

Pen & Paper

Vol. 8

The Unquowa School
2017

"A sudden
silence
sends
me to
sleep"

"Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird!
It's a plane! It's Superman!"

"If we create the sounds
of silence"



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Pen & Paper, The Unquowa School's literary-art magazine, is published annually and offers an outlet for students to share their literary and artistic talent. Students in grades 5-8 submit photography, art, poetry, and other writing in order to make *Pen & Paper* interesting and unique. And, building upon the work of Mrs. Lamb, Mr. Seferidis, our newly added advisor, *Pen & Paper* has begun to take a new form.

The magazine embraces the original mission of its founders while continually incorporating new ideas. The editorial, art, and production staff meet weekly before and after the school day to actualize the magazine. The editorial staff, invited to *Pen & Paper* by their teachers, focuses on writing their own work, selecting pieces for publication, and providing feedback for submissions. Expert editorial committee members reread selections to finalize the submissions. All pieces, writing and art, are coded, making them anonymous to the editorial committee and keeping them objective during the reviewing process. The art staff links writing to illustration, produces open choice art pieces, and works on the front and back covers. Finally, the production staff codes writing and art submissions. They also organize and print submissions for review and advertise to the Upper School inviting them to submit their personal work. Lastly, the production staff is charged with the final layout of the magazine.

The *Pen & Paper* staff wishes to thank all student contributors and our wonderful advisors for their unwavering support.

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Volume 8

2017



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Anthems & Laments



Sophia Mughal
Fearless Women
Digital photograph
Grade 8

Anthem

The hand quivers as it grazes across the vast, blank page.
You slip into a silent world with nothing but your wordless rage;
Not a thought crosses your blank, empty mind.
All signs of creativity, gone,
Vanished into the drift of the wind,
all originality has been drawn.

The mind lingers on a single idea, trying to put everything together,
Unable to light the match of creativity that will not burn whatsoever.
The hand, frozen in place, seems as if glued to the table.
All inspiration has fled and your head becomes unstable.

Then a spark ignites, and your fire is born.
A fire of creativity; it is your rose in a patch of thorns.
You write and write 'till your hands grow tired.
Your story is a masterpiece, made with a newfound desire.

With pride you stand, a thumping in your heart,
For what you have just created
is much more than just a work of art.

Samantha Renzulli
Grade 7



Ryan Cawley
Great Men
Digital photograph
Grade 8

My Home is the Sky

She disappeared in a mass of people,
Although she felt quite alone.
The sharp sounds of crowds pierced her,
And she recoiled, dreaming of home.

Home, she thought, could be anywhere,
High up above Earth, not the ground.
She wished she could feel the soft air,
But she and reality came crashing down.



She leaped across landscapes and lochs,
Yearning for a swing to the sky.
But though she did, and she met lots,
Of all that she saw, none went that high.

Elizabeth Gonnella
Grade 5



Ella Stalowir
A Spanish Perspective
Digital photograph
Grade 8

Kharon

Slicing through the Styx, so slowly
Sunrise and sunset
Some semblance of blossoming vividly
Then a withering drabness
Calm, we were drifting through the dark
Like it was nothing but unforgiving
From one world into the next
Gazing into his eyes
I saw there was nothing to see
But an abyss, devoid of emotion
It ended
I arrived
and I withered
I was an abyss

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8



Naia Kocsi
Relief

Digital illustration
Grade 8

The Ladder

I stared at the ladder.

It seemed to go on forever, up into the horizon, passing the stars and the planets and reaching the corners of the universe.

I took a deep breath. Somewhere in my head, I heard a cry of anguish. My eyes widened.

I had to do this. I had to start. I needed a beginning. Hands clasped the first rung, cold and steely, its iciness reached into my hands, stinging my skin. Brandished on the rung was one word.

Love.

I hoisted myself up and grabbed the next rung. This one was labeled Responsibility.

I continued to climb, passing more rungs, each labeled with different words.

Respect.

Trust.

Reality.

Friendship.

Kindness.

I kept climbing.

I climbed beyond the horizon, beyond the stars and the planets, and beyond the corners of the universe.

Finally, I reached the end.

I pulled myself off a rung labeled Creation. In front of my tired body was a door.

Did I reach the end?

I pushed the door open and a bright light consumed me. I found myself in the hands of a man in white with blue gloves.

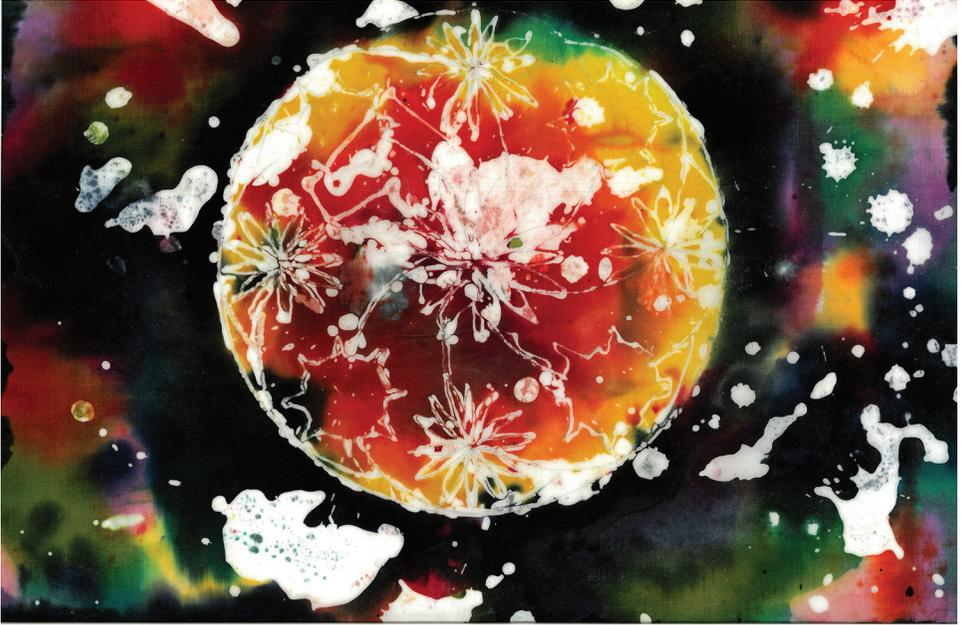
"It's a boy," he said.

The lights were bright and my eyes squinted, but soon I sighed with relief.

I had just climbed the ladder of life.

Drew Slager

Grade 8

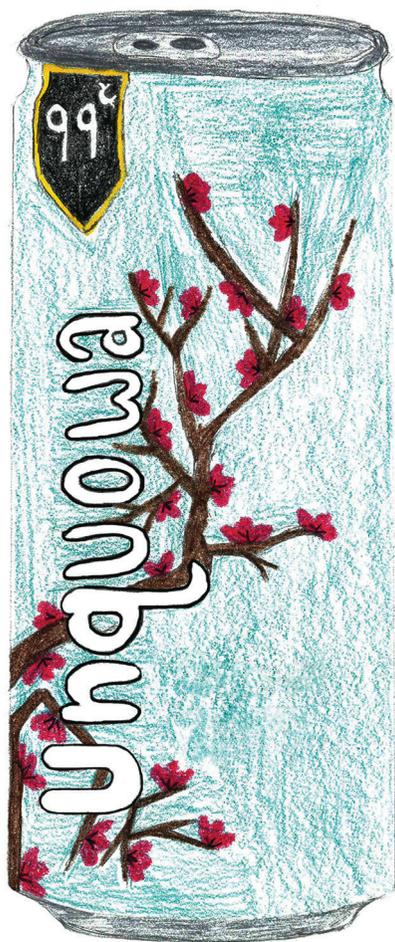


William Geary
Creation
Batik
Grade 8

Our Names

In stone, I saw it.
They make us, and they break us,
Lending definition in this whirlpool.
Though sometimes, distortion swirls unquelled,
And we lead ourselves astray.
We betray the very foundation originally sought out,
Fabricating a canopy, a mirage,
And all turned to cardboard.

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8



Jenna Foote
99 in the Leaves
Colored pencil on paper
Grade 8

Hail

A sort of following
And only through manipulation,
Have men's minds been washed.
And now, more so a cult,
Practicing wanton sacrifice,
Striking terror through all, relentlessly,
Until oblivion is achieved,
And until atrocities reign.
Until our windshield shatters,
They are all followers.

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8

The World is Music

Music seeps through the speakers,
Not just noise, but so much more.

Magic, even.

I feel colors speaking with the voices, singing in harmony-

Soft lavender and sweet blue for country,

Sharp red and sour black for rock,

Lively oranges and luscious yellows for pop.

I wish I could dive into the speaker,
and live in a world of sound.

Elizabeth Gonnella

Grade 5



Halie Perkins

Meditation

Block print

Grade 6

A Code

Life is a code;
A code that needs to be solved.

A purpose,
Your purpose.

A
Meaning,
Your
Meaning.

Use the cipher to
Discover yourself-
Your truths,
Your lies.

It is you.

Your boundaries
That need to be crossed.

Your limits
That need to be pushed.

It does not matter
What type of person
You are,

But what you do
With your life-

How you help others.
How you treat others.
How you love others.

Love is the cipher.

Love

Is

The

Cipher.

Drew Slager

Grade 8



Theodore Geary
Illusion
Block print
Grade 6



Carsen Currie & Edward Kim
Autumn Flake
Environmental installation
Grade 6

The Sounds of Silence

The sounds of silence drift and float through the colors of the wind.
They twist and curve reaching the ears of the young.
They fly and sail and touch the hearts of the old.
Nature listens as they dance on by, for they are the sounds of silence.

The sound of love is in the wedding bells that ring,
In the babies that laugh and the families who sing.
Love drifts through the empty air,
for love is in the sounds of silence.

The sound of hope is in the flags that wave,
In the flowers that bloom and the children who forgave.
Hope floats through the empty air,
for hope is in the sounds of silence.

The sound of compassion is in the soldiers who fly home,
In friends who hold their tongue, and those who care for those alone.
Compassion flies through the empty air,
for compassion is in the sounds of silence.

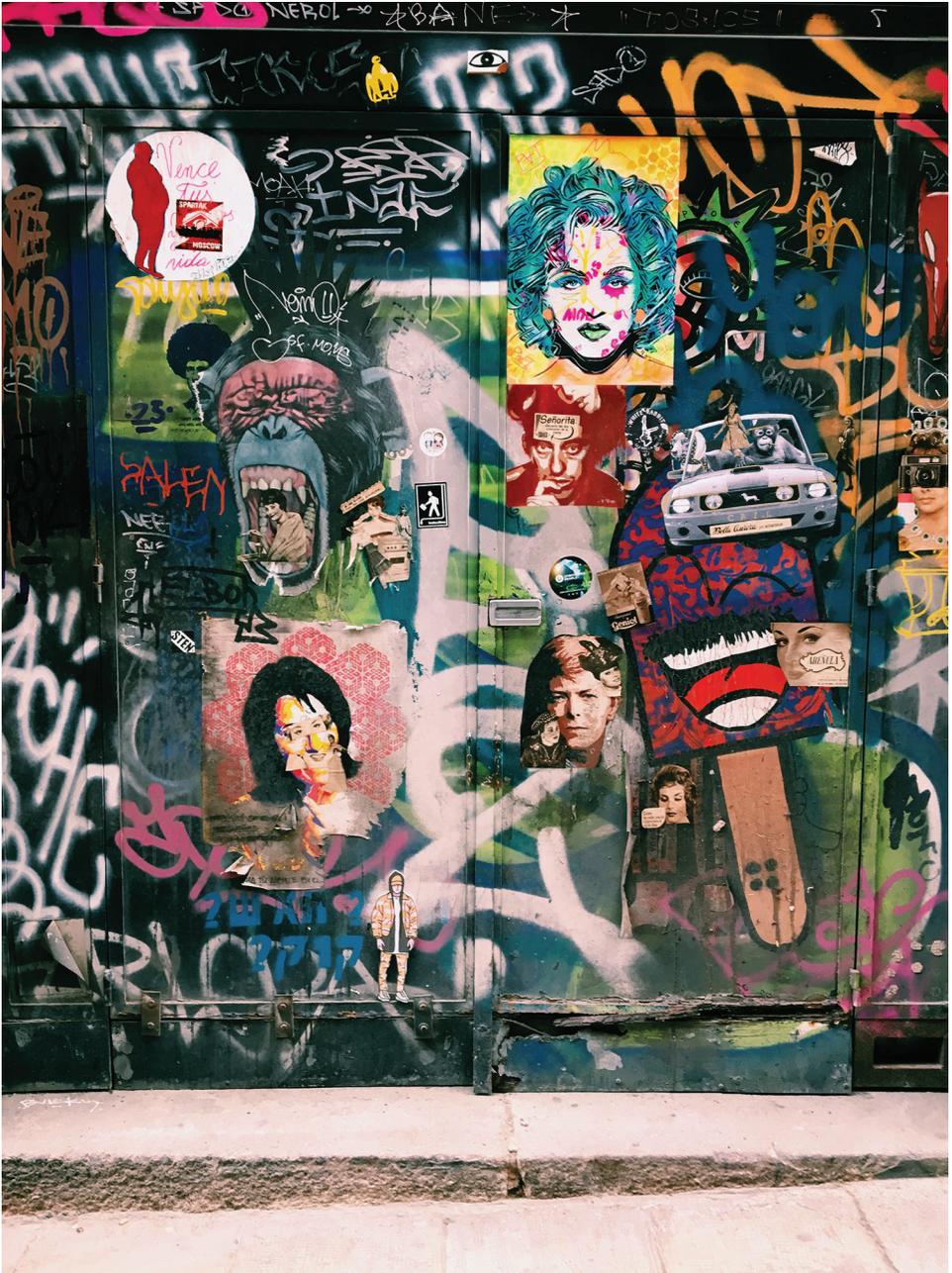
The sound of harmony is in the waves that crash,
In the birds who make their nests, and the shooting stars that flash.
Harmony sails through the empty air,
for harmony is in the sounds of silence.

The sounds of silence create the symphony of the world,
And we create the sounds of silence.

Samantha Renzulli

Grade 7

Heroes & Villains



Jenna Foote
Graffiti
Digital photograph
Grade 8

Legend of Osiris

Long before the common era, before early cultures developed and thrived, they developed their own fascinating myths and legends. Many of these are still remembered and cherished as literature.

One of these ancient cultures was the Kemetite people, the ancient Egyptians. Recall all the stories and artifacts that these people left behind. They let us modern-day people see what life was like thousands of years ago. From mummies to temples, from hieroglyphs to many compelling stories, the ancient Egyptians left so much for us to uncover. Egyptian tombs and temples became a prime destination for archaeologists.

One of the greatest of all these glimpses of the past are the stories that were based off of Egyptian religion. The most popular one that was believed by ancient Egyptians was the Legend Of Osiris. This myth tells about the struggles among the pantheon: grieving for the lost, fighting between good and evil, and vengeance. When and where did this legend originate? What did it mean? And, what really happened?

According to the history of ancient Egypt, The Legend Of Osiris occurred in the 19th

dynasty of Egypt or before the twenty-fourth century B.C.E. It is not exact, since this is a legend. The location of its occurrence was in lower Egypt around the Nile Delta. Although the settings of the actual story are Egypt and beyond, it all started in Egypt. The goddess Aset, or Isis in Greek, and the god Usir, or Osiris in Greek, were husband and wife. Children of Nut and Geb, who were children of Tefnut and Shu, were the creations of the great sun god, Ra.

The current generation, Aset and Usir, lived in peace. Usir taught humans how to plow and brought fertility to the land. He gave them laws to follow as well. His popularity increased until he became ruler of Lower Egypt, then all Egypt. Usir loved Aset; after all, she was his queen, and Aset felt the same.

Usir's brother, Set, gazed upon the happy couple. How powerful and prosperous they had become. This always brought Set into a burning jealousy. Even Set's son, Inpu, seemed to love his uncle Usir more than his father. Humans adored the happy couple for the strength they had bestowed on Egypt; this also enraged Set. Finally, he could not stand it;

evil overtook him and he swore to himself that he would crush Usir.

Set held a banquet. He made it as glamorous as he possibly could to attract Usir. He included candles to keep the mosquitoes away, lotus necklaces for the goddesses, all the food they could eat, and finally, a beautiful box. At the end of the feast, he pulled the cover away to reveal the intricate container he had brought.

The shimmering gold and deep, blue paint and neat carvings were something Usir had to come and look at. Set said in a friendly brotherly tone, "Guess what, Usir? Whoever fits into this box will get to keep it."

The tryouts for the box commenced. None of the gods exactly fit. They all were a little off from perfect size. Up until Usir. Unfortunate Usir lay in the box. It fit. Not just fit, but fit perfectly, not a millimeter off. Set had actually taken Usir's exact measurements in his sleep.

Then that dastardly demon of a god, Set, and his helpers rushed to the box, now a coffin. They closed it and sealed it. Set lifted it over his head and flung it far, far, far away into the rushing waters of the Nile. Set felt triumph.

Aset, Usir's beloved wife, screamed at the shocking

moment of evil. She leaped out of the domain of the gods and started running along the great bank, attempting to grab the box, trying to jump in and catch it as it raced north. The wind blew south, only making her pursuit more difficult. She ran in desperation. As she started to lose sight, she ran faster, for the box contained Usir, her husband.

