI PROGRAMS

Even after high school, Alumni of the Scholastic Awards are eligible for unique opportunities. The Alumni Microgrant Program provides monetary grants in support of projects in any field of creative inquiry. A Suite of One’s Own, our Alumni Writers Residency, provides time and space to two writers with a five-night stay at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City to further their work.

Both programs are initiatives of the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers Alumni Council. Founded in 2015, the Alumni Council is a select group of writers and artists who advocate for and champion the arts for teenagers in diverse communities across the nation while encouraging other Alumni to remain connected to the program for unique networking opportunities.

To find out more, visit artandwriting.org/alumni-council.
Graduating seniors are invited to reach for our top award: a Gold Medal Portfolio in art and writing. Eight artists and eight writers receive the highest honor from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Gold Medal Portfolios include a $10,000 scholarship for each student.
All That Was Unfamiliar

SHORT STORY

Since they’d left the station two hours ago for the boarding school, the boy watched the window from the train. Outside, as the train churned around a bend, he saw the graffiti factory walls—first, the image of an elephant with octopus tentacles for tusks, then four brightly colored names in bubble letters, then the words forgive me inside a pink heart, then the outline of a suited man in a gas mask—the thickets of redwood trees, and the morning redness that lacquered the sky.

Anything to not look at the woman. Black turtleneck sweater, the same one she’d worn the day she’d taken the baby home. The antelope exhibit. Chipped front tooth. White hairs around right now, you’re making me old.

Down, five, smallest country in the world, the woman said. The boy sat across from her on the brown pleather seats, and the baby lay wrapped in a crocheted blanket on the seat next to her. He watched the woman twirl a pencil between her fingers, the newspaper with the crossword puzzle sprawled on her lap. She had very bony, hard fingers from years of operating a sewing machine at a garment factory. The air smelled of bitter coffee every time the woman set the plastic mug down on the window ledge. She held the mug with both hands wrapped around it as though to warm her fingers.

Vatican City, the boy said. He liked knowing the answers, proving that he’d be more useful to the woman than the baby ever would, but at the same time, he felt bad when he thought this, because the boy realized the baby had no choice, the woman had no choice. She’d said she’d need a few months to save enough money. She had very bony, hard fingers from years of operating a sewing machine at a garment factory. The air smelled of bitter coffee every time the woman set the plastic mug down on the window ledge. She held the mug with both hands wrapped around it as though to warm her fingers.

But all the boy heard was, I can’t have you inside a pink heart, then the outline of a suited man in a gas mask—the thickets of redwood trees, and the morning redness that lacquered the sky.

Since they’d left the station two hours ago for the boarding school, the boy watched the window from the train. Outside, as the train churned around a bend, he saw the graffiti factory walls—first, the image of an elephant with octopus tentacles for tusks, then four brightly colored names in bubble letters, then the words forgive me inside a pink heart, then the outline of a suited man in a gas mask—

Lost in Thought

FLASH FICTION

Kate wearily got out of bed and meandered to her kitchen, where she poured herself a cup of coffee. Sitting at the counter, she reached for the remote and turned on the TV. Chris Cuomo appeared, with the headline underneath: 7.1 Magnitude Argument With Parents.

“Our main story is still Raj’s argument from last night, reaching a magnitude of 7.1.” As Cuomo continued to talk, Kate flipped through the morning paper. She skimmed through a chopper-than-usual “Raj Movie Review” of Wonder Woman, then half-finished reading a noticeably phoned-in editorial piece, “She Stared Back: What It Could Mean,” before looking back up at Chris Cuomo.

“We’re now joined by Kelly Leona. Kelly, are there any new details?”

“A few updates, Chris,” Kelly said. “As mentioned before, Wednesday night’s argument was with both parents, though most of the damage comes from Mom. We have about three fires in the amygdala, and the Writing Major Topic has officially been labeled a seismic danger zone.”

Kate turned the TV off, uninterested. Yes, she was aware that arguments were utter tragedies. But recently, arguments seemed almost like an everyday occurrence.

Since the dawn of College season, things had changed. It started with a lingering bitter wind, persisting through a choppier-than-usual “Raj Movie Review” of Wonder Woman, then half-finished reading a noticeably phoned-in editorial piece, “She Stared Back: What It Could Mean,” before looking back up at Chris Cuomo.

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“She’s on a three-test losing streak!” a man was overheard complaining to his friend.

“There’s just no focus. I mean, averaging Eight Missed Assignments this week? The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
"...the different phases of making ephemeral art, such as the moment of waiting for a material to cure or heat, the anxiety of installation with the uncertainty of the work's survival, and the critical moment when the work comes to a climax." Excerpted from the artist's statement
"What makes the Bronx the Bronx is its toughness and resilience. It’s a place where marginalized groups have planted roots and learned to thrive. The inherent strength and resilience of those who live here are what I strived to capture in this series." Excerpted from the artist’s statement
"With this exploration I was able to listen to my uncle’s stories about going yonder in the pastures to feed the cows. I was able to listen to my grandmother tell me about how proud she is to see her grandchildren grow. I was able to see that they live their own versions of lavish…”

Excerpted from the artist’s statement
Kiosk

POETRY

My birth (brought upon) (came with) the burden of black mortality. Perhaps a visual if the news isn’t enough. Bypass the cemetery and carpool to any mall in America. There between the shopping centers and the food court a shrine to the dead. Custom T-shirt kiosks. Pictures of young black bodies stamped on cotton. Their names, day of delivery and death. And right below, a masked face, a smile between two beautiful lips. A business model based on these principles:

1) the persistent lack of prosecution rather than imprisoning police forces
2) Boys in gang violence. Proving themselves

A second captured in such joy because they never thought they’d end up here. Pinned against the side of a small storefront Batman’s logo sitting above them—perhaps a warning, “Why are you here?”

Their names, day of delivery and death. And right below, a masked face, a smile between two beautiful lips. A business model based on these principles:

1) the persistent lack of prosecution rather than imprisoned police forces
2) Boys in gang violence. Proving themselves—shooting themselves—with guns we never needed.

The poem doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

Shooting Pebbles at the Sun

POETRY

A child, the residue of sweet soda fresh on his lips and streaked across his chest, draws back the crag of rock he found in a shallow pond.

His tongue and body keep still while a truth—not fantasy—travels to his ears, one his grandmother, her mind now peeling away like the bark of birch trees, could not provide. He had asked why his mother’s skin was lighter than his own. Her: the likeness of autumn leaves. His: the complexion of dirt. His grandmother had told him things.

His mother’s absence didn’t mean he was loved less. Mother nature kissed him more than any grandmother had told him things.

The poem doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

In the Orchard

FLASH FICTION

Beneath a raggedy Band-Aid, her bare skin feels nothing but the scratch of cotton and a tap of a leaf now settled upon her right knee. As she perches upon her personal mountain, two strong arms strap her ankles down to earth. She pulls his hair and giggles, squinting through the lazy sunlight of a day half passed. The most luscious green surrounds them, and she quickly thanks God for deciding to put this grass into the ground in just the perfect spot so she could, whenever she desired, look at it, do cartwheels on it, and have picnics with her older sister. Air passes and greets them with a brisk wave that sweeps them, envelops them into the embrace of a yawning Autumn who saunters about the valley. She is still smiling. Such little hands suspend before her almond eyes, and she runs them through her own hair, smiling. Such little hands suspend before her almond eyes, and she runs them through her own hair, wondering why the curly strands falling from her scalp are red and not brown like Daddy’s. So she almost leans down to ask him but catches sudden wonder in a hummingbird zipping by.

Daddy asks, but not at all impatiently, Aren’t you going to pick one? and she is giggling again. She wears a denim dress with the stain of blueberry jam visible not as a blemish but as a treasured brooch. Her almond eyes delicately rest upon well-established colonies of freckles. Sometimes before she goes to sleep, she peers into the mirror and imagines they are stars with their own constellations and myths.

Her right arm raises with the slightest bit of wiggle—just a little baby fat, which Mama assures will go away soon enough. She almost shivers as her naked elbow kisses the afternoon wind. It rests just inches beyond those fingers—just inches. A little heave and stretch and she’s reaching beyond, beyond toward the target she has chosen.

She grasps the sphere and grunts softly as it leaps to her from the tree. And now both hands cradle the jewel in awe. A red without passion, anger, power, or lust—no, simply a red as innocent as the color was intended. Hungrily she stares at the apple as if to devour the fruit in awe. A red without passion, anger, power, or lust—no, simply a red as innocent as the color was intended.

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"My work is my way of processing myself and the world around me, exploring themes of gender, wealth, time, nostalgia, home, and human nature as shown through possessions." Excerpted from the artist’s statement
"Seeing, hearing, and feeling emotions has a unique effect that filmmaking harnesses. This past year, I have been able to learn about so many different people’s lives that, I think if shared, will create that change."

Excerpted from the artist’s statement
Moisture
PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR

At a young age, fear became my mother’s lotion. She made sure to use it daily for the best result and rubbed vigorously to reach dry places. She rubbed every crease in between her fingers and disobedience out of her children. My mother’s favorite brand of fearisturizer was shea butter. She said it smelled like home and reminded her of the villages she had grown up in. She is afraid of the dark and confuses the fear out of her children for respect; she is quick to smack disobedience out of her children. When she is angry, you’ll see a general leading a nation to war; you’ll see veins and hate. My mother is afraid to be weak. She confuses the fear from her children for respect; she is quick to smack with her glycerin-slick fingers.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

She walks like villages should bow at her feet, like African drums played the rhythm of her hips.

The Young Werewolf’s Guide to Adolescence
SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

1. When you are bitten, resist the urge to panic. Spread salve on the wound. Call the hospital.
2. Don’t tell them what you are, at first. Let them figure it out in pieces. When they notice the bite marks, note the full moon outside.
3. When they call your parents, fake a smile. Tell Mom and Dad it was nothing more than the neighbor’s stupid dog, who everybody knows is harmless anyways.
4. Scarf down the uncooked steak in secret, when you get home.
5. For a few more weeks, you will be able to forget. Rub salve in the wounds and wrap them in bandages, take a few days off from school, shrug off your Mom when she fusses. Because you’re fine, really. Right?
6. When the next full moon comes around, excuse yourself from family dinner and retreat to your room. Lock the door. No, barricade the door. Push the chair under the handle, the dresser. Hope it will be enough.
7. Bite a rag when the fangs pop through—to muffle the screaming.
8. You will grow hair and claws. Resist the urge to panic. When you wake up in the morning with scratches and bruises, and notches in your doorframe, pretend not to notice. Splash your face with cold water. Wear a long-sleeved T-shirt.
9. When your mother asks where those bruises came from, say you’ve got no idea.

Telling his family wasn’t an option; he knew that. Werewolves were distant nightmares that lived in scary stories parents told their kids to scare them into good behavior, not in sun-drenched suburbia. They were a normal family, the kind who had dinner together most nights and held barbecues in their backyard during the summer. And he had been a piece of that—not to brag or half bad.

But one late-night werewolf attack later, and suddenly, he didn’t fit into this picture of a perfect family. The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
EMILY SHONK
Grade 12, Age 17, Indian Valley High School, Gnadenhutten, OH.
Sara Dittfeld, Educator; Kent State University at Stark, Affiliate;
Friends of the Alliance Art Portfolio

Berners (below), Scott (facing page, top left), Sternberger (facing page, top center), Ignacio (facing page, top right), Baker (facing page, bottom left), Cretors (facing page, bottom right)
"I am motivated by challenges and an artistic discomfort. I have found that I am the most creative when I am uncomfortable, when faced with invigorating uncertainty and copious possibilities. When speaking, I begin my sentences without knowing how they will end. Art is like that to me. I enjoy its unpredictable potential." Excerpted from the artist's statement.
"What I try to represent in my works is a strong sense of nostalgia. Although the images and places represented are not specifically places that would traditionally be viewed as idyllic, the distressing gives them a sense of history and recalled memory." Excerpted from the artist’s statement
so hard a thin sheen of sweat pooled on his forehead. Tons could be smart enough to trick me, and he laughed when he told me it was a trick of the light. I asked how pho-me it was just a mirage. I asked what a mirage was, and prayed for the Lord to cure my hysteria.

daffodils around her bathtub Madonna. She clutched the tins as serious as death. I told Aunt Bessie as she planted fresh peony and marigolds, as if my neighborhood was the only place that mattered. The trees there were gangly and hunched over, weathered as Old Leon down at the gas station, of my feet. The trees there wereProofers like talons and their bark warped into liver spots. Turn back, they warned. These woods aren’t for little boys. I clinched the camera that hung around my neck and thought of proving them all wrong—Mom and Aunt Bessie and Old Leon down at the gas station—and I walked deeper still, the wind whistling through my skeleton. The crickets gossiped about the boy out of bed. The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

In other words, these were the sort of people who walked past gray dandelions without blowing the seeds, who had never turned over logs in search of salamanders, who believed the Loch Ness Monster was only driftwood and you could catch cold by playing out in the rain. In other words, these were the sort of people who put up with the world instead of living in it. They had forgotten how to hear the voices of mere children.

That night, I slipped through my bedroom window with a blanket, a lantern, and the camera Dad bought me before he died. I shivered in my pajamas as I crossed the damp lawn into the forest. Pine needles nicked the soles of my feet. The trees there were gangly and hunched over, weathered as Old Leon down at the gas station, their branches like talons and their bark warped into liver spots. Turn back, they warned. These woods aren’t meant for little boys.

I clinched the camera that hung around my neck and thought of proving them all wrong—Mom and Aunt Bessie and Old Leon down at the gas station—and I walked deeper still, the wind whistling through my skeleton. The crickets gossiped about the boy out of bed.

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2018 Portfolio and Special Achievement Awards

Through the support of our sponsors, the Scholastic Awards will distribute more than $300,000 in scholarships to students in 2018. Students earning Gold Medal Portfolio, Silver Medal with Distinction Portfolio, and Special Achievement Awards are presented with scholarships to encourage them in their creative journeys.

The students listed on the following pages are all Scholastic Awards scholarship recipients.

Visit artandwriting.org/galleries to view more incredible art and writing. Many writing selections have been shortened. Go to artandwriting.org/galleries to read the full works.
Civic Expression Award

In partnership with the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, the new Civic Expression Award recognizes students whose original art or writing demonstrates civic knowledge and highlights awareness of American civic rights and responsibilities. This Award provides $1,000 scholarships to six students.

2018 Civic Expression Award Recipients:
- Lillian Benkoil, New York, NY
- Evelyn DiSalvo, Atlanta, GA
- Ashley Hajimirsadeghi, Towson, MD
- Sydney Jones, Edgewood, KY
- Rachel Whitbeck, Monticello, NY
- Nathan Zhao, Wayland, MA

The Herblock Award for Editorial Cartoon

The Herblock Award for Editorial Cartoon, sponsored by The Herb Block Foundation, celebrates the legacy of four-time Pulitzer Prize–winning political cartoonist Herb Block. This Award provides $1,000 scholarships to three students.

2018 Herblock Award for Editorial Cartoon Recipients:
- Javier Gutierrez, Burbank, IL
- Joy Han, Corvallis, OR
- Brandon Li, Hicksville, NY

New York Life Award

The New York Life Award, sponsored by the New York Life Foundation, encourages bereaved teens who have personally experienced a loss through the death of a close loved one to create original works that explore their responses to a range of grief and emotion. This Award provides $1,000 scholarships to six students.

2018 New York Life Award Recipients:
- Danielle Antelo, Miami, FL
- Perry Chen, San Diego, CA
- Meghan Hayfield, Saint James, NY
- Emily Holtzman, Charlotte, NC
- Clio Smith, Folsom, CA
- Kendall Vorhis, Goose Creek, SC

The Best-in-Grade Award

The Best-in-Grade Award, sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies, provides an additional opportunity for students to have their work recognized amongst their peers. This Award provides $500 scholarships to twenty-four students and $250 awards to their educators.

