

a literary magazine

CENTRAL  
COLUMBIA  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

7th & 8th grade  
students

FLIGHT



# Flight

A Literary Magazine

Created by  
7th and 8th Grade Students  
at Central Columbia Middle School

## The Staff of 7th and 8th Grade Literary Magazine



Advisor: Ms. Cronrath

Editors: Gracen Mott; Sarah Esslinger

Staff: Meghan Hrinda; Alexandra Eyerly;  
Kayla Gold; Naomi Casperson; Bryndil  
Kemler

## From the Editors:

Welcome to the first 7th and 8th grade literary magazine! We hope you enjoy reading the ideas and creations of students.

This year, our overall goal was to create a magazine that includes a variety of writing and art that reflects the creative expression of many student voices.

## From the Advisor:

It's not difficult for a teacher to see which students love to write...their energy lights up the room whenever a poem appears on a page or a story begins. These are the students who gave up a lunch period with friends each week to plan how we might create a literary magazine for Cental Columbia Middle School Students.

We began this project together by discussing the possibility of a publication, and how we could make it coalesce with our school's digital conversion. We wanted to include a variety of artwork and writing, and to invite all 7th and 8th graders to submit their work, to share their creations with others. Why? We all believe that through art, we begin to understand ourselves, each other, and the world.

Working with these talented and enthusiastic staff members-- and with all of my eighth graders--has been a privilege.

Cynthia Cronrath, Advisor

*Flight*

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Photo by: Meghan Hrinda

In September...



The following poems were inspired by Ted Kooser's poem, "Porch Swing in September." Eighth graders explore and express their thoughts about the changes that September brings.

## BMX in September

By: Tyler Wagner

The starting gate is rising up,  
the racers get into the lane.

As the announcer states the racers' names,  
a cool wind gust comes just as the gate is  
dropping.

The dirt is packed from a whole year of great  
races.

The riders come around the turn and jump the  
table top.

Now they are neck and neck.

It is a close race.

Week after week all the riders meet up here to  
see who is the fastest.

As the BMX season comes into an end, we  
see the amazing things we have tried.

Many falls, many scrapes and broken bones.

But one thing we know is that BMX is a great  
sport in September.



## Butterflies in September

By: Chas Kocher

Butterflies fly in chilly September nights,  
landing on dark brown branches and between  
colorful leaves.

As skies begin to dim and wind moves the  
branches in rhythm,  
the butterflies settle between the leaves and  
branches.

As the wind moves the branches, they rock  
the butterflies like a cradle.

The leaves and branches sway in the night.  
Butterflies huddling together, listening to each  
other breathe.

Falling asleep listening to the night sounds of  
the country,  
refilling their energy for their journey in the  
morning.



Photo by: Sidney Cieless

## Basketball in September

By: Maddie Ortwine

It is too cold outside to play,  
no more street basketball, all that's left to do  
is play at the inside basketball courts.  
The basketball slowly rolls across the  
hardwood floor,  
its orange color becoming slightly darker.  
Fall leaves fly in through the open door onto  
the colder than normal floor,  
the first sign of fall,  
the sign that basketball players can't wait for.  
The players come inside wearing a heavier  
coat than the day before,  
shivering if the door is open,  
yet sweating from the running.  
Doors are closed and heat is turned on,  
no one is outside in the cold, cold weather.





## Varsity in September

By: Bryndil Kemler

At first I was scared of what they would think,  
too young, just a pansy in a field of  
sunflowers,  
learning from the older players,  
so inexperienced and different than the rest.  
When I got to know them as friends, I was no  
longer scared.  
They got to know me,  
I was accepted, as a teammate, a friend.  
I learned, I made mistakes, I grew.  
I grow still, like a bright blue flower in the rays  
of the sun.  
I play the game and find myself through this  
sport,  
ever so precise like the petals of the smallest  
pansy,  
growing now into the tallest sunflower,  
building from a small pansy to a sunflower  
with the others,  
I fit in now, and I grow more and more,  
growing and learning in the rays of the tallest  
flowers.



Photo by: Sidney Cieless

## Tree's Mind in September

By: Ayesha Patel

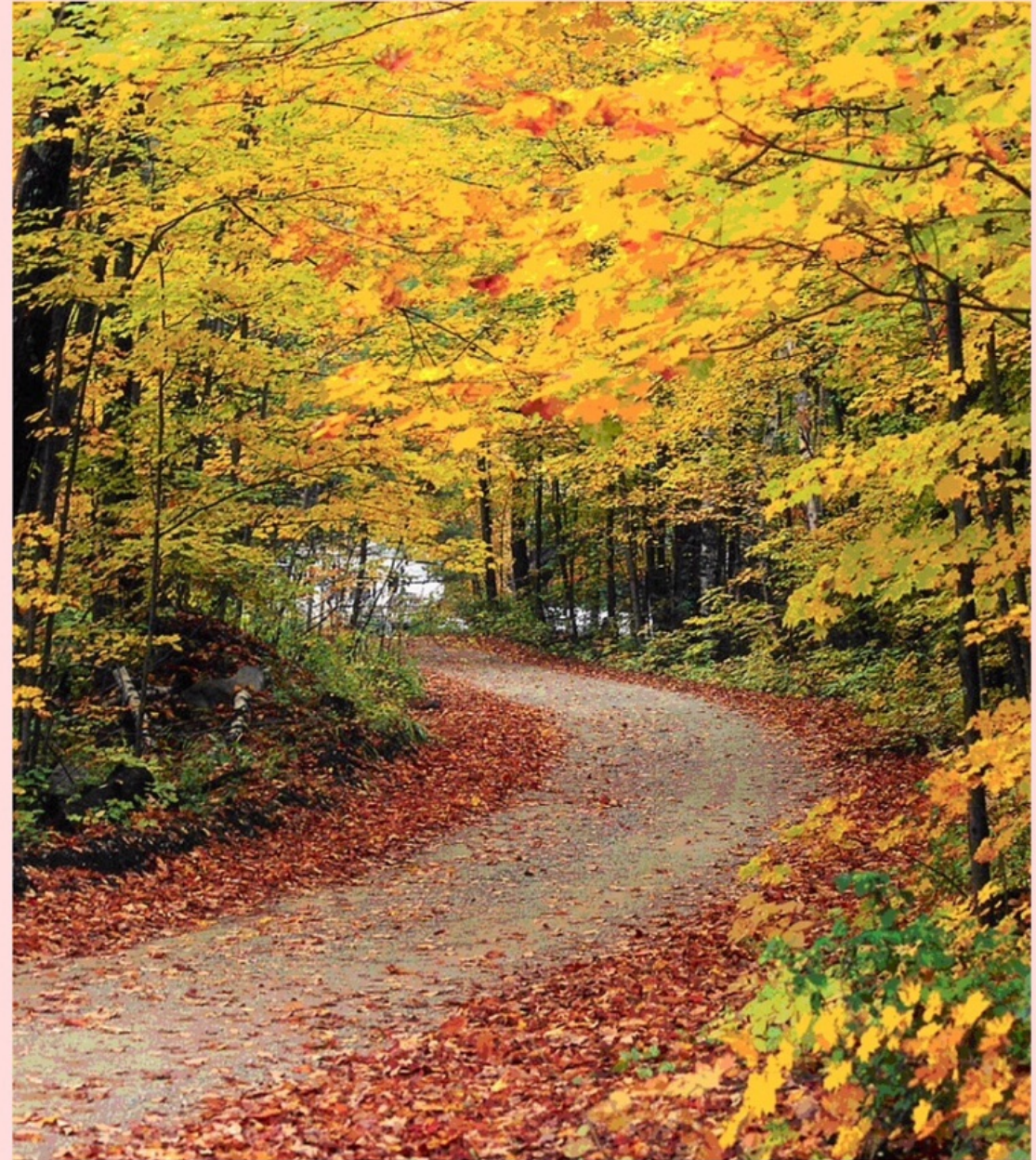
I was just looking down,  
seeing how the pink roses, sweet red  
strawberries, and the orange carrot changed.  
My furry friends just said good night.  
I see my orange, yellow, and red leaves fall  
one by one,  
onto the green and brown floors of the small  
forest.

The warm and plump children start to  
organize and fall on my leaves,  
I just watch, as my roots were tickled, as  
feathers on feet.

It started to get a little breezy, making me  
shiver.

Now my furry friends, go find your food and  
good night to you, too.

In my mind, this is how it should be.



## Swimming Pool in September By: Trevor Webb

Swimming pool in September,  
no more towels all around,  
no more beach balls on the ground,  
no more jumping in the pool,  
now it's time to get back to school,  
swimming pool in September.  
The water is cold,  
no more swimming suits,  
no more sun,  
swimming pool in September.



Photo by: Sidney Cieless

## Rose Bush in September

By: Haley Pensyl

The petals in summer  
are as colorful as can  
be,  
sunlight beats down on  
the flowers.  
As they start to turn  
brown, the leaves shrivel  
up.  
As the days get shorter,  
the thorns on the rose  
bush fall away.  
As all the days get  
shorter,  
the dew drops cling to  
the stems, days at a  
time.



## Red Bench in September

By: Meghan Hrinda

The wood grows cold on the old red bench,  
as the warmth of the day disappears once  
again.

Leaves drift down from the old oak tree,  
And come to rest on the long unused seat.

All around the sky grows dark,  
fiery colors drift to the ground.

The people who once crowded around  
have left for more pressing things.

the benches' wood sags as if in pain.

Ghostly footsteps of what once was echo all  
around,

summer has ended, fun is gone,  
without life the bench stands, all alone.

Only memories are left behind.



## Wood's Melody in September

By: Kayla Gold

The trees are bared in the pale light  
of the morning, their branches like skeletons  
whose leaves have changed and fallen like  
lost souls;  
and a little girl  
walks silently with a melody  
of crunching  
that seems not to wake the sleeping woods.  
She seems to know nothing of danger in the  
woods.

The trees begin to reach out and touch her  
soft, red face and whisper a melody of time.  
In life, when things change, we have to  
work through it, even when it's tough.  
So, dear child, work hard to find the light  
again  
and stay awake.