Aset ran all night until morning. Her heart pounded, her feet bled, and her legs could have screamed out in agony. Eventually, she arrived at the delta and started calling out to the Mediterranean water. Her current of emotions and sensations was a mix of horror, fear, extreme sorrow, pain, weariness, grief, despair, and hatred for Set. Aset grabbed a clamshell and used it to shave her eyebrows, a sign of grief in ancient Egypt.

The goddess could do nothing. She could only hope that her husband would get out of his coffin on his own. "Wait, he didn't suffocate yet, right?" Aset thought. "What if he got out of the box in the Nile?"

No, she knew he was dead by now, or he was on the brink of dying. She had no idea, no idea at all! The world spun around her as she thought. Aset may have not known for sure, but she would persevere; she had to

find Usir.

Where was Usir? Still in the box. Floating northeast of where Aset lay crying. The coffin then washed up on the shores of the city of Kubna, now Lebanon. The reeds growing on the fertile shore grasped at the box, like green tentacles. So many of these reeds knotted themselves around the box that all the reeds became one plant with a coffin inside.

Since Usir is known to bring fertility and good growth to any plant, as which he has done, the single plant grew, and grew, and grew. It grew faster than any plant ever had, and in the end, it was a massive, 130-foot-tall cedar tree. Hoopoe birds, a colorful species, came to nest in the colossal tree and made that one tree Hoopoe bird paradise.

The beautiful tree could be seen from afar, but what really made it so wonderful to all living near it was the scent, the alluring aroma of the cedar tree. Soon, the King of Kubna caught a whiff of the scent, then he called his queen to inhale the sweet fragrance. The tree was marvelous; there was no question about it.

The king believed that he and his wife should have such a fragrant specimen. "I demand this cedar tree be cut down and recreated as a beautiful column

for my palace," he ordered.

The king's hired workers cut down the base and hauled it to the city, where it was carved into a majestic and sweet smelling column and then put in the palace. They had no idea that what they had worked upon held the coffin with Usir inside.

Meanwhile, Aset was on the shores of Egypt, still desperate. All this time, she was immobile from depression, nothing became better for her yet.

Remember those Hoopoe birds who used the tree as their home? What happened to them? After the King of Kubna had the tree cut down for him, the Hoopoe birds lost their home. The birds grieved their lost home, just like Aset did when she lost her husband. They moved on to find another place to live.

They flew south and arrived in Egypt, where miserable Aset saw them. She awoke from her immobile state by their calls, bu bu bu, bu bu bu. Aset sensed that she could relate to these birds. She could feel their grief, she wanted someone to share feelings with.

Out of desperation, she followed them. "These birds are leading me to Usir. Yes. Why else would they come?" Aset thought.

This may have been a crazy thing to do, follow a flock of

birds just because you think they will lead you to what you want to find, but Aset actually made a good choice; the Hoopoe birds led her to Kubna. Now she was closer to Usir.

After a journey, there it was: the palace. She looked everywhere for the box, all over the city and its outskirts. Then she realized what she should have realized earlier; Usir was dead. It would not matter if she found the box or not. He was dead. Aset simply went back into her immobile state again.

From inside the palace, one of the royal handmaidens saw Aset in the courtyard. She called upon the other handmaidens and they whispered amongst each other, "What is she doing there?"

"You don't just find a total stranger in the courtyard."

"We should probably report her."

Aset turned around and saw their faces. They took the devastated woman inside and asked her what was she doing in the courtyard, and why was she so sad and malnourished? Aset told them nothing about her lost husband; she knew humans were not adept with discussions about grief and death.

The afternoon passed, and Aset was feeling slightly better since the maids were so kind to

her. She knew she had to move on, but it was going to get better. Soon, the maidens sincerely asked if Aset could meet the queen of Kubna. She wanted to see this stranger and put her to good use.

Aset bowed to the queen like a regular mortal as the queen looked at her with inquiring eyes. The queen of Kubna did not know she was staring right at a goddess. She led Aset to a wonderful chamber filled with the scent of honey.

The queen picked up her baby son from a cradle and placed him in Aset's arms. "You shall be his new nursemaid."

Aset suddenly felt a warmth inside of her. A warmth she had not felt for a while. It was comfort. She had someone to love and care for! Yes, Usir was gone, but now she had a bundle of joy to soften her grieving.

It was not easy caring for an infant, but it felt wonderful. She loved the little prince, and he loved her back. She loved her job, and she continued her work for a while until Aset realized that eventually the little prince would grow old and die, and Aset would just continue living and grieving another death. He would be gone like all mortals go.

She had to stop it. She could not experience that pain again.

She determined to make him immortal. The purification of fire was the perfect spell.

In the dead of night, Aset snuck out of the nursery, gathered some brush and scattered it around the pillar with the coffin inside. Then, she lit the brush ablaze and placed the prince in it. The screams tempted her to pull him out, but she would not; she turned into a sparrow and flew around the pillar. The prince was still alive.

The ear-piercing shrieks woke the whole palace, and the queen saw her baby in the fire. She rushed over and yanked him from the flames. Aset yowled in discouragement; the queen had ruined it.

Aset transformed to her real self, revealing she was a radiant goddess. "I am not you nursemaid, you worthless mortal!"

Aset's thundering voice echoed all through Kubna. "I am Aset, great granddaughter of Ra! I demand this pillar to be destroyed and used for a great fire! I will make that baby immortal!"

The workers split the pillar without hesitation. Then, the battered, eroded, salt-encrusted, cracked box slid out.

Aset departed from Kubna and set sail back to Egypt with the coffin. Once they were on Egyptian soil, she simply had to look upon her husband. A

truly depressing sight, his body was completely decayed. She hid the box in a swamp near the Nile Delta and started to prepare for the burial ceremony.

Meanwhile, Set had taken the throne of Egypt, and all was chaos. Egypt suffered many invasions and wars for territory. (This time of Set's rule may have been referring to the Hyksos invasions that Egypt went through.) Over these months, Set learned how to transform into a malevolent monster with the torso of a wolf, a long, ant-eater-like snout that could sniff out anything, and square ears that could pick up even the slightest sound waves.

While Aset was not looking, Set came across the buried coffin in his monster form. He opened it and found Usir's wasted body. With a roar of disgust at his brother's corpse, he ripped the body into fourteen pieces and threw them as far as he could all over Egypt. Aset, seeing what that beast had done but unable to stop him, wept. She was hopeless.

Set's sister and wife Nebet Hut, or Nephthys in Greek, noticed Aset and pitied her. It was her husband who had done this. She felt like she should help Aset. Should a wife not be loyal to her husband? Nebet Hut was torn between her two choices:

should she help her sister and ease her suffering, betraying her husband? Or, should she leave Aset and not care? She decided to help Aset.

They both set out to find all the pieces; in the end, they had thirteen. Where was the fourteenth? A snake slithered past them and told them it was lost in a swamp monster. What the snake meant was that Sobek, the meat-loving crocodile god, had devoured the last piece of Usir. He received a proper punishment later. Without the last piece, Usir was not complete.

Thankfully, help was on the way. The god Tehuti, or Thoth in Greek, the tongue of Ra, waded past the two goddesses disguised as an ibis, and he honked.

Aset knew this was Tehuti. He had come with advice, so she let out the same noise that he was making. The low, honking wails that Tehuti taught Aset were really a magic spell. Aset continued to do it, and the pieces of Usir reassembled themselves. She thanked Tehuti and made the missing fourteenth piece out of wax and clay. Then, Usir came to life. The magic keeping him alive would not last much longer.

Aset was with him for twelve more hours before he passed into Duat, the underworld.

There he was ruler of the dead, and all the spirits of the deceased came to him, and there, they would have their path determined.

Aset was finally content, but she was not alone because she had a child. If Set found out that there would be an heir to the throne of Egypt, Aset would be his next victim. Aset had to disguise herself as a human. There was no other option. Aset knew it was good that Usir had taken the role of ruling Duat, so she could visit. Occasionally she visited, and it was always a great reunion. Eventually, the pains started. Aset went to the same swamp where she hid Usir. It was there he was born: Heru Sa Aset, or Horus in Greek.

Heru Sa Aset grew up with his mother Aset in the Nile Delta. His childhood was happy. He grew up in prosperity. He actually grew up with two parents. One was of course, Aset. The other was Nebet Hut, his aunt. Aset told him the way society worked and everything he needed to know about the world, and Nebet Hut taught him how to turn into a falcon. As he got older and more mature, he started to fashion weapons. The idea of defense always occurred to him.

When Heru Sa Aset was a baby, Aset knew she had to pro-

tect her son more than just hiding him. She had to use magic. She started to practice spells on humans. She cured colds, fixed broken bones, and she healed injuries all using magic. She was good at it, but not good enough. To safely protect Heru Sa Aset, she had to become the most powerful magician ever.

One day a scorpion stung Heru Sa Aset. It was lethal and had to be cured. She immediately stopped the flow of the poison by naming the scorpion, which was all it took. Once a magician named it, they had control over it.

This gave Aset an idea. The god Ra was ancient now, even for a god. Like old men do, he drooled. Aset followed him and scooped up some of Ra's drool and mixed it with soil to mold it into a snake. Then, the snake was ordered by Aset to bite Ra and poison him. It did, and only Aset knew the antidote because she had made the snake.

"Help! Help! Snake bite!" All the deities came rushing and saw what had happened to the old god.

Aset, the criminal, volunteered to cure Ra. She told Ra, "I can cure you, but you must tell me your secret name."

Ra could not tell her his secret name; once the secret name is known by a magician, they have

complete power over the owner of the name. Aset should not become as powerful as Ra, but he had no choice; he was on the brink of death. "At dawn I am Ra Khepera (Ra's infant scarab form). At noon I am Ra Herakhty (Ra's adult falcon form), and, at night I am..."

Aset realized what she had done. She had just risked her great grandfather's life. "No!" exclaimed Aset.

Then, with the last bit of his strength, Ra weakly whispered his final secret name, and Aset cured him in the nick of time. Now, she was content with her powers.

Once Heru Sa Aset became an adult, he discovered what happened to his father and what Set would do to hurt him. He felt an indescribable anger for Set. "So, that beast, Set, killed my father, made mayhem of my mother's life, destroyed my father's body again, and, made my mother have to raise me in secret?! Now he sits upon the throne of Egypt, coating the land in blood because of the chaos he stirs up! I will not stand for this! I will avenge Usir!"

Heru Sa Aset challenged Set, and Set refused. Heru Sa Aset appealed to the Great Pesedjet, pantheon of the gods. Set claimed to the Pesedjet that if he was dethroned, leaving Heru

Sa Aset to rule, Egypt would fall into chaos. This was quite untrue. The reason Egypt was in turmoil was because of him. Aset was being driven crazy by the rambling debate. She decided to butt in and reveal that Set was guilty for killing Usir. The Pesedjet agreed that Set should yield, but he refused. He challenged Heru Sa Aset to fight for the throne of Egypt.

Battles between the two lasted for eighty years. This included Set plucking out Heru Sa Aset's eyes. Thankfully, his eyes were restored by Hut Heru, goddess of delights. At one point Set sank in a boat because of Heru Sa Aset's trickery. There were many more fierce competitions than can be named. Eventually, Ra sent a message to Usir, ruler of Duat, that the struggles must stop. Usir, the second most powerful god next to Ra, agreed. Then the Great Pesedjet agreed. Thus, Heru Sa Aset defeated Set and the battles ceased, and Set was forced off the throne.

Heru Sa Aset, son of Aset and Usir, became the ruler of Egypt and brought peace back to the land. Finally, Aset was completely safe and happy again.

Usir may not have lived to see his son take the throne, but he went to Duat, and there he meets the dead and makes sure they take their deserved path in the afterlife. And finally, the rightful heir to the throne avenged his father and took responsibility.

Daniel Vash

Grade 7



Sophia Mughal
Imaginary Monsters
Digital photograph
Grade 8

Whatever You Say

In the novels *1984* and *Animal Farm*, George Orwell portrays two totalitarian governments with separate settings, tones, and species. Although Orwell uses distinct methods of allegory in order to depict the USSR's prevalent corruption and oppression, one aspect of both novels that is notably similar is the proclivity for both governments to use manipulative tactics in order to maintain control over their people. Both The Party and Napoleon strip their citizens of their privacy, destroy their right to have a role in the decision making process of the country, and direct the public's anger towards false threats to their well-being. In *1984*, a simple yet abstract slogan known as "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength" (Orwell, 4) is used in order to describe the country's main methods of control and governance. Although this type of slogan is not used in *Animal Farm*, it is clear that Orwell used these tactics in order to create a totalitarian government similar to that depicted in *1984*. In *1984* and *Animal Farm*, George Orwell suggests that although many tactics can be used by governments to keep control over the people of their countries, true compliance from the

public is only attainable through manipulation.

Creating common enemies and adversaries for the public to rally around is a tactic many governments use in order to make sure their authority is not questioned by the people. However, in both *Animal Farm* and *1984*, Orwell suggests that some countries go much further than others in order to portray a true threat to the inhabitants of their countries. In *Animal Farm*, multiple common enemies were established in order to conceal the pigs' wrongdoings. After Snowball was banished by Napoleon, he became the farm's top adversary. Napoleon and Squealer commonly used him as a scapegoat for their greed and misconducts. The cows were even convinced that "Snowball milked them in their sleep," while this was clearly the doing of Napoleon and the other pigs brought about by greed (78). This suggests that the pigs will go so far as to convince the other animals that they are being directly affected and even hurt by Snowball. Although it is effective to convince animals they are in distress, this form of manipulation is most potent when they are actively in distress. Meanwhile, in *1984*, The Party uses a verse from their seemingly

contradictory slogan in order to depict their first method of public manipulation. By creating a common enemy for the people to rally around, the common eye will be shifted away from Oceania's internal corruption and deprivation onto another adversary, hence the reason why the party claims that "War is Peace" (4). As long as there is not civil conflict or warfare, the country will be prosperous; however, in order for there to be an external threat, a common enemy has to be established. Every day, The Party broadcasts The Two-Minutes Hate in which the people are encouraged, if not forced, to brew anger towards Emmanuel Goldstein, the leader of The Brotherhood, a resistance group against The Party. After constantly rallying hate against him, eventually "the thought of Goldstein produced fear and anger automatically" (13) amongst the people of Oceania. By using Goldstein as a hated stimuli, The Party does not have to worry about revolution or conflict. Over time and with constant repetition, Goldstein's name creates a Pavlov-like reaction that triggers instant fear and rage. This tool can be used in order to stop revolutions or skirmishes in their tracks. It is through this method of manipulation that complete prosperity in a country

can be achieved once and for all.

As history has demonstrated, in many totalitarian states, privacy and choice are robbed from the public in order to destroy the possibility of the government being overthrown and the current dynasty of leaders from being dethroned. This is demonstrated in both *Animal Farm* and *1984*, in which this method is known as "Freedom is Slavery" (4). In *Animal Farm*, Napoleon and Squealer constantly convince the other animals that their opinion is disregarded for the betterment of the farm. Although it is clear that the pigs are simply fixated on maintaining their positions as leaders of the farm, the animals are manipulated into believing that they lack the mental capacity to lead the farm. Squealer constantly informs the animals that "No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal" (55). Once the animals genuinely believe that Napoleon cares about the other animals, Squealer suggests to the animals that they are not fit to have a say in the decision making process of the farm since they "might make the wrong decisions" (55). By means of manipulation, the animals could be convinced that they are under the leadership of creatures much smarter than themselves.

Once Squealer and Napoleon coerced the animals into believing they do not have the brainpower to become involved in the government, they no longer had to worry about the animals questioning the pigs' authority. This suggests that Napoleon is extremely paranoid about losing power, and he is willing to sacrifice the animals' rights to self confidence and personal opinion in pursuit of complete control. The pigs were successful in this endeavor since their authority was met with little resistance. In pursuit of complete control, however, The Party uses much more extreme tactics of manipulation. In Oceania, as well as subduing the public's right to their opinion, spying devices known as "telescreens" are placed in every building and home in order to thwart plots against the government and eliminate dissent against The Party. The telescreens "could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely" (55). This suggests that the government uses the telescreens to constantly spy on the people of their country, even since the day they are born. This means that children are raised knowing they are constantly watched, and as a result are unaffected by this constant attention. This form of manipulation takes

many years to set in, over time, children will become adults, and the generation who remembers life with privacy will grow old and eventually die. This way, the public will eventually be unaware that they are being spied on, and threats are eliminated before they exist. Although this method of mass manipulation is quite extreme, it, along with the method used by Napoleon, eliminates dissent from the people, essentially silencing them. Without objection from the public, the chances of revolution are eradicated along with the rights of the people.

Throughout both *Animal Farm* and *1984*, propaganda containing falsehoods about the state of the country and its citizens is constantly spread, blurring the line between truth and reality. Although they are experiencing hunger and oppression, the citizens in both novels are lead to believe they are full, the opposite of what their senses and instincts tell them. If the public were to question the reality of these falsehoods, they would be cast aside as insane; therefore, the only way to survive in a country that prosecutes those who disregard propaganda and lies is to be ignorant of the truth, hence invoking the line "Ignorance is Strength" (4). In *Animal Farm*, Squealer, an allegory

for propaganda, is constantly sent out to spread blatant lies to the other animals in order to convince them that they are happy and live in a prosperous country. Even after Squealer told the animals a preposterous lie, “when Squealer described the scene so graphically, it seemed to the animals that they did remember it” (81). This suggests that Squealer’s manipulative skills are powerful enough to create events that never existed. By convincing the animals not to trust their own senses and judgment, but instead to trust the pigs’, the animals can be led to believe anything. Similar to *Animal Farm*, in Oceania, false information is fed to the public through propaganda. Once citizens are ignorant to what is actually happening around them and listen only to what they are told by The Party, they will not question the government’s decisions, hence making the government stronger. After holding up four fingers, O’Brien claims that instead of his fingers being four, “Sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane” (251). This statement shows that in this society, being sane entails being ignorant to what truly exists. In order to survive in Oceania, one must abandon their sanity, and replace it with information provided by the government, with disregard to truth and basic knowledge. Even facts that are understandable simply by observing them with the naked eye must be destroyed in order to survive. At this point, the human body becomes a shell, controlled by the government. Once this level of manipulation is achieved, the public becomes even more expendable and susceptible to government oppression.