Grade 7
- Liam Collins, Villa Hills, KY
- Danielle Hedvig, Valencia, CA
- Daniel Leon, Los Angeles, CA
- Lauren Puryear, Scottsdale, AZ

Grade 8
- Adam Iglesias, Los Angeles, CA
- Kayla Kim, Peachtree Corners, GA
- Keshav Vasanth, Plano, TX
- Estella Zhou, El Cerrito, CA

Grade 9
- Allina Ai, New York, NY
- Jae Ho Kim, Seongnam-si, South Korea
- Joseh Kim, New York, NY
- Noah Trevino, Tampa, FL

Grade 10
- Elinee Corona, South Elgin, IL
- Pamina Falk, Boston, MA
- Pranav Mishra, San Jose, CA
- Isabella Vella, Toronto, Canada

Grade 11
- Daniel Blokh, Birmingham, AL
- Lilah Krugman, Atlanta, GA
- Estee Petukhova, Portland, OR
- Kendall Vorhis, Goose Creek, SC

Grade 12
- Vicky Brown, Greenville, SC
- M.L.E. DeJaco, West Palm Beach, FL
- Sorieba Fofanah, Byfield, MA
- Yliuz Sierra Marin, Cambridge, MA

Special Achievement Awards

Dedicated and generous sponsors of the Scholastic Awards make it possible for us to provide additional recognition and scholarships for select students who receive Gold Medals.

We were pleased to add a brand-new opportunity for students this year—the Civic Expression Award—and to continue our ongoing partnerships with New York Life, The Herb Block Foundation, and Bloomberg Philanthropies.
The Many Faces of Silence

PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR

DANIELLE ANTELO, Grade 12, Age 17, Miami Arts Charter School, Miami, FL. Jen Karetnick and Ariel Lewis, Educators; Miami Writes, Affiliate; Gold Medal, New York Life Award, American Voices Award

Formation

A protein called p53 assesses cells and determines how healthy they are. If too damaged or old, it instructs the cells to kill themselves in order to avoid reproducing an unhealthy cell. If protein p53 is abnormal or inactive, damaged cells continue to live and reproduce, and cancer cells form. Cancer cells grow at an unlimited rate—unlike normal cells, which stop once they’ve fulfilled their purpose—reproducing until they eventually result in a tumor. Cancer cells don’t know boundaries; they lack the ability to stick to one location. They tend to travel through the bloodstream to other parts of the body. Once they arrive in a new region, they continue to grow, forming more tumors. Unlike their hosts, cancer cells are immortal. They have found a way to renew the telomeres that, in normal cells, control lifespan, making them able to effectively avoid death and reproduce infinitely.

My mother was never a quiet person. Her laugh infected the room like a popular opinion; it left you feeling as if you had just heard good news. Her voice danced with its company, a familiar salsa that reminded you it’s important to have fun. However, as we sat in the waiting room, her silence was unapologetic. I linked my breathing to hers, reaching to stay connected. I was trying my best not to focus on her silence; it was a stranger I had no desire to meet. The man behind me coughed once every ninth or tenth breath. By the time the doctor called his name, I was starting to believe I would never hear anything good again. I realized sometimes the noise isn’t worth listening to. I looked at my mother, her mouth slightly opened as if words were trying to slip out; they never did. I was holding her hand, or maybe she was holding mine, I’m not sure. We held tight, not allowing the noise to settle between our palms. I started growing comfortable sharing silence with her. Suddenly, we weren’t in a hospital, we were just silent. We weren’t waiting for news, we weren’t avoiding it, we were just existing in the absence of sound.

Stage I

Breast cancer detected during an early stage can be very effectively treated. In Stage I, the cancer is evident, but confined to the area where the abnormal cells were first discovered. The tumor is about the size of a peanut. Treatment is required immediately to stop growth, and usually involves a combination of surgery and radiation. The survival rate is close to 100 percent.

The first time I ever felt restrained by silence was when my mother told me the cancer had come back. It dripped from her words and formed a puddle at her feet; she seemed unaware of the flood she was creating. Her bedroom floor was struggling to hold the weight of her words. It seemed ready to crack and send us falling four floors, down to the lobby: I stared at her, her eyebrows furrowed and her eyes distant; she couldn’t look at me. She had spread to her kidneys and bones. For months, she had told me it was arthritis. She walked with a limp at first, then with a cane, and then not at all. She had told me it was arthritis. Back then, I didn’t know what had inspired her sudden truthfulness, but now I know it’s because she realized she couldn’t lie forever. Tragedy has the tendency to make you honest. I tried finding anger, but I couldn’t. Tragedy also inspires forgiveness. The silence that separated us that day was bitter. It found its way into my mouth, and prevented me from talking. We were silent for a long time.

Stage II

Stage II breast cancer implies that the tumor is growing but is still confined to the area in which it originally formed. At this stage, the tumor is typically two to five centimeters and has spread to five or fewer lymph nodes. Stage II cancer requires more aggressive treatment than Stage I; however, it typically responds well. The five-year survival rate is 93 percent.

Halloween was always our favorite time of the year. There was something about fictional monsters that made ours seem smaller. We used to walk to Walgreens to rent scary movies, but as I got older and she got sicker, I started walking alone. I don’t know why I expected Halloween to remain unaffected, given the waves of changes we were undergoing, but when she told me she couldn’t go out with me on Halloween night, it felt like betrayal. I looked at her lying on the bed with her peach fuzz hair and her quad cane standing at attention by the corner of the bed, and I was overcome with petty anger. I walked away before she could see it in my eyes. The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
When cartoonist Herb Block died in 2001, he left $50 million to establish a foundation to promote and support the causes he championed during his 72 years of cartooning. The Herb Block Foundation is committed to defending basic freedoms, combating all forms of discrimination and prejudice, and improving the condition of the poor and underprivileged. In addition, the Foundation promotes editorial cartooning and awards scholarships based on financial need to individuals seeking to attend community colleges in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Find out more at herbblockfoundation.org.
Iranian-American

ASHLEY HAJIMIRSADEGH, Grade 12, Age 17, George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology, Towson, MD.

Suzanne Supplee, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal, Civic Expression Award

I was a young girl in post-revolutionary Tehran
And Baba told stories of a land paved
With wands of wheat and poetic Farsi blended with
Rough accented English just like saffron ice cream
There, hijabs weren’t chains
And Allah graced everyone
With dollar bills colored like rainforest leaves;
In this place, we could eat all the lavash we wanted
And our hair could waltz openly with the breeze

We had left Tehran—the only land I’d ever known
In the hazy summer of 1988, right before Supreme Leader
Khomeini had passed away, leaving a legacy
Maman and Baba had whispered condolences
About their decrepit copy of the Qu’ran and condolences
To our nation, which despised Americans
For what they’d done to our country
And how they tried to seize what was left
Of the dry, wispy spirit of the Persians

But when we boarded the first flight to Austria,
Maman sobbed into the windowpane, her
Olive skin flushed to a bronze color; she’d cried
Even more on the connecting flight to America,
Her hazel eyes blooming like flowers in the desert
On the first and only rain they’d seen each year

On my first day of school I remember the
Blonde blue-eyed girls and boys,
My raven hair and crooked nose standing out—
Another reminder
I was a crow among doves, I will never be one of them
But still I sat tall and proud, a Persian lily
That survived through grains of sand
Eating away at its petals

“Where you from?”

English sounded like the vultures
Waiting to ravage my corpse
Among the tribes of northwest Iran,
Where cotton-candy-tipped mountains
Faded to desert and ancestors were buried under
The ever-shifting sands of the Middle East

“Iran.”

First there was a spark to light the wick of the candle
It was an ugly candle, filled with waxy hatred and an
Uncomfortable itch that never went away—
Independence, Freedom, Islam—Death to America!
They recall stories their parents passed down
From times where Iranians were seen
As a liability that needed to be erased
And with a condescending breath,
They always seem to say:

“Go back to your country—you don’t belong here.”

But those who looked at me with enlightened eyes
With burning fires passed from one immigrant to another,
Told me something special
That drenched the desert of my heart:

“You’re an American now.”
2018 BEST-IN-GRADE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Bloomberg Philanthropies

DANIELLE HEDVIG. Reflection (facing, page top), Mixed Media. Grade 7, Age 12, Rancho Pico Junior High School, Valencia, CA. Micayla Frankian, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

ESTER PETUKHOVA. Aditi (above), Painting. Grade 11, Age 16, David Douglas High School, Portland, OR. Marta Galati, Educator; Oregon Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

PAMINA FALK. Famine (below), Film & Animation. Grade 10, Age 15, Commonwealth School, Boston, MA. Walter Crump, Educator; School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award
ISABELLA VELLA, Old Honey, Painting. Grade 10, Age 15, Etobicoke School of the Arts, Toronto, Canada. Matthew Varey, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

LILAH KRUGMAN, Sexual Assault: What Were You Wearing?, Photography. Grade 11, Age 17, Paideia School, Atlanta, GA. Holly White, Educator; Savannah College of Art and Design, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

KAYLA KIM, Groceries, Painting. Grade 8, Age 13, Wesleyan School, Peachtree Corners, GA. Yoonhee Chung, Educator; Savannah College of Art and Design, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award
JAE HO KIM, Dried Out (above), Painting. Grade 9, Age 15, Korea International School, Pangyo Campus, Seongnam-si, South Korea. Kyung Ju Kwon, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

ADAM IGLESIAS, Billy Virus (below), Film & Animation. Grade 8, Age 13, Larchmont Charter School at Lafayette Park, Los Angeles, CA. Carly Short, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

DANIEL LEON, Phobetor Comic (facing page), Comic Art. Grade 7, Age 12, Mark Twain Middle School, Los Angeles, CA. Michael Jasorka, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award
Where I’m From

LIAM COLLINS, Grade 7, Age 13, Villa Madonna High School, Villa Hills, KY, Brian Rapie, Educator; Northern Kentucky Writing Region, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

I am from life, a hilly terrain of doubt, and the story that I create. I am from the floorboards, groaning, scratched, and tinted with age. I am from the small puddles of rain after a storm, just waiting in my driveway to be splashed by my hand-me-down galoshes. I am from the heavy, humid air of a Kentucky summer, whose branches I would climb as a child with my brothers and sister. I’m from French Toast Casserole and boisterous talk from crazy Uncle Bill to sweet Cousin Charlotte, from the comedians to the doctors, and everything in between. I’m from the “Why hellowooooooos!” and the “Holy Toledos!” from the simple yet powerful word of “no” to the lecture of, “If they jumped off a bridge, would you do it too?” I’m from the different prayers driven deep into my head. I’m from the death of my grandfather and the birth of my newest cousin. The broken toys whose pieces are long gone and the old graded papers my mom keeps. I am the sibling who broke the pattern. A speck of black on a white canvas.

Notice

POETRY

KENDALL VORHIS, Grade 11, Age 17, Goose Creek High School, Goose Creek, SC, Nicholas Gaey, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

Notice:

My brain stole my bike, pedaled it to a gas station reeking of fish bait and bad decisions, hummed a pack of Camels from a lost businessman, and has since been on the run with a stolen pair of Ray Bans. The bike is blue with a wicker basket. It ticks and hums and has a naggy chain that creaks when it rains and feels like the fastest damned thing you’d ever set your assets on—the handles grip like a widow to a photograph, and the wheels: plump with summer days spent exploring and school nights filled with artful rebellion. This bike, you see, is vital to my well-being.

My brain . . . has seen better days. It’s got a few scars on its amygdala from a lost fight with logic and hasn’t had a drop of serotonin in years—cold turkey.

I’ve told it there’s no shame in being happy, or in feeling at all, but, stubbornly, my brain keeps up its walls.

My brain hasn’t been the same, really. In all honesty, I could do without. It does nothing but cause me a worsening, dull ache, so, should you cross paths with such a spiteful heist, tell it to forget my skull and take a hike. I no longer want to see it, no longer want to feel it rot in my head as it brings me closer to the edge—

I know nothing in this world makes sense, but why should I have to live with a soiled excuse for consciousness?

The poem doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

The River of Ash

SHORT STORY

PRANAV MISHRA, Grade 10, Age 15, Lynbrook High School, San Jose, CA, Connie Wilson, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

On the day I am to meet my husband for the first time, it is positively sweltering. The sun feels the need to proclaim its importance in the sky; blazing with a bewildering intensity like a coin left on hot pavement. My war-kameez clings tightly to my skin, the layer of sweat dripping from my face. She wears a shawl tightly around her face now in public, a grin. “Just thinking about what the house will be like once you’re gone.”

It is hard to concentrate on what she is saying. I bounce the rolling pin against the table, drumming my fingers absently on the cheap Formica. Her gaze shifts to the window, toward the bleeding river Ganga, bruised by the light of the sun. The chai stall does have a fan, but it’s a clunky old thing—

It’s got a few scars on its amygdala from a lost fight with logic and I have the most unpleasant urge to use the toilet.

“What would you like to have, madam-ji?” I look up. I heard a distant sobbing from Papa’s old study by the dining room. Papa was only five the day she was attacked. Of course, I remember Mama and Papa’s 12th birthday, the last before Ma died. I remember Ma had tried her best to make that happen, though, not on a day like this. In all honesty, I could do without. It does nothing but cause me a worsening, dull ache, so, should you cross paths with such a spiteful heist, tell it to forget my skull and take a hike.

She places her arm on mine, as though to mock me. I flinch.

My twelfth birthday was the first one after Ma and Papa divorced. I remembered Ma had tried her best to make that one memorable—she invited all my classmates from the convent and bought me a breathtakingly lovely dress for the occasion, woven from sleek, diaphanous fibber. Before the guests came, though, there was still one more thing left to be done.

I had found Rashi playing with her dolls in the garden under a mesh of bougainvillea. She had laid out a towel like a picnic cloth, and had assembled all the stuffed animals that existed in our household, although most of them had been brutally injured by the servant’s cat. Disgusted, I marched up to her with a fierce stride and tossed her over my shoulder as though she were a backpack.

“What are you doing, didi?” she shrieked. “I told you to stay out of the way, Rashi!” I said through clenched teeth. What would everyone say if they saw her? The rooms by Papa’s old office were deserted. After he moved out, they had fallen into disuse. The type-writers coughed up little clouds of dust, and the walls spilled over with thousands of fraying, leather-bound law books.

“This room should do fine,” I said. I shrugged her off my shoulder and then bolted out of the room to lock the door before she could realize what I was doing.

“Didi?” Her little, squeaky voice had a telltale twist of panic through the keyhole. “Didi! Let me out! Let me out or else I’ll tell Mama! Didi? Did? Are you there?”

In the end, the party was decent. I was lavished with gifts, which included stacks of comics, shiny hairclips, and a new bicycle that winked with a lustrous gloss. If that weren’t enough, Ma had bought two massive cakes from the expensive bakery in Civil Lines—tall, elegantly dressed in icing, practically oozing the fragrance of butter and cream. It was almost too much for the fact that I heard a distant sobbing from Papa’s old study by the time the party was over.

“He’s late,” says Rashi. I tell myself that this is a bad sign, a terrible sign. In spite of the heat, a chill issue from the depths of my chest and I shudder. Maybe it would be better if he didn’t come at all, so that I could peel myself away from this misfortune and none of it would be my fault. From the mosque across the street, the midday namsaz hums through loudspeakers into the sky. The drone of the words bounces back and forth between my brain and my skull, so rapidly that I think I almost pass out. I can’t let that happen, though, not on a day like this.

Rashi was only five the day she was attacked. Of course, I was fortunate enough not to see it, but Shefali mausi, who worked at the hair salon, did. As most women in...
12 Steps on How to Bake a Cake

POETRY

NOAH TREVINO, Grade 9, Age 14, Howard W. Blake High School, Tampa, FL. Casey Curry, Educator, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Affiliate, Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

I Grab your ingredients at the nearby store. Don’t bring your wallet with you because you won’t need it.

II Drive the old woman’s car to your house to begin baking the cake.

III Grab a bowl and pour into it the old blood sitting in the freezer.

IV Add 3 drops of your former spouse’s tears. Make sure the tears were from a time of betrayal and manipulation.

V Crack into the bowl Ra’s heart, Shiva’s eye, Ba’s nose, and Zeus’s brain. Mix the ingredients thoroughly.

VI Before placing the batter into the tray, yell at it very loudly “I’m pregnant” or “I’m not gay” or “God isn’t real.” Then, place the tray of batter into the oven.

VII Turn up the heat to the highest temperature the oven can go. The cake will taste better if burnt.

VIII As the cake bakes, rip out more pages from the book your grandma gave you on Sunday. You’re almost to 400 pages dumped into the recycle bin.

IX Take the cake out of the oven. If the cake failed to burn, use the melted candle from your bedroom to try to engulf the cake in flames.

X Before digging into the cake, go to the pantry and grab the can of sprinkles. You remember Mr. Inferno giving it to you when you were born. You’ve had it ever since.

XI Sprinkle the can over the top of the cake. It will give the cake its fiery kick.