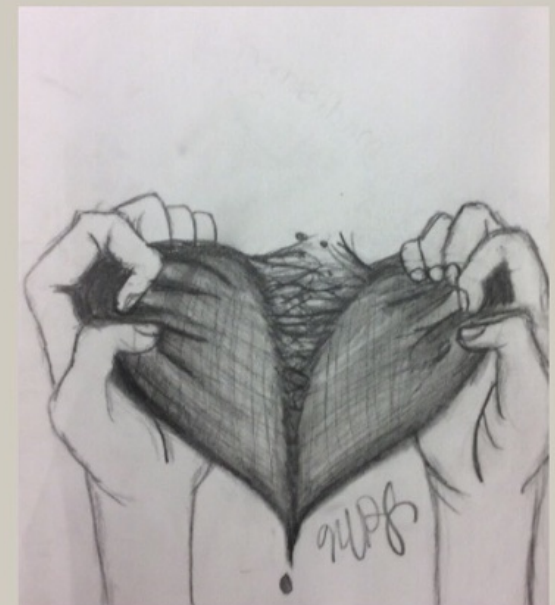




*"You're Okay" by  
Maddie Shaffer*



**VARIOUS PIECES BY:  
MADDIE SHAFFER**



# Suspenseful Short Story Awards:

1st Place: Meghan  
Hrinda

2nd Place: Sarah  
Esslinger

## Honorable Mentions:

1. Deja vu Award - Jacob Busch
2. Figurative Language to create mood - Naomi Caspersen
3. Scary Dream Award -- Overall well crafted use of language: Trae Devlin
4. Disturbed 1st person narrator - Kayla Gold
5. Breathless creepy moment award - Karlie Grosz
6. Best "The narrator must be dead because he stopped writing" award - Tyler Levitski
7. Honorable mention for a quality similar to an urban legend...Hanging tree - Kaylee Hine
8. Best "don't mistake a monster for a cute boy" story - Samantha Cieless
9. Honorable mention for Present tense action unfolding - LJ Woodward
10. Honorable mention for Creepy fog girl award - Bryndil Kemler



## THE MAZE

I WAS WALKING HOME FROM SCHOOL. I LIVE ONLY A MILE AWAY FROM SCHOOL, SO MY MOM LETS ME WALK HOME ON SUNNY DAYS. I HEARD THIS SOMEWHAT SLITHERING VOICE SPEAK OUT TO ME, "SSSTEVEN." THE VOICE DIDN'T STOP THERE, "TO DEFEAT ME, YOU MUST FACE ME." THE VOICE PUT EMPHASIS ON THE WORD "MUST." IT WAS COMING FROM THE BACK SIDE OF A CORNFIELD ON MY RIGHT.

I AM FOURTEEN AND THINK THAT NOTHING FRIGHTENS ME, SO OBVIOUSLY I CALLED OUT, "JACOB, NEXT TIME DRESS IN A WHITE SHEET AND YELL BOO!" JACOB IS EVEN MORE OF AN IDIOT THAN I AM AND A TRICKSTER, SO OF COURSE WE ARE BEST FRIENDS. I WALKED TOWARD THE NOISE, BUT IT HAD DISAPPEARED. I STARTED TO RUN TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE CORNFIELD, DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW JACOB TO GET AWAY. WHEN I ROUNDED THE CORNER, I SUDDENLY STOPPED WHEN I SAW A HOLE IN THE GROUND THAT WAS SHAPED SIMILARLY TO A HUGE HULA HOOP. AS I HAVE MENTIONED EARLIER, I HAVE FOOLISH TENDENCIES. I JUMPED THROUGH THE HOLE.

I LANDED HARD. I TWISTED MY ANKLE, ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T FEEL IT. IT WAS AS IF I COULD SEE IT HAPPENING, BUT THERE WAS NO PAIN. I GINGERLY LOOKED UP. THE WORLD HAD TURNED INTO ALL THE COLORS OF THE RAINBOW, BUT DISTORTED. IT WAS AS IF THE WORLD KEPT SHIFTING. THE LIGHTS WERE MAKING MY EYES BECOME UNFOCUSED, BUT I GUESS THAT WAS THE POINT. THAT WAS NOT EVEN THE WEIRD PART. A COLLECTION OF WALLS SEEMED TO BE PLACED IN FRONT OF ME. WITH A START, I REALIZED I WAS LOOKING AT A MAZE. THE WALLS OF THE MAZE SEEMED TO SHINE FREAKISHLY, AS IF THE LIGHT WAS INSIDE THEM. I COULD JUST BARELY MAKE OUT A LIGHT AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SHIFTING WALLS. THE LIGHT WAS NOT NEON THOUGH; THIS WAS SUNLIGHT. THE SUNLIGHT SEEMED TO BE COMING FROM ABOVE. I FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT! I WAS UNDERGROUND. BUT WHY WOULD A MAZE BE PLACED UNDERGROUND? I STARTED TO RUN THROUGH THE BEGINNING OF THE MAZE. I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO GET TO THE SUNLIGHT.

AS SOON AS I STEPPED INTO THE MAZE, THE SAME VOICE THAT SPOKE EARLIER CALLED OUT, "I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU, SSTEVEN." IT AMAZED ME HOW SIMILAR THE VOICE WAS TO THE HUMAN INTERPRETATION OF A SNAKE'S VOICE. ANOTHER PERSON WALKED OUT OF A PASSAGE IN THE MAZE RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM. SHE WAS WEARING A LONG, GOLDEN DRESS THAT WAS SCATTERED WITH SEQUINS. SHE SEEMED VAGUELY FAMILIAR. WHERE HAVE I SEEN HER BEFORE? I SAW HER LAST CHRISTMAS! BUT WHY WOULD SHE BE DOWN HERE?

THE FUNNY PART OF ALL THIS WAS, I WASN'T SCARED. IT WAS AS IF I COULDN'T FEEL. I COULD THINK OF ONLY ONE THING TO SAY, "WHO ARE YOU?"

"YOU DON'T EVEN REMEMBER ME?! I SPENT FIFTEEN DOLLARS ON THAT SHIRT FOR YOU LAST CHRISTMAS!" SHE LOOKED AS IF I HAD BETRAYED HER.

IT SUDDENLY CAME TO ME, "YOU ARE THE ONE WHO GOT ME THAT HARRY POTTER SHIRT! I WORE THAT SHIRT FOR PICTURE DAY. MOM WAS LESS THAN THRILLED ABOUT THAT THOUGH."

THE WOMAN SMILED. A WARM, MOTHERLY SMILE THAT ALMOST MADE ME FORGET THAT I HAD FALLEN THROUGH A HOLE AND WAS IN A RAINBOW MAZE. ALMOST.

"WHY ARE YOU DOWN HERE? WHY AM I DOWN HERE FOR THAT MATTER?" I DIDN'T FEEL SCARED; THERE WERE NO BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH. I FELT AS IF IT WERE NORMAL BEHAVIOR TO FALL THROUGH A HOLE AND SEE ONE OF YOUR RELATIVES.

"DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? YOUR DESTINY! THAT IS WHAT HAS BROUGHT YOU HERE!" AT THIS POINT, I WAS GIVING HER A QUIZZICAL LOOK. "OH, CHILD. IT IS WRITTEN THAT YOU MUST DEFEAT ME. YOU MUST MAKE IT THROUGH THE MAZE! THERE IS NO OTHER WAY."

WITH THAT SHE TURNED AROUND, AND HEADED BACK INTO THE MAZE. A WALL TO THE BACK OF ME SHIFTED AND I WAS SEALED IN. "OF COURSE," I THOUGHT. I DID THE ONLY LOGICAL THING, AND I WALKED INTO THE MAZE. SUDDENLY, THE RAINBOW LIGHTS DIMMED AS IF I HAD PUSHED A BUTTON. I TRIED TO TAKE THE MOST DIRECT, STRAIGHTFORWARD PATH. AFTER I HAD ONLY WALKED A FEW YARDS, A RUSTLING SOUND STARTED. AT FIRST, IT WAS LIKE A SINGLE SHEET OF PAPER HAD BEEN CRUMPLED NEARBY. THE MOST STRANGE PART WAS THAT THE SOUND ONLY OCCURRED WHEN I STEPPED ON THE GROUND. THE CLOSER I GREW TO THE CENTER, THE LOUDER THE NOISE BECAME. SOON, THE NOISE WAS AS LOUD AS A THOUSAND SHEETS OF PAPER BEING CRUMPLED.

THAT'S WHEN THE KNOCKING STARTED. I HAD JUST TURNED INTO A DEAD END. I STEPPED CLOSE TO THE WALL IN FRONT OF ME WHEN IT HAPPENED. IT WAS AS IF I WERE GOING TO ANSWER THE DOOR, BUT THE KNOCKING SOUND WAS AMPLIFIED BY TWENTY. I JUMPED, BUT I WASN'T SCARED. MY EMOTIONS SEEMED TO BE DISCONNECTED FROM MY BODY. IT WAS NOT A COMFORTABLE FEELING. I HEADED THROUGH ANOTHER PASSAGEWAY AND I STARTED TO WALK THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THE WALKWAY INSTEAD.

I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MAZE BY THIS POINT. TWO MORE DANGERS AWAITED ME HERE. SNAKES WERE FIRST TO COME. I MUST SAY THIS: SNAKES SCARE ME EVEN MORE THAN PEOPLE. AND THAT IS SAYING SOMETHING. THE SNAKES TWISTED AROUND MY ANKLES AS TIGHTLY AS PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE.

"WHY AM I NOT SCREAMING?" IT WAS A WEIRD QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF. BUT REALLY, WHY NOT? I STARTED TO JOG. I COULD NOT RUN DUE TO THE WEIGHT THE SNAKES WERE PUTTING ON MY LEGS. AS I HAVE SAID, THERE WAS ANOTHER SURPRISE IN STORE FOR ME.

