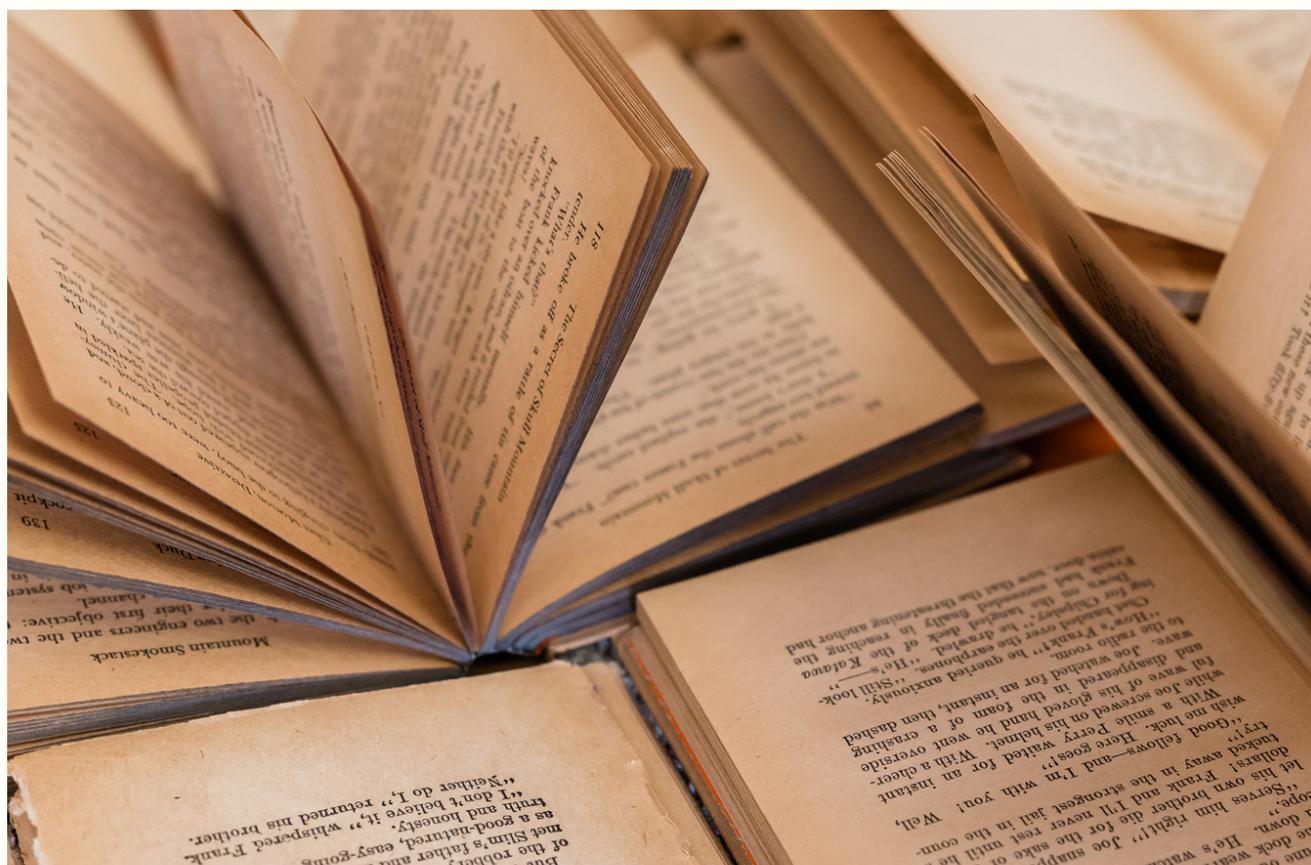


- Spring 2023 -

# YOUNG SOUTHERN STUDENT WRITERS



Grades 6-12

Prose & Poetry

Edited by Kat Finney, UTC Senior

# Table of Contents

<b>6th Grade Prose</b>	<b>4</b>	Carolina Hightower	52
Adelaide Gerwin	4	Anna Clark	53
Elena Clinkscales	5	Emma Cox	55
Saniyah Wyatt	7	Houston Hicks	56
Ta'Kiyah Smith	8	Ty Mathis	57
Ben Varnell	9	Becca Wagner	58
Finn Waldo	15	Logan Martin	59
Nissa Ruth	17	Hannah Polino	60
<b>7th Grade Prose</b>	<b>18</b>	Falon Rogers	62
Ansleigh Otting	18	Devon Elliott	64
Beatrice Sanders	19	Brody Finch	66
Karoline Kennedy	21	Carys Doxey	68
Ashton Tinney	22	Evan Lynch	70
Annalise Lofgren	23	<b>11th Grade Prose</b>	<b>73</b>
Maddox Mason	24	Isabella Dixon	73
Colton Deitch	26	Levi Adcock	75
Madelyn Guest	27	<b>12th Grade Prose</b>	<b>77</b>
Laney Zius	28	Jacob Oster	77
Meg Finger	29	Rachel Hutchings	79
Luke Boike	31	Richard Shank	81
Addilei Buttram	33	<b>6th Grade Prose</b>	<b>82</b>
Mary McKenna Holland	34	Eve Atkinson	82
Ray Ward	35	Fritz Parman	83
Haelee Harris	38	Lila Montgomery	84
Ann Chandler Williams	39	Madeleine Horn	86
<b>8th Grade Prose</b>	<b>40</b>	Pei-Ying Olsen	88
Elizabeth Cooke	40	Vera Gardner	89
Kristen Garay	41	Sha'Ryiah Bailey	90
Megan Lewis	43	Lauren Reisman	91
Larissa Wolfe	44	Alba Ortega Mac Lean	92
Brenna Crittenden	46	Mae Mae Dorizas	93
Maia Nakajima	48	Julia Hall	94
Addie Lucas	50	Lorena Dacoregio	95
<b>10th Grade Prose</b>	<b>52</b>	Breelee Elliott	96

# Table of Contents

Tallen Hobbs	97	Kai Baker	135
Dalton Mayne	98	Ryan Beavers	136
Laura Beth McKinney	99	Cooper Edwards	137
Phoenix Porter	100	Kora Neighbors	138
Kaden Rungruang	101	Madi Bowling	139
<b>7th Grade Poetry</b>	<b>102</b>	Connor Mirabella	140
Eliana Jones	102	Alyssa Fischer	141
Maddie Dixon	103	Kobe Jackson	142
Ben Sallee	104	<b>10th Grade Poetry</b>	<b>143</b>
Austin Tomyon	105	Katie Dungan	143
Sandra James	106	Nora Stone	144
<b>8th Grade Poetry</b>	<b>107</b>	Olivia Harrell	145
Breanne Hood	107	John Wood	146
Molly Payne	108	Ryder Haustein	147
Sadie Burnette	109	Brady Clift	148
Charles Martin	110	Cylia Baggett	149
Farah Tran	111	Caleb Askew	150
Cameron Kitts	112	Julia Mayo	151
Maggie Pollak	113	Anna Kate Thomas	152
Delaney Arnold	114	Kaeden Arbuckle	153
Ben Kammerer	115	<b>11th Grade Poetry</b>	<b>154</b>
Moses Windemuller	116	Levi Adcock	154
KareA' Lawson	117	Carolina Shank	155
Georgia Clemons	118	Grace Garcia	156
Charis Lea	119	Ansley Waters	157
Isaac Muriente	120	Noah Tew	158
Brandon Leach	121	Ellie Tucker	159
Ashley Yim	122	Ava Turner	160
Caroline Daniel	123	Chris Margraves	161
Abigail Laskowski	124	Noah Hendrix	162
Margo Windemuller	125	Timothy Connor	163
Chelsea Eldridge	126	<b>12th Grade Poetry</b>	<b>164</b>
Ki Ryeon Han	127	Mark Laurell	164
Julian Miranda	128	Erica Littleton	165
Annie Roth	129	Brooke Williford	166
Cooper Bottoms	130	Zachary Pham	167
Aden Fernandez	131	Summer Smith	168
Fisher Keene	132	William Moyers	168
<b>9th Grade Poetry</b>	<b>133</b>	Micaela Smith	170
Charlette Aitken	133	Faith Chertkow	171
Talia Carrillo	134	Chase Manning	172

# An Introduction From Our Chair

It is a real pleasure and privilege to be a part of the Young Southern Student Writers contest, an annual celebration of the literary arts in our community. From interacting with our region's outstanding teachers and facilitating judging at UT-Chattanooga to assembling this collection of winning submissions, the contest is one of my favorite parts of the academic year. The work we do with here is done with an eye towards promoting literacy and the creative energy of emerging writers. The submissions that follow demonstrate strong writing while also providing a glimpse into the wild imagination of young minds. Thank you to this year's writers and their teachers. You've given me much to think about, enjoy, and appreciate.

Thank you to Katrina Clark and the Southern Lit Alliance for their generosity and support of our area's outstanding young writers. The Southern Lit Alliance and the UTC English Department combine to promote and celebrate the region's literary arts. I am thankful for their collaboration in this contest.

I also want to thank the region's dedicated K-12 teachers who work tirelessly to instill the value of literature and creative writing in young hearts and minds. I am grateful for their efforts as they teach students to enjoy the art and craft of writing. Without our elementary, middle grades, and high school English/Language Arts teachers along with parents and guardians, we would not have such fine work to celebrate here!

Thanks are also due to this year's contest judges. Every submission is read by a faculty member from the UTC English Department. Our faculty volunteer to serve in this capacity with pleasure. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear my colleagues sharing submissions that are especially funny, creative, or inspiring. It is another way we contribute to this wonderful city and region.

Finally, thank you to Kat Finney, an outstanding UTC undergraduate English major. Kat worked tirelessly to facilitate judging, compile winning submissions, and create this year's digital booklet. She has spent countless hours managing the contest and has done so with patience, grace, and maturity. I am grateful for her hard work and commitment to this project.

Now, without further ado, I hope you'll read and enjoy!

Andrew D. McCarthy  
UC Foundation Associate Professor  
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga  
Chair, Young Southern Student Writers Contest

## 6th Grade Prose

### *The Problem with Plumbing*

This is the age of the most exemplary technology, the age of smartphones and TVs, the age of all things electronic. Yet one of the most important things in our household isn't Wi-Fi, it's plumbing. If you doubt that, please imagine what it would be like to have no hot showers, no dishwashers, no sinks, no flush toilets. Nightmare, right? Pipes and plumbing were first introduced to the world by the Romans, which was around 753 to 509 B.C.! That's thousands of years before the first phone, which was invented in 1876 by Alexander Graham Bell. If plumbing is that old, and technology is so advanced, why do we have so many problems with plumbing? Pipes can freeze, burst, and get backed up with disgusting sewage, to name but a few. My mother works as a pharmacist at Erlanger, and recently, pipes in the children's hospital burst. In the pharmacy and some of the patient rooms, water flooded up to 3 inches deep. Water was flowing down the stairwells like a waterfall, and boxes were floating on the water. My mom had to talk to all sorts of people, and it took more than a week and a half to fix. The thing is, the oldest part of the hospital was dry as bone. Is it that our plumbing gets worse over time instead of better? On the night of December 10th, 2022, sewage came up the pipes in our house because of a blockage, and all of the upstairs bathrooms were unusable to our family of six. The nice thing is, the plumber came out at 11 pm, only to say it was a 2-plumber job. The bad thing is, we were having family over for lunch the next day, so we went to a restaurant and had brunch while my dad stayed home until 1:30 pm to help the plumbers fix the pipes. Later that month, we were skiing in Colorado, and my dad was worrying about our pipes because the temperatures were down in the single digits, which is rare for Tennessee. Some friends of

ours came home from their own ski trip to discover all of their pipes were frozen! Our house? The water worked perfectly! Their house is newer than our house, which was built in 1890 and still has some cast iron pipes. Again, does plumbing get worse instead of better over time? Age is not the reason pipes behave this way. The older pipes in the hospital could have been more worn out and could've burst as well. The blockage could have taken longer to fix due to location. The pipes in our house could have frozen as well, because no matter the pipe, water will always expand once it freezes.

The reality is that we can never stop Mother Nature. Water will always expand, always flow to the lowest point, always wear away at pipes. No amount of fancy new technology can stop water. Plumbing is still important, though, and people could come up with fancy new technology to help fix these problems! New ways to build plumbing with easier access points could be possible, as well as new tools to fix blockages. If people are smart and clever enough to build new smartphones with better abilities than their predecessors, they are definitely smart enough to help humanity's problem with plumbing!

Adelaide Gerwin  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Regan Fazio

## 6th Grade Prose

### *The Four Seasons*

#### Winter

I duck a speeding snowball and sprint to a hiding place which happens to be a wooden post.

Laughing hysterically, I watch my siblings pelt each other with the packed balls of stiff snow and ice. I pick up a bit of cool and frosty snow, tinged with a pale blue, and feel it sinking through my velvety gloves, chilling my fingertips. We pause our raucous game to grab hot chocolate from a tray that my mother brought out. The snow crunches under my feet like tinkling bells as I walk toward her. I sniff my scalding beverage. It smells absolutely delightful. As I sip the steaming liquid from my foam cup, it fills my mouth with a sweet taste and slips smoothly down my throat. My father will read a story by the crackling and inviting fire in the hearth under the star strewn sky tonight.

#### Spring

As I sit on my veranda, with a mug of tea in my hands. I can barely see the small animals scurrying to and fro along the ferns that are scattered over the forest floor like emeralds. In a few places, the illustrious sunlight shines down upon the early morning dew, making the grass glisten. As I watch the vibrant forest, the steam coming off my tea warms my face. There is a pencil on my right hand poised over a piece of paper that will soon be transformed into a lovely forest or a petite robin. I took a long draw from my vanilla tea. The sound of rushing water coming from a neat stream that runs between the largest pines and wizened oaks over smooth, mossy rocks and pebbles like does bounding along a well-trodden path singing their songs of freedom. I breathe deeply

the scent of spring, the peculiar and faint smell of new life. From inside the house, I heard my younger brother start to wake. The dawn's tranquility will vanish as the house slowly comes to life.

#### Fall

I sit on a small, wooden porch swing, creaking with every small whoosh of air, and watch the crisp golden, crimson, and bronze oak and tulip poplar leaves tumbling off their branches like little fairies flitting toward the ground. The cool, fall breeze chills my face and I see my fingers turn a rosy pink and know my cheeks have done the same. Soon, the dinner's pleasant aroma has aroused my senses and my mouth starts to water. I get up and walk deftly inside to my warm Thanksgiving dinner of glazed ham and bread downy as young chicks. After the annual feast, the children galivant about while the adults sit in wooden chairs, talking in boisterous voices until they are ready to have a rowdy game of football in the grass, which is browning with the change of the seasons. I listen to the joyful yells of children being chased by their dogs and the crunch of fragile leaves underfoot. I'll join in soon enough. The fall's gorgeous colors never fail to awe me.

#### Summer

I sprint away from my younger brother, laughing at this comical scene. He is jamming his minuscule thumb into the nozzle of the hose that he is trying to shoot me down with. As I run, I can't help but smell the wonderful lunch of homemade chicken pizza that my mother is baking. I feel the rough and jagged concrete under my bare feet and the clear mountain air whizzing through my hair as the sun's warm rays beat down on Earth's surface. Suddenly, my sister is screaming in a euphoric

## 6th Grade Prose

voice as my 4-year-old brother sprays her with the freezing water spouting from the hose. After our water wars, we all received popsicles. Mine is tangy orange.

The best thing is, we will do it all tomorrow.

Elena Clinkscales

6th Grade

Baylor School

Regan Fazio

## 6th Grade Prose

### *A Bag of Takis*

One time me and my friends was on a ride at the fair and a man came over and asked if we want a bag of Takis. He had dark eyes and junky clothes. I said no and continue talking with my friends and then the man tried to kidnap us and we yelled for help and a man came to help us and they called the police. The police came and a few hours later the cops left with the man and went home.

Saniyah Wyatt

6th Grade

The Bethlehem Center's After-School Program

Gwen Mullins Alegre

## 6th Grade Prose

### *Malala's Story*

There is a girl named Malala. She wakes up in Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Malala said why am I in the hospital? The doctor said "You got shot and you had a bullet in your head. You got shot in your eye socket and your head because your dad didn't want to give the people there money back so they found you on the bus and shot you and two other girls. They shot you because they noticed your face because you were not wearing your mask and you showed your face. Therefore, you were shot in your eye socket, your ear and your shoulder".