XII Grab a fork and dig in. When eating, you will feel guilty. You will feel something, like as if you’ve disappointed someone. You’ll eventually ignore the feeling and continue to eat your devilish dessert.

Your Hands

(dedicated to the 43 million immigrants who now live in America)

POETRY

ESTELLA ZHOU, Grade 8, Age 13, Prospect Sierra Middle School, El Cerrito, CA. Rituant Manhoff, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

I memorized your hands. The way you knit them together like the faint wrinkles above your brow, as if your fingers only have each other to console, the way your thumbs feel when I grip them in my fists, muscled but fragile.

The skin on your palms is fertile soil, plowed and tilled and furrowed, rich but spoil’d like that far-off place from which you came, China. It is a wasteland from which flowers sprang, engorged in your sweat, where crops managed to plunge their roots deep into the earth, into you, sucking in nutrients from your life. The worms and insects explore the deep of your past, A childhood, hazy with time, spent catching cicadas on heavy summer nights, Reciting verses of propaganda of the Culture Revolution, watching barges carrying salt, spices, oranges up the Grand Canal, A childhood, so far off.

The creases in your skin are where the rivers carved through the land, threads of blue in embroidered silks of green, and the place right below your index finger where they all meet is the delta where thousands of streams join into one, thundering, crashing toward the sea, over which you flew to come to America, that strange, wonderful place that filled you with the fresh hope that only comes with youth.

Your nails are the roofs of thousands of villages and cities, shelters you built from your bones, from your fragmented shards of remembrance of the villages of your childhood. You pieced together the shards painstakingly, one at a time, until there was a cracked mirror again, but when you looked through it from America back to China, everything was the same and yet it was all different and strange and unplaceable. The sounds and colors and culture were foreign. The people were foreign. You were foreign. You thought the word foreign so much that even it felt foreign on your tongue, sour and bitter like overfermented rice liquor. When you tell me stories of your beginnings, the word found a way into your mind, until even your memories seemed distant.

Your old words tumbled from your mouth like vomit, But they were the sweetest thing you had tasted. You wish that they would become tasteless again like they once were, but they are only so because you have forgotten them. You do not remember your old tongue And your hands shake on the page as you struggle but fail to recall the words, but you do not know your new tongue enough To keep your new words from blurring with accent.

So I studied your hands. I felt the way they contorted with every crevice, the way they slacken after each mountain, how they mold the lines that wear through you and the valleys that have been engraved into your bones. I tried to see the country that was etched into your hands, and here I am, still trying so hard because I know that one day when you’re gone, all that will be left are your hands, two empty palms and ten fingers, drifting like tattered flags in the wind of everything you had seen.
Curandera in the 21st Century
PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR
YLUZ SIERRA MARIN, Grade 12, Aya 17, Buckingham Browne Nichols High School, Cambridge, MA. Allison Korner, Educator; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal, Best-in-Grade Award

Exploring my grandmother’s house in Colombia was always an adventure. You never knew what homemade magical potion you would find hidden in the old, wooden china cabinet or inside the dark drawers of her bureau. Tall glass jars held thick liquids, foul-smelling creams filled dusty metal canisters, miniscule bottles with black glass droppers contained precious ointments. I was intrigued by the mysterious concoctions, but I never dared to touch any of them out of fear that human fat or blood would be among the ingredients.

My grandmother laughed at my allegations and assured me that the burgundy liquid on the shelf was simply a concentrated mixture of rose petals and red vinegar for toning her skin. In my mind, it was still human blood.

My grandmother kept her favorite potion beside her bed. The ancient, glass Coca-Cola bottle contained whiskey, spearmint, and cinnamon sticks that were thick like a bricklayer’s fingers. It stood tall, guarding her against the evil forces that flew at night. Whenever I slept over, my grandmother would begin her ritual. She would gently tuck me in beside her, reach for her rosary beads and Coca-Cola bottle on the nightstand, quickly tilt the bottle to let out a small amount of liquid, soak my face, neck, and arms with it, and apply the potion to her own face and body. Content with the holy fluid, I would lie in healing creams and her attempts to peer into the future, since I did not want to believe that there was something slightly off about my own grandmother, but in the back of my mind, I was slightly curious about the origins of these unusual practices.

As I got older and learned more about the pre-colonial culture of indigenous peoples in Colombia, I realized that I did not have a “crazy” grandmother. She was just honoring the traditions that had been passed down generation to generation. At a time with no vaccines, no antibiotics, and no painkillers, native communities had priests called chamanes, who were responsible for brewing remedial potions from plants. In the 16th century, chamanes used their herbal medicine to attempt to cure the indigenous peoples of the diseases that the Spanish conquistadors had brought with them. As the Spanish colonized South America and forcefully converted the natives into Catholics throughout the following centuries, those indigenous tribal doctors became curanderos. A new generation of healers emerged, and among them was my great-grandmother. She claimed that she had healed countless frail children with her remedial creams and baths. Her most successful case was her own granddaughter, who had suffered from polio as a child. Most children who suffer from polio require crutches in order to walk for the rest of their lives; however, my great-grandmother claims that bathing my aunt with the broth of a cow’s poll alleviated her condition and allowed her to walk with just a slight limp.

The recipe for this remedy was passed down another generation to my grandmother, who for months after my birth nagged my parents until they allowed her to bathe me in this broth. It is believed that bathing the child with the broth of a cow’s poll strengthens him and shields him from any future harm. So when I was one year old—before my baptism, the traditional Catholic ceremony—a baby is cleansed from original sin—I participated in a ceremony that might have come from the chamanes of the indigenous tribes half a millennium ago. In my grandmother’s mind, I was Achilles in the River Styx, protected and invigorated by the bath.

In reality, it is unlikely that the broth bath was the sole reason for my improved health, and it simply made me an excessively greasy baby for the rest of the week. It is more likely that the modern medicines and treatments were what actually cured my aunt’s polio. However, in a constantly changing world in which traditions are being left in the past, it is important to value the teachings of the previous generations and embrace our history before it is lost forever.

NATIONAL AWARDS
Exemplary students receive Gold, Silver, and American Vision and Voices Medals in 29 categories of art and writing.

Students receive a Silver Medal with Distinction Portfolio Award for an art or writing portfolio presenting exceptional work at the Silver Medal level. These students are awarded a $1,000 scholarship.

Visit artandwriting.org/galleries to view more incredible art and writing. Many writing selections have been shortened. Go to artandwriting.org/galleries to read the full works.
ZOE BARTHELEMY, Mind on Repeat (facing page), Drawing & Illustration. Grade 12, Age 17, Lusher Charter School, New Orleans, LA. Kyle Sirman, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

ANDREW BOYNTON, Hemlock (above), Photography. Grade 12, Age 18, Harrison School for the Arts, Lakeland, FL. Beth Garcia, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

JENNA BELLONBY, The Strength Within Her (below), Photography. Grade 11, Age 17, Milford High School, Milford, OH. Christopher Luessen, Educator; Art Academy of Cincinnati, Affiliate; Gold Medal
CAROLINE BRODT, Paint by Number (facing page). Photography. Grade 12, Age 17, Barnstable High School, Hyannis, MA. Matt Kemp, Educator; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

BAILEY BUNICK, Baboon in a Sunny Room (above). Painting. Grade 12, Age 17, Lake Oswego High School, Lake Oswego, OR. Katherine Brink, Educator; Oregon Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal

JACK BROOKS, Guy with Really Long Limbs in Underwear (right). Drawing & Illustration. Grade 11, Age 17, Eldorado High School, Albuquerque, NM. Sheldon Richards, Educator; New Mexico Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal

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AUDREY DE LUCIA, *June* (facing page), Painting, Grade 10, Age 15, Everest Academy Manila, Taguig, Philippines.

Alphaliza Quinto, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

LUCIE COOPER, *Sunshine Devia* (above left), Drawing & Illustration, Grade 11, Age 17, Mississippi School of the Arts, Brookhaven, MS. Kelly Varner, Educator; Mississippi Museum of Art, Affiliate; Gold Medal

YADIRA DIAZ, *Estresada* (above right), Painting, Grade 12, Age 17, Goshen High School, Goshen, IN. Cynthia Cooper, Educator; South Bend Museum of Art, Affiliate; Silver Medal

SHANNON FERRARI, *Bloom* (right), Mixed Media, Grade 12, Age 17, Lampeter-Strasburg High School, Lampeter, PA. Scott Cantrell, Educator; Lancaster Museum of Art, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction
ARIANA FONTANEZ, Manuel (facing page), Photography. Grade 9, Age 14, Chicago High School of the Arts, Chicago, IL. Eileen Mueller, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Silver Medal.

CHLOE JUNG, Through the Car Window (above), Painting. Grade 7, Age 12, Tenakill Middle School, Closter, NJ. Han Jong Lee, Educator; Montclair Art Museum, Affiliate; Gold Medal.

VALERIE DEHONNET, Mentor (left), Painting. Grade 12, Age 17, Brockton High School, Brockton, MA. Erin DeSimone, Educator; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal.

Visit artandwriting.org/galleries to view more incredible art and writing.
IRENE LEE, Reflections (facing page, top), Painting. Grade 9, Age 14, Jericho Senior High School, Jericho, NY. Jiyong Park, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

LOLA HAKIM, On the Go Part 1 (facing page, bottom), Photography. Grade 10, Age 15, Crossroads School, Santa Monica, CA. Janice Gomez, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

GWYNETH GRAVADOR, Pile (above), Mixed Media. Grade 11, Age 17, Stuyvesant High School, New York, NY. Sun Young Kim and Hirah Park, Educators; NYC Scholastic Awards, Affiliate; Gold Medal

MONICA CHANG, Shallow (below), Painting. Grade 12, Age 17, North Gwinnett High School, Suwanee, GA. Yvette Kim, Educator; Savannah College of Art and Design, Affiliate; Gold Medal
JOSAPHINE LADAO. Smoke and a Haircut (facing page), Photography. Grade 12, Age 17, Leilehua High School, Wahiawa, HI. Keith Sasada, Educator; Hawai‘i State Department of Education, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

TAD GREENWALD. Composition 6 (above), Drawing & Illustration. Grade 12, Age 18, Lovejoy High School, Allen, TX. Brice McCasland, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction
STEPHANIE LOPEZ, Imprint (facing page), Photography. Grade 12, Age 17, Lambert High School, Suwanee, GA. Kimberley D’Allen, Educator; Savannah College of Art and Design, Affiliate; Gold Medal.

KATIE GOLDENBERG, Close the Gap (above), Editorial Cartoon sponsored by The Herb Block Foundation. Grade 11, Age 16, Horace Mann School, Bronx, NY. Chidi Asoluka, Educator; NYC Scholastic Awards, Affiliate; Gold Medal.

JACKSON FYFE, Triple Bellied Green Crystalline Bottle (right), Ceramics & Glass. Grade 17, Age 12, Newton South High School, Newton Centre, MA. Jeffrey Wixon, Molly Baring-Gould, and Abygale Choi, Educators; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal.

Visit artandwriting.org/galleries to view more incredible art and writing.
APRIL LEE, Of Weasels and Chickens: Episodes Five and Six (top), Film & Animation. Grade 11, Age 16, The Nightingale-Bamford School, New York, NY. Sarah Ellis, Educator; NYC Scholastic Awards, Affiliate; Gold Medal

MAXWELL WOLFE, Out Back (facing page, bottom), Painting. Grade 11, Age 17, Gettysburg Area High School, Gettysburg, PA. Amy Thrush-Dreves, Educator; Commonwealth Charter Academy, Affiliate; Gold Medal

MICHAEL PRACE. A Miserable Victory (above), Photography. Grade 11, Age 16, Mountain Vista High School, Highlands Ranch, CO. Kristin Johnson, Educator; Colorado Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal
MAX MCGUINNIS, Self-Portrait (facing page). Drawing & Illustration. Grade 10, Age 16, Wauwatosa East High School, Wauwatosa, Wi. Molly Brennan, Educator; The Milwaukee Art Museum, Affiliate; Gold Medal

LIBBY MACKIN, Recreation of Egon Schiele’s “Self Portrait with Hands on Chest” (above left). Photography. Grade 10, Age 15, Mountain Vista High School, Highlands Ranch, CO. Kristin Johnson, Educator; Colorado Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal

ENRIQUE MARTINEZ, Adios (above right). Painting. Grade 11, Age 16, Grand Island Senior High School, Grand Island, NE. Jerome Dubas, Educator; Omaha Public Schools Art Department, Affiliate; Gold Medal

NATHAN GRIFFITH, At a Breaking Point (left). Sculpture. Grade 12, Age 17, Hamilton Southeastern High School, Fishers, IN. Dan Moosbrugger, Educator; Clowes Memorial Hall, Butler Arts Center and Hossar Writing Project at IUPUI, Affiliate; Gold Medal
DANIEL LEMKE, Girl in Pink (facing page), Painting. Grade 11, Age 17, Saint Mary’s Hall, San Antonio, TX. Logan Blanco, Educator; SAY Sí (San Antonio Youth Yes), Affiliate; Gold Medal

KITTITHAT KAEWSAWANG, After Death, Photography. Grade 10, Age 16, Kent School, Kent, CT. Curtis Scofield, Educator; Connecticut Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal
EMMA ORFIELD JOHNSTON, Island (above), Photography. Grade 12, Age 17, Perpich Center for Arts Education, Golden Valley, MN. Rebecca Bullen, Educator; Art Educators of Minnesota, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

NATALIA POTERYAKHIN, Thaw (below), Film & Animation. Grade 12, Age 17, Wayzata High School, Plymouth, MN. Lea Anne Jasper, Educator; Art Educators of Minnesota, Affiliate; Gold Medal

YUNJIN LEE, The Blend of Cultures (facing page), Painting. Grade 11, Age 16, Tenafly High School, Tenafly, NJ. Yoon Jeun Kim, Educator; Montclair Art Museum, Affiliate; Gold Medal
MORIAH ROLAND, Night Out (above), Drawing & Illustration. Grade 9, Age 14, Power APAC, Jackson, MS. Martha Hamburg, Educator; Mississippi Museum of Art, Affiliate; Gold Medal, American Visions Medal

LINDSEY POTOFF, Jimmy, Don't Watch This Part (below), Comic Art. Grade 12, Age 17, The Jean and Samuel Frankel Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit, West Bloomfield, MI. Alyssa Baron-Klask, Educator; College for Creative Studies, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

JESSE COCKERHAM, Nassau (facing page, top), Painting. Grade 12, Age 17, West Forsyth High School, Clemmons, NC. Nathan Newsome, Educator; Barton College, Affiliate; Gold Medal

ADAM RODRIGUEZ, Inverted Vehicle (facing page, bottom), Photography. Grade 11, Age 16, Center Grove High School, Greenwood, IN. Jacquelyn Fowler, Educator; Clowes Memorial Hall, Butler Arts Center and Hoosier Writing Project at IUPUI, Affiliate; Gold Medal
AU DRE Y LEN DVAY, Digital Hostage (facing page), Mixed Media. Grade 8, Age 14, Lavilla School of Arts, Jacksonville, FL.
Cheryl Lunger, Educator; Northeast Florida Art Education Association, Affiliate; Gold Medal

CAROLINE SENYSZYN, Georgie (top), Photography. Grade 12, Age 17, Arlington Heights High School, Fort Worth, TX.
Cheryl Evans-Rogers, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

KATHRYN TREACY, A Girl and Her Two Best Friends (bottom), Photography. Grade 11, Age 17, American Heritage School, Plantation, FL. Teresa Smith, Educator; Young at Art Museum, Affiliate; Gold Medal
XIAOTIAN SHANGGUAN, One with Nature, Painting. Grade 7, Age 12, Wilmette Junior High School, Wilmette, IL. Paige Lunde, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

HENRY SHIELD, February Calendar (facing page), Design. Grade 11, Age 16, Niles North High School, Skokie, IL. Melissa Connell, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal
MINKYONG SONG, Monologue (facing page), Painting. Grade 12, Age 18, McLean High School, McLean, VA. Swapna Elias and Ju Yun, Educators; Fairfax County Public Schools, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

JERRY XIA, Express Café (top), Architecture & Industrial Design. Grade 8, Age 14, Pierce Middle School, Grosse Pointe Park, MI. Jane Plieth, Susan Quinn, and Geneva Scully, Educators; College for Creative Studies, Affiliate; Gold Medal

EMILY STEWARD, The Patient Few (bottom), Painting. Grade 12, Age 17, Whitmer High School, Toledo, OH. Matthew Squibb, Educator; Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Affiliate; Gold Medal
JULIA TALBOT, Moon Kingdom, Comic Art. Grade 12, Age 18, Medford High School, Medford, MA. Candace Van Aken, Educator; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal

THANH THAI, A Primate’s Wrath (facing page), Drawing & Illustration. Grade 11, Age 17, Scripps Ranch High School, San Diego, CA. Anna Brady, Educator; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Silver Medal

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KENNED Thomas, Two Cakes (facing page, top), Painting. Grade 11, Age 17, Stivers School for the Arts, Dayton, OH.
Julie Anderson and Elizabeth Whips, Educators; K12 Gallely & TEJAS, Affiliate; Gold Medal

CAMILLE VolK, Water Bottles (facing page, bottom), Drawing & Illustration. Grade 12, Age 18, Revere High School, Richfield, OH. Robert Pierson, Educator; Kent State University at Stark, Affiliate; Silver Medal with Distinction

SOPHIE THOMPSON, Grasping the Cup - Study 3 (above), Printmaking. Grade 8, Age 13, Bromfield School, Harvard, MA.
Cynthia Harris, Educator; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, All Black Everything (left), Jewelry. Grade 12, Age 18, Southfield High School for the Arts & Technology, Southfield, MI. Jaclyn Hamilton, Educator; College for Creative Studies, Affiliate; Gold Medal; American Visions Medal
SEUNGWON LEE, *Old Bus* (above), Painting. Grade 10, Age 15, Chattahoochee High School, Alpharetta, GA. Yoonhee Chung, Educator; Savannah College of Art and Design, Affiliate; Gold Medal

ZACHARY WILSON, *Delta ARC - Beginnings* (below), Video Game Design. Grade 11, Age 16, South County High School, Lorton, VA. Robert Christie, Educator; Fairfax County Public Schools, Affiliate; Gold Medal

MARGEAUX GOULD, *Sunday Morning* (facing page), Sculpture. Grade 12, Age 17, Academy of the Holy Angels, Demarest, NJ. Christine Wrage DeGennaro, Educator; Montclair Art Museum, Affiliate; Gold Medal
RAYMOND UNDERWOOD, Pensive (above), Photography. Grade 12, Age 17, Henry Ford Academy; School for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI. Mara Magyarosi-Laytner, Educator; College for Creative Studies, Affiliate; Silver Medal

RACHEL TUPLER, Shelter from the Storm (left), Sculpture. Grade 10, Age 16, NSU University School, Davie, FL. Melanie Cohen, Educator; Young at Art Museum, Affiliate; Gold Medal

JUNHAN ZENG, Lost Children (facing page, top), Mixed Media. Grade 12, Age 19, Home School, Lexington, MA. Daniella Coenen, Educator; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Affiliate; Gold Medal

VIVIAN ZHU, The Perfect Doll (facing page, bottom), Mixed Media. Grade 10, Age 15, Sentinel Secondary School, West Vancouver, Canada. Tracy Chiu, Heng Guan, and Yue Ying Wu, Educators; Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal
Every three weeks for the past two years, I’ve gone to the same support group. I rarely miss a meeting. I wake up early on those Saturday mornings, and one of my parents drives me for almost forty-five minutes to a school in the city. There, I walk up to the familiar second-story classroom, where the facilitators have pushed aside the tables and made a circle of chairs in the center of the room. Sitting in these chairs are kids middle school to college-aged, many with bleached or colorfully dyed hair, wearing outfits that some of them might not be allowed to wear every day. When the group starts, we go around the circle and introduce ourselves with our names and pronouns—typically, the pronouns are he, she, they, or sometimes a combination. Then we get to talk about what’s bothering us: family problems, school stress, anxiety, and the people who argue with us about our genders.

In this support group, I get to talk to dozens of other transgender people who know what I’m going through. These are the kids who have helped me through my journey of realizing that I’m nonbinary. Nonbinary is an umbrella term for genders that fall outside of male and female, which constitute the “gender binary.” There are more specific nonbinary genders, such as bigender, genderfluid, and agender, but I just identify as nonbinary. It took me a while to come to that conclusion—15 years, to be precise—because I, like most people, grew up with the assumption that there are only two genders. But there are probably a million genders, some of which don’t even have words to describe them yet. However, there are many people who don’t believe this. Some argue that there are only two genders, and that these new-fangled identities are made up by young people who just want to feel special, or identify themselves as “other.” Countless people think this way—parents, politicians, even some binary transgender people. But nonbinary people won’t stop existing just because there are people who think that nonbinary genders are fake. They’re real, and they’re here to stay.

Let’s start with a basic biology lesson. In school, we’re taught that there are two genders, and that each gender has certain traits associated with it. Females have XX chromosomes, estrogen as their main hormone, and a reproductive system including a vagina, uterus, ovaries, etc. Males have XY chromosomes, testosterone as their main hormone, and a reproductive system that includes a penis, testes, etc. However, in humans there is much more variation regarding sex, and there is also sometimes a disconnect between sex and gender. For example, a transgender girl’s technical sex is male, but she’s still a girl because that’s how she identifies her gender. A nonbinary person’s sex could also be male, but their gender is still nonbinary if that’s what they say their gender is.

There is a third, very broad category for sex known as intersex. The term “hermaphrodite” used to be used for these people; the term was coined from a Greek myth where a male child of Aphrodite and Hermes merged bodies with a nymph, making them one androgynous being. The Intersex Society of North America explains that while this term was used clinically in the past, “the mythological term ‘hermaphrodite’ implies that a person is both fully male and fully female. This is a physiologic impossibility. The words ‘hermaphrodite’ and ‘pseudo-hermaphrodite’ are stigmatizing and misleading words.” Currently, the word “intersex” is considered the correct way to describe this condition. People who are intersex can have any number of variations in their chromosomes, genitalia, hormones, and reproductive organs.

But nonbinary people won’t stop existing just because there are people who think that nonbinary genders are fake. They’re real, and they’re here to stay.
Assassination in the Name of a Sweet Soup

CRITICAL ESSAY

JENNY HAN, Grade 11, Age 16, Langley High School, McLean, VA.
Scott Barycki, Educator, Writopia Lab D.C., Affiliate, Gold Medal

Imagine that a small baby bird in a nest is watching as a scary stranger grabs its mommy; the innocent fowl sits and waits for its caretaker, who will never return. Numerous ethnicities, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and many more, often consume a treasured delicacy known as bird’s nest soup, a special dish that requires birds to be captured or killed for their spit. This trend originated from a Chinese myth, stating that one of the Chinese’s supreme gods feasted on bird’s nest soup, believing it would bring him longevity and great health. This wondrous tale initiated this craze for the rare soup by the Chinese, and the trend has rubbed off on its neighboring countries, as well as other cultures. Throughout the years, predominantly Asian communities have been eating this expensive delicacy that contains solidified bird saliva, collected from various birds and their nests. Though many people enjoy this tasty treat and see it as one of the most exotic dishes, the process of making this soup is more catastrophic than one can imagine.

Many individuals eat unusual kinds of food. They think that these dishes will yield delightful results, satisfying individuals with their special needs and wants. Most consumers eat bird’s nest soup believing that it is nutritious. As a result of these beliefs, consumers name this dish as special “white gold.” Consuming “white gold” will help to prevent certain illnesses. Some women are in their way of extracting the saliva. Though there are few left in the wild, reducing the number of these nests left with few primitive swiflets remaining. Bird’s nest farming has become something of a boom industry across the region.” (Twilley) When harvesting the saliva, human hands have handled the nests and the mommy birds can smell that their nests have been intruded upon. They will abandon the babies in the nest, leaving them to starve to death. Other times, the intruders will merely toss the hatchlings away if they are in their way of extracting the saliva. Though there have been ideas and practices of making synthetic nests, customers want the real deal, yearning for the “white gold” coming from wild nests. Selfish humans have been the cause of the decrease in swiflets’ population.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

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Ratings, Profits, and Fear: How a 41-Year-Old Film Predicted the Role of the Media in the 21st Century

CRITICAL ESSAY

BRIAN KIM, Grade 11, Age 16, Langley High School, McLean, VA.
Scott Barycki, Educator, Writopia Lab D.C., Affiliate, Gold Medal

In 1976, a film called Network focused on the idea of the American media manipulating the news for the sake of ratings. It tells the story of Howard Beale, a news anchor for a failing television broadcasting company named UBS. The network’s news program is struggling to compete with the major news corporations of the time—ABC, NBC, and CBS—and eventually decides to fire Beale. On that same night, Beale announces that he will kill himself on the evening news. Consequently, UBS’s network experiences a ratings spike, and soon, UBS decides to exploit Beale’s rants instead of pulling him off the air. In many of Beale’s rants, he criticizes how Americans choose to remain ignorant of the flaws of their society and watch their television.

Forty-one years later, the movie’s message is more relevant than ever. The abundance of mass media in our world has only caused more confusion rather than the actual enlightenment of viewers. Network predicted this chaotic world in the seventies. But if we saw this coming, why hasn’t this situation changed after over forty years? What’s to blame?

There are three contributory factors: ratings, profits, and fear.

There is no question that the media is driven by ratings. Howard Beale... has become something of a distinction that many Americans fail to realize: what people need to know versus what people want to know. James Surowiecki attributes this as “crowd-based decisions” in his book, The Wisdom of Crowds. He describes how crowds have the ability to be wise but can also be irrational. The very generalized reason for this is that humans are not rational. We cannot always have the ability to filter all of the knowledge we hear and effectively apply it to our lives. For example, crowds may have the ability to guess the price of an item at a restaurant but are poor at determining the quality of that food because many other factors cloud their judgment. People feel the need to follow other people’s ideas because of peer pressure, copy other people’s opinions instead of thinking on their own, and maintain the status quo in order to prevent the possibility of becoming an outcast. (Surowiecki) This leaves an important question: What does the news believe the crowd wants to watch?

The answer is negativity. In particular, psychologist Tom Stafford claims, we may be drawn to stories filled with sadness. In a 2014 BBC article, he references a study done at McGill University that found people gravitated toward articles and news stories with a negative connotation. One interpretation is that people truly believe that “the world is rosier than it actually is.” Many Americans believe that their lifestyle is better than average and as a result, they believe that good will always prevail and bad will be vanquished. Stafford says: “This pleasant view of the world makes bad news all the more surprising and salient. It is only against a light background that the dark spots are highlighted.” In other words, we need the bad stories to make us feel better about ourselves. It is a common human psychological urge to feel exceptional.

We “find negativity irresistible because it is so anomalous, and therefore compelling, to us Americans. (Staf ford) News channels and networks know what people want to watch, so they put these stories on the air. There is no doubt that President Trump has conquered the media. Every minute, there seems to be a new story about his actions in office. As of May 2017, Trump headlines made up 41 percent of all news coverage, 80 percent of which is negative. (Patterson) News networks cover him for an obvious reason; in return for ruthless, and therefore compelling, to us Americans. (Stafford) News networks cover him for an obvious reason; in return for ratings—even if it means sacrificing basic journalistic ethics.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
You pinched your cheeks and stuck out your tongue, laughing at something that would only ever be ours.

To Let Out the Sun

FLASH FICTION

KAYLEE JEONG, Grade 10, Age 15, Jesuit High School, Portland, OR; Jeff Hall, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

When I was five and you were eight, we were always peeling grass off our faces and thighs as we skidded across the grass trying to reach the soccer ball in time. We washed mud from our bare shoulders with the sprinklers along the sidewalk. The funniest thing in the world was when your entire face turned bright red from sunburn and exhaustion. If it didn’t, we ran to the bathroom. Both of us set the mirror, we shared the blue plastic stepping stool. You pinched your cheeks and stuck out your tongue and I, shrieking, onto the tile, laughing at something that would only ever be ours. We sat on old lawn chairs when the sky was clear, and you told me that the sunset is God stirring the pieces of old time, that wasn’t growing up. When you pulled Mom aside, I could only think, “Lola, you didn’t!”

The fear and anxiety begin shortly before the battle. I tremble, and a nervous sweat trickles down my brow. Self-doubt plagues my thoughts. My heart races. I ponder the consequences should I lose, and the spoils should I win. If I should fail, all my men would fall; I would be humiliated, and worst of all, my rightful place as king would be stolen from me. If I win, the glory will be all mine.

I stand at the back of my army. All of my men are at my sides and in front of me. Every soldier able to fight has come prepared to lay down his life for me and they will protect me to their death.

My wife is at my side. I did not protest when she requested to accompany me. I was glad. She is my most trusted adviser and my deadliest assassin. She clutches my hand and my racing heart relaxes. I am the king of this army and our great nation. Although the circumstances that brought us together as a nation are unknown to us now, we stand united by our cause: to defeat our adversary.

We march onward toward the front for battle. Over the hills, I spy a glance of the enemy, and my heart begins to race.

As we approach the shadow of the adversary, the presence of our enemy looms over us like a torrential storm cloud waiting to burst. The enemy has the same presence of our enemy looms over us like a torrential storm cloud waiting to burst. The enemy has the same

Another Day at War

FLASH FICTION

AVERY DIETZ, Grade 12, Age 18, Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills, KY; Diane Ruth, Educator, Northern Kentucky Writing Region, Affiliate, Gold Medal

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

You pinched your cheeks and stuck out your tongue, laughing at something that would only ever be ours.
Origin Story
FLASH FICTION

SOPHIE PAQUETTE, Grade 11, Age 15, Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI. Mentor: Mika Parra and Joe Sacksteder. Educators: Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University. Affiliote: Gold Medal, American Voices Award.

Every afternoon, the school bus drops the four of us off at the old 7-Eleven behind Marsha’s house. We stumble through the door in the same humming clump, bell chiming overhead. The register boy looks up, all snaggle-toothed, lip hitched where the white edge of a molar pokes out. Elsie smiles and waves at the security camera, exposing the pink of her palms like something secret. (Elsie’s always got an audience.) Here, we know the aisles like we know the nooks of our own bodies. Marsha slides a finger down the crinkling rows of candy wrappers, June tucks bags of chips in her lap, pinches the corners until all that’s left inside is dust. Elsie spins, spins, spins the sunglasses stand on its axis. (We think she could spin the whole world like that if she wanted to, flicking the tip of her finger.) We’ve missed so many people, so many trucks and the fresh fruit stand. Occasionally, someone would be staring at the spot where the moon had gone. I wasn’t so concerned as to where the stupid moon was gone. I wasn’t so concerned as to where the stupid moon had gone. I wasn’t so concerned as to where the stupid moon had gone, but as to how it got there.

Sometimes people wondered where the moon had gone. I wasn’t so concerned as to where the stupid moon had gone, but as to how it got there.

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A Lunar Absence
FLASH FICTION

DAVID LIANG, Grade 12, Age 18, Kinkaid School, Houston, TX. Mentor: Casey Fleming. Educators: Harris County Department of Education, Affiliote, Gold Medal.

So the moon is gone. And that’s something.
It was there, at one point, and then it wasn’t.
Which was odd.
But it wasn’t as odd as when Mrs. Plinkerton fell down seven flights of stairs that one summer and sprang back up again at the bottom, saying, “I’m fine!” in that candy, syrupy voice of hers.
It wasn’t as odd as when Sylvester did a belly flop into an empty pool one night and woke up in the hospital red as a tomato and still half-concussed. Yeah, that was weird.
But when the moon vanished in the sky that night, no one really talked about it. It was just something people had to accept. There was nothing anyone could do to get it back, so what was the point of fretting about it?
Occasionally, someone would be staring at the spot in the sky where the moon used to be, but then they would see the rest of the sky and the missing moon just became another starry section of the night.
So yes, it was strange, but it wasn’t the end of the world.
Sometimes people wondered where the moon had gone. I wasn’t so concerned as to where the stupid moon had gone, but as to how it got there.
Maybe someone had just . . . smited it, gotten rid of it somehow, and fly.

I mopped him up at the end of the day, put him in a pail and gave it to his mother. “Sorry,” I said.
She nodded, and then tossed the pail into the fire. “He would have wanted it that way,” she said.
And then she invited me in for a drink, and so we sat there on her porch, drinking and talking about Sylvester, like he was still alive, all while secretly missing the moon.
Seven

FLASH FICTION

BENJAMINE MO, Grade 11, Age 16, Manhasset Senior High School, Manhasset, NY. Nikkii Leaby, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

In Chinese tradition, the number seven, pronounced “qi,” is phonetically similar to the words that can mean “rise” and “energy of life.” In addition, in certain areas of China the seventh lunar month is considered to be a “ghost month.” During this month, ghosts and spirits of one’s ancestors return to our earthly world and visit the living.