In *1984* and *Animal Farm*, George Orwell suggests that through manipulation, the public can be controlled. Methods of manipulating the public involve the spreading of false information, establishment of public enemies, and destruction of privacy. Although none use tactics as extreme as those used by Napoleon and The Party, many countries today use some manipulative tactics in order to maintain control and prevent the questioning of authority. In order to prevent such tactics from being used on an extreme level, citizens must stay aware and continue to pursue the truth. As long as the public stays aware of corruption and oppression from the government, totalitarian countries will cease to exist in the future.

Aaron Gruen

Grade 8



Jenna Foote
1984

Digital photograph
Grade 8



Ryan Cawley
Suspended Disbelief
Digital photograph
Grade 8

Leaves of Courage

Hi. I'm Autumn. I'm twelve years old. I live in Connecticut. I live in a plain, small, one-bedroom house with my mom, Katherine. She is a Pre-K teacher at a school around the corner. My mom is my best friend. She gets ice cream for me and, she likes to play Hangman. She calms me down when I have nightmares. We do everything together; well, when she is around.

I have a day-babysitter named Aggie. Because my mom is out so much, Aggie comes to stay with me. She comes in the morning as soon as I wake up.

I like Aggie. I treat her like an older sister. People around the block call her my therapist. That means she takes care of me and helps me. Well, that's what she says she does.

My mom just got over a divorce with my father, Jerrick. My mother calls him Jerry. I don't talk to him much, and I don't like him, and the feeling is mutual. That is fine because I have never liked that he has one freckle on one side of his face and none on the other side. It drives me insane. It is almost to the point where I

don't want to look at him because I know I am going to have that strange feeling in my stomach. Not like butterflies, but something strange, like frogs. I have tried explaining that to him, but he shut me out halfway through. "I don't care, Autumn," he had said.

Jerrick works as a television reporter for sports or something. I sometimes like to watch him, but I have never actually seen him do his job. I guess that's okay.

Jerrick despises me at times. He hates that I screamed when I have scary dreams. He yells at me when I cry for no reason. He just doesn't understand me. Well, no one does, but he doesn't the most. It is like he doesn't even try.

I've actually never been to school. I'm not allowed to go. I've never met a teacher, except my mom of course. I don't have any friends. I've never known the blonde girl's name across the street from me.

I've never left my house. I'm not allowed to. I've never witnessed those beautiful sunsets on the beach that my mom shows me on her phone. I've never experienced a roll-

er coaster that Aggie says is really fun. I've never had a pet. I've never been able to walk a dog.

I have anxiety. I'm afraid of things: people, bugs, loud noises, even my own thoughts. I have a serious condition of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. It's also known as OCD.

I wake up. I rub my eyes. I shake my blue covers off of me. I stretch my arms and turn my neck until the bone falls into place.

Sure, I am a normal kid on the outside. In the inside, there are a million thoughts. There are a thousand questions. They are all circulating in my insides like how air circulates in a room. My thoughts are deep and thick, with many details like how air is thick and important. I even repeat things, and it is difficult for me to get rid of thoughts.

I crawl out of bed, put on my slippers, and take a glance at the yellow, my favorite color, clock. It reads 8:12.

Aggie has home-schooled me since I was four years old, the age when I was diagnosed with anxiety and OCD. I don't think about my condition

much though because it's not important. Being kind to others and being myself is the most important, but I can't exactly do that because I'm trapped in my one-story house all day doing multiplication flashcards and watching *Finding Nemo* everyday. I know that staying in my house is important, however. Being trapped for eight years will help me get rid of this condition, and I will be able to experience real life, not a fake one.

Once my eyes aren't droopy and tired, I am able to achieve today. I hear footsteps. They are quiet, and the person who is doing the footsteps is being quiet on purpose, for they know I hate loud noises.

Sure enough the quiet-footstep-doer is my babysitter, legal advisor, nanny, teacher, and like-a-big-sister, Aggie. Her straggly hair is pulled into a ponytail and she has bags under her eyes.

Aggie wipes her eyes. She asks with a sad tone to her voice, "Okay, Autumn. What are we wearing today?" Why she is talking like this, I have no idea.

I don't even know what I'm going to wear. I trudge to my closet, retrieve jeans and a

striped T-shirt and change into it. I receive Aggie's approval with a smile, and we continue into the bathroom where I then brush my teeth.

I stand in front of my dusty mirror in the bathroom that both my mother and I share. It is dirty and sometimes there are flies, and maybe there is a bee. That would be the worst-possible scenario.

I then brush my teeth for a good five minutes, clean my-

self up once again, and make it to my small kitchen for breakfast.

Aggie leaves me, and she is standing at the stove, cooking eggs and toasting bread. While I sit at the dining room table, I snatch a piece of paper off the table where there is an image of a mandala. It is something Aggie has printed out for me, and I am destined to finish it before breakfast, so I get some colored pencils and begin col-



Grace Rosow
Mandala
Block print
Grade 8

oring the shapes in.

Yellow, green, red, orange, repeat. Yellow green, red, orange, repeat. I do this until it is complete, and I scan my masterpiece. Then, a feeling I never have experienced before rushes through me. It is strange and sad, and it makes me want to go to my bedroom and hide or maybe even go back to sleep.

The mandala looks like it is trying to escape from the page and that the shapes make up the mandala body. I don't know how I think this or how it comes about in my mind, but I need to get rid of this weird thought.

The mandala relates to me because I am trapped in my house all day; the mandala is trapped in its blank, piece of paper all day, and we're both trying to escape our prisons. Thoughts like this stump my mind for the rest of the day. Thoughts like this go away in about three to four days, but this one will stay with me forever, until we both escape our prisons. The mandala has a better chance of getting out than I do.

Three hours after breakfast,

Aggie and I are sitting in the living room, and Aggie is showing me flashcards. When we do flashcards, we usually do vocabulary and math. I am okay, but I should be in seventh grade right now, and I can assure Aggie that those students aren't doing flashcards in their living room.

As always, we then find our *Finding Nemo* disk and put it in the DVD player. The Disney message comes up and oceans of blue arise from my television. The oceans are so blue; they are so free. The fish are so free.

We usually watch the movie until my mom comes home at around 12:30. That is probably my favorite time of the day, when I get to see her.

I feel like this day is different though, something crazy is about to happen. I don't know what, but I can sense something tense. Well, not tense, that is Aggie, but something else.

Sure enough, my mom rings the doorbell from the front door. I sit up from my couch and turn off the TV just as Marlin and Dory are jumping on jellyfish. Aggie gets up too, and strolls to the door, and opens it. There, my tired moth-

er stands with a small box with holes on it. Is this the mail?

Aggie greets my mom and they talk for not even thirty seconds before Aggie gets about six texts. "I'm sorry, Ms. Bright. I have to go."

Bright was my mom's maiden name and my last name. Before Bright, it was Dirr, which I don't like.

"Is everything okay?" my mother asks, putting the box on the kitchen table,

"Just work stuff," Aggie says. She walks out. "Bye, Katherine. Bye, Autumn."

Then her phone rings, and she is out the door. Five seconds later she drives away.

"Weird," my mother whispers. "Well Autumn, do you want to open the box?"

"Sure, what is it?"

"Just open it!" Katherine smiles.

I run to the kitchen with my mom close behind with a small camcorder. She is recording me, and I am a little skeptical at first, but I want to open that box. So I do, and I am amazed at what happens next.

The box has the best thing I could ask for. It is small, furry, and loving, and it licks my face when I pick it up. It is a dog!

I am excited. I am surprised

and overwhelmed. The puppy is a golden retriever. She is licking my face to her heart's content, and I am not even flinching. If this had happened a year ago, I would have been so scared, but here I am, so incredibly shocked. My mom starts laugh-crying when she sees how happy and excited I am. I was not expecting that today.

I play with Levi all day. My mom even bought food, supplies, toys, and a crate. I am still shocked at how small she is.

At night, I read a book in my bed. My dog, whom I name Levi, is next to me, sound asleep.

Then, when I finish the fifth chapter of the book, I turn the light off, and I am out in seconds. So is Levi, who buries herself in the blankets next to me.

The next morning is chaos. Levi finds my socks and rips them apart. I discipline her, and I'm pretty sure she feels bad, but I am very mad. My room is a complete mess: bookshelves are chewed, clothes ripped, and Levi went to the bathroom six times over night.

That will be fun to clean up.

Other than Levi's little outburst, I am happy with her. She is sweet, playful, has a big personality, and I am sure we will be best friends.

Last night, however, I overheard my mom crying in the bathroom. I didn't go see what was up because I was sleeping at the time, but I could definitely hear her in my dreams. It sounded like she was hurt, or something was hurt. The door was also creaked open. She checked on me. Then she left.

I am confused. Did she leave during the night? Did she get up and go teach? Is she sick?

I look over at my yellow clock: 8:56. Why isn't Aggie here yet? Where is she? Did something happen to her? "Oh no," I say out loud.

That is when I start to get those frogs in my stomach. I feel nervous about my mother and scared about Aggie not being here.

It isn't just frogs in my stomach. There are butterflies. It is like an entire forest is growing in my insides. I start to panic. Sweat drips from my forehead. I start crying. Tears swim down my cheeks. I don't know what to do.

After I finally face reality and get dressed, without Aggie's opinion, I call her. At first she doesn't pick up, but the third time she does.

"Hello?" I ask, still wondering if this is actually her number.

"Yes, is this Autumnn?" Aggie's tone is alarmed, and it sounds like she is sad.

"Yeah, it is," I answer. "Where are you?" At this point I am frightened. There is about a seven-second pause.

"Autie..." Aggie begins, her voice still the same. "I'm in the hospital."

Aggie? In the hospital? Why is she answering her phone? Isn't she in a hospital room with help from nurses and doctors? "Then why are you answering your phone?"

There is more silence. Then, Aggie sniffs. It sounds like she is crying, or she has been crying. There are muffled voices in the background. I can hear doctors and nurses disagreeing on something, and their voice level starts to increase. Aggie takes a deep breath.

I have no idea what is about to happen. I want to hang up

and put the phone back where it belongs. I want to go into the living room and watch *Finding Nemo* for the six hundredth time. I want to be doing schoolwork and being productive. Instead, I am sitting on my kitchen counter, waiting to hear the most dramatic answer in my life.

"Autumn," Aggie whispers. "It's not me that is supposed to be in the hospital."

"Then, who is?" My voice shakes and quivers. I feel like I am about to cry.

"Your...your mother."

It feels like the entire world is balancing on my shoulders. Well, my world is already balancing on my shoulders, but much to my dismay, it is light. My world is light. It is not the words I just heard that are light, but it is all the events that have happened in my lifetime.

Aggie is still sniffing and still anxious about the words she had just spoken to me. The muffled voices are getting louder, and I want to hang up immediately.

I start shivering. I start tearing up. The frogs return. I have no idea how to respond to that

horrific answer. I just need to ask why, so that is exactly what I do.

"Wh..Why?" I ask, my voice now very shaky.

"Autumn," Aggie answers right away, "your mother has a kind of...a kind of...um...a kind of cancer..."

This is all I can take. I drop the phone on the ground and let my face fall in my hands. Then I really start to cry. Hot, steaming tears fall down my face, and it feels like I have made a lake of tears when I started just seconds ago.

I start to scream and begin to brew a temper tantrum. I kick my feet on the cabinets. I throw an innocent book that is lying on a counter across the room. It hits the wall, the wall shakes, and a painting falls. Glasses shatter.

"Autumn!" Aggie shouts, sounding panicked. "Autumn Bright! Autumn!"

I ignore her yells while I squeal with sadness, frustration, and confusion. "Aggie..." I whimper, my tantrum level increasing, "Aggie, can I go see her?"

An hour later, Aggie drives into my driveway, closes the car door, and runs inside empty-handed. She picks up

the painting that is now on the floor, greets Levi, grabs my hand, and says a motivating, "You've got this," and we both leave my house.

I can't believe that this is happening. I am outside! I am nervous and anxious about noises, but I am now anticipating getting inside a car for the first time in eight years.

Then, I watch a leaf, a green one, that practically shimmers under the gray sky above. It flies down to the concrete street below and sits there, as I open the door to Aggie's car.

A half-hour later, I am sitting in Aggie's car, in front of the hospital where my mom is supposedly staying. Aggie smiles at me, glances at her phone, gets reassurance somehow, and turns to her car door. She gets out and gestures me to come along with her. I get out and a shudder rushes through me as I follow my babysitter into a hospital.

I sit in the quiet, cold, empty waiting room before the room my mother is in. I still can't believe that I am out in the open. People whisper. I glance at a nearby fish tank with rainbow fish within the glass.

Again, I have that strange sensation from the mandalas. The fish are trapped, behind the glass, swimming around in wonder. They look happy, but I know that they want to be in the enormous ocean swimming in freedom.

Aggie is arguing with the receptionist at the front desk. Aggie looks upset and frustrated, but the receptionist is firing back.

"We need to see her!" Aggie whisper-shouts.

"You can't," whispers the receptionist.

"Excuse me?" The receptionist ceases her work, puts her pencil down, and looks up at Aggie. The receptionist almost looks defeated.

Now, everyone in the waiting room is on the edge of their seats waiting for the next fire-back. It looks as if the fish are listening too. Aggie speaks next.

"What's your name, Miss?" Aggie speaks in a firm voice now.

"Debra" the receptionist answers.

"Well, Deb," Aggie spits on the word, "Deb," "I have a child who wants to see her mother. The child over there." Aggie points at me; "You see

her?"

Deb nods.

"That kid is probably the strongest kid I have ever met, and I've met many kids. She has been trapped in her house for eight years straight. She could not leave her house. She could not see anyone. The only people that she could talk to were her mother and I. Her father is away, doing only God knows what.

"Now, that child's mother is in a hospital room with cancer, and you're saying that poor child cannot see her. You're low, Deb, real low."

The people with their blank faces smile, then just go right back to what they are doing.

Deb, however, is shocked. "I'm sorry," Deb continues, "but I cannot let you see her. It's under law."

"Law?" Aggie says. "Law?" Aggie repeats. "I'm pretty sure that's not under law. You're saying that an innocent daughter cannot see her mother. That girl may never see her mother again. Katherine is trapped in a hospital room, and Autumn can't see her. Law is for the police. Are you in the police force? Can she at least give her mom a hug?"

"I'm sorry, Miss."

"No, please, Debra. I'm begging you. Can't you just let this family reunite? Can you let people be happy? That may make that girl's day."

"I'm sorry, Miss, but you can come back another time."

"Just five minutes. That's all we need."

Deb frowns. "I told you, no. The child cannot see her mother. Get it?"

"Oh, you're low, Deb. Real low." Aggie shakes her head. Then, she smiles, "Get it?"

Then, we leave.

"I'm sorry, Autumn." Aggie smiles a guilty smile as she slams the door shut and turns the car on. The engine sounds, and we take off.

"It's okay..." My voice quivers, and I stare out the window. Will I ever get to see my mom again? Will she die? Who will I live with? Where will Aggie go? Questions swim through my mind right as a tear swims down my face. It is hot and makes my vision blurry. One by one, tears drip down my face and conjoin into a small puddle below.

Although my vision is blurry, I can see the trees swaying in the wind, and the grass waving in the breeze. The clouds are moving fast, and so

are the cars. People and dogs walk down the concrete sidewalk.

For them--people, dogs, trees, grass, clouds--it is a normal day. They are having a perfectly good day, while the worst, most painful secret in my entire life has just been revealed.

For one time in my life, I finally feel like life is hard.

"Autumn," Aggie says once we get inside, sitting at the kitchen table. "Look, Autie, I need to go back to California. My parents just got a divorce. I need to go see them."

"Wait," I begin, "you'll be gone?"

"That's right. I won't be here in Connecticut for three months."

Oh, no I think. Will I be alone? What is happening to my life? Just yesterday, I was complaining about *Finding Nemo*, and now, my life is crumbling into pieces. Why does Aggie have to leave the second I find out my mother has cancer?

"Will I be alone?" I think out loud.

"Sadly, I don't know, Autumn. I don't know if anyone

would be willing to take care of you."

Well, that hurts. Aggie, this person who I have a lot of respect for, suddenly tells me that no one wants to be with me. Although she doesn't say those exact words, I can tell that is what she means.

"Do you have any other family, Autumn?" Aggie says, then looks at her phone to see if she got any additional texts.

"I have my father," I answer weakly, "but I don't want him to be here."

"I don't either."

Aggie is talking on the phone with someone while I am having water and a bowl of chips. The bowl is chipped; I dropped it eight years ago.

Then, Aggie ends the phone call after about fifteen minutes and gently puts her phone down on the kitchen counter.

"Okay, here's the deal. I found your father's older sister, Stacie. Stacie, her husband Andrew, and their daughter April, who is ten, are going to come stay with you while I'm away."

"Uh, okay," I look down. I don't want to stay with a family I have never met before.