Malala was stunned to speak.

"If you don't remember what happened when you got on the bus, the driver was driving. Then one car pulled in front of the bus. The people jumped out of the car and walked in to ask Where Malala was. Everyone pulled their mask up and you were the only one with your mask down and then the people realized her face." The doctor said, they shot you and your two friends. Then a hospital truck pulled up and got you and the two other girls on the bus. Then brought you to us. Then people outside were protesting for you and were feeling sad for you.

After the talk Malala's family came into the room. Her Mother, brothers and Dad sat down and said "are you okay?". The doctors rushed you to the hospital. Mom said "They gave you an IV and you were in a coma for a few days". Miss Malala's people are literally fighting for you, for your right to live.

3 months go by and Malala meets president Obama and they talk about how she changed the world and fought for girls and their learning. Malala's hands held up from the shouting and she is with her familying and she

is with her friends and she is going to school and her brothers are going to school too.

Ta'Kiyah Smith

6th Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet School

Sara Clarich-Page

## 6th Grade Prose

### *Surviving the Future*

~Day 1~

This is the future. Not the future you would expect. This future is different from the future with floating cars and hoverboards and all the fancy high tech. The future that is here is a cold war zone, with destruction everywhere, a desert here and there, and little to no people. A wasteland is what you could call it, I guess. But to us survivors, this is what we call home. This is all that's left around this world. We don't have much, but we cherish what we have.

I should probably introduce myself. My name is Ben. I am a 12 year old boy who is living in this "Wasteland" in the aftermath of... something. I don't exactly remember what happened, but I think I'll remember sometime. I found this book in an empty room, and will use it for a journal. We have a lot of empty rooms throughout our hideout, thanks to the thing that happened. I am currently living with my best friend, Henry. We both survived what had happened not too long ago. I think it's best if we find other people who survived, and we wouldn't be alone. We currently live in our middle school, where we were when it happened. I did see someone the other day, a kid at that. I think me and Henry will go look tomorrow. I think I've written enough for today.

~Day 2~

Henry and I went outside today for the first time in weeks. I saw a calendar and was surprised to see that it had been used recently, with a fresh, new marker scent. I know Henry had never seen it, so that meant someone was here with us. The date read "August 13, 2026." We didn't know who was here, and we looked for them right away. We went outside to see the crisp, autumn red-orange sky. It looked kind of

pretty, but it reminded us of everything that has changed. We looked around for a bit; looking in cars, scavenging the high school snack machines, climbing trees, walking around, anything really, and enjoyed being outside. We didn't find anyone, but we at least got some food. Being with Henry is nice, but it does get lonely. I'll look tomorrow for the person who is roaming the school.

~Day 3~

Well, we found the person roaming the school, and I'm honestly surprised that we didn't even know about them being here. It was Lillian, Henry's friend before the... thing happened. Henry was glad to see her here, and I was too, just not as excited as him. As I said, this is his friend. We are friends, yeah, but just not that close of friends. We asked how she had survived, and she said that she remembers hiding in a cabinet in the science room. We told her that's where we woke up too, and she said that she probably awoke later after we did in the aftermath of an... overpollen. Which was weird, considering I don't remember an overpollen. Maybe she remembers more than I do.

~Day 4~

We went upstairs and found nothing. We did find a room that had been used, but not for some time. We decided to go outside and check there to see if there was anything, but we saw something bad. We saw humans, but they looked bug-like. Like they had been merged together to form one. And they weren't small, either. They were the size of an average human. We hoped they wouldn't see us, but unfortunately, they did. "You'll need to be careful fighting those," we heard someone say. The voice was familiar, though I hadn't heard it for a while. Was it- "Zander!" Henry exclaimed.

## 6th Grade Prose

“In the flesh,” he said. He looked different, as did everyone in this group so far, and he was holding something of a cleave made with a kitchen knife and a broom stick. “Have you dealt with them before?” Lillian asked. “Once, just not in this form of bug,” he said. “These are hornet humans, as I like to call them,” Zander told us. He told us to ready our weapons, because they would hurt us and the school. Once we were ready, we charged. Henry used his breaker box sledgehammer to slam one the four down, while Lillian was firing pencils with her crossbow, and Zander was using his cleave and cutting the hornet humans. I was taking on my own hornet, and I took it down in a couple of minutes.

It wasn't too long before we took them all down. We all high fived one another, but for only a little bit. When Zander high fived me, I felt a wave of pain and a headache. But I remembered something, something about the accident. I remember flowers, but not normal ones, and they released spores that changed the air, and they died out. What had happened was surprising, and it was weird. Would that explain why there were hornet people? Would that end the world? Why was I chosen to live?

Those questions stayed with me throughout the day to dinner, which Zander joined us for. We asked if he wanted to stay with us, and he did. We set up camp in the library today, and decided to stay there for a while. It was a perfect base, with books and books to read (there would be more if it weren't for the overpollen,) it felt cozy, and there were separate rooms for personal space and protection. It was home. We found cozy pillows and used spare curtains to keep warm.

~Day 5~

We decided to stay inside today, because we

couldn't risk getting attacked. We did find some board games to occupy ourselves, and we found some computers in the one the rooms in the library. We tried signing into our accounts, and it worked! We checked everything top to bottom of everything from our computers, and everything was fine. I checked my email, and was shocked. I had a message from yesterday. First of all, that would be very unlikely, and second, it was from a friend of mine. It was hard remembering their name, considering they even used “A” for the username. They told me they were okay, and living in the preschool near the school we went to. The preschool was just past the high school, so we threw everything about staying indoors out the window, and went to the preschool.

We got there, and the doors were stuck. We found a side door, and it was unlocked. We went inside, and it was quiet. It felt dreary and empty. We looked around for a little, and we found some food and water. We found a separate room, and then we found my friend, and I remembered their name, August. We were glad she was okay, and we talked to her about what she had been doing. She said she had found a globe and took the base and turned it into a sickle. She had also been working on a backpack with extendable arms, four of them to be exact. She showed us them, and it was very impressive. We told her about the bug humans, and that the arms would help her. She said she can't fight very well, so she could attach the sickles to her extendable robot arms. She called the backpack her “Robo-pack”, which was a decent name. We headed out of the school, and were attacked by dragonfly humans. We fought them off, but not before one could get to Zander. We tried to peel it off, but by the time we did, it had already got to him. We ran back to the middle school with him, and tried to seal the wound. We sealed it, and he was feeling slightly better. He told us

## 6th Grade Prose

something was wrong, and that he was careless. We told him we wouldn't leave him. We spent the rest of the day in the library, watching over Zander, and hoping he would live.

~Day 6~

Zander survived! We were all joyful! But he seemed different, though. He kept saying he heard buzzing noises, but we didn't hear anything. We thought it was probably just a side effect. But he kept asking that all day, but we still didn't hear anything. We were starting to get worried, because he seemed worried and his nerves seemed shot. We mostly made sure he was hydrated and that he ate, we played board games to distract him. But he still seemed like something was wrong. We know he just went through a near-death experience, but he didn't have any pain. He mostly kept hearing things we didn't. The noises he mentioned were all bug noises. We tried to help get rid of the noises, but nothing worked. We will just have to hope for the best.

~Day 7~

We finally figured out what was wrong with Zander. He had been bit by the dragonfly human, but he was okay from the start. Apparently, thanks to the bite, he can switch in and out of bug form, in full control. He can't switch yet, but he can send out some spikes out of his arms. It looked cool, but I hope he doesn't lose control. We will still stay inside unless we have to go outside. We can't risk losing someone else. We also can't leave Zander alone for too long. We can't take too many risks, because no one can save us now. There are no people within a one mile radius that I would know of. But thankfully we had each other, which kept us content. We continued with the board games, played some

games on the computers we found, and mostly tried to enjoy ourselves, even if it was hard. We also are watching Zander and making sure he's okay. After a while, we had to leave Zander for a minute, but when we came back, he was gone. We looked around for a little, and we found him, but not the way we left him. He looked like a centipede, a terrifying and scary version of him. He had a lot more limbs than before, and he had antennas attached to his head, not to mention that there were hooks at the end of his fingers. He also had jaws that looked dangerously sharp. We worried we had lost Zander, because at this point, he was fully transformed. I called it "Zandepede," and soon we backed away, hoping he would go back to normal. But as we tried to leave, it hissed and charged at us. We couldn't fight it, because it was Zander, but we also couldn't let it hurt us either. So we just tried to block the attacks, which seemed to work ok.

Our biggest concern was that we didn't hurt him, and that he didn't hurt us. We did alright defending against him, but we couldn't run and hide, because he could easily catch us, and he would roam the school, our base. So we mostly kept him in the eighth grade hall, and prevented him from the rest of the school. After a while, we tried to calm it, because it was getting more crazy, and we couldn't keep it down forever. We tried calming it, and it slowly calmed down. And once it was fully calm, it turned back into Zander. We were glad he was back to normal, but we were worried that he would be back with the centipede. We took him to the cafeteria, and we gave him food to keep him calm, and we asked him what had happened. He said once we left, he sat there for a little bit, but then he started feeling a bit off. He tried to stand up, but he fell to the ground, and that's when the transformation began. He said he was glad that we helped him out, and that he was in a lot of trouble.

## 6th Grade Prose

~Day 8~

The worst has happened: we ran out of food. We were all in a panic, because we didn't know how it happened. But then we realized we had given some to Zander the other day, and that's how we ran out. We needed food for our survival, but luckily Zander knew there was a Fallmart somewhere nearby, and we could head there. We all agreed, but it would be super dangerous. We were leaving our base, our safe spot, into a dangerous world we knew little to nothing about. But we knew it was crucial to our survival, so we packed up some packs with supplies and first-aid kits, and what little snacks we could find. Before we left, we checked a computer, found the exact location, printed out the map, and went on our way.

~Day 9~

When we woke up, we saw smoke. It was nearby, so we decided to check it out. When we got there, we heard a scream, and there were two people standing near a beetle-hybrid human. We decided to help them out, so Zander began swinging at them, and we all jumped in too. Eventually, the bugs were defeated. I turned to look at them, but when I did, I instantly recognized one of them. It was her. It was Maria. I have a bad past with her, with bullying, betrayal, lying, and faking to get what she wanted. I had never liked her. And here she was, still about the way I last saw her, only a little older. I gave her a hard stare, and she delivered the same.

They say they had nowhere to go, and they "probably will be safe but not for long," so they decided to walk with us for food, because they also were out. We began to get back on the road, and continued on. We passed by a couple more houses and woods, but finally, we reached an opening with the Falmart ahead. We

were almost there! We dashed towards the store, so happy to be there and be able to survive longer! We entered the store, and there were shelves of food, most of them in date. We loaded up on as much as we could carry, but we also found something helpful for travel. We found mechanical parts and a couple seats and cushions, and luckily Lillian and August knew how to use mechanical parts, so they decided to modify them for long-distance travel. The rest of us stayed nearby, helping any way we could. Everyone except Maria. While they were working, I was studying mechanics so I could eventually build and help, too. After some time, they finished up, and they looked amazing. They also said that they had to be tested, so we brought them into the parking lot. I let Henry get a ride, and he did. They worked almost perfectly, and they just needed 3 BB batteries. So we grabbed two big boxes of batteries and went on our way. There were only three karts, so we called them "Trio-karts." After that Lillian and August got in one kart, Maria and Katie got in another, and me, Henry and Zander squeezed into the last one. We used the map and compass and made our way home. But before we did that, we found human traces. It told where a base was, at a school. The handwriting was very neat and professional, which meant an adult wrote it. We had a new goal: go to the base. We used the map in the store to find where the school was, and it was a three day trip. We hopped on our Trio-karts, and went towards that direction. After a little bit, it began to get dark out, so we set up camp.

~Day 10~

We woke up and began making our way towards the base. On the way there, though, we saw something in the distance. We thought it was one the hornet humans, so we prepared to fight. But when it approached, it looked much different. It looked like metal, mechanical even.

## 6th Grade Prose

Eventually, it reached us. My heart was pounding. My head felt heavy, and everything felt weak. It was still for a moment, nothing moving. Then, the creature lunged at us, with a sharp metallic blade. Henry swings at it with his breaker box weapon, but the creature dodges, and then shoots a fiber net made from glowing mechanical stuff at Henry, trapping him! I backed up some hoping to not be caught, but I swung at the net, but it didn't break. August sent her robo arms and sicles, but the creature continued to dodge our attacks. Then it launched another net at us, this time capturing August. She dropped to the ground, dropping the sicles and robo-pack outside the net. The thing lifted up the nets, and carried them away from us. I tried running after them, tears forming in my eyes, but it was just too fast. It headed north, towards the human camp. After it was out of my site, I stopped running. I stood frozen, processing everything that had happened, and then fell to the ground crying. I had just lost my best friend and someone I treasured dearly, and they had just taken from me in seconds. Lillian and Katie rushed over and tried to comfort me, while Maria just stood carefree. Even though they tried to calm me, it didn't help that much. I stood up, hopped into my Trio-kart, told everyone to hop into their kart, and to follow me. Everyone did so, and I proceeded to drive ahead, full speed. I didn't care. No one tried to stop me, even if it was dangerous. They had seen what I had experienced. We had shortened our three day trip by one day, and now another by going full speed. Night reached us soon, though, so we had to stop, no matter how much I wanted to keep going.

We prepared some food, and ate some dinner, even though I wasn't in the mood to eat. But halfway through eating, Maria had the audacity to say "You know, you didn't really need those two anyway," knowing that I was in a terrible

mood. With a rush of anger flooding in, I quickly grabbed Lillian's crossbow, put a pencil in, and pointed dead at her. I pulled out my sword and said, "You wouldn't know anything about them! They mean nothing to you, yet they mean the world to me! And the fact that you said that to me means you don't care about anyone!" Everyone looks at us in shock and fear. I look into Maria's eyes dead on, and see fear. I put my sword away and put the crossbow down, walk to my resting spot, and begin to cry. Why did they have to have been taken? Are they OK? What will happen if I don't reach them in time?

~Day 12~

I woke up as soon as the sun was up. I woke everyone up quietly, and eventually, the doors opened. We snook inside, and it was just stairs. We walked all the way up, which took a while, but we reached the top shortly. When we opened the door, we found Henry and August! They were tied up in chairs with rope, so we freed them. They both thanked us, but then the metallic hornet human came to the building. I pulled out my sword, and so did Landon and Zander. Landon kept the rope and put it in his bag. The metallic hornet pulled out its metallic sword, so I told August and Henry to go to the stairs. They began to move slowly towards the door, but as they moved toward the door, the metallic hornet flew towards them and knocked them off! Landon threw the rope, and they both caught it. Landon started pulling them up, but as he was doing that, the metallic hornet moved towards him. Before it got to him, I swung my sword as hard as I could on its wing. It crashed to the ground hard, and me and Zander started swinging our weapons at the creature. Eventually, it stopped moving. We removed the metal to find a normal hornet human inside. August said we could melt the armor and make stronger weapons. We left the

## 6th Grade Prose

building and went to the chute. There were people living here, so we let Lillian, Katie and Maria in. They have a stable food supply and lots of friendly people, so I think me and my friends will be staying for a while. I think we'll be a lot more happy here in our new home.

Ben Varnell

6th Grade

Hixson Middle School

Gabby Cowden

## 6th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

“Breaking news! The well known flying messenger of the gods, Pegasus, is retiring! Who will be his successor? Will he or she be able to live up to Pegasus's legacy? Will any of my questions be answered?”

This newspaper, with a date of only yesterday, flew across the arctic tundra. A young wolf pup, with the name of Neo raced across the arctic tundra. Then, both collided, sending the wolf with the paper. The wolf glanced at the newspaper. While it did not know English at this age (yes, wolves in this story learn English) the wolf liked the wings, the horse and most of all wanted to fly.

10 years later

I walked through the streets of the underground city. The city had lost its spark, there was no horse with wings anywhere in the fake “Sky” . I walked up to a god and said, “Do you know where this horse is?”

“Listen, wolf, I’m the god of war and I feel like going to war with you, especially if you bother me and talk about that failure again,”he said. Well, that was rude. Eventually I found someone who pointed to a run down building.