I.

I know the trade winds. They blow in the living room when the kitchen then settle on the stone floor. And they kiss my sun-dried feet with lips that numb like tiger balm. To sail with their voices is to lie in bed with rain-clouds. To become a man is to discern sliced ginger from bamboo shoots. It is for the broth, she says, clearing the bones. I never did, and we worry that one day he will fly away with the winds in his belly.

II.

To become a man is to discern sliced ginger from bamboo shoots. To bite solid ginger and know this is the taste of culture. My father eats indiscriminately, coats his face. “Do you understand?” he asked. “Yes, Grandmother.” She was smug. “Meat be damned, you can live the rest of your life on kimchi and rice.” Bare-handed, she plunged into the jar, bringing a piece to her mouth. Her face scrunched. “This is a taste that comes with time.” He asked me this batch months ago, remember?” He did. Grandmother had taught him how to rinse and slice the cabbages; he had even learned how to rub the red pepper sauce between each leaf, inside the little cracks. “Well you better. We barely had any left after you were done,” Grandmother said.

Won-Shik licked his lips. Fresh kimchi was good too. It was refreshing and spicy—a taste that got the nose running.

Grandmother ate another piece. “Three months pass and the flavor becomes sour. But the taste is still kimchi. Always kimchi.” She nodded. Satisfied. Won-Shik stood up, clearing his throat. “May I be excused?”

“I have tried my best to age well.” She went on. “But in the end, I will not last.” Grandmother looked up at him, eyes striking through their cataracts.

“What will you do when I’m gone?” she asked. Won-Shik took a while to think of an answer. “I don’t know. May I be excused?”

“Will you cry like you did today? Hide in your room about something that you knew would happen?”

Won-Shik sat down. She clutched his hand. “Won-ee-ah, things must always change. But you must decide if they will change for the worse.” He dragged a sleeve across his eyes. “One day, I won’t be here, and you will have to open the kimchi jars by yourself, no matter how long it takes.” She poked his chest, her finger stained red. “And however old the kimchi gets, however sour, you will enjoy it as you are meant to.” She grabbed a napkin and dabbed at his face. “Do you understand?” she asked.

Won-Shik struggled to answer. “Yes, Grandmother,” he said, eyes stinging.

She shook her head. “Do not cry. Eat.” And Won-Shik ate, mouth puckering as he did so.

Fermenting Jar

FLASH FICTION

DAVID LEE, Grade 12, Age 17, Huron High School, Ann Arbor, MI.

Aimee Grant, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

The day Won-Shik’s dog died, Grandmother called Won-Shik to the living room. In her hands was a jar of kimchi.

He asked her, at the dried stains that ran down his cheeks, and the dog hair still stuck to his sweater. “Come. Help me open this,” she said.

The jar lid, cold and wet, slid under his hands. He pushed it away, his throat feeling thick.

Grandmother tutted, gripping the lid tightly under her sleeve. “You know, you can use your head once in a while.” The jar popped open with a coughing fit; it reeked of jeotgal and old fish. She reached in with plastic gloves and ripped off a large piece for Won-Shik, red juices dripping.

The kimchi was cold and crisp between his teeth, filling his mouth with sour brine and spice. He ate it slowly, savoring the harsh bite and the deluge of saliva.

Grandmother sat down and took off her gloves.

“Good, yes?” He swallowed. “Yes, Grandmother.”

She was smug. “Meat be damned, you can live the rest of your life on kimchi and rice.” Bare-handed, she plunged into the jar, bringing a piece to her mouth. Her face scrunched. “This is a taste that comes with time. You helped me make this batch months ago, remember?”

He did. Grandmother had taught him how to rinse and slice the cabbages; he had even learned how to rub the pepper sauce between each leaf, inside the little cracks. “Well you better. We barely had any left after you were done,” Grandmother said.

Won-Shik licked his lips. Fresh kimchi was good too. It was refreshing and spicy—a taste that got the nose running.

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Fresh kimchi was good too. It was refreshing and spicy—a taste that got the nose running.
Yelp Reviews of an Oak Tree

HUMOR

JULIANA YU, Grade 10, Age 15, Marriotts Ridge High School, Marriottsville, MD Alliston Wichmann, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

Showing oldest reviews first.

Mike S. of Ellicott City, MD: “Solid oak, excellent bark for climbing, great tree for the whole family! Highly recommend. 5/5 stars.”

Sharon S. of Ellicott City, MD: “Best acorns in town. Come before the secret’s out! 5/5 stars.”

Joe S. of Columbia, MD: “I’m nuts about this oak tree! Haha! Seriously though, super oak tree. Sturdy branches, plenty of playing room for the kids, and acorns galore. 5/5 stars.”

Meghan S. of Catonsville, MD: “The tree was a little tall for my taste, but the kids loved it. Hubby also loved the hidden hole on the fifth highest branch. Great hideaway from the noise. A little crowded given the tree’s popularity, but all things considered, excellent tree. 5/5 stars.”

Patrick S. of Owings Mills, MD: “I gotta say, I was real wary of all the 5-star reviews, but man, was I in for a surprise! Abundant acorns, beautiful backyard, ample space for basking aforementioned acorns. Wow, what a treat. 5/5 stars.”

Jennifer S. of Catonsville, MD: “Great tree, lots of acorns, but had an issue with the dog in the backyard. I’m a little surprised to see all the 5-star reviews given the dog issue. 3/5 stars.”

Amy S. of Columbia, MD: “This place really isn’t what it used to be. New ownership and new dog have completely ruined the experience. Not to mention now the danger of getting eaten. 1/5 stars.”


Yelpers report this tree as closed for business. n

So many acorns. So much to love. I am not a dog. All squirrels recommended to come to tree. Lotsa acorns. I am not a dog. 5/5 stars.”

Justin S. of Baltimore, MD: “I’ve also got to agree with Jennifer S’s review. Great tree with lots of branches and foliage for coverage, but man, what a persistent dog. Can’t fully endorse this tree given that. I recommend checking out Oak Tree in Crystal Chan’s backyard. No dogs, no cats, plus there’s a nice creek nearby so you can rehydrate or even go for a dip. 2/5 stars.”

Mark S. of Columbia, MD: “Squirrels beware. This is a bait and switch. Like some other reviewers have noted, lots of acorns but a dog’s part of the package. Not a friendly one, either. Bite to go with the bark, mark my words. If someone hasn’t been hurt yet, it’s only a matter of time. 1/5 stars.”

Notahawk H. of Ellicott City, MD: “Best tree in MD. So many delicious squirrel—acorns. So many delicious acorns. Come one, come all squirrels! Highly recommend. 5/5 stars.”

Brett S. of Clarksville, MD: “Seconding Justin’s and Jennifer’s reviews. Huge dog issue here. Also now a hawk issue. All squirrels beware. Would give 0 stars if I could. Check out my other reviews for my top 10 trees and power lines in Maryland! 1/5 stars.”

Jess S. of Ellicott City, MD: “Could someone flag Notahawk and Notahawk? If they’re not trolls, they’re clearly the dog and the hawk all these other reviewers are talking about. 1/5 stars.”

Reply from Notahawk of Ellicott City, MD: “If I were a dog, why would my username be Notahawk? Think about that, you stupid creature.”

Amy S. of Columbia, MD: “This place really isn’t what it used to be. New ownership and new dog have completely ruined the experience. Not to mention now the danger of getting eaten. 1/5 stars.”

Mike S. of Ellicott City, MD—updated review: “Where is what?”

JULIANA YU, Grade 10, Age 15, Marriotts Ridge High School, Marriottsville, MD Alliston Wichmann, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

R.I.P. Harvard Mom

HUMOR

EILEEN CHEN, Grade 8, Age 13, Newsy Middle School, Santa Ana, CA Clarissa Ngo, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

Once upon a time, the only school Great Aunt Diane deemed acceptable for her precious progeny, David and Michael, was Harvard. Aunt Diane hammered into them that Harvard is the only university that existed and all other schools are mere shadows crouching in the wake of Harvard’s glory. So all their lives, my aunt’s family set their sights on Harvard while all the other colleges sweated in their peripheral vision. And at every family gathering, casual family lunch, and dinner with friends, Aunt Diane was always some-how mentioning how great her little David and Michael were, which always ended up with her concluding that they were guaranteed to get into Harvard. Conversations were always like this: “Yeah, my computer just shut down in the middle of FaceTime because my dog peed on the cord. Yeah, it was outrageous. And then the line at the computer store was super long, so it took forever to get out of there.” whoever-was-unfortunate-enough-to-be-roped-into-a-meal-with-Aunt-Diane complained. “Yeah, that sounds so terrible! But some good news is that my sons, David and Michael, are going to Harvard.” Aunt Diane would reply to almost any disaster you mentioned. Now, if you were a family member, you would just roll your eyes and blank out for the rest of the conversation since, knowing David and Michael, we know for a fact that this could not possibly be true. (If you’re reading this, no offense, David and Michael. You’re both great guys. Now please don’t put Vaseline on my toilet seat!) But unsuspecting strangers would innocently exclaim, “Oh! That’s great! What are they majoring in?” And Aunt Diane would breathlessly reply, “Oh, they haven’t applied yet. And I’m sure when they do, it’s inevitable. After all, my David just made class president of the third grade. And Michael has the top grades in his entire class . . . (Please imagine here another one-hour-and-twenty-seven-minute lecture of all fifty-seven major and minor achievements in the brief lives of the incomparable David and Michael, beginning with the Miracle of Potty Training at the Age of One and Three-Quarters.)”

As Aunt Diane yapped on, the poor stranger would start fading away slowly by mumbling he had to “go to the bathroom.” Aunt Diane once told me she strongly suspected the world of Harry Potter truly existed by the way her conversation partners would always disappear after they claimed “they had to go to the bathroom.”

After a decade of claiming that David and Michael were destined for Harvard, David turned in his early action application and Aunt Diane counted down the days until she could finally buy a license plate that said “HARVARD MOM.” She placed a chair right next to the mailbox and wouldn’t leave other than to go to the bath-room or procure more batteries for her portable fan so she would be the first to gaze upon its glory when the acceptance letter arrived.

When the mailman finally arrived that fateful Tues-day morning, Aunt Diane practically ate the mailman she was so eager to see her son’s results. “Where is it?” she cried, leaping into the mail truck’s rear to check for the famous fat envelope with the gold and crimson seal. The mailman looked at her as if she was crazy. “Where is what?” “The letter! The letter from Harvard saying my David got in.” The mailman started to sweat a little. He hadn’t thought twice before taking this neighborhood for the higher pay this time of year, but by all the Asian moth-ers sitting outside by their mailboxes with grim expres-sions, he could now see why he had been given a bonus. He had always wondered why mailmen from this neigh-borhood never came back. “Hey, don’t blame me, lady. I don’t make the decisions around here.” The mailman handed her a thin envelope with a gold and crimson seal that said “VERITAS,” which is Latin for “TRUTH.” Aunt Diane glared at it. This was not a good sign. Everyone knew acceptances were in thick envelopes, as there is all that paperwork you have to fill out. “You may go now,” Aunt Diane said sternly, plucking the letter from the mailman’s hand with a pair of twee- zers she produced from her apron pocket. Aunt Diane was feeling faint. It must have been the leftover soy sauce chicken she had eaten for breakfast. Yes, that was it. As soon as David trudged through the door, he felt his ears start to wiggle in alarm. The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
Infrastructure in Africa: The Fastest Road to Development

JOURNALISM

BENJAMIN ZEISLOFT

Grade 12, Age 18, Peters Township High School, McMurray, PA. Judy Alexander, Educator, California University of Pennsylvania, Affiliate; Gold Medal, American Voices Award

The Mathare slum of Kenya is one of the most poverty-stricken, cramped, and economically desolate places on the globe. Over 700,000 people, including 100,000 children, reside in corrugated metal shanties in the Mathare Valley’s three-square-mile area. The Kenyan government more or less turns a blind eye to the slum, meaning that no sewage, fire safety, or law enforcement services are present; imagine a city the size of St. Louis or Cincinnati without these basic amenities. Few children attend school, since virtually no public education is currently up and running. Unemployment is 80 percent, and one in three adults is HIV positive.

Unfortunately, the Mathare slum is a matchless microcosm of Africa. Dozens of slums exist across the continent, and sub-Saharan Africa is home to the majority of the globe’s poverty-stricken people. Even for those who do not reside in slums, 47 percent of sub-Saharan Africans earn $1.90 or less per day.

I had the opportunity to visit Mathare in June 2017 while on a mission trip. Walking through the slum and taking in all of the sights, smells, and sounds of suffering was heartbreaking. When I returned to the United States, I became curious about what is being done by the global community to combat extreme poverty in Africa. My research revealed that Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) governments give more than $30 billion annually in foreign aid to Africa, and that countless thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) either transfer philanthropic donations to Africa or are fulfilling humanitarian missions on the ground. I now intern for an NGO called Welcome the Children, which raises funds for one of the four elementary schools in the Mathare slum.

The world community is taking considerable steps to combat hardships and enhance living conditions in Africa. Fulfilling the goals of feeding the hungry, promoting education, providing much-needed medical care, and increasing access to clean drinking water improves the lives of millions. However, the most efficient solution to Africa’s poverty isn’t as glamorous as one may expect and doesn’t necessarily present opportunities for emotional fund-raising flyers or television advertisements featuring emaciated, wide-eyed African children. The ideal solution to Africa’s problem is straightforward, economically sensible, and frequently overlooked by the millions of people worldwide who long to ease the suffering of the African people. Infrastructure—roads, bridges, railways—is the highway to development of sub-Saharan Africa.

Today, the state of Africa’s infrastructure is dismal. Only narrow percentages of people in nations such as Nigeria and Ethiopia reside near all-weather roads. Highway traffic is sluggish across the continent, preventing products and people from traveling between major cities. Port facilities are incapable of handling shipping volume; goods often remain in ports for months or years, creating logistical bottlenecks. Existing train networks are usually relics from colonial Britain or France, resulting in rail technology that is sometimes several decades behind modern standards. The World Bank estimates that half a trillion dollars are needed in order to initiate a response to these concerns.

With improvements in infrastructure come improvements in the ability of Africans to meet their basic needs. For instance, much of Africa’s rural population is prevented from leaving subsistence farming lifestyles by calamitous road systems, which make the movement of crops to markets practically impossible; however, adequate roads allow food to travel freely, which decreases the prevalence of hunger—both in the countryside and in major urban centers. More importantly, infrastructure would permit the economy of Africa as a whole to make a much-needed transition from agrarianism to industrialism.

No world government recognizes this fact better than the People’s Republic of China, which has become the dominant economic post-colonial power in sub-Saharan Africa. The Chinese government intends to harness Africa’s ample natural resources, raw materials, and low-wage populations to establish the planet’s next industrial powerhouse. However, Beijing understands that this economic miracle will be impossible without infrastructure investment, which is why it has spent the past decade investing billions in upgrading infrastructure throughout the continent.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

Power to the Period!

JOURNALISM

EVA STRELITZ-BLOCK

Grade 11, Age 16, Liberal Arts & Science Academy, Austin, TX. Kevin Garcia, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate; Gold Medal

To be sure, 2017 has brought a hevy of heartbreak and outrage, and bold attacks on women’s health, rights, and political voices are the cresting apex of this tsunami of injustice. But as public discussions of, and references to, menstruation have gone mainstream, 2017 has also been “the year of the period.”

Low (period) moments include candidate Donald Trump’s statement of Megyn Kelly’s presidential debate moderation, his particularly less-than-oblique comment that she had “blood coming out of her wherever.” She was out to get him, he implied, because she was on her period, and therefore, obviously emotionally unstable. More tragically, earlier this year, a 12-year-old girl from Tamil Nadu in southern India committed suicide after her teacher made fun of a period stain on her clothing during class. And recent reporting has revealed that even here in the United States, girls want limited access to menstrual products are missing school and even dropping out. Tampons and pads are not cheap, and it would be pretty hard for anyone to stay focused on school if you can’t keep yourself from bleeding through one’s clothes.

Luckily, the tide (if you will) is beginning to turn. This past year saw Fu Yuanhui, a Chinese swimmer at the Rio Olympics, shatter a longstanding sports taboo with disarming casualness when she noted on camera that she was on her period. Her period wasn’t the whole story of her race experience—just a facet she shared, albeit especially noteworthy given China’s persistent reluctance to acknowledge menstruation publicly. We have also seen an advertising campaign for maxi products that replaces, for the first time, the faux blue dye that typically represents menstruation flow, with a more realistic red dye. The television commercial shows period blood running down the leg of a woman in the shower.