"Is that okay, Autumn?" Aggie asks, looking at her phone

once again. She texts, who I think was her mother, something very long and clicks, "send."

"I guess," I answer. "When will they come?"

"I hope in a few hours. They'll come at seven o'clock, so you can spend the night with them." Aggie looks down at her phone, again.

Oh, no. Seven? That is in four hours. Will they be kind to me? Will they like me? What will I do all day?

Then, we go into the living room to watch *Finding Nemo* for the last time.

Seven hours pass, and I am waiting for a strange car to pull into my driveway. I am sitting on an old, kitchen table chair with a book, and behind the window, Levi is at my feet, asleep.

For a second, I lay my book down on the dirty floor and stare out the window. Hundreds of emotions hit me, most of them negative. I am sad, scared, and anxious for what is about to come.

I listen to the wind bouncing off the windows and Aggie's nervous whispers to her phone. I wonder if the person

behind the other side of the phone knows the situation Aggie is in right now.

Sure enough, an old Suburban pulls into the driveway. I quickly put my chair back where it belongs, hide my book in a bookshelf, make final cleaning touches to the house, and sit at the kitchen counter with a half-full cup of orange juice. Aggie ends her phone call, gives me a smile and a nod, and goes to open the door. Levi awakens, scared to death. Like me.

The door creaks open. A girl, with a head taller than me, walks through, makes a strange face, and continues to my room with a large duffel bag, not even engaging with me. She definitely sees me. It is like she knows the place. Levi follows her. I hear a spontaneous squeal. I smile.

Then, a tiny, skinny man walks through. He greets Aggie and strolls over to the kitchen where he notices me. "Who are you?" he says disgustingly, "are you Jerrick's kid?"

"Yes," I mumble.

"What? I can't hear you," Andrew replies, looking around. "Jeez this place is a dump," he whispers loudly.

"Yes, I'm his daughter," I say louder.

"You got OCD?" He asks. He is small but still much taller than me. He has three earrings on one ear and two nose rings. He wears sweatpants and a raggy T-shirt. He wears enormous basketball shoes, which are clearly not his size.

"Yes," I say proudly.

"Oh, man." Then he follows his daughter.

Suddenly, a large, slam pounds through the doorway. Aggie is forced to move.

"Hey," a voice says. It is crackly, deep, but high at the same time, "move out of the way! I got big bags here, lady!"

The voice crackles. Aggie moves more. Now I have a visual of who it is.

It is a woman with short, black hair. She is large and has a round stomach.

She is about 6'6" and has the biggest feet and nose I have ever seen in my entire life. She has black eyes that pierce into anyone who is looking at her. She wears a white tank top, glasses, and huge jeans that are bigger than me.

Aggie looks alarmed. "You must be Stacie," Aggie smiles. She sticks out her hand.

"Pleasure to meet you. I'm

Aggie, your niece's babysitter."

"Okay, Ashley, here's the- "

"It's Aggie," Aggie says, rolling her eyes.

"Whatever," Stacie chuckles.

"Okay, I'll take care of the girl if you give me one-hundred dollars each day I take care of her. Got it?"

"Um, I think that's unreasonable."

"Then we're leaving now. Money or no deal."

"For now, the deal is on; however, if you're mean, abusive, or you harass Autumn in any way, the deal is off."

"Why can't you take care of her?"

"I have a personal life, Stacie. My parents just got a divorce like your brother. He left that kid all alone."

"I don't care about the kid or my brother. I'm here for the money."

Aggie looks at me and frowns. Her eyes begin to sparkle.

"Adios, Aggie."

She stands there for a second. Suddenly she walks over to where I am sitting. Her eyes start to water. I get up and give her the biggest hug I might ever give.

I sit on my living room couch with a book and the lamp on. April, my cousin, has taken over my room. She even moved my books and personal things out. She loves Levi, though, but I can tell Levi hates her. April locks Levi in my room all day, so she can't get out as April does her homework.

Stacie and Andrew brought two cots with them (I don't know how they did that) and lay them out in the kitchen. The kitchen table is thrown out in the front yard. An hour later, it is gone.

"Turn the freakin' light out, kid!" Andrew yells from across the room.

"I'm reading my book!" I respond, loudly.

"Then sleep outside," Stacie says. They both laugh.

I turn my light out. Seconds later, I reluctantly fall asleep.

I wake up at eight A.M. to the sound of Levi scratching the door of my bedroom. The door is locked. I knock on it.

"Uh, April, can you please open the door to my bedroom?" I ask sweetly.

"It's her bedroom now," Stacie barks. "Kid, you're going to school today."

I freeze. My heart freezes.

"What?"

"Do you have ears? You're going to school," Stacie chuckles. "Pack up. Ashley got you a backpack yesterday. It's got all you need."

"School already started," I say.

I can't believe this is happening to me. My life is happening too fast all of a sudden. What will school be like? Although I've always wanted to go school, at this moment I am too tired and sad to deal with all this.

"Autumn, don't give me back talk. Your clothes are in the closet." She points to the laundry room closet. "Get dressed. Now!" she says.

"Fine," I say, my voice quivering. "By the way, her name is Aggie."

A half hour later, I sit in the backseat of their Suburban. I read a book, and April plays games on her iPhone. I don't even have a cell phone yet, and she is two years younger.

"How did you sign me up for school if it already started?" I ask, putting a bookmark in between the pages I last read.

"Ashley did, before it start-

ed. Thought it would be good for ya," Andrew answers.

This means that Aggie knows that I will be ready to start school! Does this mean that my OCD is going away, possibly? Did my mom know?

The car drives into the school loop, where people get out of their cars.

"Does she need to be signed in?" Stacie whispers to Andrew.

"Nah, bet the kid can do it herself," Andrew answers.

"Okay, kid," Andrew begins; "Here's the deal: you get out of the car, go to the main office, and introduce yourself. Then, they'll bring you to your class and you'll have a great day. Got it? Now get out."

I open the door. I get out and start walking towards the school. I pause, then turn back to the car.

"Have a fantastic first day, April! See you later!" Stacie waves to April as she gets out and starts to walk confidently to the school. I follow into the scary building that is ahead without so much as a glance.

Before I know it, I am following the nice receptionist-guy to my new classroom. His name is Mr. Marco. He is talking to me, but I don't hear

a single word. I am too anxious and nervous about what is to come. Will the kids be nice? Will I like my teachers? Will they be kind to me? Will the work be hard? Will I keep up with everyone?

We stop at Room 381. "Ms. Sun," it reads.

I walk through the door.

The classroom is boring. There are three bookshelves, a white board, a small television, a teacher, and about thirty, blank-faced kids. Everyone is silent the second I walk in.

"This is Autumn Bright," Mr. Marco says. He turns to the class. "She will be in your class for the rest of the year."

"Hi, Autumn. I'm Ms. Sun." The teacher smiles. "Our names kind of match." A handful of the kids laugh and smirk. I don't really know what is so funny.

Mr. Marco leaves, and I am facing thirty of my brand new classmates.

"Before Autumn sits down, does anyone have any questions for her?" Ms. Sun asks. She points to a boy with red hair, freckles, and glasses. He has a big nose and wears basketball shoes. "Yes."

"Are you purposely named

after a season?" he asks with a sly smile across his face. Of course, the other kids laugh. All of them. I feel my face burning up.

The teacher looks at me and signals me to answer by raising her eyebrow.

I shrug. "Ask my mom," I say honestly. I think that is a pretty humorous answer. Apparently it isn't. No one laughs except for the teacher; however, the kids laugh and point at her.

"Anyone else?" Ms. Sun chuckles. She points to another boy. "Yes, Ben?"

"Why haven't you come to school in the first place? I mean, school started like three months ago. Why are you just coming now?"

Oh no, I think. I don't want to answer that question. I feel myself start blushing. A few of the kids point at my face and make explosion signals.

I look to the teacher. I make an innocent puppy face and wait for her response. She gets up from her chair. "You can ask Autumn that question during your free time. Okay, now everyone open your history textbooks to page to one-hundred and thirty-three."

I do. I look around the room.

Everyone is staring at me and cupping their hands over their mouths, obviously talking about me.

Not even fully into a day at school, and I memorize four things:

Music is a religion.

Gossip is politics.

Drama is war.

Popularity is money.

These four are key in having a great day, not to mention year, at school. The problem is, I don't know how or what to do about any of them.

No one talks to me. It is like I'm not even here. I answer four out of four questions wrong, and every answer gets a snicker from at least one kid.

Lunch is the hardest. I walk through the door to the cafeteria, and immediately everyone stares at me. I am the new kid. I go to the front of the kitchen where there are loads of food. I grab a blue tray and cover it with water, a turkey sandwich, a bag of chips, and a sleeve of Oreos. I sit at an empty table in the corner of the lunch room. It overlooks the street, and I watch numerous cars drive by the school. It is loud in the cafeteria, but I am so tired I don't care.



**Maddy Shantz
Portrait**
Acrylic on paper
Grade 6

I get home, and I race to my bedroom before April, but I am kicked out by her parents. Homework sucks. That's all. I glance at a book with Levi at my side. I am hungry. I don't have dinner. The only thing that got me through the school day was the sleeve of Oreos, which I awarded myself after

each class. The teachers were okay, but I am absolutely dreading tomorrow.

Tonight, I lay on my couch thinking about the day. I made no friends, and the chance of a relationship with my aunt, uncle, and cousin has decreased since the second they picked April and I up.

At nine o'clock, I doze off, and that doze becomes a deep, deep sleep.

The next morning, I awaken to the sound of April's screams and complaining that turns into a temper tantrum.

I, someone who's more mature, get up from the couch, scratch Levi's head, and make it to the sink for breakfast.

I make myself fried eggs and pour a healthy amount of orange juice. Suddenly, the frogs appear in my stomach. I feel myself sweating and having a panic attack. It hurts me mentally, not physically.

"Kid, what are you doing?" Andrew asks, walking over to the cup cabinet, taking a coffee mug, and holding it under the coffee maker. A dark liquid pours out and lands majestically in his cup.

"I'm having breakfast. What does it look like I'm doing?" I honestly don't know what concerns him. Why does he ask?

"Jeez, Kid, just askin'. Where you going again?"

"Um, school. You dropped me off literally yesterday." Yes, I sound sassy, but I don't care.

"Oh, sorry, Kid. It's not like you spoke. And, I forgot."

Then we drive to school.

Three months pass. 91 days after the tragedy. 2,184 hours after I lost Aggie. 131,040 minutes after a selfish family arrived in my life. 7,862,400 seconds after I lost my best friend.

Stacie speaks on the phone to an unknown person.

"What?!" Stacie exclaims. "That's so exciting!" she says sarcastically, in a fake, giddy voice.

Pause. "Yes."

Shorter pause. "Oh, okay."

Longer pause. "Hmm, oh my God. That's horrible."

Short pause. "Yup, she's right here."

Pause. "No."

Very long pause. "Okay, I'll see her later."

"What happened?" I ask, starting to panic. I start getting uncomfortable. I start shaking my feet.

"Calm down," Stacie sighs; "Your mother's coming home."

"Wait, what?" I ask, forgetting about the uncomfortable sensation.

"She just got out of chemotherapy treatment. We're going to see her in, say, three hours. You and me." She looks to the clock and nods. "Okay?"

I nod. "Thank you."

Then, Stacie does something unimaginable. She smiles (a real one) and walks over to where I stand and gives me an awkward, but caring, hug.

I tap my foot in the front seat of Stacie's car, anticipating the moment. I wait for my mother to walk out of the treacherous building.

Stacie stands out of the car, on the phone, talking to Andrew. Stacie seems mad and concerned, and I have no idea what is happening. She shakes her head, and talks some more.

To be honest, I can't believe I am here right now. I have been waiting for something good to come into my life; however, bad things came: my mother got cancer, I went to school, Aggie left, and a strange family arrived at my house.

Now, I'm sitting in my aunt's car; I'm sitting in my father's sister's car. That seems so weird to me.

Fifteen minutes fly by. I tap my foot until the door of the hospital opens. My heart starts to beat. I find the curves of my lips start to curl into a smile.

An old man walks out of the door in a white doctor's coat.

He smiled and waves to my aunt, who talks to him. She then nods happily and goes back to her phone call.

Then, a small woman appears at the doorway. She has a huge smile on her face. Her hair is short, cut like a boy's. Her arms and legs have both shrunk. She is followed by another man who assists her through the door. She is obviously weak and exhausted, but her face is covered with determination.

The woman walks carefully to the car. She gives my aunt an enormous hug, and they both wipe their eyes. The doctor, and what looks like a nurse, smile, and they speak to each other.

The small woman looks around as if she is looking for something important. This woman is Katherine. She is looking for me.

My heartbeat increases. My eyes widen. She is my mother. The mother whom I had lost.

I open the front door of the car and leap out. My mother sees me and yelps. Her eyes widen, and she covers her mouth with her hand. She is almost as excited to see me, as I am to see her.

I sprint to my mom as fast

as my legs can carry me. I run faster and faster until I jump into her arms, and she catches me with a giant hug. My aunt, the doctor, and nurse smile and bite their lips to avoid tears.

"I'm so excited to see you, Autumn!" my mother cries. She signals around. She waves around. "You're outside! You're here!"

"You're here," I say. We both cry a thousand tears.

We drive back in my aunt's car, and I can't help but stare at my mother in the front seat. The doctors are going to come to our house to check her out each week to see how she is doing.

My mother and my aunt are both talking, but I have zoned out of the conversation. I can't stop thinking about what my mother has gone through in these three months. I am going to ask her, but I decide it will be better to ask her later.

There is a lull in the conversation. Then a spark in the conversation catches my attention.

"Katherine, how did you pay for the chemo?" Stacie asks. She knows we are not the wealthiest of families.

"Someone actually paid for it," my mother says calmly.

"Who?" I chime in.

My mother looks behind her seat, her eyes staring into mine, "Your father."

"Autumn," my mother says, tears in her eyes. They sparkle in the light. A tear falls. "Let's go to the beach." Without answering, I obediently put on my shoes, snatch a coat just in case, take my small mother's hand, and we start walking to the beach near my house.

It is a peaceful walk. Spring is just beginning, and autumn and winter have ended. Birds and other animals who had silenced over the winter arise from rest and continue to grace Earth with their smile-triggering sounds.

The two of us take our shoes off, walk on the wet sand that tickles our feet, and sit on a bench.

Minutes fly by as if we are the seagull that flaps its mighty wings over us. We sit in silence until my mother says out of the blue, "Autumn, I'm so proud of you." My chin begins to shake, and a proud, happy feeling shields me from the wind.

I am beyond happy that my mother, whom I almost lost

three months ago, has arisen from the pain that she was in, the pain that she hid from me, her daughter. Although the amount of wrinkles have increased, her large head has turned small, and her hair has fallen, I honestly don't care.

It doesn't matter what's on the outside, it's what's on the inside that matters, and what Katherine, my lucky mother, has inside is indescribable.

I watch the beautiful sun turn orange, and misty pink clouds begin to take over the blue sky. I've always wanted to see a sunset, and right now, I am experiencing this beauty with my mother.

I know now that life is a gift, and we should all act like our lives will be gone in a second, like my mother's life. Life is difficult. The events in people's lives are sometimes difficult. Sometimes life is confusing, and most times it doesn't go our way.

But every valley we cross that seems endless, and we just want to start over, just know that a peak will arrive and soon we will have pounds of happiness and gallons of peace.

Every negative feeling of mine is now meaningful, and all of my feelings seem positive to me. I know for sure that right now, I'm on a peak. And so is my mother. And father. Trust me, trust me.

Trust me.

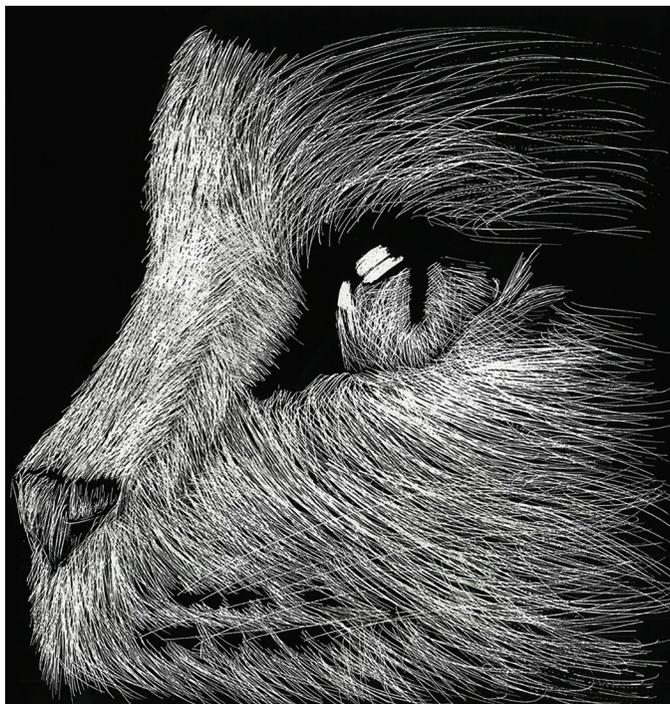
Keilan Rosow

Grade 7

The Cat

Oh, how the cat did learn his lesson.
After a year of harmony,
He did walk up to the
The boy,
And bite his little leg.
Then he did learn that
This was not very smart,
For the boy struck him down,
And the cat cried.
But the cat lived
For 14 years,
And never did the cat
Bite the boy's leg
Again.

Aaron Gruen
Grade 8



William Geary
The Cat
Scratchboard
Grade 8

Wings

“Mimi,” said Julia, “can we go out for a fly?”