In this building, a horse who looked disturbingly like a middle aged person, started speaking to me. “Get out kid, I know you just want my money.”

“Wait, you have money? No, no, no, I just want to fly and help everyone out.”

“Well, you better earn yourself these wings.” He gave me my first assignment, to find enough feathers as his wings have. 1,984. This is going to take a while. I encountered the animal with

the golden feathers, the crochicken. The fiercest animal ever. However, if you manage to pluck one feather, you get as many golden feathers as you desire.

I reached out to the crochicken. Suddenly, the crochicken’s eyes were fixed on me. It came closer, and the chase began. I was caught in the fight. It was gnawing at me, and I quickly got out of there when I realized that I had managed to pluck a feather! I thought of the number 1,984 and I got that many feathers. I came back with them.

“Okay, I got the feathers,” I said.

“You just got one step closer,” the horse said.

Suddenly, I felt a cold sensation. I was growing wings! I noticed that his wings were disappearing. I had grown three inches of wings.

I rested and returned. “Get a pail of golden water,” was my next task. I went to the holy spring and took a chalice of the golden water. I answered the riddle of the seven metals. (Copper, silver, gold, bronze, platinum, aluminum,brass) After I did that, I had six inches of wings now. I could fly! This continued one more time.

This was my last time, and I could tell he had something in store for me. I came to the edge of the core of the Earth. “Fly into the core, and go all the way through” Though frightened, I went into the core of the Earth.

It was hot, and thick, but I persevered. After what felt like the end of the world I emerged victorious. I went back to the horse, and I got the rest of my wings. “You deserved it,” The Horse said. I finally had taken on the full role of Pegasus.

## 6th Grade Prose

Today is my first journey with my wings. I think I am going to go home for a while and catch up with the rest of my family. The gods are now happy again. Pegasus is running free in some flower field somewhere, and everything is happy.

Here are all of my best positive reviews, not to brag or anything like that. "Perfect delivery! 10/10." "So CUTE 111/5." and finally " I love the new Pegasus, even though he isn't a horse, I feel like this is a good way to honor this legacy. legacy/10."

Remember, if you see another animal with wings, remember the flying horse who started himself and me.

Finn Waldo  
6th Grade  
Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts  
Mary LeDoux

## 6th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

I slow to a stop, grab my water bottle, and take a quick sip. Leaning on my dark blue bike, I take in my surroundings. The bright green leaves on the trees rustle with the slight breeze, and the sky is as blue as a newborn's eyes. I can't believe this beautiful state forest backs up to my camp!

Our counselor talks a bit about the trail and then takes the lead, whooshing down the hill at an alarming pace. The two other kids, both older boys, follow in a similar fashion. A few seconds later I have two hands on the rough handlebars, four fingers on the smooth brakes, and I'm off down the slope. The feel of the wind whipping through my short, tied back hair cools me down from the tough ride up, even with a helmet on. I pedal a little through the flatter bits, then let gravity take me and the bike down the trail. Coming up on another flat stretch, I pump the pedals again, but they aren't working. Looking briefly in the direction of my chain, I notice that it's off the gear again. I know I can just let gravity take me, and so I do.

As I soar down the hill, I think about how cool it is that I even get to be here. The leader picked people based on skill level, so I'm a little bit proud that I'm here. I'm the youngest and the only girl who got in.

I snap out of my reverie just in time to swerve around a tree on my left. That was a close one! I look forwards and catch a glimpse of a thick rear tire disappearing around a curve. I try to pedal to catch up, only to remember my chain is off. Sighing, I wait for my bike to slowly roll down the level part of the trail using leftover momentum. I listen to the birds singing in the swaying trees and hear the crunch of dirt under the wheels. I notice the way the squirrels play, branches bending the higher they climb. I feel

the wind again, soft and cool on my back. The sun beats down on my black helmet. Then my front tire dips down again and I'm back to the wild wind, the controlled free fall. I can feel the bike vibrating underneath me, the black shocks absorbing most of the impact. The fierce wind bites my face and slips past my heavy helmet.

Maybe it's because I'm going so fast, or maybe it's because I'm totally in control, but I let go of all of my worries, fears, and concerns. My mind is totally clear and I'm happy. It's not an "I got a new Xbox" happy, not an "I just won my race" happy, but a sense of joy almost. I know that I am so lucky and sometimes I act so spoiled towards the people who love me. I also know that I am going to try my very best to get better at these things, to be more compassionate, to be more considerate to others' feelings. The people who are around me don't deserve a me that is annoying, or a me that complains about things that some people don't have. They deserve, family, friends, or strangers, a me at my very best.

I swoop down onto the gravel road, rejoining our small group of bikers. Following the group into the parking lot, I promise myself I will never forget that moment or its resolutions.

Nissa Ruth  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Suzanne Collins

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Youth Camp*

Have you ever been to some type of church camp? I knew my mom would make me go, but I was so nervous and didn't want to go at all. That's before I knew how much fun it should be!

"Oh great!" I thought to myself as I was sitting in church listening to the youth director. "Sign up for youth camp! It's the sixth through the tenth!". I knew my mom was going to make me go, and I didn't want to. I had no friends and didn't talk to anyone. My mom signed me and my sister up right after the service. I knew I would have to go now.

Camp kept getting closer and closer, I knew in just a couple of weeks I'd be on a bus on my way there. Just before I knew it I was packing all my things up and heading to the church. When we got there, there were so many people. Over two-hundred people were going! I said bye to my parents and then got on the bus and left.

We were on the bus for about two and a half hours, and by the time we got there I had actually made a couple of friends! I was having a lot more fun than I thought I would be having. Everything was going well! We all were having fun. But about two days later a girl comes up to me and says "Ansleigh! There's been something that happened and they won't let us go into our cabin!" I knew something wasn't good, because everybody was talking about the seventh grade girls!

My friend went up to my leader and asked if everything was ok. "Yeah, everything is fine, there's just been some girls arguing," my leader said. When I went to my cabin, all I could hear was girls arguing with each other and other girls crying. I wasn't able to go into my cabin, but I could hear a lot. After I had stood there for a

minute waiting, I went back to playing with my friends.

Later that night some senior girls came into our cabin. They told us to sit down, and to have a talk with them. "Drama is common for girls y'all's age, but why are we at this camp right now?" Said one of the senior girls. They talked to us all about how they had drama when they were younger, and how it had split them up and their grade of girls stopped coming to church and being friends with them because of all the drama. After we talked I went up to one of the girls, and talked to her for a pretty long time. We became best friends by the end of the night. All I could do was give her a hug and tell her she helped us all a lot.

After the senior girls talked to us, we all realized that we were there to show the love of Christ to others. Even though we had a hard time towards the beginning of camp, we all grew in some way, and closer to each other. That night not only helped my relationship with Christ and others, but it also helped with my grade of girls too. And I can't wait to go back to youth camp again next year!

Ansleigh Otting  
7th Grade  
Grace Baptist Academy  
Shana Ivarson

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

“However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be-”

“Kyra! We're leaving for school now!” Kyra Holland looked up, brushing a lock of black hair out of her face. She hadn't realized it was so late, but, sure enough, the clock on her wall proclaimed it to be Seven Forty-Five.

“I'll be right there!” she called, pulling on her blue sweatshirt and tennis shoes. They both knew that she would not “be right there.” Usually, she dashed into school moments before the bell rang, blushing under the stares of the other students as she slid into her seat. At least that way she missed most of the pre-class noise.

“Kyra you'll be late!”

“I'm coming!” She just had to find her notebook and earbuds. She used the notebook for writing, mostly, short poems and thoughts she wanted to remember. She also drew in it occasionally, although she didn't consider herself very good. The earbuds were a necessity for her to survive the day of screaming classmates and loud chatter.

“Kyra, come on!” her mom shouted, and she grabbed the notebook from off her desk and stuffed the earbuds in her pocket, dashing into the kitchen and shoveling down spoonfuls of cereal before rushing out the door and into her mother's SUV, a remnant from before Kyra's brothers had begun driving and later left for college. Now they were gone, one still in college, the other working in New York City.

Neither had come home in years.

Kyra shoved her backpack in the trunk and hopped into the passenger seat of the car, where her mom was already waiting. Mrs. Holland was a small woman in her mid forties, with dirty-blonde hair that fell to her shoulders. She wore a red jacket, jeans, and a perpetually tired expression. Kyra had gotten her black hair and olive complexion from her father, who'd died when she was young, but her short stature and small features were reminiscent of her mom's.

As the car sped across the landscape Kyra stared out the window, thinking. School. Kyra didn't enjoy school, although she loved learning. Her school wasn't very good, and most of the students only learned the bare minimum, if that. But Kyra had books, and internet access; she wouldn't have minded school much if it wasn't for the other students. They were probably like eighth graders everywhere, but they were the reason she wished her mom could homeschool her. She wasn't bullied, it was simply stressful dealing with the constant noise, gossip, and confusing teenage social rules without the reward of any deeper conversations or relationships. Many were nice, and probably great friends, but Kyra was too nervous to approach them, and worried they wouldn't get along anyway. So she retreated into her books, worlds where she didn't have to say the right thing or act a certain way, where she could immerse herself in other people's lives, hopes, and fears, without dealing with her own. It probably wasn't healthy. She didn't care.

“Kyra, we're here.” She looked around. They'd arrived at Harper Middle/High School, and her mother had tapped her on the shoulder. “Love you! Hope you have a good day!”

## 7th Grade Prose

“You too mom!” Kyra hopped out of the car. “Bye.” She dashed up the steps into the building. It was Tuesday, so her first class was English. But the eighth grade English teacher had quit midway through the year, and no one could find a long term sub, so beginning today eighth and ninth grade had that class together. Kyra hurried through the hallway, eyeing the doors she passed. Ninth grade English was in room...303. She turned a corner and saw the classroom. The open door revealed a gaudily decorated room crammed with desks, with streamers and bright curtains on the windows. She found a seat near the back and took out her book, not wanting to risk the earbuds as Ms. Drimmons, the ninth grade English teacher, was rumored to be very strict.

The classroom was packed, and Kyra shrank down in her seat as the noise increased and people surrounded her. She didn't think most of the kids in her grade knew her name, and that was fine, but sometimes she wished she had a friend she could talk with about things on her mind. Most fourteen year olds, however, were uninterested in her theories and ideas, and she had struggled to connect the few times she'd been brave enough to try and make a friend.

“This is what happens when you come into class late.” Kyra spun around and found herself looking at a tall boy with messy hair and disheveled clothing. “Your favorite spot by the window is taken by a mysterious girl.” The boy sat at the desk beside her, plunking down a large stack of books as he did. “Hi. My name's Joshua. What's yours?”

Kyra stared at him, taken aback by his relaxed confidence. “I'm...Kyra.”

“What's that? Kyla?”

She bit her lip. “No. Kyra.”

“What are you reading, Kyra?”

“Um...” Usually she tried to avoid those sorts of questions. “It's...Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen. I just started it but I've read it once before.”

Joshua smiled, “I love Pride and Prejudice! I've read it three times, although I usually prefer fantasy.”

Kyra twisted her hands in her lap, “I like fantasy too. But...those books on your desk don't look like fantasy.”

“No. This one is Dante's Inferno, this a collection of Socrates' writings, and this...” He gestured at the last book in the stack, “Is Pride and Prejudice.”

“So...” Kyra said tentatively, “What do you like talking about? Besides books, I mean.”

Joshua grinned. “All sorts of theories and ideas...mostly just whatever I'm thinking about.”

Kyra stared at him.

“Hey, Kyra?” He asked slowly, “Do you want to sit with me at lunch today?”

Kyra smiled.

Beatrice Sanders  
7th Grade  
Chattanooga School for Arts and Science  
Laycica Harjes

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

We needed two more points to win the tournament and the bases were loaded. Smack! The ball went to the fence and I ran as fast as I could. It was a home run that I hit! I was 12 years old and it happened this past summer. I learned from this experience that a little encouragement from other people and believing in yourself can help a lot. This event was significant to me because I helped my team win and it was a very exciting moment since we lost to that team in the last tournament, causing them to win first in the tournament. There were also so many emotions in that moment causing me to be happy and it was a good bonding experience for me and all my teammates.

In this paragraph I'm going to be telling you about how encouragement helped me. I was very nervous when I went up to bat because there were two outs, the bases were loaded, and we were losing by one. Encouragement helped me though from everyone cheering me on and saying I could do it. It helped me believe in myself and showed me that I could hit the ball. It helped me think positively, like for example, "Even if we don't win, I still had fun, and tried my best." In conclusion this is how encouragement helped me when I was up to bat.

The pitcher does her motion and throws the ball. "Ball one," says the umpire. She does her motion again and when the ball comes, I swing. Woosh! I missed it, as the ball popped the glove and the umpire said, "Strike one!" I took a deep breath then the next pitch came. I swung and Smack! The ball went past the outfielders to the fence! I ran as fast as I could all the way around the bases. I was hoping I wasn't going to get out even though enough people already scored for us to win. My heart was racing as

everyone was cheering because we had just won! I could see the ball getting thrown closer to home plate and it scared me a little bit. Almost there, almost there..... then I touched home plate!

After I touched home plate the crowd went wild! The catcher was very close to tagging me but I made it just in the nick of time. Everyone was cheering so happily and were so excited. There were so many emotions I started tearing up in tears of joy because it was just so overwhelming. I was proud of myself because I had just gotten a home run and helped my team score to win. My dad lifted me up in the air and one of my friends was crying happy tears because she was full of emotions too. That was a very tough game to play because everyone tried so hard to do their best because that team was good. We also didn't want them to beat us again like they did the last tournament because we had come so far. We all got rings and went to eat out to celebrate.

In conclusion, this event was very significant and meaningful to me. One reason is because encouragement helped me to believe in myself and stay positive. The second reason is because I felt like I helped my team win and it was a good bonding experience to get closer with my team. Lastly, there were lots of emotions and excitement going on which just made me feel happy. To wrap it up, this is why this event was significant to me and I hope you enjoyed reading just as much as I enjoyed getting that big hit!

Karoline Kennedy  
7th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

Have you ever heard of someone who spelled the word they were given in a spelling bee correctly and was still eliminated? This is exactly what happened to me in the spelling bee in 5th grade at Silverdale Baptist Academy in January 2021 when I was 11 years old. Keep reading to find out what I learned from this experience and what you can do so that you will also know. Something that you will learn from my story is to not give up no matter what happens or how many times you lose.

My story begins with everyone in 5th grade spelling words in their class trying to get a place in the spelling bee. I was surprised that I made it in and proud of myself when I told my parents. School sent me home with a list of words to study for the spelling bee. It was not the first school spelling bee I had been in. In 4th grade I participated but got a word I didn't know in the final round and lost so I planned to study hard for this one. I got the word list and studied all of them over Christmas break and practiced with my family. I was really excited that I got in the spelling bee but I was also really nervous that if I messed up kids might make fun of me. I studied very hard and I felt confident that I would be able to win the spelling bee for the first time.

The day of the spelling bee had arrived and this is what happened after they called all of the spelling bee participants into the chapel. My parents could not come to the school because of covid and it made me a little sad that they couldn't be there, but they were able to watch it online. They started calling us up one by one and after several rounds I was getting really far and was hopeful I would win. Then Mrs. Woodard gave me a word and I spelled the word correctly but the judges said that I spelled it wrong. What had just happened? I

was a little confused and upset about what was happening so I walked over to the judges and talked to them. They knew what had happened but they wouldn't let me back in and I had to wait and watch the others finish.

After the spelling bee was over I went back to class and my teacher, Mrs. Wilson told me that she was very proud of me but I was still upset. I told Mrs. Wilson what one of the judges named Mrs. Lamb had said but it still did not make sense to me. I was still bummed out when I got home because I felt what happened was unfair to me. The school explained to me and my family that the list they had was messed up and different from the list I was given to study and that is the reason they said I was eliminated. Then they explained what they would do to prevent that from happening again and I decided that I would try again the next year since they said that would not happen again.

I entered the spelling bee wanting to learn how to spell different words that I didn't even know existed and see if I could get first place. I spent a lot of time practicing for the spelling bee which is why I was so upset when I was eliminated. This event taught me to not give up no matter how much I lose or how hard something is. In 6th grade I came back and tried out for the spelling bee again because I wasn't going to give up on wanting to reach first place and I ended up getting second place in middle school and first place in the whole school! So for everyone out there reading this, don't give up if you lose at something the first time. Keep trying just like me and you may be surprised what happens next time.