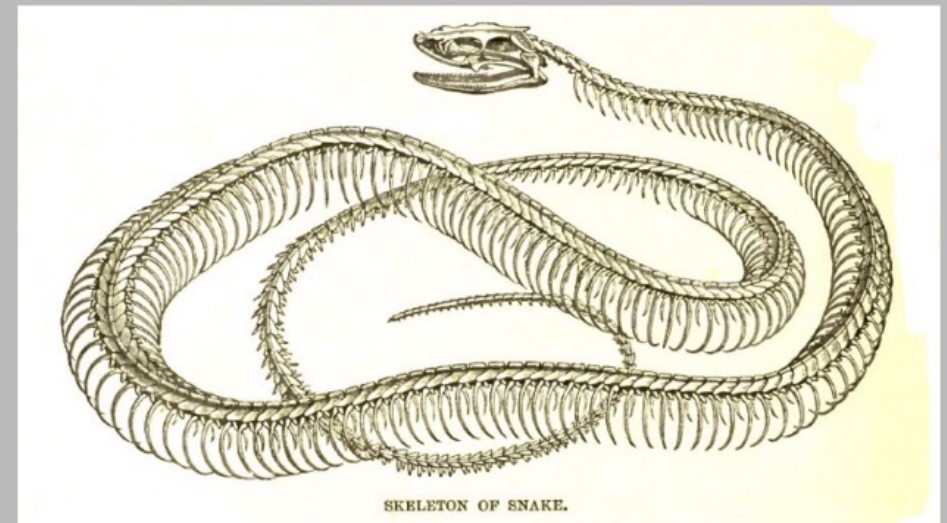
THE FIRST BLADE NICKED MY EAR. WHEN I FELT THE BLOOD RUNNING DOWN THE SIDE OF MY CHEEK, IT WAS LIKE ANOTHER PERSON'S BLOOD. I DIDN'T FEEL PAIN, BUT I WAS UPSET THAT I HAD GOTTEN HURT. THE KNIVES WERE JAGGED, SHARP TOOLS THAT WERE AIMED AT ME EVERY MINUTE OR SO. I DODGED THE SECOND KNIFE BY DROPPING TO THE GROUND. STILL JOGGING, MY FEET WERE SLOWING DOWN, ALTHOUGH I WASN'T TELLING THEM TO. I REALIZED THE SNAKES MUST BE CUTTING OFF THE CIRCULATION IN MY FEET. I WAS TRYING TO MAKE ONE LAST EFFORT TO GET OUT OF THE MAZE WHEN THE KNIFE CAUGHT MY SIDE.

IT'S FUNNY REALLY, I WAS SO CLOSE TO THE LIGHT. THE BEAUTIFUL LIGHT OF FREEDOM. WHEN I SAW THE BLADE ZIPPING THROUGH THE AIR, I KNEW THERE WAS NO WAY TO STOP IT. THE PAIN WAS NOT MY OWN, BUT THE SIDE OF MY BODY IS MINE. I FELL TO THE FLOOR. THERE WAS ONLY ABOUT FIVE YARDS TO THE LIGHT NOW. I'M PATHETIC. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I FELL THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE GROUND, I THOUGHT OF MY FAMILY. MY PARENTS' FACES SWAM BEFORE ME, ALONG WITH MY BROTHER DANNY'S. IT WAS THE LOOK ON DAN'S CHUBBY TODDLER FACE THAT GAVE ME THE WILL POWER TO GET UP AND TO DRAG MY USELESS FEET ONE AFTER THE OTHER. THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WAS CONCERN. THE CONCERN WAS FOR ME AND ME ALONE. I GRABBED THE EDGE OF THE DOORWAY AND PULLED MYSELF INSIDE.

SHE WAS STANDING THERE. THE WOMAN WAS STILL WEARING THAT GOLDEN DRESS. "YOU HAVE DONE WELL." WITH THAT SAID, SHE LEFT THE SMALL AREA WHERE WE WERE STANDING. I STARTED TO BE LIFTED UP AS IF I WERE ON AN ELEVATOR. PROMPTLY, I FELL UNCONSCIOUS WHERE I WAS STANDING.

THERE WAS SOMETHING ROUGH SHAKING MY SHOULDER. DANNY WAS MILLIMETERS FROM MY EYES. I JUMPED. THE FRIGHT I HAD! WAIT...I FELT FRIGHTENED. I FELT. THE THREE YEAR-OLD CANNOT GRASP THE REASONING OF GENTLY SPEAKING TO SOMEONE TO WAKE THEM (AND FROM A DISTANCE TOO). "AUNT MARIE IS HERE!" HE SHOUTED AT ME. WITHOUT WARNING, DAN WAS PULLING ME OUT OF BED AND DOWN A FLIGHT OF CARPETED STAIRS. WAITING TO HUG ME, MY AUNT MARIE WAS STANDING AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS WEARING A VERY FAMILIAR LONG, GOLDEN, AND SEQUINED DRESS.

BY: SARAH ESSLINGER



## THE DARK ONES

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DIFFERENT. APPEARANCES, ACTIONS AND THE LIKE. I'VE BEEN ABLE TO FEEL THINGS NO ONE ELSE IN THIS GODFORSAKEN TOWN CAN. I CAN REMEMBER THE LITTLE THINGS. SOUNDS, SMELLS, COLORS. NOT MUCH, NOT EVEN ENOUGH TO FORM A COHERENT THOUGHT, BUT IT IS THERE. I NEVER KNEW HOW TO EXPRESS MYSELF, SO I JUST PLAYED THEIR GAME. I BECAME A SOULLESS, THOUGHTLESS, FEELING-LESS BEING. FOR AS LONG AS I REMEMBER FROM THE PAST YEARS, I HAD BEEN ONE OF THEM. I DID NOT REMEMBER ANYTHING BEFORE THE NOTHINGNESS. I CONVINCED MYSELF I WAS LIKE THEM, BUT THAT ALL CHANGED THAT DAY, EVERYTHING I CAME TO KNOW WAS GONE, ABANDONED BY ME.

I WAS WANDERING IN THE WIDE EXPANSE OF FOREST BEHIND MY HOUSE, INTRIGUED BY THE TRIVIAL THINGS IN LIFE. I STUMBLED, SAYING NOTHING AS I GOT UP AGAIN. THEN I SAW A DOOR, PARTIALLY HIDDEN BY LEAVES AND UNDERGROWTH. BEING MY CURIOUS SELF, I CHOSE TO SEE WHERE IT LED. IT TOOK A FAIR AMOUNT OF MY STRENGTH TO FORCE THE RUSTY, CREAKING HINGES TO MOVE, BUT I ACCOMPLISHED THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE FEAT IN ONLY A FEW MINUTES; I WAS RUNNING ON PURE ADRENALINE. I TOOK A DEEP BREATH AS I LOOKED INTO THE CHASM BEFORE ME. I SHOOK MY HEAD IN DISBELIEF, AS I DESCENDED INTO THE ROOM THAT WOULD CHANGE MY ENTIRE LIFE. I SOMEHOW KNEW THAT I BELONGED WITH WHATEVER THIS WAS. I TRAVELLED DOWN THREE FLIGHTS OF OLD MARBLE STAIRS THAT SEEMED MADE IN ANOTHER WORLD. I ENDED UP IN A DARK ROOM, LIT BY SOMETHING I CAN ONLY EXPLAIN AS TORCHES; THEY WERE SOMETHING THE LIKES OF ANY PERSON IN THEIR RIGHT STATE OF MIND HAS NEVER SEEN. THE WALLS WERE BARE AND LOOKED TO BE MADE OF CONCRETE, AND THE FLOOR WAS SIMPLY TIGHTLY PACKED DIRT. BUT, WHAT REALLY STRUCK ME AS ODD WAS THE LONE CHAIR AND TABLE IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. ON THE TOP OF THE TABLE WAS A BOOK, JUST A PLAIN JOURNAL TYPE THING. MY CURIOSITY GOT THE BETTER OF ME AND I SAT DOWN.

AS SOON AS I SAT DOWN I FELT SOMETHING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, A WARM, BUZZING FEELING, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT. THEN, I HEARD A NOISE, STATIC, MECHANIC SOUNDS. THE ROOM WAS SPINNING, THE WALLS WERE OPENING! I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, THEN I SAW IT. IT WAS A BRIGHT LIGHT SEEMINGLY COMING FROM NOWHERE. THEN I KNEW. THE KNOWLEDGE SEEPED INTO ME LIKE WATER INTO A SPONGE.



AT THAT MOMENT, I LEAPT OUT OF THE CHAIR AND BACK UP THE STAIRS INTO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. I RAN AS FAST AS I COULD DOWN THE PATH AND INTO THE HOUSE. I WAS SCARED; THIS WAS THE HOUSE THAT THEY ALL WERE TAKEN FROM. I WASN'T SAFE ANYWHERE. THE DAYS PASSED UNEVENTFULLY IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS; I TRIED TO FORGET AND RETURN TO NORMAL BUT I COULDN'T. THE SHADOW-FIGURES WERE DRAWING NEARER, AND I WAS TERRIFIED. WALKING DOWN THE HALLWAYS, EVEN USING THE RESTROOM SPARKED FEAR INTO ME. I COULDN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT THEM BEING THERE. MY STRENGTH WAS DRAINING, AND I WAS FAILING. AS ALWAYS, NOBODY SPOKE, AS ALWAYS EVERYTHING WAS COLORLESS, ALMOST. I WAS STARTING TO SEE THE COLORS THAT I SAW IN THE VISIONS FROM THE ROOM. I COULD FINALLY SEE THE GREEN OF THE TREES, I COULD SEE THE COLORS OF MY HAIR AND EYES. IT WAS ASTONISHING TO ME. IT IS SO SAD THAT I CAN'T TELL ANYONE, FOR THEY WILL NOT LISTEN, THEY WILL NOT EVEN HEAR. THEY WILL JUST BUMBLE ALONG AS ALWAYS, THEY WILL NOT SEE, THEY WILL NOT INTERACT, LIFE WILL JUST GO ON.

I COULD REMEMBER. I COULD REMEMBER LIFE BEFORE THIS; THE LAUGHTER, THE LIFE THAT I HAD MISSED FOR SO LONG. I REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAYS, AND FUN. I-I-I REMEMBERED THOSE GIRLS, THEY WERE MY FRIENDS, THEY WERE IN MY LIFE EVERY SINGLE DAY. IT HASN'T BEEN YEARS--IT WAS IN PERSPECTIVE FOR ME NOW; IT WAS MONTHS AGO. I FIGURED THIS OUT, AND ONCE I DID THE DARK THINGS DREW EVEN CLOSER TO MY WORLD. I COULD SOMETIMES FEEL THEIR WARM BREATHS ON MY NECK. I HAVEN'T SLEPT IN DAYS, I JUST CAN'T. THE GRIP THAT THEY HAVE ON MY LIFE IS CHILLING; THEY ARE EVERYWHERE. I GO NOWHERE WITHOUT THEM. IT HAS BECOME A NORMAL OCCURRENCE FOR ME.