I was nervous. We usually don’t go for a glide when more people are around than usual. Since today was Halloween, though, our enormous wings would look normal.

So we took to the skies. Me, Julia, George, Fang, Harold, and Kiki all spread our wings and used the chilly air currents to take off. My jacket helped a little bit, but the wind rushing in my face made it colder than average.

After flying for about twelve minutes, we landed a couple of blocks away from the trick-or-treaters. We didn’t want people thinking, *Ohmigosh! It’s Superman with wings!* because that would be bad for the real Superman. Wherever he is.

Margot Israel-Pitchenik
Grade 7



Ryan Cawley
Swede
Digital photograph
Grade 8



Jenna Foote
Door Frame Faces
Digital photograph
Grade 8

Heroic

“Look! Up in the sky! It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s Superman!”

“Na na na, Batman!”

With these two quotes, you’ve got a hint about what I’m talking about, my heroes, the Dark Knight and the Man of Steel. But really, how can you not? Superheroes have become part of our culture, so deeply ingrained that it’s impossible not to know that Clark Kent is Superman. Among those heroes, every man, woman and child has their favorite superhero, such as my personal favorite, Batman. Each hero has a colorful and wildly entertaining background, not only within the story, but of why they were created. Really, it’s impossible to only talk about one or two comics, so I’ll tell you about how they were created in the first place.

Comics started as something called Pulps--a 10-cent book sold on newsstands, filled with heroes going to fantastical places and having funny adventures. The main character, although doing superhuman feats on a daily basis, was never portrayed as anything other than human. One example would be the character Popeye. Although

he regularly uses spinach to give him super-strength, he’s only ever marketed as human.

The first true superhero was a man called The Phantom, who never used superhuman abilities, instead fighting only with his wits and death defying stunts. He was the first masked hero but not the last. Not by a long shot.

Soon after the Phantom in 1938, began what is known as the Golden Age of comics, starting with a Pulp which featured on its cover a man in a red and blue costume, lifting a car over his head. This comic book was titled *Action Comics #1*, and it was the start of the hero known as Superman. He was big and bright, a role model for kids everywhere, and also to comic book creators - soon masked heroes were a massive movement.

On a side note, just to point out how much people love superheroes, you know how I said that at the time, comics cost 10 cents? Well, recently, a copy of *Action Comics #1* went for 3.21 million dollars. Let that one sink in.

Now, where was I? Ah, yes. Another famous hero to come out early was the infamous Batman, debuting in *Detective Comics #1*, and he was a bit of a change from Superman. Where

Superman was big and bright, colorful and shiny, the Batman was grim and gritty, an exquisite planner who fought with brains, not brawn.

Over the years comics have continued, with character histories changed and entire events being discarded through “time-line changes,” but in the end, the characters are the same. Although this makes it a nightmare for some fans, in the end, it makes comics approachable for all.

Another big thing about comics is the massive amount of characters, and among them, everyone has their favorite, the one they can see themselves in. But, did you know that you can tell a bit about someone just by knowing their favorite superhero?

It’s been suggested by quite a few sources that you can know a few things about someone by knowing their favorite superhero. *The Atlantic*, *Puckermob*, and tons of other websites tell you a little about yourself, if you tell them your favorite superhero. Now, I want you to think of your favorite superhero. If it’s not Batman, Superman, or Spiderman, try again. Aquaman fans, sorry, you’re just a fish out of water here. Now that you know your choices, pick one of the three in your head, and

listen for which describes you the most.

The first is Superman. In *The Atlantic*, the entry for Superman reads, “You don’t believe in underdogs. Cheering for Kal-El is sort of like rooting for Duke or the Miami Heat—you like the very best and don’t like to be on the losing team. You are probably the firstborn and are a bit of an overachiever, so you’re used to setting the example and handling the pressure that comes with it. You have probably enabled “god mode” in a video game or cheated on your golf score at some point. You’re loyal to a fault, or at least like loyal people. You’re also an optimist and see the good in all, despite what Batman fans says about you.”

For Batman, it reads, “Do you secretly enjoy watching Superman (and his fan base) getting his (or their) butt(s) kicked? Yes. You like your heroes damaged, because perfection is silly. If everything were perfect, then why even bother making comic books? You’re a realist with a pessimistic bent. You’ve seen the worst and know that you need to see the ugly side of things to appreciate life fully.”

Finally, the Spiderman entry reads, “You love a good underdog story and might have been bullied as a kid. But you rose

above the abuse you suffered at the hands of your peers, and made something of yourself.”

Now, did your favorite match up with what most describes you? The reason that you and your favorite character may be so similar is because people enjoy things that are similar to themselves. Why do people even like superheroes to begin with? What is it about these characters who came from little books sold on a newsstand? The reason heroes are so popular isn't because they always save the day, it isn't because of the times they've died to remind people that they're not all-powerful. It's because in the origin of almost every hero, there's a normal man. Behind the mask is someone who's simple, not invincible, and identical to you or me. Every secret identity reminds you that anyone could be a hero - and it's true. Anyone can be a hero. Because heroism isn't just about shooting lasers out of your eyes or flying faster than a speeding bullet - it's about being a hero everyday: picking your friend up off the ground, helping an elderly person across the street, or showing a classmate how to do the work. Because anyone can be a hero.

Daniel DeGirolomo
Grade 8

Paulpable

Cast of Characters

- PAUL: Protagonist. A very skilled sorcerer, trained by GIKMENON
- GWYDION: An incredibly skilled and serious magician.
- UBEL: Antagonist. An incredibly powerful sorcerer and a Shade
- COLLIER: A Dwarf who helps PAUL on his journey.
- COUNCILMEN: A group of powerful warlocks who officiate magic.
- GIKMENON: A powerful sorcerer, PAUL's Mentor.
- ARCHARD: An incredibly powerful Shade
- WARLOCKS
- SOLDIERS

SCENE 1

SETTING: *Time unknown, appears premodern. Curtained stage.*

AT RISE: *Narrating*

NARRATOR. Once, long ago, a Sorcerer toppled an empire. He was named (*Insert dramatic pause*) Paul. At one point, sometime, Paul was performing a resurrection ritual on a sheep.

(*Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 2

SETTING: *A small room, a pentacle.*

AT RISE: *Performing ritual on dead sheep*

PAUL. Gikmenon! I need more energy! I'm running out!

GIKMENON. I'm trying! Something keeps breaking the connection! (GIKMENON *walks into PAUL's spell circle*) Sorry, that is the only thing that I could think of. (PAUL *finished incantation. They both walk out of the spell circle and into the next room. Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 3

SETTING: *A small dining room.*

AT RISE: *Eating stew*

PAUL. (*Enters room*) Thank you for helping me out.

GIKMENON. But you did not completely perform the ritual.

PAUL. What do you mean?

GIKMENON. (*Annoyed*) You should know this. You did not do it alone. Therefore, you have not mastered Life. The Council will not make you my apprentice until you have mastered Life. (*Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 4

SETTING: *A small room, pentacle.*

AT RISE: *Performing ritual on dead sheep*

PAUL. (*Performing ritual on dead sheep*) I need to do this ritual, and quick. (GIKMENON *appears from nowhere with a small pop; PAUL does not notice him.*) Ego novo ovis. (*Pyrotechnics on stage. PAUL is disappointed.*) It didn't work! (*Wait*) Ego novo ovis. (*Pyrotechnics*) It worked!

GIKMENON. Yes, indeed!

PAUL. *(Surprised)* How long have you been here?

GIKMENON. I saw the whole thing! *(PAUL and GIKMENON walk out the door. They are walking down a dirt road, lined with clay houses.)*

GIKMENON. You must be very careful. If you are discovered using magic, you will most likely be executed for using it illegally. *(Blackout. End of scene.)*

SCENE 5

SETTING: *A dark cavern.*

AT RISE: *A meeting. PAUL and GIKMENON on the floor, council of 10-20 sitting in a recreation of the Coliseum clearly intended for hundreds.*

GIKMENON. He has mastered every element, and I wish to make him my apprentice.

COUNCILMAN 1. *(Dismissively)* How did he master them?

GIKMENON. He has resurrected a sheep after killing it. He has started a fire on his own. He has doused said fire with water. He has built a pillar of earth and blown it away with air.

COUNCILMAN 2. *(Dismissively)* He may be your apprentice.

GIKMENON. Thank you. *(Blackout. End of scene.)*

SCENE 6

SETTING: *A dirt road lined with dirt huts.*

AT RISE: *PAUL and GIKMENON walking.*

GIKMENON. You've done a great job.

PAUL. Thank you! *(GIKMENON hands PAUL a book.)*

WARLOCK 1. Stop it right there, wizard. *(Spell is cast. GIKMENON falls.)*

PAUL. Ignis! *(The sorcerer blasts back.)*

GIKMENON. Just run. *(PAUL begins to run.)*

WARLOCK 1. In the name of Ubel, stop! *(More spells. GIKMENON dies. PAUL runs towards gate.)*

WARLOCK 2. Stop! *(Blasts. Blackout. End of scene.)*

SCENE 7

SETTING: *A hill with a house at the top.*

AT RISE: PAUL *running.*

(PAUL runs out of the gate, up a hill, and into a large house. Fades to black. Fades into a house library. Blackout. End of scene.)

SCENE 8

SETTING: *A library*

AT RISE: PAUL *grabs books, puts in cart, repeats 10 times. PAUL waves wand at cart and the books fall into a portal to another dimension.*

PAUL. Those are the last of the books. *(Blackout. End of scene.)*

SCENE 9

SETTING: *A bustling town*

AT RISE: PAUL *walking*

PAUL. I can feel a magical force. A very strong one. Where is it?
(PAUL looks around, eyes land on a townspeople. We see a townspeople. GWYDION is in disguise; he stops. PAUL turns towards him.)

PAUL. *(Whispering)* Who are you?

GWYDION. *(Whispering)* I am Gwydion. I have been on the run for months. What brings you here?

PAUL. I am going to kill Ubel.

GWYDION. Finally, another magic user with the same quest as I. I must retrieve my apprentice, Archard. He is a Shade, so don't be surprised by his lack of a very corporeal form.

PAUL. OK. *(GWYDION and PAUL duck into the house. They are hiding inside in a crevice. Blackout. End of scene.)*

SCENE 10

SETTING: *A house*

AT RISE: GWYDION *walking, and PAUL marveling.*

(GWYDION puts away his robe, then runs from door to door, waving his wand. PAUL walks down the hall and sees various rooms. GWYDION gets to large doors at the end.)

GWYDION. Paul, shh. Come over here.

(PAUL goes over to GWYDION. GWYDION knocks in the pattern -.-.-.-, and the door opens. The room is shrouded in black mist, getting thicker towards the center GWYDION and PAUL enter.)

GWYDION. (Shouting) Archard! We need to leave! It is time to execute the plan! (The dark cloud recedes. ARCHARD, a shadow, appears just behind the door.)

ARCHARD. OK, let's grab my stuff. (PAUL and GWYDION walk into the kitchen as various sounds are heard. ARCHARD walks out of the room with a briefcase. GWYDION magically cuts an orange into slices. ARCHARD absorbs an orange slice by transforming it into granules.)

GWYDION. That's the last orange. (PAUL eats an orange slice. GWYDION vanishes the rest of the orange. They leave the house. After they leave, a small tendril of darkness wraps around the doorknob. PAUL, ARCHARD and GWYDION hide.)

SOLDIER 1. Everyone! I can see Gwydion! Get him! (GWYDION whips out a wand. ARCHARD, GWYDION and PAUL vanish. Black-out. End of scene.)

SCENE 11

SETTING: A library

AT RISE: Appearing

(Reappear in writing room with MARTIN.)

MARTIN. Sorry. I teleported you without alerting you.

PAUL. Who are you?

MARTIN. My name is Martin. I use writing to channel magic. I sensed you were in danger, so I wrote you out of it.

GWYDION. Where did you learn-

PAUL. Thank you, for saving us.

MARTIN. You are welcome. (BENJAMIN enters with cookies.)

Thank you for making those cookies.

BENJAMIN. Thank you, Martin.

MARTIN. This is my golem, Benjamin .

PAUL. Thank you, Benjamin, for the cookies.

GWYDION. Anyways, we need to be on our way and complete

our quest to kill Ubel.

MARTIN. Then Benjamin and I will come with you, as it will be easier for you to defeat him as his magic puts a limit on mine.

GWYDION. Grab my hand, Paul! (PAUL *grabs* GWYDION's hand.

MARTIN *writes, and there is a bzapp!! sound.* GWYDION, MARTIN, BENJAMIN , ARCHARD and PAUL *vanish. Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 12

SETTING: *On a hill above town*

AT RISE: GWYDION, MARTIN, BENJAMIN , ARCHARD and PAUL *Standing there, making sure that they have everything.*

ARCHARD. We have to go quickly. (*They run off, ARCHARD first. Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 13

SETTING: *On a hill*

AT RISE: *Walking over the hill*

(PAUL *sees a hole dug into hill.*)

MARTIN. Benjamin and I will be over here if you need us.

PAUL. What is that?

GWYDION. That is a Dwarf's home.

ARCHARD. It is our friend Gawain's house. (*Enter GAWAIN's home.*) Gawain! We need to go! We are going to finally get rid of Ubel! We are initiating the plan.

GAWAIN. (*Exasperated*) Finally! (*Fade to black. Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 14

SETTING: *On a hill*

AT RISE: *Walking over said hill*

(*An arrow speeds towards the group and ARCHARD catches it with his cloud, shattering it almost immediately. Enter ORCHAL.*)

PAUL. Who is that?!

ORCHAL. Oh no! I'm so sorry! I thought you were a deer! Please, forgive me. Anyways, what brings you here?

GWYDION. We are going to kill Ubel!

PAUL. Shut-

ORCHAL. Many have tried, and all have failed, so I will join you, as he killed my family as he rose to power. (*Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 15

SETTING: *A gate*

AT RISE: *Walking to gate*

(*Enter soldiers and GWYDION.*)

SOLDIER 1. Who are you? And, what is your business here?

GWYDION. I am Steve Veneficum, and my caravan is here to deliver our goods. (*GWYDION suddenly has a large number of baskets of assorted fresh food and some clay jars.*)

SOLDIER 2. You may ent-

SOLDIER 1. Hey! You didn't have those before.

SOLDIER 2. No, they did have them before.

SOLDIER 1. They definitely didn't have them before.

SOLDIER 2. Wait, my memory amulet is kicking in. Yeah, they did not have it before. (*Soldiers handcuff them, bring them to prison in separate cells. Blackout. End of scene.*)

SCENE 16

SETTING: *A shadowy prison*

AT RISE: PAUL is *shoved into a cell.*

MYSTERIOUS VOICE. (*Dismissively*) Why are you here?

PAUL. Who was that?

MYSTERIOUS VOICE. I'm Leo. I used to fight for Zxzyxymon. I'm in here because he is afraid of me.

PAUL. Why do you say that?

LEO. I'm a shape-shifter. (*Pause*)

PAUL. I assume you've tried to get out of this cell.

LEO. Yes, I am chained to a wall with magicite. It is draining my power to the point that I cannot shapeshift, presumably into either his personal store of magical energy or his armies.

PAUL. I'll get them off. Abolere. (*It doesn't work.*) Abolere. (*It doesn't work.* PAUL sighs.)

LEO. It's not going to work. Do you think they would have put a sorcerer in this cell if it could? (PAUL looks like he has an idea. He is grinning.)

PAUL. Clavis. (A key appears in PAUL's hand. PAUL unlocks the chains. The keys slowly degenerate while in contact with the chains.)

Cultro. (A yellow, glowing knife appears in PAUL's hand, and PAUL carves some stone off the shackles. LEO is freed, waits a short time, shifts into a rat and exits the cell. He grabs keys and unlocks all the cells. They begin sneaking around. The use of fire-related spells by GWYDION, ARCHARD stabbing soldiers, GAWAIN battering soldiers with his battle-axe, MARTIN writing, LEO mauling guards as a lion, and PAUL using air spells on soldiers. Blackout. End of scene.)

SCENE 17

SETTING: A castle in view, in town

AT RISE: Stopped on an empty street

GWYDION. Now, we must go into the tower. Grab my arm so we may teleport to the door. (PAUL and GAWAIN grab GWYDION's arm, MARTIN is writing, ORCHAL fires an arrow, and GWYDION, ORCHAL, ARCHARD and PAUL vanish. They reappear at the door. Cut to the door.)

PAUL. Glacies. (One guard freezes. ORCHAL fires an arrow at a guard. LEO shifts into a bear, and ARCHARD breaks the door. Blackout. End of scene.)

SCENE 18

SETTING: A tower room

AT RISE: Fighting stances

GWYDION. Ubel.

UBEL. Gwydion. We meet once again. I wonder, have you told him?

PAUL. What does he mean?

GWYDION. I was Ubel's student before he took over the country. (PAUL attacks.)