Ashton Tinney  
7th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

Have you ever done something that you regret as a kid? Did you get hurt from it? I know I did. My story takes place in 2016, so I was in first grade. This story was a big learning experience for me. It is very important to me because it showed me that I should never hurt myself just so that I can look cool or mature.

It all began when I was at my brother's soccer game. Around me, I saw lots of kids about my age playing tag and running around. I had pretty much nothing to do besides watch my brother's game, so I decided to join a group of kids playing tag and running around. The kids that I was playing with were much older than me, maybe 12 or so. I thought: Hmm.. Maybe I should do a backflip to impress them. The grass was soft, so I just automatically assumed that I wouldn't get hurt if I were to land wrong. Little did I know, there was probably a big rock under the grass I was about to land on.

So I told them: "Hey, watch this, I can do a backflip!" So I jumped up, and... CRACK! I felt a sudden jolt of pain in my right arm. Then, as if I wasn't hurting enough already, a little blonde girl, maybe around 3 years old, started scratching and spitting on my face! The audacity! Afterwards, all the big kids just stood around me as I was left there, crying on the ground. Looking back on it, little first grade me probably looked pretty pathetic laying there. A few minutes later, my mom and dad found me. They thought I was overreacting and were in a rush to go get dinner.

They kept saying: "Annalise, get up! Stop overreacting." But my arm was hurting so bad that I could barely move it. After my parents finally got me to stand up and get in the car, we went to McCallisters. I couldn't even pick up my spoon without it hurting. My parents had to

feed me the food by themselves because I couldn't do it. Sad, right? My parents began to get worried, so they decided to take me to the emergency room to get checked for any serious injuries.

The emergency room was super clean and it smelt like hand sanitizer. I sat down in a chair that, like the rest of the room, felt very clean. After a lot of waiting, the doctor finally took me and my family to a big X-ray. The doctor told me to lay down so that the X-ray could check my arm. I layed down as the X-ray scanned my arm. When the results were in, it showed me and my family that I had a small crack in my right elbow and that I would need a cast. It cost my parents a lot of money, and I feel bad that they had to spend so much money just because of my silly little mistake.

From this experience, I learned many different things. One thing I learned is that I should be more cautious. Another thing I learned is that I need to be less reckless and start thinking about the consequences of mistakes I make. But, if you could take anything from this story, then I would just advise you not to hurt yourself for the approval of others. I hope you learned something new from my story, and stay safe!

Annalise Lofgren  
7th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

It has been a dream of mine since I was 9 years old to fly helicopters. For my 9th birthday a close family friend took me up in his personal bell jet ranger helicopter and that is where the passion started with flying. 3 years later I decided I wanted to be a helicopter pilot and I wanted to see what education I needed to have. It was a chilly, windy Monday morning on December 1, 2021 that I made the call that would change my whole week, my whole life even. At 11 years old I would never think that I would be able to take helicopter flying lessons, but boy was I wrong when we made the call to Prestige Flight School in Atlanta, Georgia. "As long as he can touch the rudder pedals" she said he is able to start tomorrow. I knew it was expensive but with much conversation with my mom she agreed.

When I showed up for my first lesson Mike met me at the hangar. Mike was my instructor. He had been in the Air Force for 32 years and flew in wars, and had over almost 15,000 log hours. I knew I was in good hands. We walked on the tarmac to the helicopter and I was getting nervous. I did not know what to expect. When we came to the helicopter it looked like a small bubble. At this point I was scared because it was so little, I didn't think we would both fit in there. It is a R22 helicopter which is the smallest legal helicopter to fly in the United States. We checked the gas, and did a walk around to make sure everything looked good with the aircraft, something that pilots do with every aircraft that they fly. We both managed to fit in the bubble. And WOW when it cranked up, the sound of it was more than I could ever have imagined. The loudness of the blades chopping through the air nearly took my breath away. The blades create so much force of wind to allow the lift of the aircraft, and the engine was so powerful that while we were on the

ground the helicopter started to shake and wobble around.

I put my headset on, learned a few radio communications, gave a thumbs up and I was ready! We began to lift off. I felt like a feather at that very moment. The ground started to gain more and more distance further and further away. The helicopter began to rise faster and faster and before I knew it we were up I could hear the choo choo sounds of the helicopter's blades whipping right above our heads. Mike had shown all the instruments right before we had started our flight so he said, "place your hand lightly on the cyclic and collective," which are the instruments you use to steer the helicopter and the collective which is used to keep the helicopter up. I was so glad I got to slightly steer but then Mike told me to have a firmer grip so I did as he said, and he said "hey look you're flying this thing!" I took a quick nervous look at him and he had no hands on any of the instruments so I gripped both instruments tighter and tighter nervously looking down, then I felt a slight pull to the left, and a bump out of nowhere. Then I remembered Mike telling me if you keep your eyes up the flight will be much smoother. So I did my best to keep my eyes up and tried to keep the helicopter as smooth as it could be. I got to fly over the Chattahoochee River all by myself.

We flew around for an hour over Atlanta. He showed many areas around the town, and educated me on the basics of the helicopter. As we were heading back to the airport we dipped low to the ground. Mike explained hovering and how surprisingly that is the hardest thing to do while flying a helicopter. We took one last circle around the airport while Mike explained how to land and he said that's the second hardest thing to do while flying a helicopter but I got to grip the instruments lightly as he hovered and

## 7th Grade Prose

landed the awesome R22 helicopter. I felt the ground below me and was relieved. I was so excited to see my mom waiting on the ground for me, I could not wait to tell her all about my first helicopter flight and how simple yet complex flying a helicopter is. Later that week we get a text from that family friend David who is really good friends with Mike. David told me he had heard from Mike and he said I flew in 20 mph wind and Mike said "That's the best flying I have ever seen on a first flight with wind that fast and he is 11 years old!" If there is one thing I learned it is that age does not matter when you are doing something you love. The knowledge you can gain under your belt can be beneficial. It was my first time flying. I was told I did GREAT. Do not be afraid to try new things, I know you have heard that before and I did not believe it at first but trust me it's so much fun once you do.

Maddox Mason  
7th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

What is your most desired Christmas present? For me it was a dog. Let me set the scene. The date is December 15, 2019, it was another day at Ooltewah elementary school. My mom just picked me up and I was riding home. When I arrived I saw it. I was in total shock. My dad had just got me a puppy! My thesis about this is that I will have to learn responsibility. I would also create a ton of memories of having a dog.

He was the perfect puppy. But there were a few things that had to happen. First off there was responsibility. Having a dog meant that I would have to take care of it. So me and my brother Jackson went back and forth taking care of him. I would take him out and Jackson would feed him. The next day I would feed him and Jackson would take him out. And we did that for a while. Next thing we had to do was teach him manners. First thing I taught him was to sit. Then we went on to teach him to not pee and poo in the house. Now there was one more problem, Teddy would jump on people and he would pee on them because he was so happy to see them. So we had to train him to not jump on people. First thing we tried was to let him go pee first and then meet the person. That didn't work. Next we tried to let him be around more people. Every time that we tried that my arm hurt afterwards because he would pull on the leash so much. So we were out of options. We sadly had to start putting him in his crate.

Having a puppy means that you will make a lot of memories. And memories are one the most important parts in your life. Memories last forever and I'm lucky because I got a great dog to make memories with. Some of my favorite memories of Teddy are of him on the lake. Teddy is not a water dog but when he gets in the water it's so funny. He likes to splash with his paws when he is trying to swim. Teddy also

loves boats. Teddy loves just feeling the fresh wind on his chest like he is the king of the world. In addition to Teddy's love of the lake, Teddy also loves to go in the car. We don't know why but he will go on a car ride any day of the week. He would never turn down a car ride. Some other memories I have of Teddy are just playing with him. Teddy loves to just run around the house playing with stuffed animals. But sometimes Teddy likes to rip his stuffed animals and we have to buy him new ones for him. And that is not fun.

Another thing you have to do when you have a puppy is love him. That means that you have to pet him, make sure he feels safe / comfortable, and that even means that you have to play with him. Once there was a big storm and Teddy was not feeling safe, so I had to hug him and let him know that it was going to be safe. Also before bed I like to make sure Teddy is comfortable with sleeping with me, so I pet him before bed. In addition to petting him I usually like to throw a ball and let him go get it, so he can waste his energy before bed so he is not bouncing off the walls. Before school I like to pet him alot because he won't see us until school ends and that is like 7 hours so I want to make sure that he is ok before I leave.

All in all you can see that owning a dog is a lot of work, but it comes with a lot of chraits. Like the memories or learning responsibility. So next time you ask for a dog just remember this autobiography narrative. And make sure to make memories with your dog if you have one. Thanks for reading.

Colton Deitch  
7th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

Have you ever played a sport before? Throughout the year and especially during spring you can find me in some type of gym playing or practicing volleyball. I've learned throughout the years that listening to what my coaches tell me is vital in volleyball. Another thing that I learned is that teamwork is important and practicing can make a huge impact on how I play and can make me a better teammate. Learning what volleyball means and is, is very important. Practicing at least 2 times a week can make a big difference and improve my skills drastically! Learning the positions is another really important factor!

Being familiar with volleyball and the game is very important, it can be hard sometimes to be constantly going to practice after practice but in the end it's worth it! When I first started playing volleyball I was about eight years old. It took a couple weeks to fully understand the game and rules, but once I learned the sport well it was all I wanted to do! After I started playing for a year or two I realized that teamwork is so important! You need to know who is on the court and where they are so that you can make a great play. Volleyball positions are important as well! It's very hard when you have to play a different position than what you are used to. A libero is usually the one who gets the first ball, they play in the middle back. Then they pass it up to the center who sets outside hitters or middle hitters. A hitter is the one who gets the set and makes the kill. Everyone has to call the ball and have good teamwork to make this happen! A good attitude is also what coaches look for in tryouts so I have to try my best to keep that in mind even when I mess up. Putting your skills to their fullest is a thing that I have learned from many of my coaches. Good sportsmanship is so important, it's okay to be competing but you need to be kind on the

court and off the court.

Volleyball can be challenging at times especially when I am trying to keep my grades up in school and balance homework. I have learned to push through even when it is hard. If I pray and ask God for guidance then he delivers me not always when I want him to but at his own time. I have learned many lessons from playing this sport, such as always having a positive attitude and pushing to my absolute fullest. This can be hard if I have had a rough day at school and have to then go to a practice. This has affected my life now in a couple of ways, whenever I go on the court now I have learned to give it my all. Not making the volleyball team in 6th grade pushed me to work harder. Now I have been going to as many clinics and camps as I can. It has benefited me by making club volleyball teams this year! I'm so glad that I have achieved my goal! In January I will need to remember all that I have done and learned to get to the spot I'm at when I am trying out for school volleyball. This sport has always been a big part of my life and I hope that it will always be! I am so thankful that I have gotten to the place I am in now with volleyball and that I never gave up even when it was hard.

Madelyn Guest  
7th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Mrs. Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

“He will be fine,” they said. When I was 7 my brother and I were at my grandparents house. It was the end of August, everything was perfectly fine until the day that I learned, when everything is going great, the littlest of things can result in a bad ending. It was a warm and peaceful August day. My parents had just dropped me and my brother, Luke, off at my grandparents house like they do every Sunday. Kids were playing in the neighborhood and were yelling. They asked if my brother and I wanted to ride our scooters down a hill. My brother jumped at that idea, but I had an uneasy feeling.

When Luke said yes, my uneasy feeling deepened. As we climbed up the hill, I remembered my grandma telling us we weren’t supposed to go on it. We started down the hill, our neighbors had bikes, me and my brother didn’t. Luke stumbled a little, my heart dropped, but he got back on fine. It was a steep hill, it took a while to get down. The neighbors had already made it to the bottom, Luke and I were almost there. We had almost reached the bottom and I had a sigh of relief that nothing went wrong, then I realized Luke wasn’t beside me anymore. My heart dropped.

“CRASH!” I looked up and Luke was on the ground unconscious. I ran over to him, he didn’t move. My heart started racing, my head was spinning, I didn’t know what to do. My grandma came outside, not knowing anything was wrong. I ran over to her, tears pouring down my face. She saw Luke on the ground and immediately asked what had happened. One of the neighbors rushed over to pick him up. He carried him over to my grandparents next door neighbor and he carried him inside. I was calling my parents, I was in tears, my heart was racing and everything seemed to happen so fast. The

paramedics got there not long after my parents did, Luke had finally woken up I felt a little bit of relief. They said Luke would be fine because there wasn’t any swelling, but my mom insisted they bring him to the hospital. Me and my dad were speeding behind the ambulance, my heart was still pounding, I wondered what was going to happen.

We got to the hospital and they did a ton of scans on Luke. As this was going on, I was calling everyone in my contacts telling them what had happened, all of them couldn’t believe it and were sending their prayers. We soon found out that Luke had gotten a concussion, his skull was cracked and they were making sure his brain wouldn’t start bleeding. I was sitting in a chair on the other side of the curtain, I didn’t know what to do other than just sit there. The paramedics that said he would be fine came in many times and apologized because of their mistake. We stayed there for a few hours and then my dad and I left. My mom stayed the night with my brother at the hospital. On the car ride home I was really nervous about what would happen to my brother, but my dad reassured me everything would be ok. The doctors had said if Luke’s brain would have bled, they would have had to do surgery and give him stitches in his head. We were almost home and the song “Stitches” by Shawn Mendez came on. I immediately turned off the radio.

To this day I still can’t listen to that song without getting a sick feeling in my stomach. I learned that when everything is going great, the littlest of things can result in a bad ending. This event impacted me because to this day I’m always more careful when my brother rides a bike, or a scooter.

Laney Zius  
7th Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Beth Taylor

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Airglider*

“And your sure I won’t die?”

“I can’t guarantee it.”

“Wow, Lou, really persuading.”

I can barely see her roll her eyes in the darkness. Even though the city lights flood the streets, Lou picked a building roof so high the light couldn’t touch us. I look off the edge to see a rushing river of golden light swirling through the haze of traffic. I stumble back, a giant stone plummeting into my stomach.

“What? Scared?” Lou taunts. Then she sees the hollow fear in my eyes. “Hey, Soph, it’ll be okay. Nobody’s ever died or anything.”

“Yeah.”

“How about I do it with you?”

“Yeah.” She grabs my arms and walks me toward the edge of the building. My stomach contracts as I stare down at the ground a hundred feet below me. Lou clutches my hand hard enough, sending the message that I can’t back down now. I gulp a gallon of air down my throat. I’ve seen many teens in my family do this. They all say it was easy. This doesn’t look any easier than making a time machine.

“We go on the count of three,” I steady my shivering knees, “One,” I push the hair out of my face with my free hand and tuck it behind my ear. “Two,” I stare down at the ground like a mouse stares at a cat’s maw, waiting in terrible silence for the end. Fear grips me. “Three.” I don’t think. I jump. A small part of me thinks I wonder what my body will look like when it hits the ground.

We rush at the ground, our clothes flowing up like a malfunctioning parachute. I desperately wish it would work. That a wave of fabric would rocket toward the stars and spare me of my fear.

“Concentrate!” Lou yells over the wind, barely registering as a whisper, “Don’t let fear control you!”

Oh, but it does. Every inch of me is wrapped in the chains of my terror. I squeeze my eyes shut, hoping the nightmare will end, that I’ll wake up in my bed on 4th Avenue, not careening towards Earth.

I hear a faint whooshing sound to my left. I look up through my tears to see Lou soaring above, huge metallic wings sprouting from her shoulder blades. I realize that I’ve never seen Lou’s wings before.

Focus. Breathe. Manipulate the wind. Those things would sound so easy if I wasn’t falling. Focus. Breathe. Manipulate the wind. I shift myself into the skydiver position. Focus. I close my eyes and feel the wind rushing around me, running over my face and encompassing my body. I breathe in and out, the night gale running through my body. Breathe. I am an air glider. I manipulate the wind.