I WILL SLEEP FOR I SIMPLY CANNOT TAKE IT ANYMORE, I AM A SIMPLE HUMAN, I MUST SLEEP. THE DAY PASSES LIKE ALL THE OTHERS BEFORE IT, JUST THE REGULAR MOTIONS OF DAILY LIFE HERE. NIGHT APPROACHES QUICKLY AND I AM FRIGHTENED, BUT I MUST CONQUER THIS, I TELL MYSELF, AS I SETTLE INTO A FITFUL SLEEP.

I AWAKE WITH A GASP, A SOUND I HAVEN'T UTTERED SINCE THIS HAPPENED; THE ONLY SOUND IN FACT. THE CREATURES LOOM OVER ME WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED AND TEETH BARED, BUT SOMEHOW I'M NOT SCARED. I FALL INTO THEIR TIGHT EMBRACE AND SIMPLY FLOAT AWAY. BEFORE I LEAVE I HEAR ONE OF THEM UTTER IN A RASPY GUTTURAL VOICE, "YOU ARE HOME MY CHILD."

SINCE I LEFT, I VISIT EVERYDAY, UNSEEN BY THEIR WORLD. NOTHING HAS CHANGED, NO ONE NOTICES MY ABSENCE. I KNEW TOO MUCH, MY CURIOSITY SEPARATED ME. I WAS TAKEN BECAUSE EVEN AFTER THEY SUCKED THE LIFE OUT OF ALL OF THESE PEOPLE, I HELD ON TO MYSELF. I KEPT MY SOUL, JUST LIKE THE GIRLS BEFORE ME. WE HAVE BEEN REUNITED ONCE AGAIN, REJOINED OUR KINDRED SPIRITS. THEY HAVE BECOME MY FAMILY, THE DARK ONES TOOK US INTO THEIR WORLD. WE ARE DIFFERENT. WE ARE FIGHTERS. WE ARE THE CREATURES NOW, CONSTANTLY LOOKING FOR THE DIFFERENT ONES TO BRING INTO OUR WORLD. WE ARE THE ONES THAT YOU SEE IN THE SHADOWS; WE ARE WHAT YOU ARE AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT. WE ARE WHAT CAUSES TOWNS TO GO OFF THE MAP. WE ARE THE ONES WHO TAKE YOUR EVERYTHING. WE ARE THE DARK ONES.

BY: MEGHAN HRINDA

# A Pilgrim's Point of View

Narratives Describing the Journey  
on the Mayflower

Based Upon Historical Research



# My Story As Priscilla Mullins

Have you ever imagined riding on a boat, on a treacherous journey, filled with conflict, and waiting for years to arrive to a new land for freedom? Well, if you haven't, then, I need to tell you the truth. The truth is--it wasn't fun. It was terrible. At the age of eighteen, I had seen so much that I still suffer from. My name is Priscilla Mullins, and this is my story on the Mayflower.

On July 1620, I set sail with my father, my brother, who is named Joseph, and my mother, who is named Alice, on the Mayflower. As I climbed up the railing, I smelled the saltiness of the sea, and looked out to the horizon of the village, saying good-bye to the place I once lived.

"Come on, Priscilla! We have to follow mom and dad, or they will be fierce with us!" Joseph winced.

"I'm coming," I scoffed at him.

Men were leaving and entering the ship. They were carrying barrels of supplies for our journey for freedom. The ship supplies contained gun powder for weapons, food, and other goods that we kept in our homes in England.

"She's all packed and ready for an adventure!" a man yelled to the crew.

The sea is full of dangers. There are pirates that could attack and shipwrecks caused by storms. I even heard that some passengers fell overboard and drowned or got sick and died.

Luckily, as we sailed on, the Mayflower did not sink or get taken over by pirates. The ship was only damaged by a bad storm halfway to America. We sailed the northern path across the Atlantic to avoid pirates.

As the sea rocked back and forth, to and fro, my family and I, and other pilgrims, sat in a cold, dark cargo hold that was as dark as night. This caused people to get seasick. It felt as if we were stuck inside a butter churn for months.

"Don't worry. We will be there in no time," my father assured us in a cheerful way.

"I hope so! I feel so sick and shaken up!" my mother complained.

When the first winter came, I experienced a heartbreaking event that lingers in my mind once in a while, like a lost soul finding its way to Heaven. My father, brother, and mother died and I was the only one alive. We had promised each other we would live a happy life at this new land. I was an orphan at that point in time trying to conquer Mother Nature to prove to her that I would live to see the new land.

Months and days passed, and we were still on the Mayflower, until we arrived at Cape Cod on November 11th, 1620. That meant we were on the Mayflower for 66 days. A few weeks later, we sailed up to Plymouth and built a little town to live happily and freely.

I was very happy to be off that unpleasant ship, but I still felt sad that my family wasn't there to see it. I would be alone until I got married. Until then, I would just have to make it through alone, and maybe someday, I will see my family again.

By: Kayla Gold



## John Walsh

My name is John Walsh. I grew up in a small town in Ireland as a farmer's son. I had a good childhood, until my family's farm stopped growing all its food. We didn't have any money coming in, so I started stealing things. They weren't expensive or anything, just little stuff to sell. My family got by, but barely, so I stole things of more value. I eventually took so much that there was a price on my head so big that even my friends wouldn't think twice about selling me out. To get away, I snuck onto a ship one night. I was going to England, leaving my family behind.

When I got to England, I got a job as a sailor on a ship called the Mayflower. It wasn't all that great, but it was giving me some money. I went around trading the money for cloth and wine, until a group of Pilgrims were going to the New World. This meant that I was going, too.

We set off onto the water that was as blue as the sky. I was excited to be going to the New World, even if it was just for a little while. After the first few days, people were getting cramped.

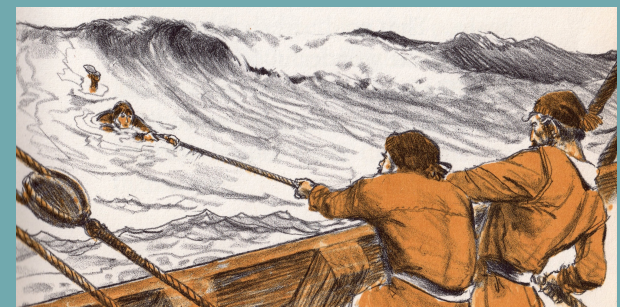
We all knew food was precious so we couldn't waste it. I went to go eat dinner and got up after a few minutes to use the bathroom. When I got back, another crew member was munching on my food. I approached him and asked what he was doing. He said it was his food. I told him he was mistaken and he called me a lying, alcoholic, potato eater. That made me mad. With one punch, I knocked him down in the ground. Then I sat down and enjoyed my dinner.

I was ordered by my captain to go check on the Pilgrims. When I went down to check on them, I saw a man with a thick, dark, red liquid oozing out of his leg, like a dam breaking and spilling water all over. I quickly told another man to find a doctor. I acted fast by wrapping some towels around the wound. Just as I was about to tie it off, a doctor came and dismissed me. I was glad I could do something to help him.

Word had spread throughout the crew that a different sailor had died as unexpectedly as a blue moon. No one was sad because nobody knew him very well. I was definitely not sad because he was the one that took my food.

The captain called me to his quarters one day. He gave me a promotion because of my quick thinking with the wounded pilgrim. He said that he needs men like me leading on his ship. I was happy as a clam because a promotion meant a higher pay.

I was steering the ship through a bad storm. The rain was stinging my skin and I couldn't wait to go to sleep. I kept on dozing off and I was mad at myself for it. When I was about to doze off again, I saw a man fall from the ship and into the rough waters. I couldn't leave my post. Feeling guilty, I saw a man dart forward to help him. He pulled the wet man up to the slippery deck with a rope. A wave of relief went through me. We didn't need another death.

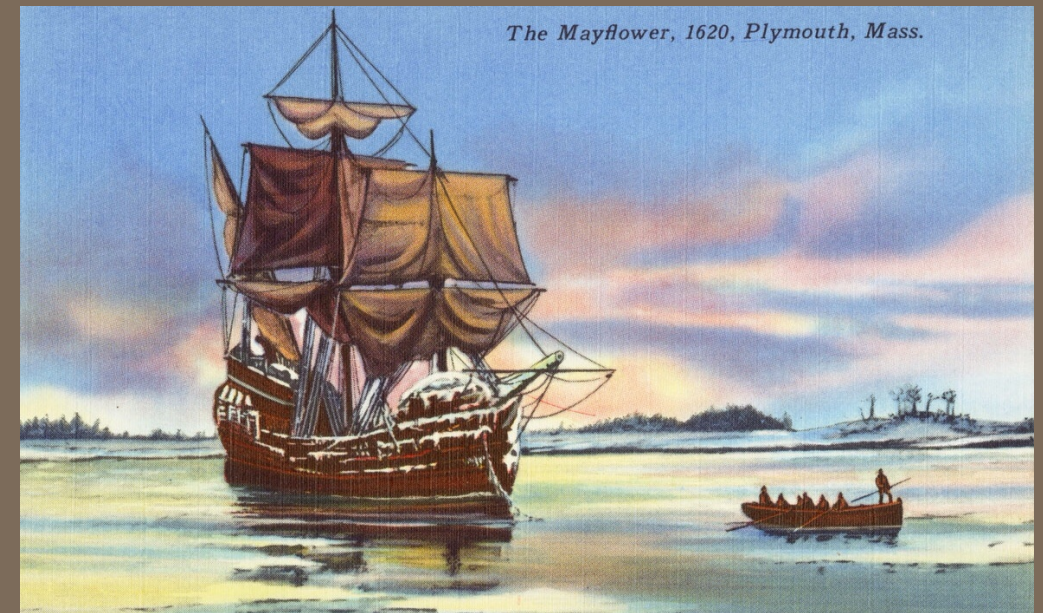
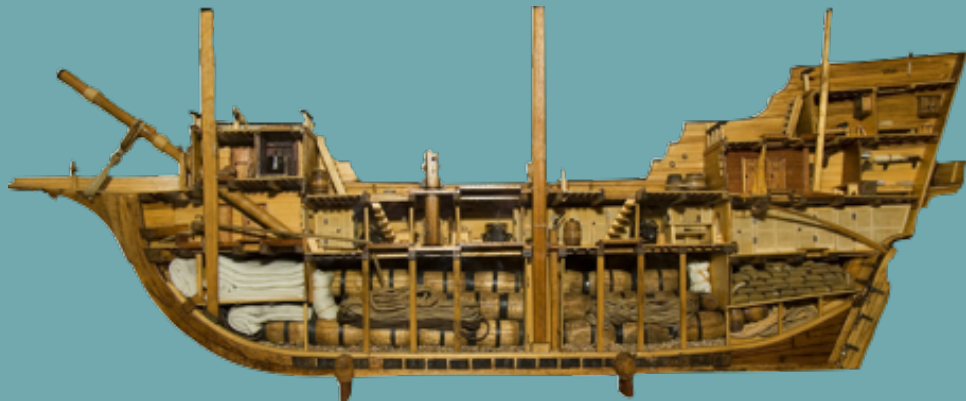