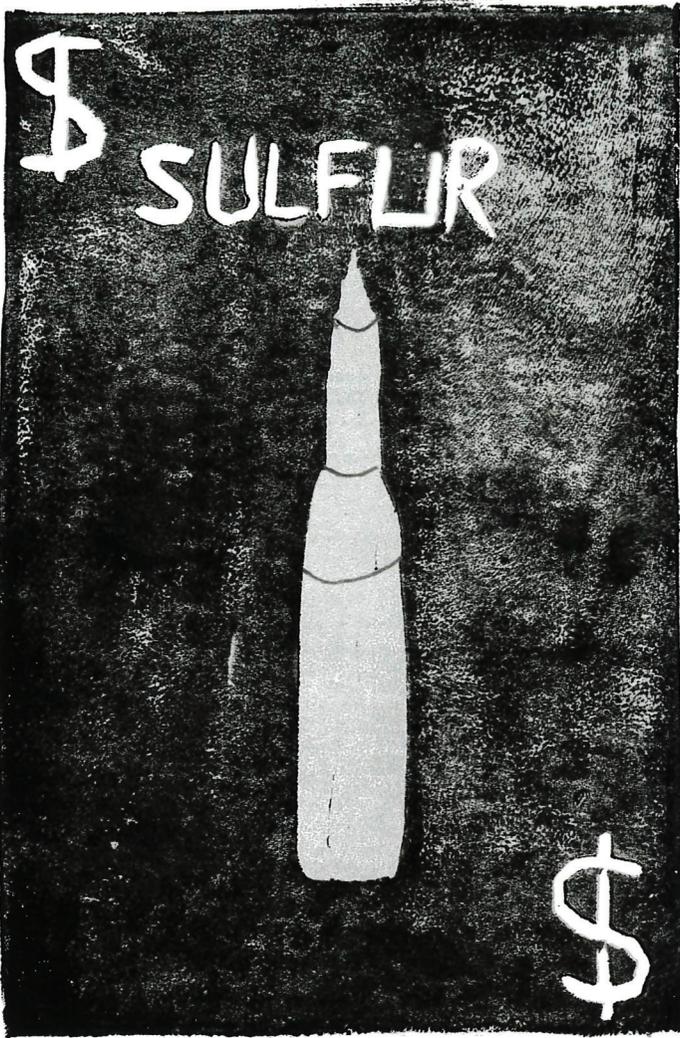
UBEL. Obsto. (A blazing, yellow beam deflects off of a blue shield of energy that UBEL summoned. ZYZYKYMOM begins attacking with his

cloud, and ARCHARD defends PAUL and begins attacking. GAWAIN attacks with a battle-axe. LEO attacks. PAUL attacks. MARTIN writes spells. BENJAMIN beats UBEL, and ORCHAL fires multiple arrows.)
GWYDION. Conglacio, fulmen, ignis.
UBEL. Mori humanus!

(ARCHARD catches the red bolt and throws it at UBEL as ARCHARD, GAWAIN, GWYDION, ORCHAL, LEO, MARTIN, BENJAMIN, and PAUL all attack at once. UBEL perishes, disintegrating into pieces slowly and then exploding in a fiery explosion. Blackout. End of scene. Curtain.)

Alexander McKinnis

Grade 7



Ethan Klein
\$ulfur
Block print
Grade 8

Crusader

Prelude

What I Know of The Siege Of Jerusalem by The Rashidun Caliphate and Call of Charlemagne

The days that existed in the time of the sparking of the first crusade were the days of Charlemagne The Great, a fair ruler of Merovingian extract, and one who descended from the Franks who lived under his great dominion. He happened to be ruling as emperor of the now Holy Roman Empire and had the surprise and inconvenience of viewing the Saracens' capture of Jerusalem, and a crude massacre of Christians. The siege, which lasted between the November of 636 and the April of 637, was led by the blistering Rashidun Caliphate, a blisteringly powerful yet timely power under the Sultans of Islam.

The siege was directed by Abu Ubaida, accordingly one of the ten companions of Mohammed in his preachings through the south. From my readings, he was a merchant by profession, and one who was honored for his modesty and bravery. I would contradict his "modesty" to the Quraish of Makkah, if I had been on Earth so long ago.

His battles included his first encounter, the Battle of Badr, a conflict between their prophet, and the opposers at Medina. The quarrel was fought on the day of the revealing of their sacred text, the Quran, on what is known as Ramadan. Yes, his reputation in the distant Islamic world made its mark in taking what they believed was obligated to them, but he, nor the Emperor Uthman, had no true reason to bloat their empire to a greater size.

The land had been controlled by the Christians since Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, recovered of the Holy City from the Zoroastrians, had seized it from Chosroes of Persia, the very last before the Rashidun Muslims subjugated Persia and smote the Sassanians in the key Battle of Qadisiyah in 636.

Carrying on, the siege of Jerusalem in November 637 was done with the devious method of willingly, and ruthlessly, hindering the victims inside their own walls. Details are vague, even for me, but it appeared to be absolutely bloodless.

The city was taken after six, dirty months, and Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem, more candidly known as John, the patriarch of The Holy City and a man of great holiness, surrendered with tribute and a pact.

During the battle he had secretly set away the True Cross to be taken to Constantinople, thus foreseeing his defeat, due to the imposing Muslim victory at the Battle of Yarmuk in 636. In addition, he had been urging his people to flee to Acre, Antioch, and garrisons that were fortified by Christian refugees. In April of 637, Umar, a close associate of the Rashidun Abu-Bakr and the second caliph to scourge the Levant and later take Persia, arrived at the city. The Umariyya Covenant was officially composed, granting civil rights for the Christians on the condition of jizyah, tribute.

As one may imagine, the news alarmed the Byzantines, and in this case, it was Constantine V (741 - 775). A significant amount of their territory had been taken from the Levant, and the same sense of alertness went up from the people on the scene. John, along with the Bishop of Naples and the Archpriest of Jerusalem, fled to Constantinople, and informed Constantine V and his son, Leo IV, who was also subsequently emperor. Constantine received the arrival of the Patriarch of Jerusalem with replaceable joy. The emperor heard of the capture of Jerusalem and Syria by the Saracens and the desecration of the Church of the Holy Sceptre, and other Holy

Places, and was greatly saddened. Despite being so taken aback, he desisted from taking action so soon, for if the Saracens knew of their great pain, they may mobilize their armies even further. He put a halt to his grieving, and demanded that all knights and military commanders must meet in the Palace of Blachernae, an imperial residence in the suburbs of Constantinople. Discussions on the matter of embarking on this recapture correctly were done, and The Greeks willingly obeyed without order.

What is about to be told of this emperor is simply a fragment of the many pieces from the annals of history which includes fantastical or supernatural events associated with the benefits of greats such as Constantine V. I would like to inform you that this record is written and completely true.

The night before the third and final day of council, the Byzantine Emperor had a dream. He laid awake in his bed that night, speculating on how to retaliate against the might of the powers in the South and save the Holy Land. As sleep conquered his mind, he awoke, and had a vision. An apparently angelic figure ushered him out of bed, and said, "Constantine, you prayed

and begged Our Lord to come to your aid. This he has done. Summon Charles the Great, King of Gaul and France, who is the defender and combatant of the Church of God." (Passages d'outremer).

When the emperor obeyed, he saw a knight with a coat of mail and a sword hanging from his belt. He held a fiery white spear and a helmet of gold.

Once he awoke, he recalled the vision in all its eternity and departed to inform the patriarch of Jerusalem and the assembled Greeks. Quarrelsome speculation on how they should emerge as victors were ceaseless, until he recounted his dream. He declared in this that the strength and Valour of Charlemagne exceeded that of all others in the East and even those in the West. He enthusiastically recalled all of the feats of Charles the Great in the effort to gain the trust of the assembly, which he did. In retrospect, it is completely true that Charlemagne, the King of the Franks, had gained much reputability for the region of Francia. He gained the Frankish Throne in 768, and he had become King of Italy in 774. During his magnificence, he brought the Franks to become the Carolingians. He also sought to unite the peoples of Germania and the Christian religion, and

he imposed this with a penalty for death. His incursions into Lombard Italy, Muslim Spain, and the Eastern territory of the Saxons were straddled with victories. Despite the negative view that the Eastern Orthodox Church cast upon him, his reputation was of being wise, and apparently very athletic, conqueror.

The officials had confirmed that they would now send ambassadors to beg for his aid. It was all concluded with the idea that he would allow them to expel the Saracens from the Holy Land, and there would be full support in the process. When the epistle and requests were confirmed, the Patriarch and the Emperor chose four ambassadors for this urgency, two Latin and two Hebrew. The Latins were John, Bishop of Naples, and David, the archpriest. Samuel and Isaac were the Hebrews. They set off to France quickly and directly to find Charlemagne.

After passing through Germany, the first city that the four faithful ones had arrived at was Rheims, where they were informed that they may find Charles the Great while still in Germany. Disappointedly enough, this did not work, for the King had left the city shortly before, while leading his army

to Auvergne against rebels.

Interestingly enough, Auvergne is the French province whose capital is Clermont-Ferrand, the same place where Pope Urban II would give his sermon for the First Crusade.

The desperate officials would have moved on in a futile attempt to simply run into the King, but John, Bishop of Naples, was greatly afflicted by head and stomach pains, forcing them to remain in Rheims for two days. They set out after some time, but not directly to Charlemagne due to The Bishop's ensuing pains. They had been in such a predicament that they had to become disregardful and adventuresome to succeed in their mission. For his sake, they traveled for only half of the day, and reached Saint-Denis, praying and remaining there until it was reported that Charlemagne had captured the castle where his adversaries had taken refuge, and was heading back to Paris after dealing with such petty business.

The ambassadors rejoiced. Saint-Denis happened to be just north of Paris, so they made their way to the cultural city, and met the King. They gave him their highest salutation in the name of the Byzantine

Emperor and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and in a lengthy but explicit manner, told him of the quarrels in the Levant. According to my readings, forgive me if this is inaccurate, tears fell from his eyes, tears of joy and of sorrow. The joy being because his sphere of influence had spread as far as Greece, and the sorrow because of the desecration of Jerusalem by the inhuman infidels and enemies of the cross. He immediately made an edict proclaiming throughout his kingdom that every man who owed him obedience, young or old, must furnish themselves with the arms they needed, and head for the Holy Land with Charlemagne, without excuses.

As the proclamation became profound, a massive and ardent army sprang up in France, and the King decided to lead them as far as he may by land. He set out for Constantinople first, plowing through Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria, and other lands beyond the Danube. The march was a secure one, and the people that he passed were willing to supply him with any victuals. He was able to reach Constantinople without many obstacles in the end, but the greatest challenges were still ahead.

This is just the realization of the first of many quarrels over the Holy Land.

What I Know Of The Questionable Calling Of Help From Clermont From Pope Urban II

In the Year 1095, Henry IV, King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor, was in the fortieth year of his reign and the seventh of his empire. In this year, in November 28, Pope Urban II, spiritual leader of the Christian faith, named Odo of Châtillon at birth, declared his solemn sermon for the retaking of the Holy Land and safeguarding the Christian faith. This meeting at Clermont-Ferrand was just the first of three that he organized with the aid of the King. The first was in the Abbey of Vezelay, the second in the city of Our Lady of Le Puy, and then the most renowned one, which was the Council of Clermont.

The call was at first one that sparked reluctance among us, but the convincing nature of whatever Alexius Comnenus had to say using his envoys at the Council of Piacenza in March, drew in nobles from Europe to Clermont in France. Who knew that reaching the little town of Clermont, at the Cathedral of Clermont Ferrand, a structure of imposing importance, on a rainy and sullen day would cause so much of a hustle for achievement and bloodshed. It was followed by the arrival

of several hundred clerics and noblemen. As a matter of fact, the crowd was so large, that they could not all fit inside the cathedral, and had to gather in a field near the cathedral's east gate, despite the chill.

The entire meeting lasted from November 18 to November 28, but the final day proved to be the one that gained the approval. The actual sermon disapproved of the Islamic holdings of Jerusalem, the Holy City, that had been existent for a mere forty-five years. Jews and Christians had been living under Muslim rule since the siege of Jerusalem in 637, and the Pope described them as those with a radical and inhuman nature and as unrighteous infidels. He also mentioned that they hold the Christians in serfdom and captivity, thus humiliating the religion. He concluded, by setting forth the plainest proposition, that the Christians should not have to suffer oppression by the Seljuk Turks any longer. The end of the speech was followed by a brief, and supposedly awkward silence of awe, until a cry went up, echoing from the city's walls, "Deus le Volt!" (God wills it!)

Christians, hasten to help your brothers in the East for they are being attacked. Arm for the rescue of Jerusalem under your captain,



Sophia Mughal

Ruins

Digital photograph

Grade 8

Christ. Wear his cross as your badge. If you are killed, your sins will be pardoned.

-Pope Urban II

Foremost, those who took up the cross were French, English, and German. They included Hugh the Younger of France, Robert, Duke of Normandy, and perhaps the most glorious Raymond Count of Toulouse, who spent great sums to raise troops. Another great one, who was also in competition for contribution was Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, and, thereafter, was made King of Jerusalem after its rescue. Among the Italians who had assembled themselves,

there was the valiant Bohemond of Taranto, Prince of Taranto, and Duke of Apulia. Other Italians were descendants of Normans and much of Bohemond's family. Everyone amassed their power and called upon everyone to join the expedition, many of whom were inexperienced peasants, such as myself.

These landlords and their armies did not meet again until the siege of Nicaea, beyond Constantinople.

It is here when I was called upon to arm myself and set out.

Year: 1099 A.D.

Month: June

Day: The Sixth

The golden aura of The Holy Land resonated to us across the water. Relief falls over us all, as everyone is exulting with joy for the satiation of their ambitions, and mine. It was June 6, and our army, depleted of many, had finally reached Jerusalem, our righteous land, and the Navel of the Christian World.

My iron clad and clambering feet weakly and numbly hit the sandy earth in the rhythmic chant of beats along the ground that was seared into my mind after months of violence and terror upon the Islamic World. Sweat gathered in the very notches in my armor, and the situation did not improve much, especially with the addition of the helmets. We all felt like smoldering pieces of flesh inside brazen bulls, due to the great hulks of armor that had been placed on us so sturdily. The sun shone from the east, while we advanced south, but it was still blinding. The only bits of our final destination that I viewed through the small rectangular eyelets of my bucket-shaped helmet were the

silhouettes of the structures of Jerusalem.

The wind was blowing against us for sure, as if fending us away. Our strenuous march from the now burned city of Antioch had ended. The encounter with the delusional Seljuk traitor was what I would say was the great highlight of the siege. It may have lasted for six days, but the effort to get through this city's walls would break all our backs far more than the previous attacks on Nicaea, Dorylaeum, and Antioch combined (at least that's what was depicted by those who orated our destiny to fight for the cross.

From what I had heard, as did every other inexperienced fighter who had a red cross smoldered on their breastplate, and helmets, and woven on their wrists, was that we were the heroes and reclaimers. The Islamic Khanate, which had come only to take our land, was just a pretender. They had no right and no faith to take the Holy Land, and the relations between us all must end. For too long have they straddled the South, and now they take Jerusalem. Blasphemy! Furthermore, I was ambitious to see what the city would appear to be.

During my entire lifetime, while mainly keeping a residence in Rheims, France, I

always read about The Holy land during the enforced studies of the Christian faith, but it was certainly a privilege to see it. For someone who had only experienced a life of relentless work in the town for an oppressive group of nobles, taking up a sword that I would generally be making, not wielding, was a nerve-racking experience. Even more so, I defended the faith and essence of the religion that had been so deeply implanted into the minds of everyone I knew. I was one of those who had experienced nothing but the orders of Christianity, and that is why I hardly crawled out of those battles with my life. My inexperience was something that was not even regarded by those who forced me into this.

Many times while on the journey, I felt like going home, especially after each battle. This did not match me to the courage of those who led the armed forces, and I hoped my cowardice would not get the best of me this time.

If I was to die in this battle, then I doubted Pope Urban's words, "If you are killed your sins will be pardoned," were going to resound to the heavens.

No, this could not end here. I saw more bloodshed than ever before, especially in the Battle of Nicaea, and it certainly usurped

my previous record, which was when I accidentally knocked over a red hot blade onto my foot. Because of this gathered experience, which I would say was quite meager when compared to that of certain knights, I could more legitimately wear the cross on my breastplate, and lay siege to the City of Jerusalem.

On second thought, it seemed almost ironic and blasphemous to siege The Holy City. The intention of it all was to rescue it in the name of God, but there were mass killings involved. From what had been said, killing was a sinful act, but the Pope made it clear that killing infidels was fine.

I continued to question myself on this topic. Despite all the bloodshed that followed our absolute arrival, I was determined to do what it took for the regaining of Christianity's Cradle.

There was an ear piercing call to halt. We did so. Godfrey of Bouillon looked across the landscape and eyed The Holy City. There was a silence and a chill in the atmosphere.

"Onward!"

Year: 1099

Month: July

Day: The Seventh

We had reached The Holy

City while trudging along through the entire night. Sadly, the city was heavily fortified. Godfrey of Bouillon, one who had engaged in such efforts to reach this place, gave us a speech of hope, and began to settle around our target. We began the futile construction of three enormous, but not very thoroughly fashioned, siege towers to give ourselves some altitude. By the night of the thirteenth, we began to fight our way through the guards lining the walls.

The sun rose, warming the desert landscape of its nightly extremities of coldness. We were all truly bedraggled, and felt that an unpredictable discourse was coming our way. After trudging the entire night, and converting from an immense heat to coldness was clearly unpleasant.

Year: 1099
Month: July
Day: The 13th

The thirteenth was a successive amount of siege warfare until we finally made our way to the top of one of our walls using a disheveled siege tower. We began fighting through the top ramparts of the wall, which were lined with aggressive guards.

Year: 1099
Month: July
Day: The Fourteenth

On this day, Godfrey's men finally penetrated the sure defenses of Jerusalem, and the gate of Saint Stephen was thrown open, giving way to a clash between our army and the defenses inside. We finally captured the city.