Suddenly, I feel something erupt from my shoulder blades and I glide upward to the moon. I move my arms to keep fluttering subconsciously, like it was as simple as breathing. I’m filled with adrenaline. I look over to Lou, who’s beaming at me. I spiral backward and she follows me. We swoop around buildings and barrel at the ground before coming up at the last second. My wings light up

## 7th Grade Prose

the reflection in the window glass, the silver  
moon glimmering brilliantly in the metallic  
folds.

Meg Finger

7th Grade

Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts

Mary LeDoux

# 7th Grade Prose

## *Prologue*

I stood atop the tallest tower, wondering how this could be. The dark masses that were the animals that were still alive moved in the distance, or at least that's what they say. How should I know? I was just a guard atop a watchtower, watching over a now ruined world, or so we thought.

I was always so close to hitting the alarm button, I was always so scared that something would jump out of the darkness at any moment. "RING!" My time to watch was over, now I could return home and get some shut eye before morning, or what we called morning in this ruined Earth.

I woke in the morning and ate what little I could spare, anyone could spare really. It was just a granola bar made of disgusting processed food and probably had dirt in it, but I didn't care, anything was good. I looked at the time and jumped, I was almost late. After climbing the rusty ladder up to the tower and getting slapped by the man who was on watch, I settled into my post for the next four hours.

There, in the corner of my vision, I had seen something move just barely. I shook myself awake and looked that way and almost fainted, there climbing the tower were thousands of spiders. These I could immediately tell were the "new" kind, the ones that had broken out of a lab and were smarter than normal, had stronger webs and each one had double the amount of venom a black widow would have. The man of the other tower fell down screaming until he could no more, the flesh falling from his bones. The creatures began to leave, but not before a man wasted a bullet trying to shoot one.

After that excitement, I realized my time was

almost up and began to pack the few things that we were allowed to take, and had.

"Oi!" shouted a friendly voice behind me. I turned around trying my best not to smile, but it was hard not to.

Standing there was my friend, Jacob. Jacob tended to have a friendly aura around him, everyone tended to be happier when he was around.

"Finally I can leave," I said in a bored voice. "Those mutant spiders attacked again, so be careful." Jacob laughed as I said this:

"Come on, me? Since when have I not been careful?" I shook my head, a slight smile appearing on my face as I patted him on the back and began to climb down the ladder. I headed towards the market. As I was walking, I saw many friendly faces and waved to most of them, yet no words were spoken. When I reached the Market, I went over to the man selling meat bars (Gross, right?) and put some money on the three planks of rotten wood that made up the table. Once I had my food, I went back home and fed my snake before making it bite through some wax paper so the venom fell into the cup below.

"No,no,no,no,no," I said as I tripped over a lump in the floor, spilling the venom. Some people had a special job to get venom from snakes to create anti-venom for all the snake bites. After cleaning up the mess, I walked into my eleven by ten-foot room. The bed was attached to the wall and there was a very small amount of space above for storage. My bed was rock hard with barely any warmth, but it was still great to return after a long day and lay down. As I drifted off, I dreamed of blue skies and green grass with dogs barking in the background.

## 7th Grade Prose

I walked into the disgusting dark air in which you could never tell if it was day or night, the sky was mostly just dark. I walked through the market where a crowd had gathered. I attempted to push past everyone to get a better view, but there were just too many people in the way. "Hey," I asked a man, "what's going on?"

"From what I've heard, one of those men they sent out to see if there were any other settlements just returned," replied the man. I really didn't care for this news, I was sure that there was nothing out there. Because I was walking away, I missed the man say:

"I found a healthy plant, green and all, do you know what this means! We might be saved!" Of course, I didn't hear that, so I was in for quite a surprise.

### Chapter 1

Something was wrong. I sniffed the air. I inhaled. Nothing. I strained my ears. There it was! Absolutely nothing, not even the sound of a man walking down the dark dusty musty and crusty road. I probed my ear as I got up, wondering if I had gone deaf, but I could hear my foot as it hit the old rotten wood floor, which was a relief. This also caused another problem, why was there no sound from the outside?

I packed my normal supplies and nibbled at some food, but I was really looking to see where everyone had gone.

As I left my house, more of a large shed really, I looked around and saw not a single person. I walked around but after a bit I panicked and dropped my stuff as I ran down the road, shouting out random people's names, some

made up:

"Jim, John, Josh, Jeff," I shouted, saying any names. A man appeared at the end of the road and turned the corner.

Luke Boike  
7th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet  
Sarah Andrews

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

Once the campsite was ready, Brandon and I decided to gather some more fire wood in the forest. It would be getting dark soon, and we would need to keep warm. We walked for what must have been an hour. When we finally realized that it was getting too dark, a terrifying thought struck us.

We didn't know the way back...we tried to retrace our steps. Of course, our luck, it started to rain. Our footprints slowly washed away. The terrifying thought struck us that we would not find our way back. The rain was getting harder and it became difficult to see the path in front of us. The leaves rustled behind us. I turned around and nothing was there.

“What was that noise?” I asked Brandon.

Brandon wasn't behind me anywhere. I began to wonder back the way from where we had started. Suddenly, I almost tripped over something.

My foot hit the ground with a thud to catch myself. I wondered what had tripped me- it was Brandon's shoe.

I knew I was going the right way.

I kept on walking and suddenly I heard a growl from the side of my path.

“Brandon?” I hoped that it was my friend.

Instantly, a bear began to run at me. I had no idea what to do. I began to run and looked for a tree to climb. The bear caught up to me and before I knew it, I was caught. I met the same fate as Brandon.

Addilei Buttram

7th Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet

Sarah Andrews

## 7th Grade Prose

### *The Unsafe Pool*

I am walking to the pool. I hope nobody is there. It was hard being there with people there because they hurt my feelings because of my size. It is not my fault I'm big on the outside, I just have a big heart that fills up the space. At least that's what my mama always told me.

I'm kind hearted to everyone. Even the ones that are mean to me. I hate that I'm big. I always have. I tried to change things but they never ever worked out how I wanted them. I started a diet but it didn't work. There was not enough food for a girl like me. I tried starving myself but that didn't work because I became really sick and my stomach really hurt. I see the pool gate. I get my key ready and I twist the key around then it finally lets me in. My gut tightens up when I see people from my school everywhere! In the corner of my eye I see my best friend talking to a random guy. She is giggling, laughing, and twirling her hair. I walk over to her but Max Conner gets in my way.

He says to everyone "Hey guys, Whale is here today. Make sure you watch out because she will make sure you float far away."

My best friend is looking at Max. She walks over but very slowly, please don't embarrass me.

"Maybe you should watch out." She runs towards him and shoves him into the pool. He screams like a little girl.

"I said you should have watched out." She starts laughing.

She is walking towards me. I look in shock, I know because I see Casey's sunglasses.

"Casey, what were you thinking?" I asked

"I was just standing up for my best friend. I couldn't let you be by yourself." She replied. This is why she is my best friend. She is always there for me and never lets people get what they want. I take off my coverup and get a float and relax in the pool. Then Max swims underneath me and flips me over. I came right up. Since I was a swimmer. Casey jumps in and starts dunking Max's head in and out of the water. He yells "Casey STOP."

"No, unless you stop harassing my best friend."

"Fine, fine. Okay."

I see his fingers crossed behind his back. She lets him go.

"I never promised and I crossed my fingers." He said.

"You are so childish, grow up instead of being a little baby like your mommy told you to be. Casey gets out and I follow. My hair is drenched so I put a towel in my hair and put my cover back on.

"Thanks. You didn't have to do that. I was fine on my own." She opens the gate and we leave for my house.

"I know. I wanted to do it, he deserved that."

"Meet at my house?"

"Yeah let me go get changed."

Mary McKenna Holland  
7th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet  
Sarah Andrews

## 7th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

It was a bright sunny morning, the sun's golden-yellow beam shone through Xander's blinds. The birds tweeted outside his window, sitting in a handcrafted birdhouse that probably the last house owners left behind when they moved. His alarm clock rang suddenly.

"Honey! Wake up! Your alarm has been ringing for the past ten minutes!" says his mother. Bursting into his room.

"Hey, wake up!" she says, ripping the covers off his small, frail body. Xander finally opens his eyes to his mother, dressed in her silky blue robe. His mother was a wizard and always dressed in blue because of her wizard type.

"Huh...?" Xander questions, still on his morning high,

"Xander honey, you'll be late to school"

"That's right! It was the first day of Phantom High!" Xander thought.

Xander shot up from his bed and rushed to the bathroom. He quickly brushed his soft, fluffy brown hair, brushed his teeth, washed his face, then got dressed. He gathered his stuff and stuffed it in his bag. He looked at the time, he still had about 10 minutes left until the... bus came? This was a magic school so there was no expecting what would happen. Full of different mythical creatures such as Werewolves, Elves, Dragons, Sirens, Vampires, and Wizards. Xander falls under that category, but he isn't as powerful as you think. He didn't know any spells, the best he could do was telekinesis. His great-grandfather was the most powerful wizard of all the land until he was poisoned by his best friend, but he was never caught and brought to justice.

Suddenly, a hovering bus pulled up in front of his house.

"Bye Mom! I love you!" Xander calls out, but just before he heads out the door, his mom grabs his shoulder.

"Mom, what is it? I need to go..."

"Xander, I know you've always wanted to go to this school since you were a kid, and you'll be gone for a long time. So, I want to give you this," His Mother handed him an old-timey, thick book with a glimmering hardcover. "It was your grandfather before he passed on. I've already mastered every spell in the book, so I want you to have it." Xander grabs the book from her hand and looks into the giant, red gem on the cover of the book.

Suddenly he feels a rush of feelings and grabs his chest.

"Honey, are you okay?" his mother questions

"Yeah I'm fine," he holsters the book under his shoulder, "Thanks mom, I'll see you next summer!" he says rushing to the bus door. He enters onto the bus, It's full of other mythical teens as him. He walks down the aisle into an empty seat and sits his backpack down next to him. He watches his mother walk back into their house, she smiles at him and shuts the door behind her.

The bus starts to take off into the distance and a portal opens for the bus to enter. They traveled through different universes, Xander starts to think. He's always been an introverted kid, he barely had any friends, but his friendships never last long. He always liked to be in his own bubble. People found him different and weird, but no one really got the chance to get to know him better. He just

## 7th Grade Prose

wishes people wouldn't judge him the way they do, especially since he's out. Xander starts to slip into a sleep but then...

"Alright kiddos, get outta here!" The bus driver blubbers flinging his tentacles around.

Everyone grabs their bags and starts exiting the bus.

"Hey dude, get up, we gotta go!"

Huh? Xander then awakes to an obsidian haired male with golden eyes that could snipe anyone down to their knees.

"Oh, yeah sorry." Xander says, grabbing his bag and the book.

The black-haired male trails after him, stepping off the bus behind him. All the students gather in the plaza, Xander takes in his surroundings. There are 3 buildings that look like they're forming a semi-circle. In front of the school there's a fountain with a gargoyle statue at the top that's crouching and water pouring out his mouth. There was a mini garden around the fountain and white painted benches. The students gathered around the fountain waiting for instructions.

Xander sat down in one of the benches in the back. He starts to pull out his sketchbook and start to replicate the fountain.

"Hey there sleepyhead!" Xander looks in his peripheral vision and makes out the golden eyed male again.

"Hi again..." Xander awkwardly says.

"Mind if i sit next to you?" Golden Eyes says.

"Um... sure?" Xander moves his legs from the other space and Golden Eyes sits plops down

next to him. There's a bit of silence between them before Golden Eyes says something.

"I'm Amos," He says. "What's your name?" he says, reaching his hand out, expecting a handshake.

"You're really awkward you know?" Xander chuckles, "I'm Xander." He replies, shaking his hand. Suddenly the front doors burst open, everything went silent. A tall woman with a black shirt and flare jeans steps out onto the few steps that lead into the school. About six men in black suits stand in a diamond formation a few feet away from her with their hands behind their backs.

"Welcome Students! My name is Scarlet Andy and I am the founder of this precious school and your principal. I'm so very delighted to start a new school year with fresh faces and hopefully get to share as much school spirit with you all. Please refer to me and Principal Andy or Mrs. Andy. Now, I hope you all enjoy this school year and have the most fun you've ever had!"

The students cheer for a while but Mrs. Andy calms them down to say something else.

"If you all look at your devices that are being handed out to you, these are the official Phantom High portable phones especially made by our team. You all should have a number on the back of them, that determines your dorm room. If someone has the same number as you then that will be your roommate for the rest of the year unless you'd like a change. There will be pairs of two in each dorm room. Now if you'd all make your way to the building to your left and settle into your dorm. After that my men come to escort each floor to the auditorium to go over the rules and etiquette."

## 7th Grade Prose

Xander looks at the back of his “Phoenix Phone,” 4-5 is what it says.

Amos peeks over at Xander’s phone, “Looks like we’re right next to each other!”

“Nice...” Xander says, not sounding too enthusiastic.

“Too bad we couldn’t be roommates exactly but at least we’ll be neighbors! Well I’ll catch you later Xander!” Amos says while joining the crowd of students packing into the dorm building.

Xander sighs.

“Alright,” he thought while grabbing his stuff, “Time to find out what this school has in store for me.” He steps up the stairs without knowing what will happen next...

Ray Ward  
7th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet  
Sarah Andrews

## 7th Grade Prose

### *My Name*

My name means a hill in the valley. Often overlooked but openly giving comfort. Someone from New Jersey said my name meant grace and comfort. I don't think that's true because I'm very clumsy. My name is Australian. I've always loved their accents. My name is blue and orange and easy to say. My name is made of cotton. It's light and floats to the top of the room. My name is like a balloon. A yellow one. It sounds like laughing summer nights in June.

I got my name from both of my grandmothers. Half of each of their names, half of each their personalities? Maybe. My dad's mom was a wild child. Always getting into trouble when she was younger. She grew up and matured and eventually became an English teacher and wrote her own book. I'd love to do that someday. Write a book, not grow up.

I got the first half of my name from my mom's mom. She is strong and courageous and smart. I hope that I share all of those traits with her. When she was young, she escaped from the Korean War. She had 6 sisters, all different flowers in the same garden. I read that somewhere once. They left where they lived in South Korea on a train to go more south. I can't imagine having to live through that. It sounds like a movie or a book but it was her life. And here I am worrying about drama and stressing over schoolwork. The difference is almost funny.

I was born in the year of the Ox in the Chinese New Year Calendar. That should make me hardworking and confident. I am hard working, but sometimes I struggle with being confident. It's like going downstairs and thinking that there is one more step. But there isn't. I think it's there and I think I can do it. But then that

one more step, the step to confidence, isn't there. I'm going to work on that though. Seeing the last step as the last step and then being confident. At least I'm hardworking.

I love my name. I love the history behind it and the potential it gives me. I hope that one day I can have my Gia's creativeness and write my own book. I hope that one day I can be as strong as my Halmoni and just keep going when things get rough. I hope that I can eventually get confidence, like the brave ox. And I especially hope that I can make a positive impact in people's lives, because that's what people with my name are meant to do. I might have made that part up but you can't convince me that it's untrue.

Haelee Harris  
7th Grade  
Baylor School  
Henry Blue

## 7th Grade Prose

### *My Name*

People say my name reminds them of the beach. My name is the waves in the ocean. Sometimes crazy, and sometimes calm and soothing. The color I think of when I hear my name is red. Burning big and bright. When I hear my name, I am proud of it. I feel like my name is the longest name ever. My name is like someone's emotions. It can be annoying, it can make me happy, or sad to hear my name. My name is like someone living till One hundred. It's possible, but not likely.

I was named after one of the most important people in my life. My grandmother. People like to say she is fun to be around, funny, and kind. I wouldn't want to be named after anyone else. I love my name. It is so unique, and I share the same name with one of my favorite people in the whole world.

People say Pisces like to show their emotions and thoughts. I don't think I share emotions lots. I would say I share my thoughts. I think sharing my thoughts can sometimes ruin relationships for me and creates knots. People also say that Pisces put others before themselves. I like that people say that. I think its important to care for others.

I have a double name. The first part of my name means grace. Grace like peace. I like that the first part of my name means that. The second part of my name means candle maker. I don't think I relate to candle maker. I have never made a candle in my life. I know why it means candle maker, but I don't think it relates to me at all. I like the first meaning of my name better.