Yes, the period has made some notable advances. But there clearly remains a great deal of work to ensure “menstrual equity.”

Campaign takeaway: Period blood is red. And normal. Closer to home, LASA has begun stocking its rest-rooms with community-supplied menstrual products. No student at our school needs to miss class—or stress out—for want of tampon. We can and should make sure of that.

In keeping with this trend, legislators across the political spectrum are beginning to bring forward legis-lation that aims to ensure that menstrual products are accessible for free at prisons, workplaces, and public schools. Additionally, numerous bills have been filed to eliminate the “tampon tax,” a sales tax on feminine hygiene products, because they are not considered necessities. Four of the forty states that tax menstrual prod-ucts have voted to end the “period penalty” (New York, Connecticut, Illinois, and Florida).

Yes, the period has made some notable advances. But there clearly remains a great deal of work to ensure “menstrual equity.”

Art and Writing 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

NATIONAL AWARDS

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I am not normal. As you will soon see . . .

would want to forget what happened last autumn? Well, you may be judge over me. Am I right to want to remem-

a year ago. I shall tell you, any reader who happens to

happened, and I am not the same Sydney Adams I was

But I don't want to forget! It is a part of me now, what

she's the psychologist my mother hired

Dr. Smith said I should write down everything about

The Scars of Memory

Excerpt:

"The Balls of my feet bounce delicately with every upbea-

The story doesn't end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

Where to begin? When did it all start? So many things

happened that may have seemed unconnected but are

actually, looking back, interlocked that it is hard to pin-

point an exact date. Sometimes I think this date, or this
data, or this, but then I light on another day . . . but I

am rambling. Mother has tried to curb this habit time

and time again, but I refuse to be cured. Ah, yes, I have

it now. I was—yes, I believe I was twelve—and it was

the day my father went off to war. My mind turns back

the pages of the days, like turning back in a calendar. I

have a precise memory, which is why they wanted me—

but I am getting ahead of myself. For now, all that is

important is that it was June 27. My mind twists and

turns, faster and faster and faster until it feels like it is

burning, until finally I arrive at my destination—that

beautiful summer day when the best things should have

happened and the worst things did.

Chapter One

In Which We Meet an Unusual Girl

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”

I am an unusual girl. I always have been. I am differ-

ent from all the other kids my age in our small town of

Dearborn. I don't listen to the radio shows—Buck Rogers

and The Lone Ranger—very often. I like to read. Oh, oth-
ers did it too, but it was what I did for entertainment—
at night especially, because I didn’t listen to news. Life

was depressing enough without the war. I didn’t listen
to the music. I read newspapers. (I actually tried to get

the STRAND. It was boring and a waste of time, so I
cancelled.) I loved Sherlock Holmes. It was a mystery
to me why no one else did. I loved, more than anything
else, to sit down and go through the adventure from
start to finish. After I devoured those for the first time,
I turned my attention to other things. Nancy Drew, the
new mystery series, I read all that were written. (I read
the Hardy Boys too, even though they were boys.) I read
that new English author Agatha Christie, Poe, and any
other mystery I could get my hands on. Suddenly, the
whole genre of mystery was open to me as an alternate
world to escape to, a world where good won and evil was
vanquished, where logic was used to figure out crimes.

But nothing was better than Sherlock Holmes. Even
though it was written in the last century, and occasion-
ally used big words, so that I grew accustomed to sitting
in my father's armchair with the magazine or book on
my lap and the dictionary at my feet, it was my favorite.

For Halloween, my mother sewed me a deerstalker
and a checked coat.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

Fortissimo Footsteps

PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR

STEPHANIE BRIGGS, Grade 8, Age 13, Concord Junior
High/School, Elkhart, IN Melissa Huffer, Educator,
Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Affiliate, Gold Medal

An easy smile slips onto my features as my feet lead me
outside. I take a deep breath of fresh air before turn-

ing around and crossing the wooden door, erasing the
indoors to take in the beauty of my neighborhood. My
lips open once more for another deep breath and I sigh,
taking my thin phone out of the safety of my pocket
to plug in my delicate, and partially broken, earbuds.
The fingers of my right hand insert the amplifiers into
the cavens of my ears; opening the familiar app with
an eighth note on the cover. I scroll through it for a
few seconds, carefully searching for the day's perfect
mantra. I eventually decide, after slight deliberation
man with one of Beethoven's symphonies, on the La La Land
soundtrack.
The fingertips that had been on my ears now light-
fully fall onto the shuffle button and a familiar trumpet
rhythm electrifies my heart with liveliness. The jazz
band's instruments sing at a beautiful forte, enticing my
feet to keep in time with the beat, swinging my body
around in an attempt at conveying the beauty of the
music through dance. I look at my phone's dark screen
once more before I place the device into my jacket pock-
et. The time was 12:53 when I left the blandness of my
home. My shoes make contact with my concrete drive-
way for a quick flicker of movement. Silence accompanies me
in a quick flicker of movement. Silence accompanies me
as I briskly walk to the door, pulling my earbuds out as
I do. I turn around to get a lasting glimpse of the out-
doors before returning to the cool air of my living room,
smiling as I close the door behind me, closing my eyes
to see the image painted on the back of my lids.

The melancholy melody cannot counteract the pos-
tivity of the beautiful nature around me, though it
comes close to doing so. I do not want to ruin the hap-
piness I have already connected to this walk, so my feet
take a turn down the familiar asphalt pathway to my
home. My shoes make contact with my concrete drive-
way, and in that exact moment my right hand slips out
of my cell phone, selecting the two-line symbol for “pause”
in a quick flicker of movement. Silence accompanies me
as I briskly walk to the door, pulling my earbuds out as
I do. I turn around to get a lasting glimpse of the out-
doors before returning to the cool air of my living room,
smiling as I close the door behind me, closing my eyes
to see the image painted on the back of my lids.

The balls of my feet bounce delicately with every upbea-

The Scars of Memory

NOVEL WRITING

ELIZABETH BOWLING, Grade 8, Age 13, Crawfordville Middle
School, Crawfordville, IN Paul Utterback, Educator; Clay Walker,
Memorial Hall, Butler Arts Center and Horizon Writing Project
at IUPUI, Affiliate, Gold Medal

Brief Summary:

Sydney Adams is writing down the story of what hap-
pened last autumn. She goes back to when she is twelve
and goes home and is confused by her father's absence;
she later learns her father has gone to spy on Nazis for
the U.S. government. The following weeks pass by in a
blur, until her birthday comes. Her favorite aunt invites
the two to her home in St. John's next summer. Sydney
makes friends with a new mystery-loving boy named
Scott. The three go to St. John's and, after escaping in
the nick of time, find evidence to convict a horse cheat.
Sydney realizes she can try back into her memories and
relive what she's experienced. Sydney's father goes
missing in action; her mother also disappears. Sydney
overhears her sister calling her old boyfriend, using an
assumed name, and confronts her, to learn her moth-
er works for a U.S. government laboratory. Soon after,
Sydney's parents' obituaries are published in the
newspaper, although her friends believe her parents are
alive. Sydney and her sister are kidnapped, with tragic
consequences. Sydney manages to escape with the help
of a friend, only to be kidnapped once again. She finds
the enemy, the horse cheat, and learns something im-
portant about Scott's father. Sydney's shoot in the arm.
She blacks out and awakens to find her parents are also
missing in action; her mother also disappears. Sydney
—very often. I like to read. Oh, oth-
ers did it too, but it was what I did for entertainment—
at night especially, because I didn’t listen to news. Life
was depressing enough without the war. I didn’t listen
to the music. I read newspapers. (I actually tried to get
the STRAND. It was boring and a waste of time, so I
cancelled.) I loved Sherlock Holmes. It was a mystery
to me why no one else did. I loved, more than anything
else, to sit down and go through the adventure from
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new mystery series, I read all that were written. (I read
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whole genre of mystery was open to me as an alternate
world to escape to, a world where good won and evil was
vanquished, where logic was used to figure out crimes.

But nothing was better than Sherlock Holmes. Even
though it was written in the last century, and occasion-
ally used big words, so that I grew accustomed to sitting
in my father's armchair with the magazine or book on
my lap and the dictionary at my feet, it was my favorite.

For Halloween, my mother sewed me a deerstalker
and a checked coat.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

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2018 SCHOLASTIC ART & WRITING AWARDS

NATIONAL AWARDS

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Red Waters
PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR
ANGELO CHEN, Grade 7, Age 12, Bak Middle School of Art, West Palm Beach, FL. Laine Golden, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

Blood. Blood everywhere. I step onto the Greek sand and feel shells made millions of years ago surround my feet, listening to the birds calling and waves splashing onto the rocky ledges of Kamari Beach. The feeling of tranquility envelops my body as I am gratified by the beauty of nature.

I watch as the sun slowly reaches the horizon. The dark blue of the night suddenly changes into a hot, fiery red-orange. A gust of wind hits me, and the saltiness of the ocean is gone; replaced with clear blue.

I'm glad I didn't wear my shoes. I feel the cold moss, wet with dew from the morning. The winds that I had once called my friend now seem to be pushing into me.

I risk leaning over more than I would have liked to get a better look. The guides kept their entire body straight with their hands and arms firm. They pass the second ledge by a good length. I'm glad I risked leaning over.

“Timmy!” I hear my parents screech as my brother is pushed into me. I watch as the water slowly reaches the horizon. The guides perform a dive as an example. They followed the safety precautions to the letter. I admired their perfect form as they glided through the air in their navy-blue diving suits.

I try to sneak a glance at the sea. The water, rippling with waves, reflecting the morning sun. The rocks, rough from the water and wind, chipping away, with shades of mahogany, slowly getting darker as it gets closer to the point where just the tallest of waves can reach.

I look up. Everyone looks down. Eyes wide open, mouths gaping. Finally, I look down. I remember why I had feared this one that you might just fall off. There is a second ledge beneath this one that you might hit.”

We silently listen to the guides' directions. My parents don't seem to be able to emphasize how important it is to do this correctly.

“It’s just like swimming, except I need to push off more forward in this,” I think to myself.

Two of the guides perform a dive as an example. They followed the safety precautions to the letter. I admired their perfect form as they glided through the air in their navy-blue diving suits.

I risk leaning over more than I would have liked to get a better look. The guides kept their entire body straight with their hands and arms firm. They pass the second ledge by a good length. I'm glad I risked leaning over.

“Timmy!” I hear my parents screech as my brother is pushed into me. I, who am already off-balance, am pushed off the edge, down into the sea. I regret leaning over.

“ANGE—” My parent's screams become inaudible as the ledge slowly changes into silence. The uplifting familiarity is swept away by the horizontal gusts that spread through my veins, a transfusion of something cold and lonely.

Earlier in the morning, I had shuffled out of bed, lurching through my routines without thought. Leaving the heavy warmth of my blankets had felt, inexplicably, like a betrayal as the thin air settled against my waist. I let my grandmother braid my hair, the way she had done when she was a little girl in the rain-washed city of Guangzhou. I spent hours with my mother, poring over books and memorizing characters, engrossed in the sloping grace of their strokes. I paced the halls, ing over books and memorizing characters, engrossed in the sloping grace of their strokes. I paced the halls, engrossed in the sloping grace of their strokes.

As expected, the tablecloth is fluttering red, pinned at the corners by golden replicas of guardian lions. I hear the volunteers conversing in Chinese, and suddenly my own words are welling up in response, but something chokes me. It’s been years since I’ve spoken Mandarin. I feel the sentences fracture in my chest, words disinTEGRating into silence. The uplifting familiarity is swept away by the embers that spread through my veins, a transfusion of something cold and lonely.

I sneak a glance at the water. Still blue, but no longer clear.

The words replay through my brain as the ledge slowly approaches me. Closer, closer. I stare at the rock as it stares back, with evil, with malice, my world.

Crack. My body hits the ledge. The rock cracks under me, as I do as well.

The world goes gray. A splintering pain shocks the side of my chest. What had once been a clear-blue sky is now a malicious gray, waiting for the right time to strike.

I sneak a glance at the water. Still blue, but no longer blue. I look at the rocks.

The story doesn't end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

Definiton
PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR
KATHERINE ZENG, Grade 11, Adlai E. Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, IL. Kimberly Musolf, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

Rainbow streamers. Paper cranes. Laughter, dancing, and clamorous conversation. Rows of tables, laden with trays of food: sesame balls, saffron pudding, pastries, fried fish. This is World's Fair.

Breathing in the spice-saturated air, I am light-headed and uncertain, my fingers closed around a wad of ticketsthat I don't remember buying. I could trade them for anything. Everything. In one corner, the Philippines are selling tall glasses of shaved ice, stained purple with taro; in another, Taiwan is beckoning with its offer of pink-tinged pineapple sticky rice. But what I am searching for is China.

As expected, the tablecloth is fluttering red, pinned at the corners by golden replicas of guardian lions. I hear the volunteers conversing in Chinese, and suddenly my own words are welling up in response, but something chokes me. It’s been years since I’ve spoken Mandarin. I feel the sentences fracture in my chest, words disintegrating into silence. The uplifting familiarity is swept away by the embers that spread through my veins, a transfusion of something cold and lonely.

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I sneak a glance at the water. Still blue, but no longer blue. I look at the rocks.

The story doesn't end here! Read more: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
This is the fall my life fell apart.
This is the fall when the gods struck their anger down upon the tiny island where my roots spread through the sea and nestled next to the coqui frogs as they sing their symphony every night while Maria raises her mighty fist and strikes her mighty blows. This is the fall of the hurricane, dancing in the street while the power that’s been lost to them is promised to be restored by a hollow government that refuses to listen to the cries of the people who need it the most. This is the fall of my mother embracing me with tears in her eyes as she receives a message over Facebook that her aunt is safe and alive while waiting on news about other family. Maria strikes her wrath down on my island, and here in Wellesley, the echo of her wind blows through the leaves like they’re crying for the tree that fell on top of my Abuelo’s yard.

This is the fall of haggling on the phone for hours to arrange a generator to be delivered so that Titi and Tío don’t know whether the neighbors will be able to watch their kids’ shows to distract from the fact that I think everything is OK, even though we both knew her front isn’t working. It’s sobbing into my best friend’s shoulder and excusing myself from any clubs to go home and eat a tub of ice cream with my laptop and three dogs wondering why there’s now an ever-present feeling of absence in the house.

This is the fall when my sweet, wise Abuelo was buried in a simple wooden casket draped with the flag of Puerto Rico, the flag of his people, the flag of his burning joy and passion that is now doomed by a government that doesn’t care whether mi gente dance themselves into an early grave while their beloved island, their vibrant home, sinks into the sea with nobody to hear it but the Nuyoricans and a Wellesley girl with the flag on her ceiling, breaking the store making empanadas and listening to the history of the jíbaros. This is crying out to my classmates, my friends, my government to do something as mis hermanos persevere and continue and live with the absence of everything that makes living life easy.

This is the fall where Puerto Rico lost everything. This is the fall of my island.

Why Willows Weep
PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR
NOLAND BLAIN. Grade 10, Age 16, Douglas Anderson School of Arts, Jacksonville, Fl. Jennifer Bundy, Educator; Region-At-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

It’s 2:00 am and I am awoken by thunder thumping its drumbeat, rain driving its downpour on the roof shingles, all the vibrations running through the walls, my mattress, up and across my tiny, six-year-old body. My mother threw open my room, her head on end of a pale face. She got an alert on a storm radio: Tornado Warn. Take Shelter Immediately.

Those great, old analysts of the Weather Channel had not predicted such a sudden development. Tropical Storm Fay was erratic, unsettled, picking up its swirling tempest mass and moving this way, that way, up and down Florida State, legs of lightning and storm never moving fast enough.

We are on the second floor of our apartment complex, a ragged building of rough wood, so there is nowhere we can go but within our own home. My brother is awake at this point; he is three years older than me, but he is despairing that the night is scary and unknown and my cheeks are cold and something is about to happen.

A life is not the weather; it cannot be forecast. Some things aren’t shown by focus groups and statistics. Some things just don’t line up with probability.

Mommy’s here. Mommy’s here. I’ll be right back. Her arms unravel from around me. Her face is a moon. She gives the flashlight to my brother, who has stopped shaking. I am crying without knowing why, only knowing that the night is scarier than I thought and my cheeks are cold and something is about to happen.