Daniel Vash
Grade 7

Dreadnaught

From a frame of cold steel,
Was something greater
And worse.
A catalyst of sorts,
Utterly awe inspiring,
dreadfully so,
And it struck fear through us,
Firing its cannons,
Filling us with holes
Until we were nothing but ourselves,
And we were small,
So insignificant.
I am but a speck of dust,
Compared to this behemoth.

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8



Blake Erenhouse
Stellated & Serrated
Block print
Grade 6

One

Where do I go?

This place is not my home.
I look around and always frown.
This place has become bleak and cold.

I cry and try but ears are closed.
My efforts are blocked by ignorant foes.

But, are we foes?

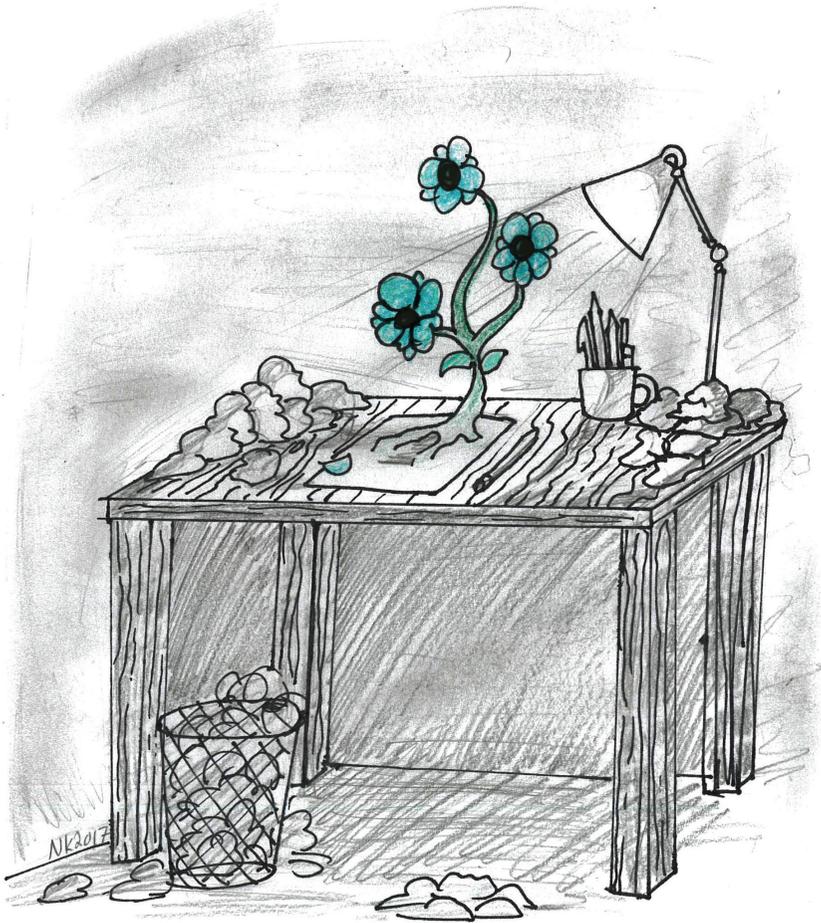
Or, misguided by those
who want to divide us and keep us alone?

For power and greed, we are divided.

To overcome will be very trying,
but when the dust settles and the battle is won,
we will see the true strength
that comes with being one.

Sophia Mughal
Grade 8

Withering & Blossoming



Naia Kocsi
New Life
Pencil on paper
Grade 8

Springtime

They say a rose
Used to grow in the garden.
But then the gardener
Came along and picked the little rose
Of its thorns and its petals,
And all that was left was a stem
That shriveled up and
Died.
If only they had left
That poor little rose
Alone, maybe things
Would be
Better.

Aaron Gruen
Grade 8



Ryan Cawley
Pure Through the Tumult
Digital photograph
Grade 8

A Hostile Nature

So few know what we have become.
It was a beginning both true and sincere.
 Like so much else,
 Harmony reigned;
Birds sang and gardens blossomed.
But so soon did discord and dissonance begin to take form,
 Tragedy trumped all else.
Our once-blue sky had shrouded,
 And all the birds flew away.
Sparkling showers turned to acid rain,
 So life began to wither.
Yet all seemed harmonious; few saw through this veneer.
The stillness was pierced as an explosion echoed throughout,
 Rapidly quelled by a hostile nature.

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8



Sneha Sunder
Black Phoenix
Reduction print
Grade 7



Naia Kocsi
Empress
Digital illustration
Grade 8

Two-Faced

A cyclical process;
time always repeats itself.
A Phoenix rising from the ashes.
A big bang, a sort of stillness.
A fiery oblivion floating through space.
A planet which lends itself to life.

A violent war,
a peace lasting long and far.
Grit and grime, sparkle and shine.
Storm and silence, loss and gain.

Contrast has shaped the Universe.

The Kandinsky is painted on both sides.
Chaos prompts control,
and control ignites chaos.

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8

The Switch

In the midst of the hazy, faded, pink clouds stood a colossal wall, stretching far beyond the horizon. The wall extended further than the eye could see, as if it wrapped around the earth and connected back at the beginning. At the foot of the wall, the foliage, illuminated by the incandescent sun, whispered with the wind. As the sun behind the wall sank beneath the skyline, the darkness shut the scene off, like a hand to a light switch.

Brooke Jones

Grade 7



Brooke Jones

Azure Zenith

Digital photograph

Grade 7

Thunder and Lightning

One, one-thousand; two, one-thousand;
I count as I hear a loud clap of thunder
 Rumble through the shadowy sky.
Lightning ignites the evening above me
 As I inch deeper under my sheets.
 An intimidating feeling creeps
 And curls itself over me
 like the crescent moon
 Hanging in the cloudy sky above .
The feeling slithers through my spine,
Sending every hair on my body upward.
 A sudden silence
 Sends me to sleep.

Kelly Jones

Grade 6

Our Sky

There were we,
And there were they,
And all was still,
Perpetually obstinate.
So trees stopped growing
Because the sky shrouded
Because the sun stopped shining.
And eventually light dwindled
Under a spell
of untrue auspices.
They ambled forward, unending,
While we were lighting matches,
Watching our sparks fly.
Our sky was blue.
It was ablaze,
Home to a vibrant palette.

Ryan Cawley
Grade 8



Forever

The water glistens
As I allow the waves
To roll over my feet.
The sun shines down on me;
I can feel it burning my shoulders and face.
I close my eyes and tilt my head up to the sky.
The bright beams warm my whole body,
And make me never want to leave this position
With my feet digging into the wet sand.
The water gently taps my toes.
A light breeze floats above my head,
And an emerald piece of seaweed
Gets caught between my toes.
I gaze up at the baby-blue sky.
I want to stay here forever.

Kelly Jones
Grade 6

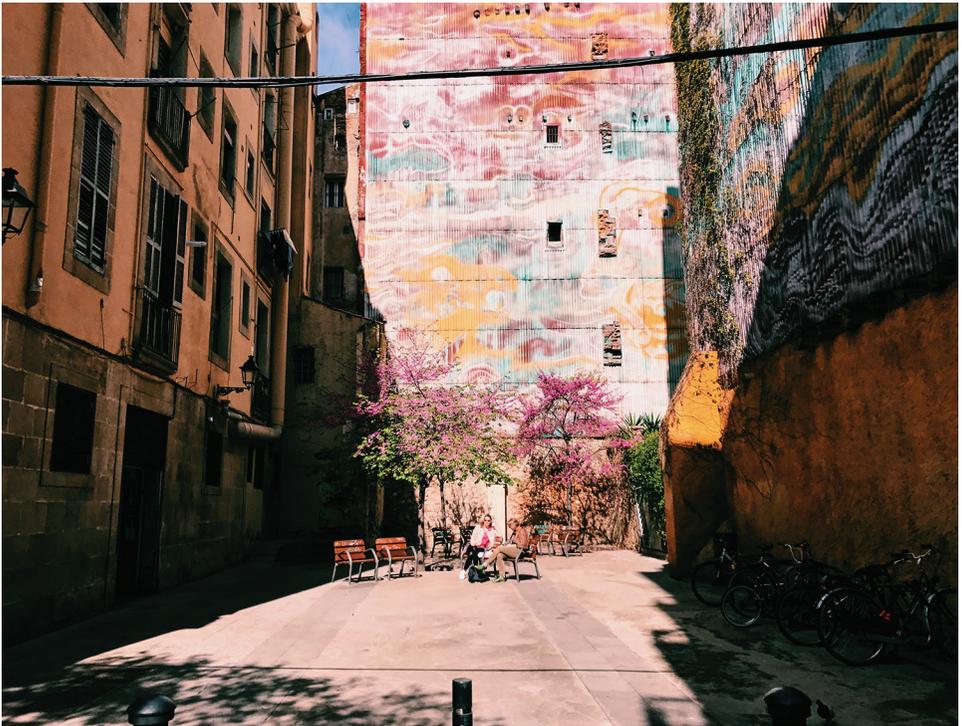


Sophia Mughal
Distorted Views
Digital photograph
Grade 8

All Creatures Wait

The dazzling sky of the vivid sunset makes the water glisten like a mural filled with color as the stars begin to rise and twinkle. The clouds flood with a vibrant glow as they reflect onto the calm, mineral-blue ocean. All figures transform into silhouettes as the horizon gleams above the distant islands. A light breeze drifts through the air, rustling the leaves inside the deep forest. Rainbow colors stream through the thinning clouds as they glide across the sky, darkening into a navy blue as a sapphire ring surrounds the setting sun. The warm air becomes crisp as the sun finally vanishes, and the sky darkens to a dark blackish-indigo. It seems as if the whole universe has gone silent. Stars cover the sky, and the moon gleams with light. All creatures wait for a new day to come.

Kelly Jones
Grade 6



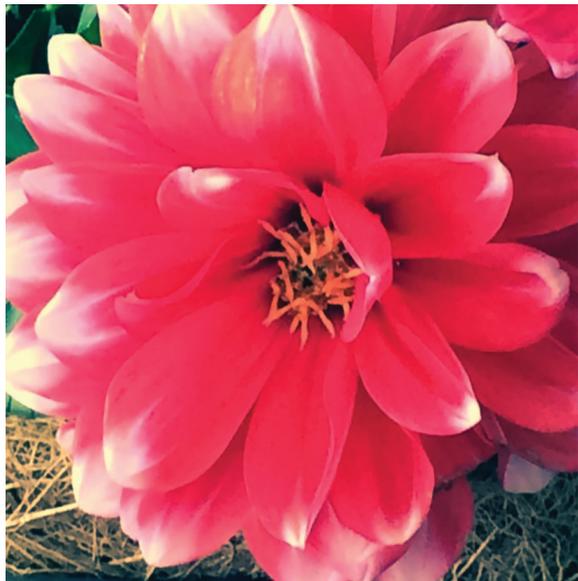
Ryan Cawley
Mad Palette
Digital photograph
Grade 8



Jenna Foote
Ivy
Scratch board
Grade 8



Samantha Renzulli
Bloom
Digital photograph
Grade 7



Samantha Renzulli
Blossom
Digital photograph
Grade 7

Blossom

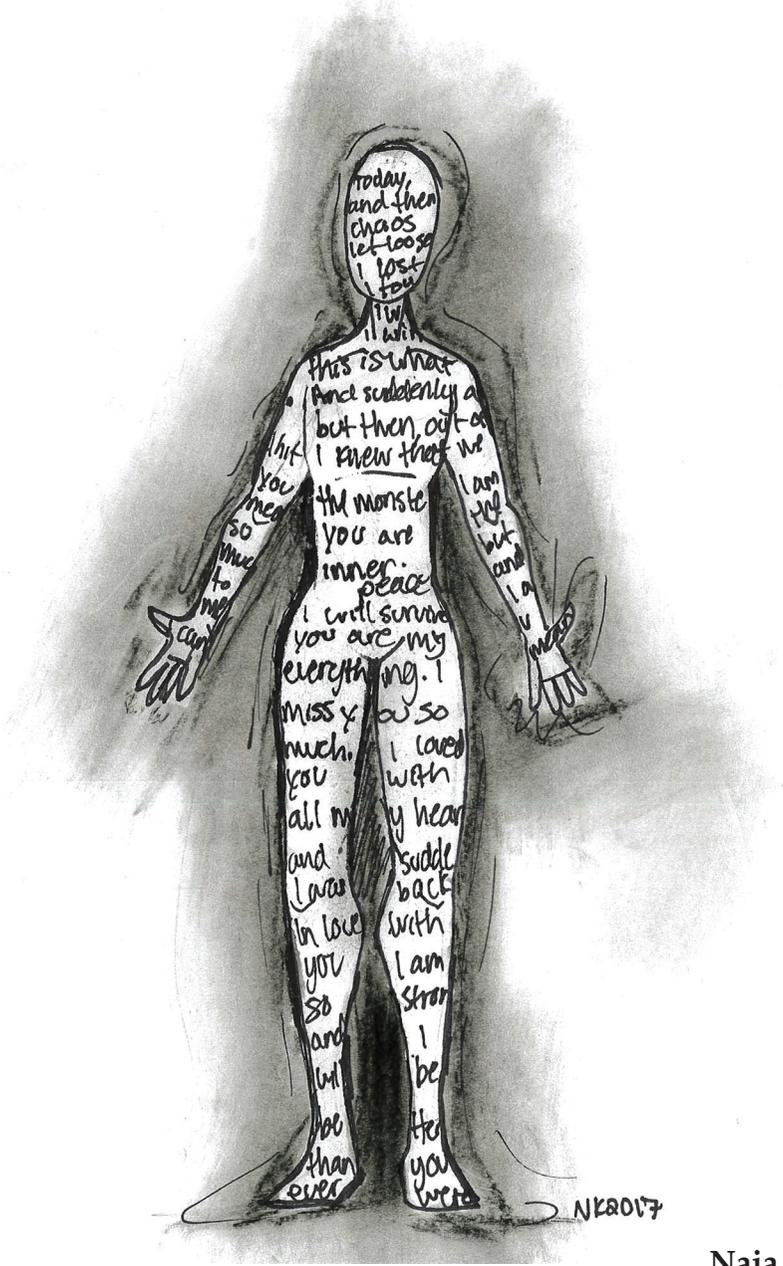
As the bare,
lonely branches drape from the trees,
there comes that time of year when they no longer remain lonely.
You wake up one day and embark on the beginning of spring
with the very first bloom you see in your garden.

As days pass by, they gradually begin to blossom,
adding color and feeling to our world.
Each tree you come across consists of numerous flowers,
each unique in their own special way.
A spectrum of color in every angle appears.
Not only do the lonely branches receive life once again,
but the world does as well.

Happiness,
joy,
a scent
that
all
floats
about.

Raphael Makhraz
Grade 7

Writing & Being



Naia Kocsi

Inked

Charcoal on paper

Grade 8



Ryan Cawley
Distorted Sights
Digital photograph
Grade 8

It All Starts With Your Pen

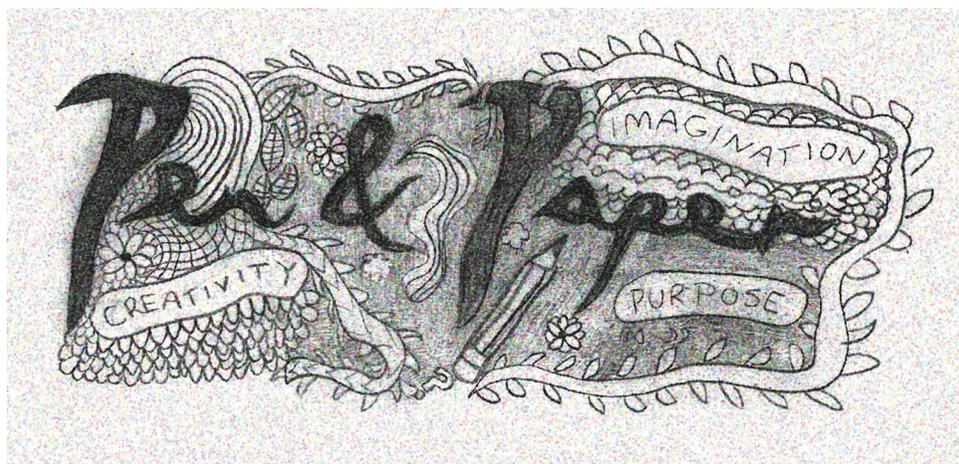
It all starts with your pen,
Which is controlled by your hand,
Thanks to your nervous system,
Which is alerted by your brain,
Which gets the idea from your heart,
Inside of your inner soul,
Which is thanks to your parents
And their parents
And their parents
And their parents' parents' parents' parents'
parents' parents' parents' parents' parents' parents,
Who evolved from certain animals,
Who evolved from other certain animals,
Who evolved from other certain animals,
Who evolved from cells,
Which came from the Big Bang.
So, what I'm trying to say is,
Every single piece in this magazine
is credited to the Big Bang.
Thanks, pal.

Brooke Jones
Grade 7

The White Page

The piece of paper is right in front you
with the perfectly sharpened pencil laying on top,
ready to write your creative thoughts down.
That one, expressive sentence pops into your mind like a balloon
hit with a needle.
You write it down,
eager to write your next sentence,
but then nothing.
Sitting there,
you wait for the next few words
to slowly fill up the page.
Looking around,
you hope that something
will create a sentence for you,
but everything around
is only consuming your creative thoughts.
Then, a spark flies within and creates another sentence.
Hope and excitement begin to bubble inside
and anticipation of finishing the piece of writing grows and grows.