People always ask me if I would ever want to change my name. Personally, I have never meet someone with my name. I also like my name because I have endless nicknames. Ann, Annie,

Ac and many more. Ann Chandler is who I am. My name is what makes me. Ann Chandler suits me because it's my personality. Smart, funny, kind, athletic, and many other things. But my main personality is my name, Ann Chandler, and I would never want to change it.

Ann Chandler Williams  
7th Grade  
Baylor School  
Henry Blue

## 8th Grade Prose

### *A Letter of Truth and Healing*

I hate Alzheimer's disease. Some reasons why I hate this disease is because it can never go away. It just gets worse. Some people say there are ways to slow it down, but that still doesn't mean that it will go away. There is no cure. Most people only live three to eleven years after being diagnosed. No one should have to go through Alzheimer's disease. It is hard on the person, but to be honest, I feel like it's harder on the family and on their friends. The reason why I feel like it's harder on the family and the friends, is because you have to watch them slowly fade. They start forgetting memories, names, and etc. All you can do is try to help them remember things, and help them with life. Another reason why I hate Alzheimers is because you can get it if it's in your family history. I'm praying there will be a cure soon.

My Nana passed away this past year. She died from Alzheimer's disease. We lost a lot of who she was over the years, but we lost her physically on January 21, 2022. She was very special to me. I was adopted at the age of two. She was one of my caregivers while my parents were at work. We had so much fun together. One evening, while I was missing her, I thought about what all I would say, if she was sitting across from me. This letter helped me to work through my grief.

December 22, 2022

Dear Nana,

I can't believe how it's almost been a year without you. I miss you so very much, well not just me, we all miss you so much. I think about you. I have the sweatshirt that I bought you just before you died. I love that sweatshirt, it has your name on it and it's purple, your favorite color. Whenever we come to your house it's so

hard to realize you're not here. When I'm downstairs I remember we would take pictures beside the fireplace and we would take pictures on the stairs. Many things have changed since you haven't been here. I miss the old times. Whenever I see Papaw, I think of how you're not here with him and how it's so weird not ever saying, "Hi, Nana." I still remember all the good times we had together. I will never forget them. I remember when I was little, I would come over and stay with you and Papaw. I remember we would go on the golf cart and look at the alpacas, we would look at flowers, we would take pictures, and we would do word searches. I had so much fun. I think I took those memories for granted. I'm really sad you're not here this Christmas, but I'm glad you're in a way better place. I can't wait to see you! I know you probably think that's a while from now, and I think so too, but it will come sooner than we think. A few weeks ago I was cleaning and I found some puppy and butterfly stickers that you gave me a long time ago. I even do some of the word searches when I have time. I love wordsearches, it's all because of you. You taught me how to do them. So thank you, I don't think I ever said thank you for teaching me how to do word searches. The other day we went to a funeral for Kay's mother. It was at the same funeral home that we had yours. It reminded me of you. I didn't know Kay's mother. All I knew was that I was about to cry thinking about you. Just know I love you so very much and I will never ever forget you. You are and always will be in my heart.

Love your granddaughter,  
Elizabeth

Elizabeth Cooke  
8th Grade  
Grace Baptist Academy  
Shana Ivarson

## 8th Grade Prose

### *Doll Mary*

It all started with a dream. This particular dream wasn't like any other of the sort. That should have been my first red flag. My usual dreams are about food, naps, you know, the usual teenage things. But this one was different. My favorite doll in the whole world, Rosemary, had awakened into reality. It was a very slow process. First, it started with just basic moving around. Then by some waves and crawling. Until it got too far out of my control.

I awoke from the dream terrified, drenched in sweat. If I hadn't been so petrified by this dream, I would've been more concerned about me sweating. That was the type of girl I was. The girl with the hundreds of dollar girl dolls, hot pink bike with the streamers and basket. Those types of girls. I arose from my bed to check on Rosemary. Through each hall, with every second, my heart beat faster as I filled with worry. I hesitated as I was about to open the door, but knew I had to. My baby sister was in there. I opened the door slightly and saw the doll. It wasn't exactly where I had put it last, but at that exact moment, I didn't think anything of it.

As I was walking out of the bedroom, I scraped my foot against the nail and my foot started to bleed. "I told him to fix that!" I said as I sighed and walked to the washroom to cover it up. When I walked back to clean up the puddle of blood, suddenly it wasn't there anymore. "Weird" I whispered and walked back to my bedroom.

The next morning I woke up to the smell of my mom's delicious bacon. She always made the best food. I always wondered why she never made her own restaurant. "Morning Rose!" She said as she gestured her hand towards the nursery. "Could you please wake up Anna?" I

nodded my head and opened the door, still feeling anxious about last night. "Sih!" she called out. "Sih, look!" as she pointed to the doll. The doll was in her hands. I didn't want to freak her out, nor did I want the doll to know I was catching on if, she was really alive.

I carefully put the doll back into the pile of Anna's toys and walked out of the room. I desperately needed to tell mom about this, but how? I didn't want to freak her out, but what if it was just my imagination? "Mom?" I said nervously. "Hold on hun, I have to change Anna's Pull-Up." I felt very uneasy. What if this was just all in my head and nothing was really happening? I don't want to worry her for no reason. "I'm back Rose, now what was it that you were needing?" "Oh, umm it was nothing. I took care of it." I said, smiling. I gathered up my things for school and started walking towards the car.

Thoughts filled my mind while we were on the way to school. I was so anxious about this whole thing. As soon as we got there, I went to the one person I knew I could trust. Elsiana. She was the best person in the whole world. We met playing in the park, my teacher, Ms. Garcón had just sent me to get a bandaid for her. From then on, we just kind of connected.

"Elsiana!" I called out.

"Finally, It's about time you got here girl!"

"I need to tell you something.."

"Make it quick, I need to make it early to ask for some extra credit in math. Algebra is too hard." Word by word, eventually it all spilled out. The doll, the nightmare, every single detail.

"Hahaha! You're so funny, Rose. You almost had me there!"

## 8th Grade Prose

“Rose, I’m being serious.”

“Ok, ok. I’ll believe you’re little joke. Anyways, I have to go, Mom will absolutely kill me if I fail again.”

I guess I thought too highly of Elsiana. I guess it was sort of my fault though. I always play pranks on her.

As I was walking home from school, I suddenly got cold chills down my spine. I got so scared. Mostly because I would be home alone. I, unfortunately, didn't have anywhere else to go. So I had to face it and just go home. Although, it wasn't what I thought I would come home to.

“I miss you”

“I miss you”

“I miss you”

As this echoed down the hallways, I prayed and prayed it wasn't the doll. But I knew, if it was happening, it was going to happen. I turned the hall and surely, I was correct. Fear hit me so hard that I felt I was gonna pass out right then and there. I had to fight it off though. If I passed out, who knew what would happen to me?

“Hello? Is anyone there?”

“I’ve missed you, now I’m gonna make up for all the time we have missed together..”

That’s where I blacked out, and from there, things only escalated. I woke up in a forest. The one me and my sister always spent time in. But, Rosemary wasn’t in the forest with me. But, thankfully, my phone was still with me. I called my mom instantly. When she picked up, her voice was panicked.

“Rose! Rose! Oh my goodness! Please tell me your sister is with you!”

I could tell she was crying over the phone. I needed to know what happened and started to run home.

“I’m not with her, mom what happened?”

“ I- I’m not sure! I came home and put her in her nursery and she was gone!

Suddenly, I tripped over my shoelace and fell into a leaf pile. Just to find my sister’s shoes, with a note..

“You should have spent more time with me...”  
(XOXO, Rosemary.)

Kristen Garay  
8th Grade  
East Ridge Middle School  
Audrey Laurell and Landry Smith

## 8th Grade Prose

### *Dear World*

Dear World, why do we hurt each other? Why do we have to tear others down at the first chance we get? Is it to make ourselves feel better? Does looking at someone else and immediately noticing their flaws and all the things you have better than them make you feel better? Does looking at a person with different shoes than you and telling yourself that yours are better boost your ego? What happened to compliments? What about noticing people's beauty, and their personality rather than judging people on the negativities we see? Let's compliment people. Let them know they are seen, and we think they are beautiful.

Dear World, why can't we leave it better than we found it? Why do we have to hold the self-destruct button and leave a trail? We litter, pollute, we don't recycle. Let's think of the future, our kids, their kids, what earth will they get to have? Will it be dirty, left in a mess for someone to clean later? Let's leave it better than we found it.

Dear World, Why can't we look beyond our country, our continent, to other places? Places calling for help. Places with oppression, despotism, and harsh realities. Why can't we be the shoulder they need? The voice when others have lost theirs. Why can't we listen—listen to their needs, their calls for help, their requests. Let's be the shoulder, the listening ears. Let's be the people that are ready to help when they are needed. Let's look beyond our small communities. Let's look towards the world. Let's make an impact. An Impact to make even just one person's life a little better that day. Let's look beyond, dig deeper, and be the help people need.

Dear World, what if one day all of the goals I

just listed were met. What if we built each other up, took care of our home, and looked beyond ourselves and our communities, to a bigger world and offered a shoulder. I imagine this world could be a pretty great place. A place where people are welcomed, wanted, thought of, taken care of, stable, and so much more. So let's try to get there, let's make this potential world happen.

Abraham Lincoln once said "The most reliable way to predict the future is to create it." Just like Abraham Lincoln says, we shouldn't wait to see how things will turn out, we can always be working to ensure our future is better than the present and the past. So my challenge for us is to think of the future, Think of our children and their children, what world will they get to live in?. We need to think of others, the people who can help us make this world better, and think of earth. The place we get to call home, and take care of it. So one day, it can be a better place.

Megan Lewis

8th Grade

Chattanooga Christian School

Christy Piersant

## 8th Grade Prose

### *The Letter*

I got off the bus after school like any other day. I checked the mail as the big yellow school bus, #13, skirted off down the street that connected my house to the main road. As I was shifting through the mail, under all of the bills and unpaid speeding tickets, there lay an envelope. A lime green envelope now sat at the top of the pile of other mail. It was covered in little gold stars and hearts. I turned it around to the front to see to whom it was addressed, and to my surprise, it read, "To Dillion Astor. 30527 Muir Ct. Temecula, CA 92563" It was addressed to me.

Never before in my 14 years of life had I ever received anything in the mail. I quickly shut the mailbox and scurried inside. I called out to my mother, but of course, there was no reply. I went into the kitchen to set down the other mail on the glossy wood counters. I found a fluorescent yellow sticky note in the small white fridge next to the countertop.

*Be back soon dear. I'm just stopping by the store to pick up some groceries. I left you some money to order pizza in case I'm not home in time for dinner. Be sure to get to bed on time.*

*I love you.*

There were 20 dollars next to the note that she left me to buy pizza. I sighed heavily knowing that she wasn't at the store getting groceries, she was probably out shopping for clothes, having the time of her life and forgetting that I was even excited. But nothing, not even my crazy mother, could stop me from opening the letter. I ran down the dark hall and up the stairs to my bedroom.

There was little to no natural light in the room and all that was in there was a lousy frail

wooden desk and a twin-sized mattress on the floor that was covered with a thin navy blue blanket. I sat down at the desk, in my small child-sized school chair, and prepared myself to open the letter. I couldn't stand the suspense, I tore open the envelope with no regard for the wax seal.

I skimmed the letter frantically. It was a short note, only three sentences long. My excitement slowly started to disappear as the words came into focus. It was nothing like I had ever expected. The golden cursive letters were not easy to read. I reread the letter multiple times trying to comprehend the words. The three sentences floated around the page like an elaborate riddle that I could not find the answer for.

Finally, it came to me. This wasn't English, but a code. The words so elaborately placed it would be hard to catch on. At the bottom of the letter, there was the key to the code, "'A' left one". That meant that the letter, A, would be shifted to the left by one. So A would be Z and Z would be Y, so on and so forth. It came to me pretty fast as I started to decode the complicated words.

I finally had the final message. I read it slowly and carefully, not skipping over a single word. The final letter read, "You are reading this for a reason, you were able to decode a message. I hope you have found our game fun, there are plenty more games to come. Just text 'I completed the first game' to, +1 951-555-8204."

All the suspense that had led up to me reading this letter only resulted in a lame game. I tossed the letter aside without a second thought and began doing my homework. I was frustrated so getting my work done quickly and efficiently wasn't easy. I tried to concentrate on my homework, but I couldn't. Not having the

## 8th Grade Prose

closure I needed was eating me up. I finally decided to text the number on the letter; I knew that if I didn't I would never be able to get all my work done.

I was back downstairs in a flash, letter in hand, I picked up my phone from the counter top, I put in the number, whispering to myself all of the digits, "951. 555. 8204." I double checked that the number was inputted correctly. I typed out the words, 'I completed the first game'. Before I sent the text, my head filled with thousands of questions like, Who even am I about to text? How did they know my name? Will they be able to track my phone if I send this text? Am I making the right choice? How do they know where I live? That one stuck out the most in my head.

How was I going to be sure that I'm not texting some creep who is going to track my phone? They already knew my address though, which is the most concerning part. I was filled with confusion and concern for my own safety. Now realizing all these things made me no longer want to send the message. I thought about the pros and cons of the situation, to no surprise, the cons outweigh the pros. I decided against sending the message, I left the message in the text box in case I wanted to send it later. I went back upstairs to complete my homework and to completely forget about the letter.

A long time passed, and the thought of the letter was gone from my head. Later that night, my mom came home and told me to check my phone. I didn't think much of it and went downstairs to grab my phone. To my horror, the same number that had been on the letter had left me a message. A chill crawled up my spine. The message read, "Dillion Astor, I know you solved the puzzle. You now have two days to respond. Or else."

The End

Larissa Wolfe

8th Grade

East Hamilton Middle School

Melissa Smith

## 8th Grade Prose

### *Arbeit Macht Frei*

My family and I did nothing wrong. All I can remember is one day, everything was normal. Abba had his business, and my two brothers and I could go to school. But the next day, everything changed.

My family and I were Jews during what later came to be known as World War Two. No one ever thought there was anything wrong with being Jews until the Nazis came. We had to wear the Star of David on all our clothes to signify that we were Jews. Then, we couldn't go to most places, and they burned down Father's business and other Jewish companies. Life went on like this for a few months, and then they began to take other Jews and send them far, far away to places unknown. So, my family and I hid. We hid for eleven months until we were found. The Nazis took thirteen-year-old me and my thirty-year-old Mother and separated us from our thirty-year-old Father and twin eight-year-old brothers. Before he left, Father looked back at me and said: "Be brave Naomi." My brothers only looked back at me with huge, frightened eyes. We never heard from them again.

Mother and I were thrown on a stinky train car filled to the brim with other women and girl Jews. We didn't have much to eat or drink, and they kept us in that train car for an unknown time. I don't recall much of the train trip, as I was passed out for most of it. When we arrived, the Nazis pushed us through a barbed wire gate maze with twists and turns. As we continued on our trail, I saw a small building about the size of our train car up ahead and thought that that building must be where we were going. Before entering the building, I saw a sign that read: Arbeit Macht Frei. In the room, our heads were shaved, we got old clothes, and a number was tattooed on my arm.

Mother was at this place called Auschwitz for thirteen days. I was there for eighteen. During those two weeks before Mother left, we worked. All day, every day. Mostly, we dug holes. Whenever we dug the holes, I could always see smoke coming out of the chimney from a building only a handful were allowed in. I also noticed that none of those people ever came out, but I wasn't allowed to ask questions or I'd be beaten, like many of the women and girls who asked questions, was. We were given food, but there was very little of it. We all grew to be extremely skinny. Some died from a lack of food. It was also January, so it was very frigid. Some died from this cold weather while others got diseases.

Around the end of the first week, the atrocious Nazi guards began to select a couple of women to be marched away to never return. More and more were selected each day. I had heard rumors that they were finally letting us go free and we now had a spark of hope. When Mother was selected to go, she looked back at me and said, "I'll come and find you. I promise." She then turned to the nearest guard, pointed at me, and said "That's my daughter. Please be sure that she stays safe."