I’ll be right back, she says, stay here. Before I can grasp her, she slips into the hallway, into the dark, into the air. We stay here, in the cloister of the cold porcelain ball, elitists of the room, spilling from the font in her hands, her gentle hands. It’ll all be alright, she says, It will all be okay.

My brother and I are in a dry-banked bathtub, Fay spilling tides of rain on top of our house, wind howling and thunder cracking its whip. Our cats are with us, huddled against our bodies but prepared to leap. There is no light in the bathroom; the power is out. The room is dark, dark, deep. My brother casts a beam of light into the room, spilling from the font in her hands, her gentle hands. It’ll all be alright, she says, It will all be okay.

Mommy’s here. Mommy’s here.

It is so easy to say that death can be predicted. The men with white hair and long names point to charts, color-code their graphs like mandalas, insist on the holy name of their Ph.D.s that I will live to be 80 years old. But no amount of peering into computers or crystal balls, nor consultation of divine or medical bodies, can say where things will land before they have.

A life is not the weather; it cannot be forecast. Some things aren’t shown by focus groups and statistics. Some things just don’t line up with probability.

Mommy’s here. Mommy’s here.

Maria strikes her wrath down on my island, and here in Wellesley, the echo of her wind blows through the leaves like they’re crying for the tree that fell on top of my Abuelo’s yard.
An old Hindu tale goes: The god Krishna, in his insincerity, came across a fruit seller selling delicious fruit. He asked the vendor if she would give him some of her goods in exchange for nothing but the fistful of grains he had in his hands. Her heart swelling with love for the child, she gave him her fruit and he put the grains in the basket. As she was walking home, she noticed her basket was heavier than usual—the grains were gone, in their place, rubies and gold.

Perhaps the reason why the moral of this story, that small acts of kindness and piety can go a long way, failed to take root with me was because I didn’t understand its context, its setting in my parents’ native country of India.

I’ll be blunt. Not only did I not understand India, I didn’t care to either. I loathed it. Picturing India, my American-born and American-raised mind immediately flashed to crowded, littered, badly paved streets and dirty bathrooms. And, as I stepped out of the car into Vrindavan for a cousin’s wedding, the famed and religiously significant birthplace of Krishna, these conceptions were only solidified. The place was, to put it lightly, a mess—a cack-handed mess of shanties, shacks, and garbage.

Butler Arts Center and Hoosier Writing Project at IUPUI, Affiliate Gold Medal

I am four years old, and my father picks me up and I giggle. He puts me on his shoulders and makes me pan-cakes and tells me he loves me and I smile. In my eyes, he is the best father. Even when he is busy with work, I still know that he is the only father I want. He sneaks me raspberries from the kitchen in our restaurant and I sit on the counter next to him as he cooks. Sometimes he gives me jobs to do, and even though I complain about polishing the silverware and wiping containers, I am secretly happy just to spend time with him. When the sun sets, all the hungry customers flood in to have a meal before dispersing to the various Tokyo clubs and bars. The orders increase, and my father gives me to my mother. I cry out and beg him to keep me with him. I promise not to get in the way, but he is busy, and it’s time for me to go back to our apartment. There I will sit quietly and color pictures for dad to praise in the morning. My father is a hero; he is a spelunker and a backpacker, a world-renowned chef. He even has a national merit for saving someone’s life. He answers all the questions I can ask, and each day I spend a great deal of time thinking of a new question, such as, “Why is the sky blue?” or “What are all the planets made of?” and many others. When he is smart, I try to be smart too. I memorize every answer and work hard to absorb as much information as will fit in my brain.

I am five years old, and my parents announce that we will be moving all the way to Hawaii, which makes me sob. I love our life in Tokyo, and I fear these big changes, but my mom tells me it will make my father happy, so I agree to act pleased about it. We move, and for a while we get along great, Dad and I. I try to be everything he is. I am a good cook, so I learn how to make food too. He is funny, so I learn lots of jokes to make him laugh. When I am sad, he picks me up and coos, telling me jokes and soothing me until I calm. I press my head into his shoulder and he rubs my back. I adjust to Hawaii, gaining new friends and keeping my parents company in the new restaurant. I learn to love our little town, and my father seems to like it too.

I am six years old. One night, it’s late, and I’ve come out from my new room for some water. From my parents’ room, I can hear yells, so I creep slowly up to the door and press my ear against the cold wood. I cannot make out what they’re saying, but the whole conversation is filled with unbridled and intense anger. Unable to keep myself hidden, I burst in. Silently, I watch as my father turns to me and tells me to go to my room. This is the first time he’s been this aggressive toward me, but I shake my head no and stay firmly planted into the carpeted floor, tears rolling down my face. He screams at me to get out, every short, fine black hair on his head shaking with him. I don’t know the man looking at me. Veins are popping out from his neck and his eyes have a mad look in them. This isn’t my father. My mother, standing across from him, is crying and saying, “Just leave honey, please. I’ll be in in a minute, sweetheart, just please go to your room.” She turns to my father and asks him to please calm down. I shake my head no again. “Calm down,” he repeats, and tears roll down his face as you can see his teeth and gums toward me. I barely have time to scream before his hand strikes my cheek. I wail in pain, the slap’s sting echoing across my face in the form of a red handprint. My mother is yelling at him to stop. My vision blurs with tears. “I’m gonna tell you one more time to get into your room right now. Are we clear?”

I run across the hall and jump into my bed, covering myself with blankets and taking refuge from the monster that has possessed my father. This is not the man who picks me up when I’m crying or cooks me pancakes or tells me he loves me. I cry until my eyes are drier than a desert, and lie on my side shaking. Several hours pass while I wait for my mother to come in.

“Mama, mama, mama please,” I whisper under the sheets as if I were praying.

My father is a hero; he is a spelunker and a backpacker, a world-renowned chef.

That day, I prayed. I was already old enough to have my fair share of skepticism in religion, but I prayed nonetheless. About what, I couldn’t say. Maybe, while staring at the youthful, flute-toting, blue-skinned Krishna idol, I asked him why he tolerated poverty.

My story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
There are leaves on the ground. Everywhere. They’re green and red and orange and they’re falling from the sky, like wilted raindrops. I don’t know why this is the picture that floods my brain when I think about my mother. It’s not the only picture, there are others. French toast, backyard tea parties, orange cats, and a spouting water geyser. But there are always leaves, waving in the wind, allowing little droplets of light to flood through, painting a mosaic of sun and wind and leaves. It’s been so long I have trouble remembering if the memories that play in my mind, like old movies, are actually memories or dreams I was never able to forget. I choose to believe they are real memories, so I have something to hold onto, so I never forget.

In my first memory, we are sitting outside around a glass table in the backyard. Actually, I can’t say surely that this is my first memory, but it’s the first to come to mind. The pavement is frigid and cold beneath my feet, and the sky is not yet lit by the sun. My mother and I are having a tea party. The cups are filled with amber-colored apple tea, and we have baked French toast sticks, passing as pastries. Like all memories, there is no conversation, no words or sounds I can clearly remember. Just tea and French toast sticks, and gold nail polish. For some reason our unconventional tea party includes me painting my mother’s toes gold. I get ready to paint, shaking the bottle like I’ve seen her do before, while hearing the light tap of the metal bead inside. Then suddenly, the bottle slips from my hand and shatters on the ground, painting the gray pavement with shiny, gold dirt, like a toy lost in a sandbox.

I am brushing my teeth. I remember this clearly because I didn’t want to brush my teeth alone, so I went outside to brush them with her. Silently, the orange and white cat from next door jumps the fence and begins to walk around the yard. My mother doesn’t move to tell me to be careful because this cat has jumped over the fence before. We name him Blueberry, because his collar is a bright blue. He prowls around for a while and then jumps the fence again and the memory ends. I can’t recall when I learned this, but that cat was eaten by a coyote, and I was introduced to loss at a young age.

My mother told me she was going to die without saying anything. We are at a stopwatch when she tells me about a doctor’s appointment that day. At least I think that’s what she does, I don’t remember any words being said. It’s like watching a movie without sound, complete silence. At some point the idea that she has cancer fully sets up camp in my brain, and I can feel it, that overwhelming feeling of fear, of the unknown. And being six years old, I ask the painfully obvious question, “Are you going to die?”

Those are the only words I can remember being exchanged in all these memories I have. They are my own, and they are crystal clear.

She pulls the car over to the side of the road to a completely stop. Her hands are wrapped around the steering wheel so hard, her pale knuckles are even paler. Her eyes are covered by big black sunglasses, but she looks at me through the rearview mirror and I look back. We look at one another for a while, and even though her eyes are completely covered, I see their sadness. Then she looks back to the road and pulls the car back onto the road. The image of her sunglasses-covered eyes in that rearview mirror is forever burned into my mind, and mine alone, because I have never shared that memory out loud.

Memories for My Emah
PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR
TIKIA VELAZQUEZ Grade 11, Age 16, San Diego Jewish Academy, San Diego, CA. Stacey Goldblatt, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

My life at the moment seems to be separated into a before and after. There is the before, a life I can never fully grasp as my own, where my mother and I were together all the time while my father was deployed. There is a part of the before that is filled with family members and hospitals, children’s books explaining chemotherapy, and flowers. Those memories, for some reason, are clearer.

We are sitting in the living room, in front of the giant television. My father, mother, older sister, and myself. My mother has just explained to me that when she has chemo, her hair will begin to fall out. So being the six-year-old I am, I pull out the plastic box of hair clips and begin to clip her hair in place, in hopes that it won't fall out, that those clips are magical. There is an actual physical picture to go with this memory, of my mother from the side, her hair filled with flower-shaped clips of every color of the rainbow, and I remember being proud because in that moment everything was OK.

The day my mother died, I was at the neighbor’s house across the street. I watched my father trek across the black street to get me. The house was filled with family members and friends. And one by one we said goodbye.

I have made the decision to not share the moments in which my mother got sicker and sicker. I have chosen not to expand on those times because they are not how I choose to remember her, or to remember my life. Because now, I live in the After. I live in a new house, the only house I can ever imagine calling home. I am close with my dad, who has taken care of me and my sisters with unfaltering love. And I will create new chapters in my life. I will graduate high school soon, go to college, get a job, get married, have kids. I will grow. And I will keep these memories because they are a part of me now and will be a part of the person I become.

There are memories I rewatch sometimes, that I can’t find a place for. They don’t fit on the timeline of my life, so I let them float around and rest wherever they like.

My mother and I are on the way to school. There is traffic building up as we near our turn, and when we reach it, there is a geyser of water soaring toward the sky. It is coming from one of the drains in the road and it is never-ending. The white geyser sails above the cars and the nearby trees. The water ending in a splash, soaking the already wet pavement. It is a force of unnatural nature and we admire it, because its power is astounding and eternal.

I’ve never understood memories. They fascinate me. How we grow and then suddenly we are us, and that little kid we used to be is a mere memory. People say reincarnation happens when you die. I say it happens every few years. It happens that day when you wake up and can no longer recall what you did on your fourth birthday. Eventually, faces get mismatched and the voices blend together, or go silent, forming the pictures that make up your life. A life you remember only from stories relatives tell you. A life that seems to belong to a different person entirely.

I lost my mother when I was six. I have learned that I am a lot like her. That I look like her. I have learned that those memories, and that loss, have played a small part in who I am. I am resilient, I know grief, and I have empathy because of those memories. So I write them now to ensure I never forget them. To ensure I never forget who I am.
Perils in Young Black America

PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR

JACKSON OVERTON-CLARK, Grade 11, Aga I, The Haverford School, Haverford, PA. Thomas Stambaugh, Educator, Philadelphia Writing Project, Affiliates, Gold Medal

As I approached the Philadelphia International Airport, my excitement increased. This was first time I’d leave the United States, thus throwing myself into an unknown culture. Thrilled to receive a peek into Puerto Rican life, I also accepted the possibility of alienation while immersing myself into a different culture for a few days. Fortunately, since it was a class trip, I would share the experience with my best friends, which alleviated some of the nervousness. I stepped off the bus in my bright-orange Adidas sneakers, only to be met with the morning wind chill. However, with the combination of my excitement and the comfort of my favorite hoodie, it didn’t bother me, as my mind imagined the warmth of Puerto Rico. Along with being my first trip off the mainland, this Puerto Rico trip marked my first trip without parents. Four teachers held the responsibility of caring for a class full of eighth-grade boys and bringing them back unscathed four days later.

Following directions, we lined up at the TSA check-point. Immediately, I thought about what I’d heard about TSA officers, stopping people they perceived as dangerous. I have no reason to worry, I thought. I’m an eighth-grader on a trip with the Haverford School. This realization caused a shift in attitude. My expectations rose. I had no idea what to expect. The officer’s suspicion had to do with my clothes. The officer didn’t let him pass either. I noticed the movement. By this time, my best friend stood next to me. The officer didn’t let him pass either. I noticed the majority of my classmates waiting on the other side of the scanner. I felt isolated, as if my classmates stood around, what don’t you see? You don’t see many people that look like you. This vivid memory at four years old, that look like you. This vivid memory at four years old, the officer’s suspicion had to do with my current situation. The officer’s suspicion had to do with my race. My white classmates didn’t receive nasty looks nor questions. Now, my friend and I, both black, stood here being questioned as if we were not harmless eighth-graders. This realization caused a shift in attitude. My responses no longer had a respectful tone.

Suddenly, my mom’s words entered my mind. Look around, what don’t you see? You don’t see many people that look like you. This vivid memory at four years old, standing in the lobby of the Haverford Lower School on my first day of Junior Kindergarten, clarified my current situation. The officer’s suspicion had to do with my race. My white classmates didn’t receive nasty looks nor questions. Now, my friend and I, both black, stood here being questioned as if we were not harmless eighth-graders. This realization caused a shift in attitude. My responses no longer had a respectful tone.

Are you planning to do anything dangerous? he asked. WHAT? Dangerous? What about me looks dangerous? All of this because of race? No. I forced the word through my clenched teeth. Are you carrying anything dangerous? I guess the answer is yes. No.

He looked stumped; he knew there was no other reason he could keep me. He glared at me, patting me down in a hastily and violating way.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

His look pierced through me, as if I just committed a heinous crime.

An Undelivered Letter

POETRY

LOGAN BAKER, Grade 9, Age 14, Charleston County School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC. Danielle DeItiberus, Francis Hammes, and Elizabeth Hart, Educators, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

It was strange: even though your heart had stopped, the dishwasher still chugged on, for another twenty minutes, probably. And even though your hands were still, and still cooling, the hands of the clock twitched fiercely around their plastic rim.

People I had never seen, who had maybe not known you the way they said they did brought me to the house, three days after it happened, whatever did happen, and showed me that the laundry was shriveled out on the line. And also, I think, so I would throw away the rags molding your washing machine.

I noticed that there was no sympathy at the funeral, for the geranium baking on the windowsill, or the quarter-full crock curdling in the fridge. But then again, they weren’t the ones in the casket.

My mom always told me that speaking ill of the dead was wrong, but I think it must somehow be worse to lie to them. Like I lied back before all of this when I said I’d replace the begonias I’d trampled. So for my mother, not you, I have to admit that the death of your routine seems a sorrier affair than your death will ever be.

White Lighters

POETRY

CHRISTOPHER BARLOW, Grade 10, Age 15, South Portland High School, South Portland, ME. Tasha Graff, Educator, The Southern Maine Writing Project at the University of Southern Maine, Affiliate, Gold Medal

It’s the 4th of July and we play the ‘firework or gunshot’ game, sing god bless america while our parents think we’re in love, strike a match for every family barbecue gone awry.

under the night sky, light a roman candle to lead our way home under rosy cherry trees ripe for picking.

wrap your hands around my neck until you can smell cologne under your fingernails, I’ll be happy just the same. wrap your hands around your neck until they stop shaking.

fear is what lives in these woods and in the cartilage between my ribs. in the hollow in my chest dread has started to rearrange furniture.

doubt is what lives in my fingertips and quivering lips, words you speak to try to hurt me, carve out the piece you call most tender and leave the rest for the dogs.

run home until your legs give out, sweat out your mistakes under a moon brighter than porcelain.

you’re not going to cry, are you? it’s okay, I don’t know which one of us has earned that right either.
Summer Falls
POETRY

MIRA BOHANNAN KUMAR, Grade 10, Age 15, Iowa City High School, Iowa City, IA. Mandy Sotillo, Educator; Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, University of Iowa, Affiliate; Gold Medal

The mottled chill blows through my window, through the shadow of my non-aquiline nose against the fuss of the clean bone-china ceiling and smells too delicious for taste, like rain if rain were the cast-off shells of peas.