Raphael Makhraz
Grade 7



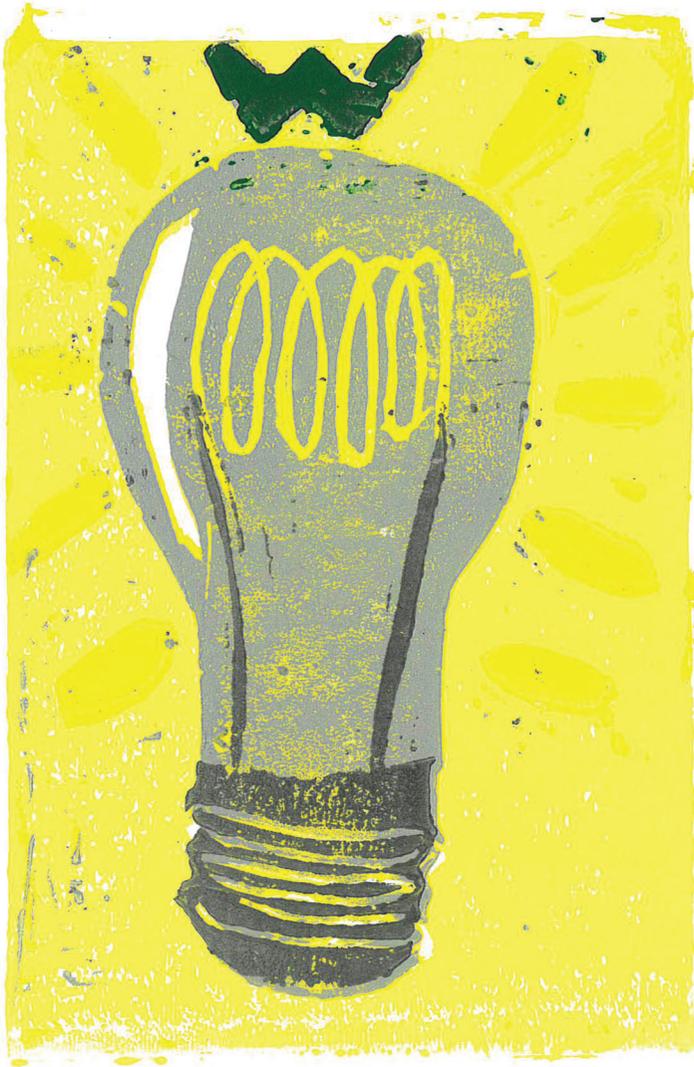
Drew Slager
Pen & Paper
Pencil illustration
Grade 8

Writer's Block

As I sit here, with my pen,
Poised to write again,
I worry that my brain is not filled,
Will have no words that I can build.
My hands flex, wanting to move across the page.
My eyes wander, ready to engage.
My mind is ready to outwrite my rage,
But nothing comes out on my page.
I sigh, my face beginning to whimper.
If only my hands could write something simpler.
Wishing my mind would come of age,
But still nothing comes out on my page.
And then the thoughts flood through my head,
Out of my mouth, the thoughts bled.
Colors burst in my vision:
Red, blue, and yellow collisions.
As I feel I have been released from my cage,
Now I have something to write on my page.

Drew Slager

Grade 8



Drew Slager
Tungsten
Block print
Grade 8

Sudden Thoughts

Thoughts are like powerful fireworks that explode into the mind with one sole purpose: to spark the imagination and creativity centers of the brain and start to turn the wheels of life. With these ideas comes success or failure, along with the discovery of perseverance and integrity. However, some of these ideas can be a little strange and can force your mind to start thinking, to start turning the wheels of the big machine that is your brain. You may think, *How?* or *Woah!* and that is just the gift of some sudden thoughts. Here are some that will hopefully make you start to wonder about greater things.

The phrase, "You are what you eat," has crossed everyone's mind at some point. This can be explained by saying, "If you eat trashy foods, you become trash." But say, for example, you are a cannibal, and you are feasting on a vegetarian. Do you become a vegetarian?

As humans, our bodies contain liquid known as blood. An ice cube is a cube of frozen water. If an ice cube melts in a cup, is it sitting in its own blood? If so, maybe you could say that ice cubes are pretty cool.

Seatbelts are devices that are used to help protect us in vehicles. In a car crash, lives can be saved by wearing seatbelts. While most cars and other vehicles are equipped with seatbelts, one vehicle that comes to mind that usually does not have these life-saving devices is a giant, yellow bus filled with children.

You never know what types of thoughts come into your head. It all starts with a little brain power.

Drew Slager
Grade 8

Seeing Eye Person

Tired of having to walk up a full flight of stairs without your phone? Can't break the habit of walking into the street and getting hit by cars while scrolling through social media? We agree with you! That's why we decided to create our company, Seeing Eye People! With one of our specially trained professionals guiding you around the city streets, you won't have to look up from your phone at all. We'll make sure you get from place to place with ease and safety.

When we asked one of our customers what they thought of our service, they gladly replied, "What? Can you ask me again? I was checking how many likes I got. Oh! Seeing Eye People! Yeah, they are like, awesome!"

On the popular social media website InstantGram, we received five stars, and we were also recommended by S.M.U.R.F. (The Social Media Union Rights Foundation).

We operate in 40 countries and have associates that speak up to 4 languages. Our plans start at just \$40 an hour for standard, \$60 for Above Average, \$80 for Really Good, \$100 for Premium, \$300 for Super

Premium, and \$1,000 for Ultimate Premium.

Our high-quality, 100% leather leashes come in 178 colors including Chestnut and Golden Retriever, by popular demand. We also give you the option of having the leash tied around your arm or neck.

We guarantee that when you use our services, you will be greatly surprised. Give us a call! Whoops, sorry, give us a text! Our number is 111-111-TEXT. We promise you will have a great experience!*

*Seeing Eye Person LLC is not responsible for any damages including leg breakage, arm breakage, migraines, abrupt crying, internal bleeding, addiction to red jelly beans, hives, allergic reaction, sudden hyperactivity, demonic spawnings, or spontaneous combustion.

Aaron Gruen
Grade 8



Caroline Avery
Eyes Behind My Head
Colored pencil on paper
Grade 6

Time After Time

Dusk had settled upon the little town of Berwyn, and trees were dancing upon the Pennsylvanian hills. The large apartment buildings sent gloomy shadows upon the compact alleyways, and music twirled into every corner of the city. It leaped into everyone's ears, causing all sorrow to be drained from the urban village. However, there was one house which seemed to be collecting dust as the world around it seemed to be filling with joy. The liveliness had abandoned the structure years ago, and the "For Sale" sign creaked with every gust of wind.

The house was perched upon a hill overlooking the city, and I remember a time when it was the heart of the town. But all things come to an end; the grass now grew in patches across the yard, and tree leaves ceased to grow. Ivy vines crept up the abandoned walls as to conserve the house's cheerful essence. Month after month, it sat, empty and alone.

One summer morning when the humidity covered Berwyn like a blanket, I noticed the rusted-over "For Sale" sign

had been taken down. Trees and flowers were in full bloom, and the ivy vines, I noticed, had been chopped down. Moreover, the vines had been replaced by a dapper sign that read, "Newly Married!" Once again, the house obtained life.

As days grew into months, green leaves melted into a deep shade of orange and descended towards the ground. The "Newly Married!" sign had been removed, and piles of leaves littered the ground. Each day, I looked out my window to gaze at the house and admire the fresh coats of paint or the newly-installed wildlife. All the same, soon enough the crisp wind caused frost instead of morning dew, and snow began to dance toward the ground. It was only on Christmas Eve that I noticed a new sign pasted to the now-inhabited house. I squinted my eyes and gasped.

"It's a Boy!" the sign read, its blue lettering looking out over the hibernating village. Joy filled my heart as I wondered about the new family that was growing right outside of my window.

As the days stretched longer, the sign was taken down

once more. In the yard space next to the house, a playset was installed. I watched as young children climbed up the slide and swung from the monkey bars. Just as it did each season, the house was regaining its charm.

Years. That's how long I kept my eye on that house, for it seemed to withstand the test of time. I watched as Christmas lights were strung and then taken down. I stared as fireworks lit the sky each New Year's and Fourth of July. Turkeys came and went. Snowmen were built and forgotten, and I watched as they were left to melt in the morning sun. Forty years passed, and the house remained in the same spot it had been for years.

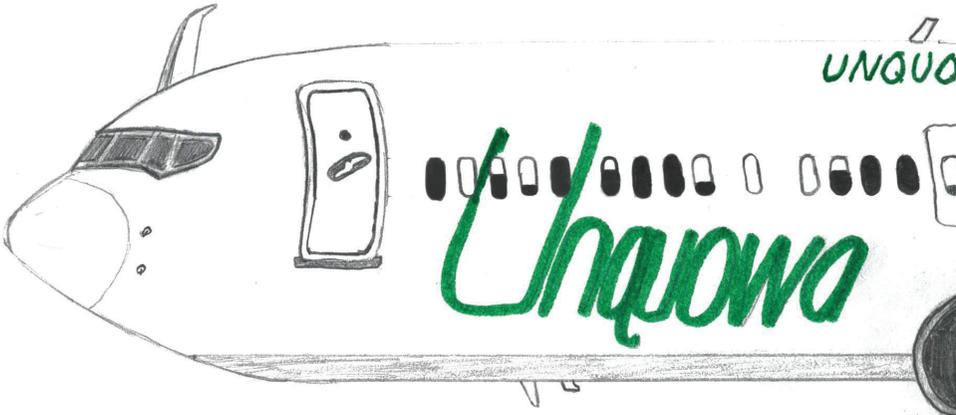
I came to endure sharp pains in my back and my face. Once joyful in youth, I now showed signs of age. It was a brisk autumn evening when I noticed a parade of men and women dressed in outfits of pure black outside the house upon the hill. From their weeping, I feared a flood would emerge. Then the skies open up and rain fell from the heavens. It was as if God was grieving too. It was only when I walked to bed that I realized my life would soon come to an end as well.

The next day as I passed the house I had grown to love for one of the last times. My eyes just barely skimmed over a another sign. It was presented near a rusted over mailbox with weeds erupting from its foundation. As I gaped at the pristine sign, I realized it read the same two words I had grown so accustomed to.

“For Sale.”

Samantha Renzulli

Grade 7





William Geary
Unquowa 737-99
Pencil and marker illustration
Grade 8

Letter to Jacob Frenkiel

Dear Jakob Frenkiel,

Hello, my name is Samantha Renzulli, and I am a seventh grade student at a school called Unquowa in Fairfield, Connecticut. I write this letter to you to express my utmost admiration for all you have been put through.

At the synagogue I attend, Congregation B'nai Israel, my classmates and I learned about the Holocaust as a way to identify with our people's past. In February 2016, each one of my nine classmates were assigned to learn everything they could about one child who survived the Holocaust through the United States Holocaust Museum. I was assigned to learn about you.

Ever since I have heard your name, I have been so inspired and in awe that you survived the Holocaust's terrible events and even found a way to get out of being forced into a gas chamber. Even though you knew that if you were caught sneaking around you would be killed immediately, you did it anyway. And you survived. Hearing and learning about you and your story has truly opened my eyes to not only what it was like to be put in a concentration camp,

but to live in a religious, Jewish family with seven children during the time when Adolf Hitler presided over everyone in Germany.

I have been exposed to how devastating and traumatic it was for you to lose track of your family and all of your sisters and brothers. During the time in which I was diving into the story of your life, I learned that you experienced more death and tragic events before you turned ten than I will throughout the course of my entire life. I learned that only months before your tenth birthday, on September 1, 1939, a war broke out between Poland and Germany.

Only six days later the German army occupied your whole entire town of Gabin, Poland. Soon after, the Nazis appeared at your house, armed and loaded with toxic gases. The Jewish men of Gabin were forced into the middle of the marketplace while all the houses were doused with gasoline and synagogues were set on fire. With your town of Gabin having 2,312 Jews, the wreckage must have been a horrible sight for everyone to see. Memories wiped away and evidence that people once lived in the very spots you stood only moments

before, completely gone.

It must have been so hard for you to walk around with a yellow star pinned onto your chest, a sign that you did not belong and should never have been born. It must have ruined your friends' and family's sense of pride. You survived though.

You survived through all of that. You survived labor camp after labor camp, you survived Auschwitz, and you survived immigration when you were only sixteen years old. While all around you, people you had once known were fading away from history, you managed to escape the treacherous bullets of a Nazi gun.

I know that if I were in your shoes, I would have been terrified in a labor camp, (as I am sure you were), but I don't think that I would have had nearly as much courage as you, and I doubt I would have snuck out of the line leading to the gas chambers, for I would have feared dying a much more harmful cause. I actually think I might have fainted just looking at the Nazis appearing in my town! I have no doubt in my mind that even though a small action, such as finding a way to get into another line, or a huge action, such as surviving the Holocaust, had a massive impact on how the war ended and the future of

our world.

I have learned that although as many as six-hundred million Jews were killed, the world has become a much more compassionate place than it would have been if the Holocaust never took place. Now don't get me wrong; if I had the power to, I would make sure the Holocaust never happened and make sure that the outcome of the war was not as disastrous, but I am saying that the Holocaust was a very humbling experience for our nation. Because of the Holocaust, people have learned not to treat others in such horrendous ways just because of their beliefs or the color of their skin. People have learned that our actions have consequences and that in the end, kindness is always the answer. Without the Holocaust, the people living on our world might not be as kind or as thoughtful towards others. So although the Holocaust might be one of the most terrible times in the history of our world, the message that I have been able to extract from it is one that will stay with me for the rest of my life. No matter what, I will always know that I will never be the same as I used to be because I learned about the Holocaust, and that the world that I wake up to see every morning would definitely not be the same if it

were not for the Holocaust.

Each day as I open my eyes, ready to start a new day, I am grateful for the opportunity to be alive and safe. I am grateful that I have been granted the ability to change the world for the better and that I am growing up in a world where my religion does not change the way people look at me.

Before I say good bye, I would like to say one more thing, and that is, as time goes by, people may not be as aware of the Holocaust as they are today. As more and more Holocaust survivors pass away, more and more stories become lost or forgotten without a voice to make them heard. There will always be people out in the world who think badly of others; however, as time goes on, I will make it my mission to make people more aware of the Holocaust. As time goes on, I will make sure the people around me stay aware of the horrors that are now behind us, but I will also make sure the people are aware of you. You will never be forgotten from history, because from now on, I am your storyteller. I will pass on your story to my family, my friends, and someday I will tell my kids, and they will tell their kids, and generation after generation will be hearing your story. I am your storyteller, and it is my mission to make your story heard.

It is really amazing for me to be able to write this letter to you, as this is the closest I have been to understanding the Holocaust. So thank you, and may your story forever be heard.

Sincerely,

Your Storyteller

Samantha Renzulli

Grade 7



Ryan Cawley
Spiral
Digital photograph
Grade 8



Ryan Cawley
Throwing Shade
Digital photograph
Grade 8

The Gatherer

From the day she was born,
she was a nomad.
All she knew were lonely meadows
and ceaseless forests.
All that she kept was a small sack of gatherings:
a leaf, a stone, a blade of grass.

Every night,
the chasm of darkness encompassed her,
and the gatherings reminded her
of the home she had yet to find.

Aaron Gruen
Grade 8



Shepherd Currie
Alice
Scratchboard
Grade 8

Colophon

Each year, the literary and art sections of *Pen & Paper* are determined by accepted student submissions. The placement of student work is determined by overall fit within the magazine's thematic sections. This year, the magazine is organized by themes of duality through binary oppositions or conceptual complements. The pieces within each section, explore the vicissitudes of the perceived dualistic extremes. Each section begins with a thematic heading and a full page illustration.

All copies were typed on a Lenovo ThinkCentre, using Adobe InDesign CC 2015 for Windows 7 Professional. The font used is Book Antiqua 12pt. for text, 14pt. bold for titles, author, and artist names.

Illustrations were scanned using a Sharp MX-4070 scanner. Layout was designed on InDesign CC 2015.

Pen & Paper was printed on sixty pound white bond and the cover was printed on 100# stock laminated gloss.

The Unquowa School is *Pen & Paper's* home base. It is an independent, Pre-K-3 through eighth grade, progressive, independent school in Fairfield, Connecticut. There are 164 enrolled students and 50 faculty and staff members. Each year, upper school teachers nominate writers, editors, and artists to join the *Pen & Paper* staff, where they engage in the creative process of producing a magazine.

"They make us and they break us"

"Thoughts are like powerful fireworks"

"We were drifting through the dark"

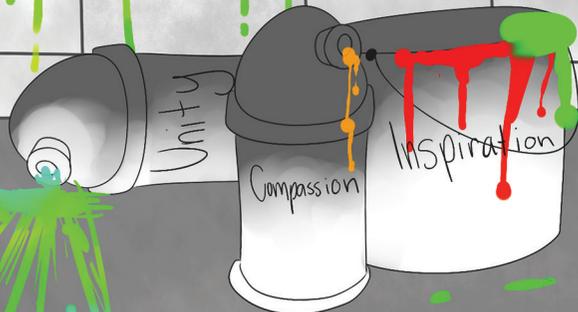
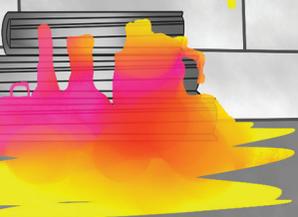


"So life began to wither"

"It all starts with your pen"

"Chaos prompts control, and control sparks chaos"

"Then a spark flies within"



Equality