The guard just stared at her, then at me, and did not respond. I cried for four days and the majority of a fifth, until the same guard that Mother talked to, kneeled, looked me in the eyes, and said, "I bet you miss your mother huh?" I just nodded my head, unable to speak. "Well, she's finally free and home. My name is Peter Schmidt. You can just call me Mr. Peter. If you come with me, I can take you to her." He smiled and offered his hand to me. Not having any other choice, I took it. He led me and a couple of other women and girls through the snow. An older woman fell, and several other women tried to help her up. Mr. Peter yelled at them to leave her and press on. When we came

## 8th Grade Prose

to a large building with no windows and a singular padlocked door, Mr. Peter crouched down next to me again and said, “Your mother is in there. I promise. I’m going to have to let you go now. Go on in there with these other women, and you’ll find her there.”

He pointed to the door. I ran to the padlocked door and knocked as hard as a thirteen-year-old could. The door swung open and I ran inside. All of the other women followed. Suddenly the door slammed shut and a guard began to bark orders. “We’re going to give you Jews a nice, long shower, then send you home.” The women and girls breathed sighs of relief and began to get undressed. I too, undressed, hoping to spot Mother in the crowd.

When we were all undressed, the guard opened another sealed door and pushed us all inside. The next sound I heard was the door slamming and a strange squeak sound as if gas was filling the room. At once, I was having trouble breathing. I croaked, “Ima?” (which I sometimes called her), and tried to find her. Suddenly, I could no longer move and collapsed on the floor.

Before all the inevitable darkness overcame me, I heard Mr. Peter’s voice outside the door. He opened the door, just a smidge, and said: “Arbeit Macht Frei. Work makes you free.” Instantly, I realized the importance of what he just said, and a single tear rolled down my cheek, seconds before I was swallowed up by the dark.

Brenna Crittenden  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Melissa Smith

## 8th Grade Prose

### *Untitled*

The frigid air glazed over my weary skin. I stand at the top of the Empire State Building, I can't think correctly. A few people surround me, gazing at the sight of New York at night. The stabbing memories from today follow me carelessly. Before I tell you my story there are 3 important facts you need to know about me; I don't have many friends, I eat salads with ketchup, and I love reading.

Let's start from the beginning:

"Thomas!" I feel a hand close around my wrist, pulling me away. I turn around to see the one and only, Maelyn. My parents died when I was young and my whole life I've been changing foster homes all over the state. She was the only person who stayed by my side through all of it. Her eyes look into mine, they're upturned and the color of soft ebony with specks of gold. Her raven hair is long and silky, strategically curled to capture the glances of many people. "C'mon let's go to the library."

Maelyn leads me out of the halls, pushing people in order to get to her settled destination. I know what you're thinking. A boy, and a girl fall in love and maybe have a kid named Aiden and Sophia, but Maelyn and I aren't like that. We've known each other way too long and she's not my type. Once we arrive in the library, we spot the librarian glaring at us.

"She probably thinks we're gonna put honey all over the books like the seniors last year." I whisper over to Maelyn sharing a laugh. The former seniors broke into the school at night and sprinkled a little bit of honey on every single book in the library for their senior prank. Instead of the librarian stomping over to yell at us for being a disappointment to the school and to her precious books, she simply smiled at

us. It wasn't a soft, and warm smile, it was more of a sharp, and creepy smile.

"Whoa. What was that about?" Mae asks, noticing the same thing. I shrug and start walking towards the fantasy section, parting ways with Mae. As I skim through the books I notice something quite unique between one of them. I pull it out and study the cover. It had a thin, golden spine with no title, no author, nothing. As I was about to open it the librarian somehow appeared behind me.

"Terribly sorry dear. I must have misplaced my records book. I'll be taking that," She snatches the book and stares at me. Her eyes are unsettling sapphires that pierce through your own. Hypothetically she looks like she's like 100 years old even though I know I'm kidding. "Where's that friend of yours? Maelyn? Is it?" I stand there speechless.

"How do you know her name?" I backed up against the bookshelf about to make a run for it. I don't recall ever saying Maelyn's name out loud to her before.

She stutters for words. "O-oh um I've heard it around." It makes sense, Mae is actually pretty popular at school. Everything I'm not. Maelyn walks up to us with a confused look.

"Hey, did you find anything?" She asks me, keeping her eyes on the librarian. I shake my head. We start walking away when I feel something touch my arm. I swing behind me to see the librarian with the golden book open, touching Mae and me. We look at her, thinking she's a maniac. Then we see a bright golden glow form around us. Everything goes dark.

I woke up abruptly. I look around at the beige surroundings. The first thing I try to find is Maelyn.

## 8th Grade Prose

“Mae!?” I called out. I start yelling as loud as I can, though my voice level stays the same. Suddenly I see something running to me. I thought it was Maelyn, but the figure became a dragon?

The dragon looked like a drawing. It was green and started to breathe fire! I start running when I see Maelyn riding on the dragon.

“Thomas!” She yells out. My mouth drops open. “In here we can create whatever you can imagine!” I’m speechless.

“What do you mean? We have to get out of here. What if we’re stuck here forever?” She looks at me as if I was speaking a different language.

“Are you crazy?” She jumps off the dragon and it flies away.

“I was never sane.” I mumbled.

“Why would you want to leave? We can have everything.” I start to panic. What is with her? I don’t waste time. I look around and see a rip in a part of a page. This is our escape.

“C’mon! Let’s go Mae!” I yank on her and pull her to the exit. She fights me and once we get there she pulls away.

“I’m not leaving Thomas, I can have everything.” She pushes me into the rip and I see her running away smiling. I can’t believe she did that. Everything went dark again.

When I wake up I appear in the same library and it’s after dark. I spot the same librarian stamping books at the front. I run up to her and grab her collar.

“What did you do to Maelyn!?” I spit out. She

just simply smiles.

“I didn’t do anything to her. She did it to herself. She let herself get too greedy into the pages of her creation. She’s stuck there forever,” I stand there, unable to move. “I’m surprised you got out. No one has before. Looks like you’re all alone.”

I ran out of the school building as fast as I could. I just ran. This can’t be happening. It’s not real. I try to convince myself. I ran up the Empire State Building. The place we met. The frigid air glazed over my weary skin. I stand at the top of the Empire State Building, I can’t think correctly.

Maia Nakajima  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Mark Pace

## 8th Grade Prose

### *Sappho Fragment 102*

I want to be soft with her.

I want a life like freshly baked bread, tender and warm and protected and safe.

Like pastel yellow sundresses flowing off of her as she twirls in the meadow, the whispering streams of sunlight pouring down her brown face. Like the way she so carefully cradles the blossom in her palms and holds it up to me. It looks just like your eyes, she says.

Or like the feeling of her hand in mine, fingers intertwined as we sit in the blooming void of unsaid words. She hums to herself as she works on her drawing, the wispy lines forming the outline of a familiar face. I've always been awestruck by the ones who have such a gift; to make something so beautiful out of something so rudimentary.

I know all the reasons and all the ways this is foolish. Am I so short-sighted to not see how this will end? I know the role I have to fit. I keep my carefully curated defenses in order, checking them off as I push through this new world. I've had this plan since I was a child. She, in all her cheerful confidence and dream of simplicity, fits nowhere in it. As much as it pains me, I cannot afford this weakness. She's enough of a target as it is; with me, she'll only be hurt. I cannot protect her.

But how can I not yearn for a life so delicate, so exquisitely designed by her side when she smiles like that? When her mouth turns upward, her eyes light up and she laughs just as she always does? It's indescribable. She is the most gorgeous person I have ever met, and by far the kindest; why else would a person of her splendor spend a moment of her time with me?

If she can exist so brightly, so brilliantly proud and cheerful and soft, why can't I? If even I am worthy of her affection, does that not present a chance for me? A chance to shed these heavy defenses?

I am tired of this burden of caution. This is supposed to be a clean slate; perhaps the shields of yesterday can be folded away with the gossamer sheets of time. Perhaps it's time for me to bid goodbye to the cold fear that defined so much of my life.

Perhaps I can make room in my plan for her warm embraces, that smell so much like the honeysuckle-scented perfume she always recommends- the one that always comes in the too-small bottles that I hate. Maybe there's some room for the small patched rabbit that she named after that one Shakespeare character. He doesn't like me very much, but we can probably make amends.

Perhaps there's a gap I can fill with her voice, the quick words that often stumble into each other and the quick laughter that follows. Perhaps I can spend my entire life memorizing the folds of her smile, how her eyes squint together as she laughs.

Perhaps we can throw away the hours as we sit, side by side, just as we did in the field. Perhaps she would braid my hair again as I spoke about my newest project; I feel like she'll find it interesting. Maybe she'll agree. Perhaps I do not need to burn myself into the pages of history to be recognized by somebody. Perhaps existing with her will be enough to prove me worthy of her affection.

Perhaps the world is kinder than I used to think it was; maybe it's soft enough to carve out a space for the two of us, her and I.

## 8th Grade Prose

Perhaps.

But for now, I slump my head against the mess of papers scattered across my desk. It's time to accept that I will be making no headway on my homework.

Sweet mother, I cannot weave- slender  
Aphrodite has overcome me with longing for  
this girl.

Addie Lucas  
8th Grade  
Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts  
Mary LeDoux

# 10th Grade Prose

## *Untitled*

I never cared for holidays like Mother's Day or any other holiday that felt useless. My parents never got upset when I didn't gift them expensive presents, so there was no need to do much. Just a simple text to not make myself feel guilty was enough. But this year, I sat outside with my cat. I never thought of her as my child, but how emotional I was this day made me need to treat her as one.

She always tried to get out of the front door when it was warm and sunny. When I got home from school most days, I would let her. I loved watching her roll around on the hot concrete, getting little rocks caught in her fur. When I brushed them out, her soft hairs were so addicting that I had to grab her and hold her close.

On Mother's Day, when I held her close, I started thinking of the future. I was always aware she wouldn't make it as long as I could. I created a plan to help me cope with the next few years. She would make it until I graduated high school, at least long enough to get me through my first year of college. It was an efficient plan and was optimal for my complete happiness. She broke through my arms after a few seconds and continued rubbing against the rough ground.

My uncontrollable heartache over the thought of the future caused me to break down. I begged her to never leave me. I wouldn't be able to remain myself if I didn't have her lie next to me on my pillow as I cried. I feared my neighbors would walk out and see me crying to my carefree cat. I cared more about what could happen in ten years, so I stayed in the blanket of the sun. When she got bored and tried to run under a car, I grabbed her and cried into her fur while I walked into the privacy of my home.

Now I lie in bed with the cat I still believe is her from far away, scrolling through websites that ask me to pay hundreds of dollars to post a photo on Instagram, thinking of a plan to get through my first year of college.

I try to remember the last time I saw her, then hurt myself more when I realize I can't. I end up hating myself for making her want to leave, then hating everyone else for being stupid enough to leave the door open. I hate the numbers who call to say they saw a black cat in their backyard but don't take photos or give an address. I hate whoever tore down the poster I spent hours making with markers because my mom wouldn't take me to the library. I hate the family that could've selfishly taken her without thinking of the people who deserve her. I mostly hate myself for thinking I'd rather she survive on dead rats than have someone love her as I did.

Now she is just a character who appears in my dreams to tell me she became a star to protect me. I stupidly believe her while I stare at the night sky, expecting her to fly back.

Carolina Hightower  
10th Grade  
Red Bank High School  
Kelli Logue

## 10th Grade Prose

### *The Castle in the Covert*

Long had the man been traveling through the woods at an unsustainable pace that tired both him and his horse. Nevertheless, he had endeavored to keep it up since early in the morning when he had left the town. Now, it was barely past noon, but the color of the sky above suggested that it was nearly midnight, and the man had been anxiously watching the clouds gather above him. He certainly wasn't going to be able to make it all the way through the woods and on into the next town before the clouds decided to release their burdens on his head, and these nervous feelings were apparently also being picked up by his horse, who was beginning to prick his ears back and whinny.

All of a sudden, a thunder clap that sounded like a peal of uncanny laughter rang from the sky after a bolt of lightning appeared above the trees. The sudden sound frightened the man's horse, who, like a cat sprayed with water, took off through the woods, the man clutching its mane in an effort to not tumble off. As the horse ran deeper and deeper into the woods, the trees began to thicken, and the man was having trouble avoiding all the tree limbs that seemed to be grasping at him from all sides. Out of nowhere, it seemed, a massive tree limb soon appeared stretched across the path that his horse was running along, unnoticed by the man in his frenzy of trying to keep his seat on the horse. The horse was able to lower its head slightly to clear the tree branch, but the man was not as fortunate. The limb hit him square on the forehead, knocking him off of his horse. The man lay on the ground, unconscious.

When the man awoke, he was drenched in rain water, with more still falling amid the thunder and lightning erupting from the sky. Where he was, he had not the slightest idea. Why he was

there was also a mystery. He reached up to the top of his head where there was a distinctly painful sensation. He felt a large, lumpy knot, but had no idea where that could have come from, either. As the rain began to fall harder, his heart began to race inside his chest.

"Oh, oh," the man wailed, "what will I do? I am clueless as to where I am and as of where I should go! If only—"

The man stopped short in this dialogue to himself. He frantically tried to stand up, but, finding that his head started to spin, changed his mind and decided to scramble across the ground in an effort to get as far away as possible from the bush he had been lying next to.

"Who's there?" he asked, in a strained and frantic voice.

He was sure that there was some movement coming from in or behind the bush, and he was certainly not in the mood for surprises.

Receiving no response in return, the man sat for a while where he was, panting, watching, and waiting. After what felt like an eternity of deafening silence, broken only by the patter of the rain drops, the man decided to make his way farther from the bush and hopefully toward some sort of shelter or help.

After traveling for hours, stopping every now and then to rest his spinning head, the man reached a spot where the trees were beginning to feel less dense. Of course, he had felt as though this was happening at many other different times during this journey, but this time he felt sure. He had felt absolutely sure of this all the other times, but he firmly believed that this was where he was going to make it out of the forest.

## 10th Grade Prose

Making his way around a bush, he soon found himself directly in front of a massive iron gate, decorated with curved metal designs and spires. Approaching slowly and peering cautiously through the bars, he found himself looking at an old stone mansion. Surrounded by dying trees on all sides save the one with the gate where the man was, the mansion, almost a castle, seemed to rise straight out of the middle of the forest. Maybe at one point the building could have been classified as grand, marvelous, and beautiful. Now, however, its stone walls were stained and dirty. Ivy was beginning to reign supreme over the fading majesty of the structure. The spires, pinnacles, and chimneys of the building reached to the heavens, but all windows were dark.

“Oh– Well– I suppose– Certainly?” the man said, shakily and in a rather high pitched voice, trying to figure how to react to this frighteningly strange mansion. “Certainly there is someone there who is willing to give a lost stranger some food and warmth? Or else no one will bother if I use the place as a shelter from this awful storm?”

The man put a hand out to one of the large, iron gates, trying to figure out how to get in but not expecting it to open. Nevertheless, the gate swung open, silent as the grave. As the man stepped onto the lawn, his head swam and the trees slowly seemed to begin to expand past the edge of the mansion’s grounds. As the man looked from the right to the left, the mansion sitting stately in front of him, more and more trees began to appear on either side. He swung his head rapidly back and forth, and the trees seemed to get closer and closer, eating away at the clearing. Panicking, the man started to run and his head began to throb more and more. If only he could reach the mansion before being engulfed by the trees! With a last burst of energy, feeling as though his head was about to

explode, the man collapsed on the steps of the mansion leading to the front door.

Laying on the threshold and banging on the giant, oak doors with his fist, the man began to yell. “Help! Someone! Anyone! The trees are coming!”

He reached up to grab the handle of the door, and the door slowly swung open, admitting him entrance to the mansion. He crawled inside, shut the door, and leaned back against it, panting.

“Hullo?” he whispered, into the darkness.

For a second, all was silence. The man could hear the rain pattering on the roof, falling also into puddles that carpeted parts of the mansion’s decaying floor. The man listened, waiting. For what, he knew not. Suddenly, a noise that sounded like a witch’s cackle rang through the hall he was in.

“Heeeee! Heee! Heeeelllllooooo!!!” shrieked the voice. The noise sent shivers down the man’s spine and vibrated through the musty air, threatening to bring the roof of the mansion down on his head. The man then thought that he heard footsteps treading lightly on the staircase leading down from the next floor.

Panting, groping for the handle of the door, the man tried to escape from the mansion that he had so willingly and thankfully entered just seconds ago. What wouldn’t he give to be back in the rainy woods, or even just to know why he was in this situation, alone? It was then that all went dark and silent, and the man fell to the floor.