I was told by the captain to check on the pilgrims again. I went down. Everybody seemed fine. No bleeding legs this time. I came beside a middle aged women who was looking rather lonely. I asked her why she was going to the New World. She looked directly at me and told me a she was looking for a new start.

I finally made it to the New World, but we had to live in the ships for a few more months before we could build houses on land. After we finished building the houses, the Mayflower was heading back to England. I told my captain that I was going to stay in the New World. The captain sighed, "I'm sad to see you go laddie."

"I'm sad too," I responded "But I need a new start."

By: Jacob Busch



*The Mayflower, 1620, Plymouth, Mass.*



## Bethany's Tale

Will we ever make it to America in this small, crowded ship? I am a seven year old Pilgrim girl named Bethany. I am so scared.

I am on a ship called the Mayflower in 1620. The ship is filled with people, their belongings and their farm animals. Many people are seasick and don't have the energy to take care of their families. The storms are violent and dangerous.

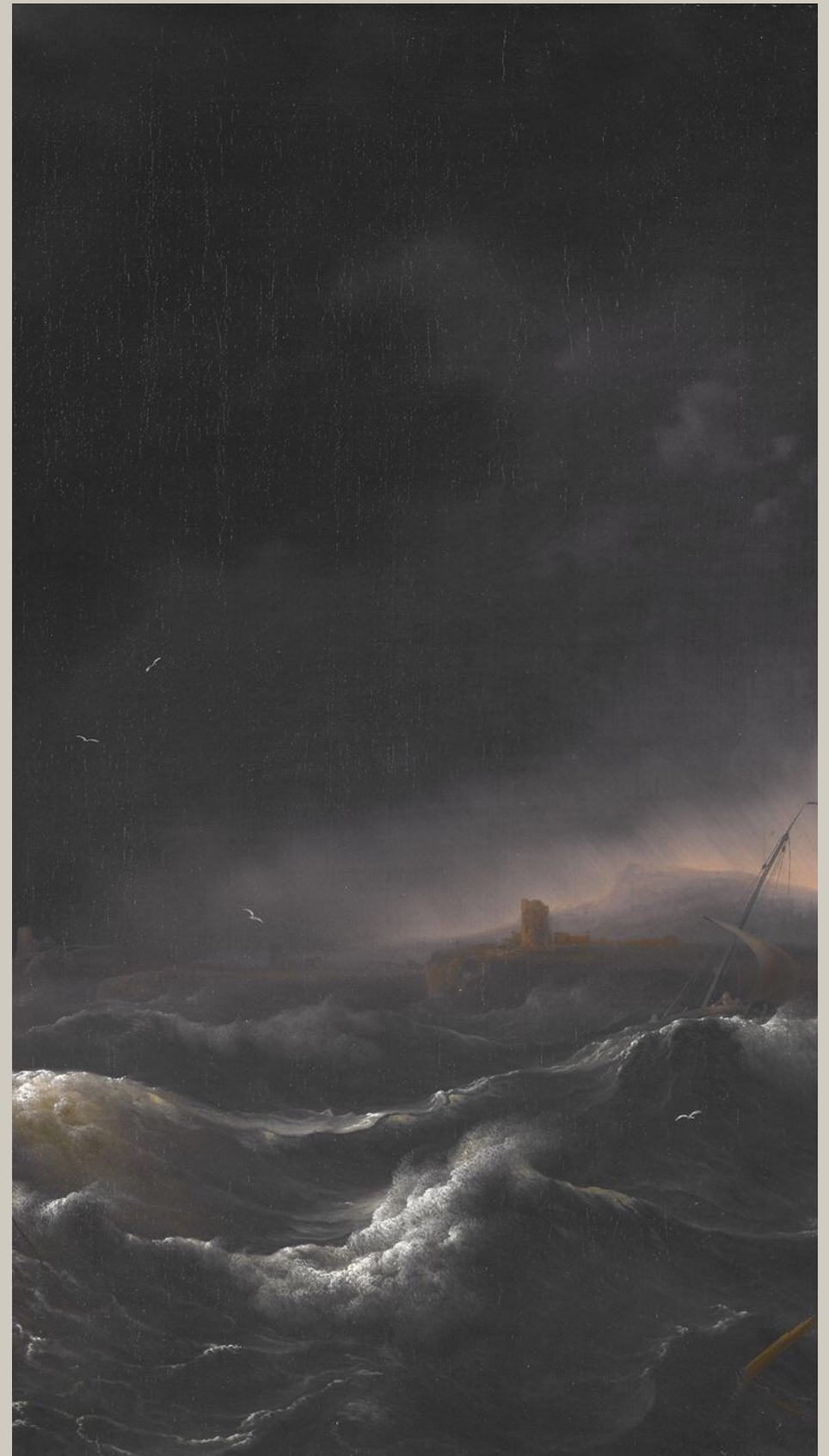
I am freezing cold and wish I had a warm, wool blanket to cover up with. I am in a dark and cold cargo hold. It smells terrible because of the farm animals. People are seasick and vomiting. The waves are hammering the boat. The waves sound like cannons shooting from a pirate ship.

During the storms, I worry that people will be swept overboard. I saw John Howland get swept off the deck of the ship. He grabbed a rope and pulled himself back onboard safely. It frightened me.

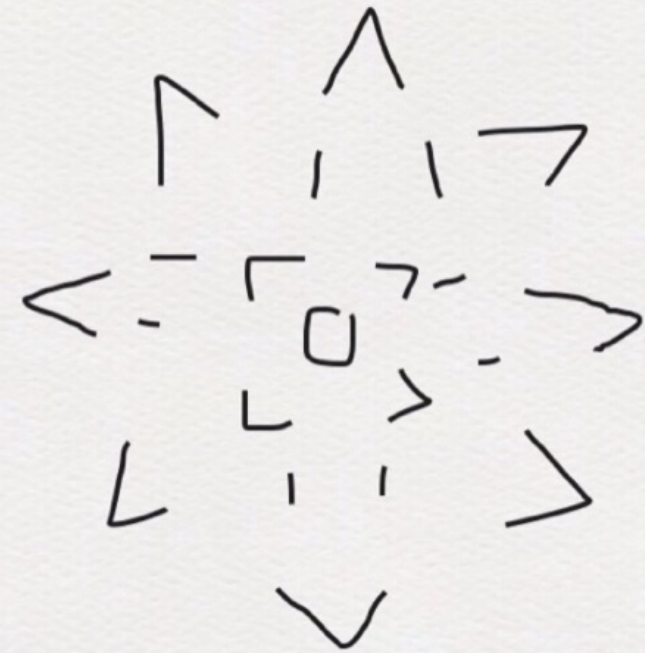
I was fearful that I would get sick and die. A sailor perished, but the colonists believed he died because God was punishing him for teasing the passengers about their seasickness. I was angry at him and I wish he had never come onboard the ship. I wonder if the other sailors felt angry towards him for teasing the passengers.

I want this voyage to be over! This voyage is very difficult. I don't know how much more of this I can take. I hope there is a better life in America and that all this suffering was worthwhile.

By: Kay Riffindifil



## *Winter Poems*



These poems were written by students who were inspired by the winter wonderland outside.

# A Winter Lyric

By: Kayla Gold

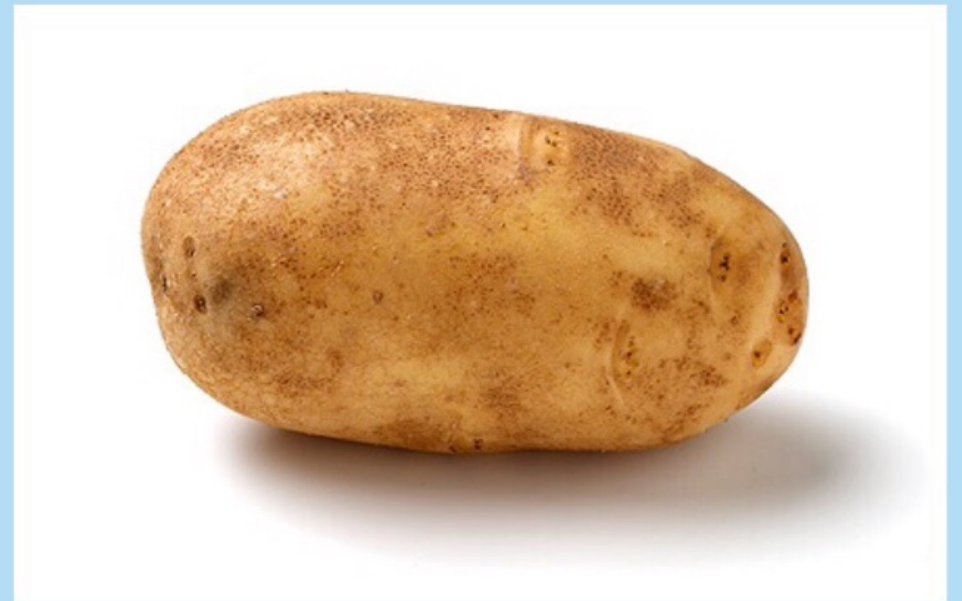
The trees are asleep  
as the snow kisses them  
softly, like a mother tucking  
her children in for bed.  
Snowflakes begin  
to fall slower and slower  
like an angel that fell  
from heaven.  
Beautiful and soft.  
Soft as the night,  
and as beautiful as  
the stars that glisten above.  
Winter is her name.  
Don't be fooled by her  
majestic ability though.  
She can be cold.  
Cold as a sinner.  
But don't be alarmed,  
enjoy the beauty  
of her call.