My homework is finished through drooping eyelids, square roots with filed-curve edges under the watchful eyes I doodled on my palms in class when I was ignoring how to do it.

Outside a bird sings—or maybe a cricket, at night my senses slip into their September horror-movie laziness and I forget just how a cricket sounds when it realizes it will never sing professionally or maybe a cricket,

I was able to stand on my own again.

And she cradled me until she reminded me that I would only ever bend through the shipwreck of my lungs.

And when she drove to an empty parking lot and how many times she would have to do it again.

She gave herself a stronger backbone and instilled in me that plucking I knew my mama understood.

So the breeze could let my cheeks dry, to let me cry

And when she told me that catchin’ bees and wish in the other to see which fills up the fastest.

Mama told me to spit in one hand and

My mama told me you catch more bees with honey and cracks in the sidewalk don’t break nobody’s back. Mama told me to spit in one hand and wish in the other to see which fills up the fastest. I wished

And I wished to inherit her spine. I spit

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The wait feels endless. And then the room comes alive.
I. Hestor Dreams She Is the Sky

Hestor dreamt that she was the sky. She dreamt that she was an endless expanse of air, vast and weightless and glowing. She dreamt that gravity had no power over her, that she could float forever in the heavens, for she was the heavens. Hestor’s breath was the dance of the wind, her heartbeat the thunder roaring in the clouds, her skin shimmering in a thousand colors.

When Hestor awoke, she was not the sky. Neither was she human, but a great lonely expanse of nothingness. An impossibly small particle amongst a sea of particles gently floating within space. Sleep seemed to be a foreign concept. She forgot her dream of the sky. She forgot her shimmering skin, the thick air in her lungs. She was cold and hard, as if dead. Scratchy darkness enveloped her, heavy and acidic like she had been buried alive beneath one thousand miles of hay. She felt numb, and far away.

“When I awoke…” A thought rose from beneath her like the tide. She moved her fingers and felt nothing but a scratchy darkness. An expanse of dull pain danced around her. A flicker. A fragment. A cracked shell of a thought. “Move.”

A flicker. A fragment. A cracked shell of a thought. She tried to move from the pain but this caused more surges, her faraway body tingling and crackling and continued shaking. She allowed herself to know that her movement was for the prevention of succumbing to the darkness. She moved to stay alive. To keep from imploding into a far hungrier void.

“Am I dead.” She wondered. Her wonder a thin cloud.

“Are you dead?” She asked, oh so softly.

She heard nothing, for she was a particle amongst a sea of particles. The story didn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

The Thing from the Sticks

SHORT STORY

BROOKE ELLIOTT Grade 9, Age 14, Central High School, Little Rock, AR, Suzann Saltzman, Educator, Region-at-Large, Affiliate, Gold Medal

“I wanna sit down!”

My breath comes heavy and weak through my lips, and my flashlights shivers in my hands. I’ve found him. I’ve found the bow-backed creature who never leaves his ramshackle cabin in the daytime, only walking when the moon hangs high overhead. I’ve found the creature depending on who you talk to, is called the Beast of Sunny Forest, the Cat Eater, the Sunny Forest Devil, or the Thing from the Sticks. The thin, creaking back is to me, ribs stuck through his tattered flannel shirt like a starved dogs’ chest.

I don’t want to sit down. I don’t want to go anywhere near the Sunny Forest Devil. My hands slip and the flashlight drops into the leafy carpet of the forest, where it fizzles out in the damp. I freeze and shut my eyes. This is how I end. I whimper and try to stop my loud breaths, but I know he’ll grab me now, and take me to his old ramshackle cabin and skin me and cook me and serve me with cats—and “Kid, ain’t gonna hurt ya.”

He turns his misshapen head toward me in the dark, and I get a glimpse of scarred and tattered flesh. I stay where I am, dappled by wanings moonlight, only shaded by the trunk of a sapling oak. The Thing from the Sticks sighs and turns away, shoulders hunching further into his hungry-dog ribcage.

There’s a long silent moment where I’m too scared to stay and too scared to run. He doesn’t grab me. I pick my crinkled flashlight out of the matted carpet of the forest and take a single, halting step forward. Still no snatching.

“Is it…?” I say, shuffling my feet through the rainy leaves. He perks up and turns to me. He doesn’t have a nose.

“Whadya wanna ask?”

“D’you . . . d’you really eat cats?”

There’s another long pause. I’m going to be snatched up. A strange, wheezing sound comes from where he sits, scraping like a scatter of leaves on the porch. He’s laughing. My face heats up.

“Is that what they’re tellin’ the kids I do? What, ya think I ain’t got nothin’ better to do than eat cats?” The Thing cackles, rubbing its scarred forehead with one hand.

“Ain’t a funny question,” I say. I sit down on a bare patch of dirt. Mean old thing. I only knew what Mama and Richie and Samuel Wilkes and the others told me. He wipes at his eyes, shoulders jerking up and down from the laughter.

“Well, no, I don’t eat cats. I catch squirrels, mostly. I cook ‘em.

“With yer bare hands?”

“Course not. I use traps, jus’ like the townfolk. Don’t yer Mama make squirrel stew?”

“My mama makes the best squirrel stew in the country,” I say, pride creeping into my voice. It’s a fact. No one can make squirrel stew like Mama. Mary Ann Dowsdon still tries to sneak looks at our recipe book every Christmas.

“Does she, now?”

He ran his hand over his scarred, melty scalp. There’s still a scrape of hair above his lip, like a weed chared by a campfire. It twists along his mouth when he talks.

“How’s your mama doin’, girl?”

“Why do you wanna know?” I say, shifting my legs. He shakes his head and repeats the question, louder this time. His tone makes me skittish. I start to stand. “She—uh-Mama’s doin’ fine? Why?”

“How’s her hand?”

I jump out of my sitting position, ready to bolt for the house. He turns on his crooked spine and raises a hand, putting the other over his face. His eyes, surrounded by folds of skin that hang like burned leather, plead with me to stay.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to scare ya,” he says, voice only a whisper.

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.

It’s a fact. No one can make squirrel stew like Mama.
The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
There was an implicit understanding in his tone—whatever she had come down with was not his fault, had nothing to do with him.

**Fluke**

SHORT STORY

JUNMOKE JAMES, Grade 11, Age 16, Marietta High School, Marietta, GA. Keisha Kirkpatrick, Educator; Savannah College of Art and Design, Affiliate; Gold Medal

She saw her father once a month. Their time together was limited to eating—breakfast at the cramped pancake house, lunch at the local sports bar. But today, they hadn’t gone out; he was poor, he reminded her, and they couldn’t afford to eat at restaurants anymore. So he cooked dinner for them: beef soup, watery and bland.

She stirred it around, slurped up the vegetables. The meat was bright red, bleeding. It slipped down the cusp of falling asleep. It all felt very violent: the brown script smell of his car. It was almost as if he didn’t exist.

An hour before she was supposed to leave, her father was watching her, waiting hungrily for her opinion, her lips in satisfaction and finished her meal without complaints.

She was only with him for the weekend. And he was so lonely—she couldn’t be around him without noticing the barrenness of everything he inhabited: his spotless clothes, the absence of life in his kitchen, the nonde Jon—she couldn’t be around him without noticing the barrenness of everything he inhabited: his spotless clothes, the absence of life in his kitchen, the non

She reached for the edge of the bathtub and used it to haul herself up. Her abdomen throbbed with pain, but she forced herself to ignore it, forced herself to open the door.

She left the bathroom, leaned against the wall and blinked at her reflection.

“Your mom will be here soon,” he said, putting on his jacket. “Make sure you haven’t left anything.”

She never left anything. She was just as organized as him, just as clean. Her father prided himself on his cleanliness. When she was younger, he spent hours in his office, wiping everything down. She knew which room he’d been in by the smell—the intoxicating scent of chemicals and lemon.

“Dad,” she tried again. “I think I got food poisoning. I can’t stop vomiting.”

He moved quickly behind the table, his hands on the chairs, straightening them, making sure everything was in order. “Are you sure it’s not that time?”

“What time?” she asked. Then, sensing his uncomfor-
tableness, she realized what he was trying to sug-
est. “No, it’s not that time.” It only happened,” she hesitated, “after the soup. That was when my stomach started to hurt.”

He lowered his eyelids. “I feel fine.” There was an implicit understanding in his tone—whatever she had come down with was not his fault, had nothing to do with him. “I don’t,” she said, scooping her belongings into her backpack. “I feel awful.”

The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artandwriting.org/online-galleries.
The story doesn’t end here! Read more at: artwriting.org-online-galleries/
2018 EDUCATOR AWARDS

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers gives special thanks to the educators who provided support, guidance, and encouragement to the National Medalists in the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

GOLD MEDAL PORTFOLIOS

Lijing Bae
Oogie Art
New York, NY

Ariel Maloney
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
Cambridge, MA

Cristy McCarty
Grant High School
Portland, OR

Jennifer McClain
Boise High School
Boise, ID

Manie Morgan
South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts & Humanities
Greenville, SC

Yoko Nomagi
Gibbs High School
St. Petersburg, FL

Melinda Ronayne
Interlochen Arts Academy
Interlochen, MI

Alan Rossi
South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts & Humanities
Greenville, SC

Rebecca Bollen
Perich Center for Arts Education
Golden Valley, MN

Scott Cantrell
Lampeter-Strasburg High School
Lampeter, PA

Mara Cregan
Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts School
Pittsburgh, PA

Casey Curry
Howard W. Blake High School
Tampa, FL

Anne Davey
Hutchison School
Memphis, TN

Yeonglie Yang
ICON Art & Design
Irvine, CA

Karen Yoshihara-Ha
Los Alamitos High School
Los Alamitos, CA

Jina Davidson
Wakefield High School
Arlington, VA

Swapna Elias
McLean High School
McLean, VA

Beth Garcia
Harrison School for the Arts
Lakeland, FL

Scott Gould
South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts & Humanities
Greenville, SC

Alyssa Boehringer
McKinney High School
McKinney, TX

Alan Brown
High Technology High School
Lincoln, NJ

Rosanne Main
New Fairfield High School
New Fairfield, CT

Nina Kemp
Barnstable High School
Hyannis, MA

Douglas Lack
Holliston High School
Holliston, MA

Keith Sadada
Leilahau High School
Wahiawa, HI

Clint Shibley
Mississippi School of the Arts
Brookhaven, MS

Jamie Smith
Homestead High School
Allen, TX

Sandra Miller
Buchanan High School
Buchanan, MI

Mamie Morgan
South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts & Humanities
Greenville, SC

Robert Pierson
Revere High School
Richfield, OH

Marcia Reybiz
Clearwater High School
Clearwater, FL

Alan Rossi
South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts & Humanities
Greenville, SC

Keith Sadada
Leilahau High School
Wahiawa, HI

Cynthia Belay
Mississippi School of the Arts
Brookhaven, MS

Jamie Smith
Homestead High School
Allen, TX

Amada Soesbe
North Mecklenburg High School
Huntersville, NC

Cherisse Thornhill
Design and Architecture Senior High
Miami, FL

Shannon Moller, Milwaukee Art Museum, presents a Block Educator Award to Dean Graf, educator at Rufus King Intermediate High School.

Kalen Thornton
Legend High School
Parker, CO

Christopher Winchester
Lebanon High School
New York, NY

Ju Yun
J Art Studio
Annandale, VA

BEST-IN-GRADE MEDAL

Rita Attuquaye
Otto Middle School
Plano, TX

TJ Betelman
Alabama School of Fine Arts
Birmingham, AL

Wook Choi
Dogie Art
New York, NY

Yoonhee Chung
Anax Cultural Art Center
Duluth, GA

Walter Crump
Commonwealth School
Bosco, MA

CASEY CURRY
Howard W. Blake High School
Tampa, FL

Micya Frankian
Rancho Pico Junior High School
Valencia, CA

Maria Galati
David Douglas High School
Portland, OR

Nicholas Geary
Goose Creek High School
Goose Creek, SC

Brittany Hennessy
South Elgin High School
South Elgin, IL

Michael Jasorka
Venice Arts
Venice, CA

Ashley Jones
Alabama School of Fine Arts
Birmingham, AL

Allison Kornet
Buckingham Browne & Nichols School
Cambridge, MA

Kyung Ju Kwon
Hyo Art
Seoul, South Korea

Ronat Machoff
Prospect Sierra Middle School
El Cerrito, CA

Kwony Maples
Alabama School of Fine Arts
Birmingham, AL

David Oxton
The Governor’s Academy
Byfield, MA

Kasumi Parker
River Valley High School
Yuba City, CA

Rebecca Buchanan
Appomattox Regional Senior High School
Richmond, VA

Whitney Stitt
River Valley High School
Yuba City, CA

Ellen Sears
Rancho Solano Preparatory School
Scotts Valley, CA

Carly Short
Venice Arts
Venice, CA

Christine Tiachte
A W Drayfoos School of the Arts
West Palm Beach, FL

Matthew Varay
Esteban School of the Arts
Toronto, Canada

Holly White
Paideia School
Atlanta, GA

Connie Willson
Lyman Hall High School
San Jose, CA

BLICK EDUCATOR AWARDS

Daniel Brown
Okanagan High School
Okanagan, WA

Dean Graf
Rufus King Intermediate High School
Milwaukee, WI

Joshua Muller
Hoosier High School
Hoosier, OR

Sharon Russell
Albert Hill Middle School
Richmond, VA

Connie Willson
Lyman Hall High School
San Jose, CA

GOLDEN ARTIST RESIDENCY EDUCATORS

Rebecca Buchanan
Appomattox Regional Senior High School
Richmond, VA

Lucy Harackiewicz
Westwood High School
Jamaica Plain, MA

Elizabeth Stainton
Berea School
New York, NY

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers gives special thanks to the educators who provided support, guidance, and encouragement to the National Medalists in the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.
Recognizing young artists and writers begins with the Alliance’s Affiliate Partners, which administer 122 art and writing regions across the country. They are responsible for bringing the Awards to local communities, educators, and students. Affiliates also work closely with local funders and universities to provide scholarship opportunities for top recipients. With our Affiliates, we awarded nearly 90,000 works this year with Gold Keys, Silver Keys, and Honorable Mentions. It is because of our Affiliate Partners’ extraordinary dedication that the Scholastic Awards have been able to reach more participants and provide additional opportunities to creative teenagers across the country.
"Many thanks to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for giving us a chance to participate in this wonderful work. Each time we participate, our teachers are inspired by the compelling student work they read, and they find inspiration for their own classrooms from the diverse genres and varied creative pieces.

Top-of-the-Mitt Writing Project appreciates this opportunity!"

Toby Kahn-Loftus, Top-of-the-Mitt Writing Project
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The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, relies on the generous support of its donors and supporters to carry out programs that encourage and recognize creative young artists and writers, primarily through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Their generosity is key to the success of our programs and we are most grateful to them. Join us in fulfilling our important mission of supporting creative teens through scholarships, exhibitions, workshops, and more.
Visit artandwriting.org/donate to make a tax-deductible contribution.

Special thanks to the major sponsors of the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

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NATIONAL STUDENT POETS PROGRAM

Five outstanding poets are chosen from Scholastic Art & Writing Awards National Poetry Medalists to serve as U.S. National Student Poets, the nation’s highest honor for youth poets presenting original work. These poets, whose works exhibit exceptional creativity, dedication to craft, and promise, serve for a year as youth poetry ambassadors, leading readings and workshops at diverse locations and carrying out intensive community service projects.

This Program, which celebrated its sixth Class during an Appointment Ceremony led by actress and activist Alfre Woodard at the Library of Congress, is a partnership between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. National Student Poets are selected by an esteemed jury of literary luminaries and leaders in education in the arts. For more information, go to artandwriting.org/NSPP.

This year’s class of National Student Poets are traveling across the United States to share their love for poetry, sparking engagement in our nation’s schools, libraries, museums, and many other sites. Through their work, these young writers are bringing attention to the importance of poetry and the pursuit of literacy in its many forms. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is honored to support these talented students throughout their year of service as youth poetry ambassadors.”

Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Students and educators!
Get ready!
The 2019 Scholastic Awards open for submissions on September 12, 2018.

Submission Categories
Architecture & Industrial Design
Art Portfolio
Ceramics & Glass
Comic Art
Critical Essay
Design
Digital Art
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Drawing & Illustration
Editorial Cartoon sponsored by The Herb Block Foundation
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