# Couch Potato

By: Sierra Seal

It was early in the morning  
When I got an alert on my phone  
that said there was no school.  
I was filled with joy  
to be able to sleep in.  
The first thing I did was take  
a cat nap.  
When I awoke, I turned on the tv and  
watched reality TV.  
Every reality marathon they had on,  
I watched.  
A couch potato I was.  
Laying around drinking hot  
Chocolate.  
Eating every fatty snack.



# Snowman

By: Ny'Asia Lewis

The white, fluffy crystals of snow  
dropping on my forehead, giving me chills.  
As my brother and I were walking to the park,  
walking on clouds of snow.  
Once we got there,  
we all started to compact  
snow together, and roll snow.  
It felt like as if I were growing ice  
cubes on my fingers.  
Rubbing my hands together to  
keep warm,  
we were finally done.  
Even though the snowman was  
lopsided,  
I said to it, "You are one good  
looking snowman!"



Winter

By: Ny'Asia Lewis

Snow makes me happy.

Snow days equal no school.

I love the way snow looks---

clouds on clouds on clouds.

I live for finding the cleanest snow,

scooping it up in a cup, pouring

juice on the snow---

It tastes so great.

I love winter; it makes me feel

happy.



The Night Walker  
By: Kayla Gold

The sound of snow crunches  
as the Night Walker walks.  
She knows what has to be  
done; as she walks through the night.  
The owl above her watches her  
every move like a mother watches  
over her children as they play in  
a field of flowers.  
"Where are you going Night Walker?"  
The owl called from a snowy tree top.  
"I'm off on a mission!" The Night Walker  
cried, "To conquer Winter!"  
She walked some more.  
It began to get colder and colder.  
The cold winter wind whispered softly,  
"Where are you off to Night Walker?"  
"I'm off to defeat Winter." She said with a shiver.  
As she walked some more, it got  
harder and harder for the Night Walker as  
the small dancing snowflakes  
danced around her.  
"Follow us Night Walker! We'll lead you to  
Winter! Come! Come! Follow!"  
She followed the little snowflakes to a  
cold snowy cave.  
"Winter! Show yourself! For I am not afraid!"  
The brave Night Walker called.  
Snowflakes began to circle  
around the Night Walker and a voice as clear  
as a day said,  
"So, you would like to conquer me?"  
"I do!" She bravely cried.  
"I do wish to conquer you!"  
"Then let the war begin!"  
Ice cycles began to fall all over.  
Luckily, not only Winter had powers, but  
The Night Walker had them, too.  
Bright as day her powers shined.  
It was as bright enough to make the  
night light up like the day.  
Loud cries came from Winter  
as a sign of defeat  
and all was silent.  
Not one snowflake showed.  
Night Walker walked out of the cave and  
out into the moonlight.  
"From this day forward  
everyone will know about the girl  
who conquered Winter."  
As she walked the stars and moon cried,  
"The Night Walker has conquered Winter!  
The Night Walker has conquered Winter!"  
Throughout the little village as the  
Night Walker walked proudly that night.



Winter

By: Dominic Coombe

What is winter?

Winter is gray,

Winter is white,

Will I see the stars tonight?

Winter tastes cold,

Winter tastes stale,

No wonder my skin is so pale.

Winter is dull,

Winter is bleak,

Winter wakes when you're weak.





# Personal Narratives



Stories Recounting Events of the  
Past,  
Hidden from View

# Flood of 2011

I see the water slowly moving like a pile of slow turtles. But this wasn't a pile of slow turtles, it was water about to destroy our lives. It seems like every second that goes by is an hour. Unlike the water creeping towards our homes, the water in the bank is moving so quickly it's crazy. I couldn't see a thing. Then I saw a boat.

"Why would somebody go out there?" I thought. "Maybe, they're going for a trip and never coming back." I realized that they were rescuing people going through the natural disaster, as I was.

On the morning of September 1, 2011, my family was getting out of bed. As we were getting ready for school, we completed our old everyday routine. We sat for about 10 minutes before my mom made us breakfast. After breakfast, we watched the news and Good Morning America. On the news, my mom noticed that we have a major flood watch warning. Normally, we would wouldn't notice this alert, as we get these alerts on a regular basis. They were only calling for a 24 feet flood level, and that would never even reach our homes. That night, we watched the forecast specifically carefully. My mom said, "It should go down by now if it's nothing." But, it gradually became a 28 feet flood level. My dad never gets worried about anything. However, when I heard him talking, my heart just sank to grief. That night, my mom said something I'll never forget: "This might be for real."

On September 5, 2011, we knew that we were going to be flooded. Therefore, we decided to move our table, fridge, and baby pictures. We moved them to my gram's house. My gram loves to talk, bake, and sing on your birthday; she is the best you can ask for. That night, at my gram's house, at about seven pm, we decided to watch the news. I started the conversation, "Mom, is this going to hurt us?"

My mom replied, "Of course not. We just need to keep praying, stay strong, and believe in God."

"What if God can't do it all?" I questioned my mother.

"He can do it all," my mom said as she smiled.

On the news, we saw that the water level had again risen to a 30 feet flood level. My mom was devastated that the water would reach our first floor. My mom was crying, nervous, and constantly wanting to check on our house. Everyday, we went back to check our home, seeing how everything was. On our television, we were constantly checking the news. The flood level rose to a 33 feet flood level. When I looked at my mom, I expected her to be sobbing, but she was calm, not a hearing a single breath that she was taking. My mom had so much stress, as she needed to find money to fix the house, she needed to help get food for us, my brother, Dj, was in Afghanistan, and my other brother, Danny, was getting married the next month. Yet, she didn't cry when I looked at her. I realized nothing in life is simply okay, it will forever be great.

On September 9, 2011, Friday, I took off school. As always, my mom made breakfast. We hear beep, beep, beep as our weather advisory went off. Columbia County flooding will be hazardous. My family and I looked at each other and didn't say a word. We immediately left my gram's house and headed for our house. When we arrived, we saw that the river was out of its banks. When my family entered our house, we saw that my cousins, Tommy and Tyler, were there. Together, we all prayed for safety. As we looked out the window, the river seemed even higher than it did before! At about two pm, the river level finally begun to fall. It was extremely frightening. When I was trying to save my baseball cards from the water, I heard my brother's scream. He was trying to push the door back from the water pouring in the house. His efforts were to no avail. Our hearts sunk in pain as we watched the water pour in, helpless to stop it.

On September 10, 2014, we still could not get in our home. The dirty, gross water was almost up to our mailbox. We had to stand across the street to simply look at our house.

We set a goal on September 11, 2014, which was to be done with renovations by the time Dj gets back from Afghanistan. This would also be about the time in which Danny would be married. On September 11, we went straight to our house to look at the damage. The house smelled like wet dog, and mud was splattered on all of the walls. When I first stepped into my house, my foot sunk into the mud like quick sand. I saw my baseball glove floating in the water that was still in the basement. Everyone ran to check their room. When I entered my room, I stepped on another baseball glove. It was my good Rawlings glove I had had for years. I knew it would be ruined forever. The stress that was on my mom's shoulders was now on everyone's. It was one of the longest rebuilding stages we had completed. We knocked down walls, washed everything, took down the deck, and we even got a new front door.

By November 19, 2011, the house renovations were officially complete. Dj made it home safely. Danny still got married on time.

November 20, 2011 was one of the best days I remember. We partied as though the flood had never occurred. That day, I thought, "The worst things do happen to the best people, but there's never a way out of it. If life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Fight even if you aren't ready."

By: Dominic Coombe



# Snow Day

Imagine a snow so white and a day so perfect. This day occurred only a few years ago but seems so long past. I was at my house early in the morning watching television, when the phone rang. I picked it up and answered, "Hello."

"Hey, Jacob," my friend Shawn said, "Can I come over?"

"Sure," I answered.

"Cool! I'll be over in a bit," he replied.

I hung up and told my sister, Sarah. We both went to put on our thick winter coats, our winter overalls, and our heavy boots. Then, we went outside to get the sleds out. Our boots sank into the deep snow, leaving tracks all the way to the garage. We brought the sleds out and saw that Shawn had brought his sister, Page. They were walking towards us, leaving two pairs of tracks in the snow from their house to ours. Sarah is friends with Page, but we usually all hang out together.

"Hey, Jacob," Shawn said to me when he had reached us.

"Hey, Shawn," I responded. We all trudged up the hill in my backyard. When we arrived, we got the sleds ready at the top of the hill.

As we were about to go down the hill, our neighbor, Brandon, came over, leaving another path of footprints. "Hey guys," he said.

After we all greeted him back, he joined us on an inner tube. We all managed to squeeze on it somehow. Brandon wrapped the straps around a tree. When he opened his hand, we flew down the hill. We all tumbled off the tube, even before we hit the bottom. We stood up, covered in snow.

"That was awesome!" I shouted.

"Yeah, so let's do it again," suggested Sarah.

We went back to the top of the hill and set up the inner tube again. Brandon held the strap around the tree, and we all piled into the inner tube once more. Brandon let go of the strap, and we all flew down the hill again. This time, only Page, Shawn, and I fell off, and the rest made it to the bottom.

We continued the cycle for over an hour. We went up and down, and up and down each time. Each time, someone fell off; sometimes it was only one of us, and sometimes it was all of us. When we reached the bottom the next time, Brandon suggested making a ramp.

We all started piling snow in one spot. We molded the snow and shaped it. To test the finished ramp, one person went down the hill in a sled and then tried to make it onto the ramp. We kept testing it for over ten minutes. Finally, it actually worked! Page now ran to the top of the hill. She zoomed down the snow-covered hill, towards the ramp. She skidded over the ramp and was launched three feet in the air, leaving a mist of snow behind her, peppering her in the face. She crashed, and she smacked the ground with a thud.

We all ran to her as she stood up. She almost toppled over covered in snow.

"That was so fun!" she exclaimed enthusiastically.

"I wanna try now!" said Shawn, excited.

We made our way up to the top of the hill again. Shawn tried it this time. We watched him slide down the hill and fly into the air like a bird taking flight. He crashed when he hit the ground, just like Page did. Snow flew all over the place. Gradually, each one of us tried it. It was awesome.

We spent the rest of that day going down that hill many times. There were paths all around the hill from sled after sled. When it finally got dark, we all went inside my house, where my mom had made hot chocolate. It was steaming, and delicious with mini marshmallows in it. We drank the hot chocolate until there was not a drop left. We talked on until Shawn, Page, and Brandon had to leave. They walked out the door to go back to their houses, leaving a trail.

That was the last time I remember all of us hanging out together. Brandon moved to another school. Page and Sarah made other friends, and therefore Page eventually stopped coming over. All Sarah does now is talk to her boyfriend, and doesn't even hang out with me. Shawn and I still hang out together. We are still friends and I hope that doesn't change any time soon. The tracks in the snow have gotten fewer each year, as less and less have shown up to sled. But as long as at least one shows up, I'll be happy.

By: Jacob Busch



# .....And That's How He Almost Killed Me

It all started on a snowy afternoon with the family. My cousins, my brother, and I were all at our grandparents' house for the weekend. The snow was coming down like crazy and the driveway turned from black to white. Then, we made a decision that would turn into a great story and a heck of an experience.

As the snow was falling, my cousin, Connor, my brother, Stephen, and I decided, like any normal kids, to go sledding. However, being the rebels that we are, we didn't want to go sledding the normal way. Instead, we decided to hook three sleds up to my grandfather's gator and have him pull us up and down his very, very long driveway. We thought this was a great idea; however, that thought quickly faded.

After all the sleds were hooked up to the gator, we all made sure to put on helmets for safety, just in case. Thank the Lord we did. Stephen got on the first sled, I got on the next one, and Connor finally got on the third sled. My grandfather then got into his gator, and we started to move. Everything was going fine. We were all having a blast being pulled. Our sleds felt like rockets flying through the snow.

Then, Stephen had this great idea to make snow fly. He would turn his sled either to the left or the right into the snow banks on the side of the driveway. This would make a bunch of snow come up into the air. At first, it was really enjoyable because the snow would look really cool blowing through the air. Stephen's turning made my sled veer to the side, and then the gator would quickly pull us back to where we were supposed to be. Everything was fine before we made the turn.

As we pulled around the turn in the driveway, the big metal gate started to open so we could go through. Then, Stephen had the genius idea to make snow fly while the gate was opening. Like every time he did this, our sleds veered to the side. However, this time our sleds wouldn't go back to where they were supposed to be, so we were in the direct line of the gate. That's when everything happened.

All I remember is yelling at my brother to stop and watching us get closer and closer to the heavy metal gate. Then, all I felt was a huge blow to my side. My vision went fuzzy, and then everything went black. I woke up with my head against a tree. My helmet was off my head and nowhere in sight. When I finally came to, I saw my brother and my cousin standing a few feet away from me.

I got up and let my brother have it.  
"You almost killed us, you idiot," I yelled.

My brother replied with, "Yeah, but I also saved you guys, so my heroism overrules my idiocy."

I just rolled my eyes at that response. When my grandfather saw that we were no longer on the sleds, he came back for us. We were all very lucky not to be injured. However, when my grandfather pulled the gator around, we saw the sleds were definitely not so lucky. Our sleds were basically demolished, scraps and pieces of them were everywhere.

Everything was eventually resolved, and everyone was safe. However, I've never forgotten that moment when we were nearing the gate. I am still waiting for that special revenge. To sum up the story: never trust your brother in the snow, and make sure that you always take safety precautions if you might be doing something dangerous.

By: Alexandra Eyerly



# My Trip to India

"Come, Ayesha. Time to get into the car!" said Uncle V.

"I'm coming," I said. I wondered to myself, "Are there people suffering in India?"

When I got into the car, I looked around. What I saw made my eyes grow wider. I saw people living in old buildings, run down buildings or living in a place smaller than a regular classroom. People were eating food from the bug and rat infested roads or getting food from the loving people who donated food from the temple. I tried to keep my eyes closed, but I couldn't. I saw unfortunate people sleeping on roofs that were congested with muddy streams of dead bugs and dirt, and small sidewalks with speedy streams of cars. There were wild beasts and dogs everywhere I could see. Many people were living near the muddy rivers in which unwanted items were scattered throughout.

I just kept wondering, "Why?" Then, I realized why. It is because they are poor, and there isn't enough space. Many of the people I saw needed medical treatment. It looked like they never did anything about their illnesses and suffered quietly, alone. When I saw this in front of my eyes, I was sad and wary, because those people were joyful, even in their conditions. They had many needs and rarely any wants, but they were happy. Life is tough, but they made it work. Looking at all of this, I realized how lucky I am not to be growing up in these conditions and to be able to eat every night!

When I was in the car, my uncle was driving like a maniac, but it was not only him. Everyone in India drives like that. Many people in India drive over the speed limit, if indeed, there is any speed limit at all! I felt as though we were going to get into a collision with many cars, but luckily, we didn't this time. When a car ahead of you stops in India, you usually have to sit back and wait, as sometimes you will be in the same spot for a half hour or a hour. Also, it certainly is not a relaxing ride through the back roads! I wasn't able to catch a nap in the car, even though I was worn out. I just watched and heard what everyone in the car said. "Ayesha why aren't you sleeping, it's going to be a long ride!"

"No, I can't sleep, I just got off the plane 6.5 hours ago," I said in a delighted tone.

During the ride, my eyes were closed until I smelled moist, acrid air. I knew that I was at my destination. I was greeted by my grandma and grandpa. They gave me the cool refreshment of water as they looked at me for a while. Then my dad's brother, my Uncle L., came. He had been napping. You could tell he was trying to figure out who I was. He just looked so confused until he recognized me.

"Hi, Ayesha, how are you? Is your dad still the same?" said Uncle L., still opening and closing his eyes while almost losing his balance.

"Hi, and yes, Dad is the same," I said standing up and taking a drink of water.

Then, my other uncle came from the farm. They all just stared at me.

I thought in my mind, "Does everyone here just stare or is it me?"

"Hi, and how are you Ayesha?" said Uncle F.

"I'm fine, how are you? It's been so long since I saw all of you!" I said in a cheerful way.

After a little while, someone came down stairs. It was my cousin, Hillu, and he looked like he had just crawled out of bed. He came down the steps, traveled to one of the beds in the kitchen, and fell asleep again. Everyone ululated him.

"Look who's here," said Uncle L., Hillu's dad, with an annoyed look, "Ayesha is here!"

"Hi, Ayesha. Didi, did you bring gifts?" said Hillu, looking around and trying to find my luggage.

"Hi, Hillu, and yes, I brought gifts!" I said while getting out my luggage.

Uncle L. was about to leave when he asked, "Do you want to come, Ayesha?"

"Yes!" I said, "Now I get to see my cousin." I had never seen my little cousin.

We left. Now it was time to go to the city. While Uncle L. was driving, I saw all of these people and animals who needed medical help, but my uncle and his brother are used to these things. They don't even realize what those people go through. They wouldn't let me stop the car, so I couldn't do a thing about it. Uncle L. was still driving. We had to wait 10 minutes for the stoplight to turn green. I don't think city life suits me, but many of the people there don't mind it at all. When you're in the city, you have to look everywhere at once. Driving is reckless, and people just walk on the road without a care in the world. When we got to the house, it was as silent as a library.

"Hi, Ayesha!" said one of my aunts.

"Hi," I said. I went into the house to see my little cousin and Aunt F.

"Swiyam, hi. I'm your cousin from the U.S. My name is Ayesha," I said while staring at him.

"Dad, where did you get her? From the stores on the streets?" said Swiyam in a fumbled way. "Don't come near me if you're from the streets."

"Um?" I said in a disheartened way.

"No, Swiyam, she is your cousin. She is the oldest, so you have to respect her in all means!" said Aunt F.

"Hi, Ayesha, didi!" said Swiyam while looking through my bags of toys.

While I was in the city of Suret, I was bored. I couldn't talk to anyone but family, which was very annoying. I thought I would like it, but I didn't. The only time I did was when we went out for something. If I was in Kadhli, then I could have gone anywhere in the village. But, I was in the city, where I couldn't do any of that. The worst part of my entire trip were the bathrooms. Everyone in my family thought I was weird because I wanted a clean bathroom, with toilet paper.

One thing kept bugging me, "Why do they litter?" Then, it came to me, "These people litter because they weren't taught not to. It is really sad." When I asked where the garbage can was, my family just kept laughing. "Do you know what a garbage can is?" I asked. I guess they don't.

I went to a restaurant in the city, but I am not fond of many Indian dishes. When I went, I kept seeing people begging for food, and dogs getting beaten up. "Why doesn't anyone help these people and animals?" I wondered. When I got to the restaurant, I saw it was fancy, but it was a little cold. After our food came, I felt like I was going to get sick. I am not fond of any of these types of food, but I still had to try. When I ate the food, I was shocked at how great the taste was. "The food was much better than the food in the U.S.," I thought. Eating at a restaurant in India is nothing like in the US. In restaurants in India, there is more interaction with other people, instead of silence.

The day after I went to the restaurant, I ate homemade food, and though it was still good, it wasn't for me. "I'm a person who likes Punjabi food more than Gujarati food," I thought to myself. The first time my family made Gujarati food, my eyes started to burn like the sun. The odor of the spices and vegetables attacked my eyes and nose. I ran away with fright. My heart jumped out and left me all alone. My "favorite" time of day. Why me? Whenever I eat Gujarati food, my stomach turns to knots, and my mouth runs away. The next time I ate the food, I lied about liking it because I didn't want to hurt their feelings.

After we ate, my cousins started to do the burden of the day; homework. The minute I looked at it, I knew it was in three languages and I only knew one of them, English. I kept looking at the page and I saw the words talking to me. I just kept saying in my mind, "I'm lucky, I'm lucky..."

The next day, Aunt F. invited me to visit a schoolhouse for children whose parents can't pay for their tuition. Many people donate books, equipment, and time to that school. All those people change the lives of those children. When these children get one plain backpack, their eyes glow with excitement and joy. They never got anything they wanted in their entire lives. Many of their families live in homes that they built out of old material. Some even live on the sidewalks. They only have one piece of ratty clothing, and no shoes for the rocky road and the muddy grass. The people that helped these children changed their lives completely. Now, with their education, these kids can make money, leading themselves to a different life than they would have otherwise.

My experience in India changed me. I know now that there are people suffering, but that there are many people trying to help them. Why can't anyone understand people who are suffering in other countries?

"Ayesha, time to go home," said Aunt F. "Are you coming?"

"Yes, just a minute," I said in a way I can't explain. "This trip to India has changed me for good."

By: Ayesha Patel



# That's How I Learned My Lesson

There is this one life lesson I learned the hard way. And although it may not seem like a big deal, it has stuck with me all these years. I could've sworn that I was going to win the race; I had so much confidence that I was going to. And that was my problem; my confidence.

So there I was, on an early Saturday morning. Like every Saturday, we had a swim meet. And like every swim meet, I had to swim the 50 free. I was so confident that I was going to win that race because I have always won it when I swam it. And I had no problem telling people that I was going to win it, even before I actually swam the race.

"I'm excited for the meet today because I get to swim the 50!" I told my older sister (she was also a swimmer when she was in high school, so she had a lot of knowledge on the subject). "I obviously know I'm going to get first place, but I wanna get my best time too."

"Gracen, you don't know that you will win; there are a lot of other swimmers that could beat you." Kailyn said to me. "Pride comes before fall, ya know."

Previously in the morning, my mom said the same thing to me, but I still didn't know what it meant (probably because I had no experience of losing). "I heard that once today, and I still don't know what it means!" I said, rolling my eyes.

As we twisted through the cramped streets on the way to the swim meet, I had no worry in me. All I could think about was winning. I never once thought of that "dumb quote" I heard multiple times earlier. And I never once thought that maybe there was some truth behind it.

The hour before the meet, during warm-up, I was confident. After I won the first few events, I felt even more confident. Standing behind the block, waiting for the 50, I was confident. I looked around to see my opponents. None of them looked like they were going to beat me. And all of them looked rather nervous. "Event 27, girl's 50 meter freestyle, step up!" the starter yelled.

"Take your mark!" the official yelled. "BEEEEEP!"

"And we're off!" I thought as my legs extended and launched me into the open waters below me. I quickly came out of my streamline, my legs moving up and down furiously in a freestyle kick, my arms moving so fast that I probably looked like a broken windmill blowing in the wind. Once I got to the other end, I flipped and did the same process back. I slammed my fingers into the touch pad and burst up out of the water triumphantly. As soon as I broke the surface, I looked towards the board to see my time and placement. When my eyes reached the board, my heart dropped, falling out of my feet, sinking to the un-touched bottom of the pool, and shattering into a million pieces. I came in second. Second...not first...second. I shook my opponent's hands and climbed out of the pool.

"Great job, Graken!" My friends yelled to me as I passed (Graken is my nickname at swimming; I don't why). "You almost beat that girl!" they were saying these things, but they did not make me feel better. In fact, they made me feel even worse.

"Oh, um, thanks, I could've beat her, but you know, my stroke hasn't been very good today." I would say as an excuse. Avoiding all other friends and their congratulatory comments, I stomped over to my towel and sat down in disbelief. "I don't understand. What happened!?" I muttered over and over again to myself.

After I swam my last event and was getting ready to leave, my older sister Kailyn walked up to me. "See, I told you. Pride comes before fall." Suddenly, a light flickered on above my head. I couldn't believe it. I finally understand what it means. I was definitely not expecting to learn what it meant the same day I heard this tormenting quote. And I was definitely not expecting to understand what it means in this way.

I can look back on this event and remember every detail as if it happened yesterday, or even this morning! Although I didn't win, I did learn a very valuable lesson that I carry with me every day: technique is the key if you want to beat the girl in the lane next to you, and also, humility helps you dodge and avoid disappointment.

By: Gracen Mott



# Operation Walmart

The day my friend and I snuck out to Walmart is a day I can never forget. Unfortunately, Jasmine was moving the next Friday and this was the last time I could have a sleepover with her. Since her house was in boxes, mine was the only option. So when the doorbell finally did go off, I couldn't help but jump up. I was just on the stairs when I saw her drop her bags on the floor and hold her arms out, tears in her green eyes. Her eyes looked like green bubbles now. I tackled her on the wet grass, knowing this time it would be the last. Moving has always been my forte, but she was going to move in with her sick grandmother. She pushed me back, and without a word, she grabbed her stuff and dashed up to my room like a cheetah. She came back empty handed, and we flopped on the couch to obsess over Finding Nemo.

A hour later, there was an awkward dinner full of talk about her new home. Not exactly light conversation over noodles and chicken, but she looked happy about seeing her family more. I can't complain, seeing as I would be, too. My happiness magnified when we had to help in the kitchen. Soapy water found its way onto us, as if we were pigs rolling in mud. We danced to music. Soon, the kitchen was in even worse shape. That was when my parents sent us out to get the hose. It was not fun getting flour out of my hair.

After we finished cleaning up, Jasmine killed me at Mario Kart. When she left, I missed our random dancing to 80's hair-band songs, our nerf fights, throwing water balloons at Chewy and the kitten, making cookies and cakes, making college plans, and having popcorn fights. Jasmine must have seen my face when we were playing on the Wii because she wrapped her thin, tan arms around me.

"I'll be back one day. I promise, and we can go into college together and work together and still be best friends. Come on, let's get into pjs."

We finally got to my room at around 10, but we were hyper and bored. Jasmine's usually innocent face split into a evil grin as she pulled out a crumpled scrap of paper.

"Walmart," she said as she straightened the money. That was most beautiful ten dollars I've ever seen!

Not ten minutes later, we were silently sneaking out of the basement window. It was raining outside when we stepped onto the soggy ground. We set off into the damp, chilly night. Walmart was about a mile away from my home. I felt so free, but yet also sad, because I knew this would be the last adventure we would have together. Also, there might be repercussions for this stunt, but it was so fun as we shouted into the night. The full moon lit our path as we hopped onto our bikes to complete "Operation Walmart." I knew dad would be hiding in the car to follow us and make sure we got home safely. He did the same for my sisters when he found out that they were sneaking out. He installed a button that alerts him when the window is opened. I only know about it because I saw him put it in in the middle of the night.

After we had ridden for a while, the cool water began to kick up on our legs from the bike wheels, soaking our pants. I asked her if she wanted to go back. "Never!" Jasmine shouted as her arms flew up, into the night air. She could ride without her hands on the bars, but I could not. We felt so free, that even if my dad was following us, this was me finally claiming the freedom that I wanted. We were so close to Walmart when I saw my dad's blue Ford for the seventh time. His amused face flashed by again and again. No way was I getting in trouble for this, because he found this too funny to stop laughing, much less punish me for it! At the most, he will teach me a trick to sneak out undetected.

By the time we got home, we had four huge bags of Halloween candy. We were soaked. It was so easy to be open with Jasmine; she was my best friend, almost like a sister. This was the last time I saw her. She didn't go to school the next week; she was getting ready to move. The next thing I remember, Jasmine was gone.

Still to this day, her memory stays with me, especially since I have only heard from her once. During this call, she told me that her grandma is dead, her aunt died from childbirth, and her uncle committed suicide. She also wouldn't be coming back again. Even though it hurts, I try to remember her spirit when I act in my life.

By: Naomi Casperson





# Spring Poems

Poems Describing What  
Spring Brings



## First Bud

By: Meghan Hrinda

The first bud is a spark,  
igniting a green fire.  
This fire roars,  
across the land,  
unable to be stopped.  
But,  
does anyone really want  
for this to be stopped?  
So, it will keep burning,  
on and on and on  
melting away all the  
reminders  
of the dreary, dreary  
winter away,  
until all doleful memories  
are simply a figment of  
our past.



Photo by: Meghan Hrinda

# Spring Fun

By: Heaven Renninger

Do you remember  
the days of Spring?

The flowers are blooming.  
The smell of spring is here.  
Do you know the sound of little bees  
there and there?

Do you hear the laughter  
of children playing and running  
around?

Do you hear the rushing waters  
of the creeks, rivers, or pond  
blown by the wind?

You do, so you will know  
that spring is here for real and  
not just in dreams.



Photo by: Meghan Hrinda

## Springtime

By: John Seibert

Springtime, springtime, here we are,  
springtime, springtime, it is time.

No more snow,  
no more cold,  
it is bold,  
the warmer weather  
comes and goes by like a flash.

Before the exams, we all celebrate  
the joys of springtime; here and now,  
Easter, Memorial Day, even school vacations,  
with joy and  
what surprises come.

April comes; Easter, Earth Day,  
and so much more.  
The showers drop  
From their base,  
And here they come,  
One, two, three!

May is here, school is almost done,  
just another month,  
and the bells strike.  
But first, the concerts,  
the tests, and all  
the intriguing news.

June is here,  
The bell goes ding,  
we're out of school,  
off to the beach, and  
off to the baseball game  
at Fenway Stadium.  
With that,  
it's time  
to celebrate Summer.



## Just Another Memory

By: Kayla Gold

The sun shines brightly on the pale grass.

The birds are chirping a new tune  
of happiness.

The tree in my backyard  
is just awakening from  
its winter slumber.

"Spring is coming! Spring is coming!"

The wind whispers lightly  
as I walk across the field.

But I just don't feel it.

The sadness grows,  
and grows as the days go by,  
turning into a painful, but happy place.

The happiness reminds me  
of how much I hurt inside.

How much I miss the days  
when everything was okay.

But that's the past.

This is the present.

Everything was just another memory.



Artwork By: Jadyn Uholik

# Nova



Artwork  
By: Jadyn Uholik



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