Anna Clark

Grade: 10th Grade

Chattanooga School for the Liberal Arts

Jessica Wooten

# 10th Grade Prose

## *Papaw*

Papaw always smelled like he had been working on cars but it wasn't a bad smell. It was just his scent. He could make you laugh until your belly started hurting or til you couldn't breathe anymore. He had eyes that were like the water in Bora Bora. They were the prettiest blue you could've ever imagined. His nose was crooked. He broke it in high school and just never got it fixed. It was one of those things that just, would make you giggle or just smile. As soon he would pull into the driveway you knew he was here. You could hear his Harley rumbling as he turned in, then you would hear his groaning because he was tired of driving, then you would hear his footsteps coming up the stairs, then he would finally knock and open the door like he owned the place. In his mind he did. He would tell me to try and keep my momma in check but he knew me and her have the same mindset. We always have an opinion about something and don't care to share it or be brutally honest about it. Which we for sure got from him. Then after all's said and done, he'd hug you and squeeze you tight and tell you goodbye. His calls were the funniest thing ever. He could never figure out how to work his flip phone so he would call and see if I could help him. He always would say, "I know you know how to work these stupid phones." I miss the small bickers we would get into because I am a Georgia fan and he was a Tennessee fan. He thought it was wrong I lived in Tennessee but rooted for Georgia. To say I miss all the calls I would get from him, or the bickers about football, the hugs, or the talks about not caring what others think and just to tell them how it is, or how I need to keep momma in check would be an understatement. He was the strongest and toughest man I have ever met. He's what I look for in my future husband. The real definition of a man was Papaw.

Emma Cox  
10th Grade  
Boyd Buchanan School  
Temple Davis

# 10th Grade Prose

*Dear Dad*

Dear Dad,

You mean more to me than you will ever know. You make jokes whether it's the right time to or not, and you can't hear half the time if I don't talk loud enough. You push me harder than anyone else, but you do it out of love. I see you almost every day, and if you're out of town, we always call. You joke if I missed you, but we always know that I did. You're like the stump to my tree, the one that keeps me up and supports me no matter what. You're one of the hardest workers I've ever met, from being the first one in your family to go to college to always figuring out what's for dinner or what vacation we're going on this year. You do things for me that not many dads or any at all do for their sons and I take that for granted. Ever since I was a little kid, I've always wanted to be just like you, and that hasn't and never will change. You are my earthly hero and inspiration.

From, Your favorite son

Houston Hicks  
10th Grade  
Boyd Buchanan School  
Temple Davis

# 10th Grade Prose

## *Label*

Twin, son of, gift of God, that's the meaning of my name, my label. I go from place to place, I eat, drink, walk, sleep, and have emotions, but to people who don't know me well, I'm just a guy named Ty. If I were to be brought up in a conversation, assuming that they have an understanding of what I look like, they would picture me.

Peanut butter, sailboat, potato chip, Crayon, fishing rod, Coca-cola, desk, yarn, saltine cracker. All of these things have something in common, they're all signs, terms, or labels attached to things. Labels to identify what things are, and they do so effectively. Maybe someone pictured the items in the list when they saw the labels, but those labels aren't that object. I can call a chair, a chair, but what even is a chair anyway? Do chairs even really even exist, all they are, are atoms arranged in a certain formation, and when they are arranged that way, I label it as a chair. Those same atoms could be constructed into a table, though, I wouldn't label it as a chair anymore, nobody would know what I was talking about. So I would call it a table. If I individually chipped one atom away at a time from a chair, when would I stop and say, hey, that's not a chair anymore? Maybe I'd get to one leg left of the chair and I'd stop. Alright, let me add one atom back, is it a chair now?

Nobody thinks of me and thinks of twin, son of, or gift of God, maybe my parents think of the last one, but the point is, they think of my qualities, and that's what it boils down to. What do people think of when they hear a name? That's all a name is anyway, an identity, an indicator, a tag, a label.

Ty Mathis  
10th Grade  
Boyd Buchanan School  
Temple Davis

# 10th Grade Prose

## *A Road Trip To Remember*

Two weeks on bumpy roads. Sister, brother-in-law, 10-months-old, a dog, and me. A car, and a small 20-foot camper on the open road. Visited twelve states and seven-ish national parks. Driving around five hundred miles each day with the world under lockdown. Stop, eat, stretch, back on the road, repeat was the motto for the two weeks. We explored new states I haven't been to before, and had an amazing experience I will never forget. Mount Rushmore, my favorite stop on the way there, had lots and lots of stairs. Back on the road again. Halfway through the road trip we had a 4-day break in Spokane, Washington to visit family. We made new memories: cooking, catching up, hiking and swimming. Sad to go but excited for the journey back home another way. Five days left in the trip, we stopped at Grand Tetons National Park, it was magnificent with picture perfect views. I could spend days there but we had to continue the journey. On the way back home we stopped in Estes Park, Colorado. It was gorgeous with the tall, snow-capped mountains and the crisp air. A road trip that I will remember for a long time, all the laughing moments, all the crying ones.

Becca Wagner  
10th Grade  
Boyd Buchanan High School  
Temple Davis

# 10th Grade Prose

*Roscoe*

Cavapoochon. Roughly ten pounds. Not very intelligent at all. To be honest I have no idea what goes on inside his head. We've all kinda wondered that since the first day we got him. He spends most of his day running around chasing his toys and running into walls. He definitely isn't very smart. It's like he enjoys running into things with how much he does it. All you have to do is grab one of his toys and toss it near wall, and there he goes running full speed and doesn't decide to slow down until his nose is in the wall. And even when he tries to stop he slides all the way across the hardwood floor until the wall stops him. And then he turns around and picks up his toy and brings it right back to you with his tail wagging and ready to run into a wall again. And that's how he spends every day. Excited to wake up in the morning and run into things.

Logan Martin

10th Grade

Boyd Buchanan High School

Temple Davis

## 10th Grade Prose

### *Ruth and the Flames of Friendship*

The sun crept over the golden mountains as Ruth slowly opened her eyes and tumbled out of her leafy nest inside an old tire. With her pointy black nose she poked the brush. Turning over a small rock, she chomped down on a tasty centipede. Nearby a fox slinked towards her. At the sound of his swishing tail she rolled up into a tight prickly ball. The fox stopped and gently nosed her and walked past. A ways down her path a terrifying, grizzly bear was scratching his back on a rugged hickory. Before being seen Ruth scurried into a decaying log and waited for his lumbering foot steps to fade away. Ruth was very thirsty. It had not rained for nearly two months. Twigs snapped, the ground cracked and the sun burned. Ruth could smell the faint scent of smoke.

Later that day Ruth heard the alarming cry of Jasper the mockingbird and raced to the old oak. The center of the large tree was filled with the warm glow of many small candles. Jeremy the fox skipped in, along with Matilda the field mouse and Gordan the grizzly bear.

“Good afternoon,” squeaked Ruth, but no one heard her. After all the other creatures had entered Ruth waddled in and ducked into the shadows, hiding from all the commotion.

Inside Socrates the owl was perched on a ledge above everyone else. He ruffled his wings and released a loud hoot. All the animals settled down and shifted their gaze towards the owl.

“Welcome,” began Socrates, “just an hour ago I was informed of smoke rising nearby. Flames can now be seen on the northern horizon. It will soon reach our abode.” The tree erupted into an uproar, each individual having his own idea.

“Let’s build a wall!” shouted a muskrat.

“No! We should all hide in our holes!” from a

mole.

“Let’s fly to Blackberry Island!” commented a robin.

“Maybe we should build a trench by the river separating us from the flames.” peeped Ruth. Just as she had finished Gordan, not noticing her, stepped back, nearly crushing her. Terrified, Ruth raced back to her safe nest. Once there she began to whimper.

“Why can’t I be big like Gordan, fly high like Jasper, be clever like Jeremy, or be distinguished like Matilda?” she thought. “No one ever notices me.” She lay curled up in her nest and softly cried herself to sleep. What she didn’t know was that back at the great oak there was a little cricket clinging to the wall of the tree right behind her, also wanting to hide. He had heard her soft comment and passed it on. Soon it had reached Jeremy. He climbed up to Socrates’ roost and caught the crowd’s attention.

“It has been suggested” announced Jeremy, “we build a trench running between us and the flames.” An air of approval rippled through the crowd.

“All in favor say: “aye”” barked Jeremy.

“Aye!” responded the animals in unison. It was a good plan.

“Follow me!” shouted Gordan and they all followed him down to the river. They began to build a trench from the river into the woods. For hours they dug and the flames came closer. Finally the trench was finished. All the animals assembled on the edge of the river. It was now dark but as the flames got closer the forest was lit up as broad as daylight. The flames devoured everything in its path.

## 10th Grade Prose

Far away Ruth lay fast asleep in her nest. The smoke was thick and the flames merciless. Ruth opened her eyes. As soon as she saw the flames surrounding her she began to panic. She jumped out of her tire and scurried across the burning ground. All around her were orange flames and charred ground. Her paws hurt from being burned. She turned to the left and saw a hollow tree. She quickly hid inside, grateful to be out of harm's way. A few seconds later Ruth heard the sound of a cracking tree then all went dark. The tree next to her had fallen in front of her hiding place trapping her inside. She began to panic and started to dig as fast as she could trying to escape but she could not make a hole big enough between the roots and rocks for her to crawl through. All she did was create a draft through the tree. The heat and smoke became too much for her and she collapsed in the dirt.

Back at the river the sun began to rise. The forest was black as coal. Gordan, Matilda, and Jeremy began taking a census. They counted the moles, rabbits, mice, birds, shrew, and all the other animals. Everyone was present and accounted for except one. Where was Ruth? They went about frantically searching. They searched her home, but all they found was a melted pile of tar. This only distressed them more. Soon everyone in the area was searching. They looked in burrows and hollow stumps, turned over logs, and tossed piles of ash. Finally, just as they were beginning to lose hope. A small badger began to call, "I've found her! I've found her!" He stood in front of a fallen log and a hollow tree. With his keen nose he could smell her sweet scent within. The animals began to pull. They pulled and they shoved with all their might, and the tree began to move. Little by little it rolled out of the way and inside lay Ruth.

Gordon scooped her up in his great paws and

gently carried her to the river. There he ran cool water over her and she began to wake up. Ruth opened her eyes and gazed into Gordan's giant brown ones. Her first reaction was one of fear but it quickly faded as she saw the look of concern in his face and all the other animals of the woodland. All the animals around her began to shout and cheer because Ruth The One and Only hedgehog was alive. From that day on Ruth knew that she didn't have to be big, or clever, or fly, or prominent. She just had to be Ruth. The quiet, sweet, prickly, innovative Ruth.

Hannah Polino  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

## 10th Grade Prose

“Sixteen”

(Luna’s POV)

I could hear everything coming through a tunnel. But, what was funny, was that I couldn’t really feel anything. I never felt the gunshot in my leg except for the split second it took to hit me. I could hear Isabella saying my name, but I couldn’t see her. But I did see us getting ready to go to the party. I saw Isabella, my best friend, and I getting ready. I saw us driving there. I saw us stopping at school because I forgot something in my locker. I saw us running through the gym to take a shortcut, and I heard in my mind, a gunshot. I felt a bullet go through my leg at some point, I think. It’s funny. I can’t remember.

(Isabella’s POV)

I still zone out in class sometimes. “School shootings are really common nowadays, Mrs. White, our guidance counselor, says. “It’s common for 1 in 5 students to experience one in their lifetime.” She told me this last week. I walk out into the hallway in a daze-like state. “Hey Izzy,” Luna says. “Hi,” I said back. We walk in silence to our next class together. We don’t have to talk. She understands. I walk home from school silently because Luna takes the bus. It seems like I’ve been walking for a long time. Turns out I have. I look at my phone and realize it’s 5:30. I still haven’t made it home. Sometimes this happens. Ever since the shooting, I’ll be trying to go somewhere or do something and then I’ll just zone out. I see a bunch of missed calls from my mom. She’ll understand though. My dad won’t. He’ll be upset. But my mom will understand. She understands everything almost. It doesn’t seem like my dad understands anything. I hear a beeping from a car and a bunch of loud noises and a sound almost like the sound of a car swerving. And then I look up. And I feel like I woke up and I can breathe and everything’s real

for the first time in six months. And I run out of the way and race back home. Because, for the first time in six months, I think I’m gonna be okay. Maybe it did take a near car wreck. But I think I’ll be okay. It’s funny though because that car looked a lot like Luna’s.

(Luna’s POV)

I hear Mrs. Henderson’s voice break in through my thoughts. I actually used to be a really good student, or at least decent. But, ever since the shooting I’ve been having a lot of trouble focusing. It wasn’t severe, in fact, they told me I was lucky it wasn’t a lot worse than it was. I was only on crutches for a couple weeks and then I was fine. The school got over it after a couple days if I’m being honest. High school moves so fast. Honestly, I feel like I’ve barely moved since the day the shooting happened. I don’t know if that’s good or bad. “Luna!” Mrs. Henderson breaks in again. “Yes?” “I asked if you knew the answer to number 10?” “Oh. Um, no. I don’t.” It gets silent. I feel bad. The room is a bit awkward now but I really don’t know what to say. The same thing happens in almost every class period. No, I don’t know the answer to your question. Yes, I did actually do it, I just don’t really understand. No, I can’t just try. And it gets quiet again. The rest of the class goes by in a rush of confusion. I walk into the hallway, dazed, and getting shoved around by kids trying to get out of school as quickly as possible, maybe find their friends, maybe hurry to get their sports practices or games or events on time. I walk through the hallway, go to my locker, grab my things and I get on the bus. I go to the back of the bus and pull out my phone, pretending like I’m looking at something. I’m not. It’s not even on. But I don’t want to look as dumb as I feel. And I figure looking occupied is better than looking alone. Thankfully, my stop is only 30 minutes away. I get off at my stop and walk to my house. My mom isn’t home yet. My mom hasn’t been getting home until about

## 10th Grade Prose

8:30 the last couple of weeks. Her hours changed so I figure I have plenty of time to do whatever I want. And for some reason, I feel like driving around. So I get in the car and start driving. I don't even know where I'm going. I know before I even get in the car that it's probably not a good idea with the frame of mind I'm in. But I honestly don't care. I've probably been driving for about an hour, with the music blaring, with the windows down, only half watching the road, when I realize a person is crossing the road. I swerve like crazy and glance back and see Isabella. And then I pull over. And I take a deep breath. And I call her. Funnily enough, she didn't even know it was me. But we talk. For the first time in six months we really talk. And it feels like the weight of an elephant has been lifted off my chest. And I'm really good.

Isabella and I went to a basketball game tonight. In the gym. After I almost ran her over with my car two days ago, we went to a basketball game. And everything was okay. No one almost died. We cheered and had fun like normal highschoolers. It was almost like we were normal sixteen year olds.

Falon Rogers  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Prose

## *One Beat at a Time*

The curtains opened and the lights shone brightly, blinding me. I looked out into the dark auditorium. I glanced at Danny, whose sandy blonde hair refracted the light of the spotlight. His deep green eyes gave me a look of composure. All the nerves evaporated from my body; I felt at peace. I took a deep breath and we played our hearts out into the silence that blanketed the room. This performance was a result of a roller coaster of emotions. Let me take you back to the beginning.

*2 weeks ago.*

*I don't know why it's so hard for me to keep on time today. 1..and..2..and..3..and..4..and. Simple. I should be able to do this,* I thought as I watched the waving of the band director's hands. I glanced over at Danny, who was across the room blaring his trumpet. *I can't wait to go home today,* I thought. *Oh, here comes my part.* Yes! That was perfect. I listened as brass held out its high note and I felt the weight of all my stress lift off of my shoulders. Danny walked over as I was packing up.

"Only two weeks till the performance," Danny said.

"Yup," I responded as I was putting my mallets away, "I'm not too worried about it. Percussion has got pretty simple parts."

"Speak for yourself," he said, "How's being the lead percussionist going?"

"It's good," I said, zipping up my backpack.

I noticed Mr. Parker, our band director, heading over to us looking over one of the many sheets of music in his hands. I started walking towards the door trying to blend in with the crowd of

band kids filing out.

"Hey, Vincent, wait up!" he said as he pulled a paper from the stack.

I turned around slowly and Mr. Parker, with a focused look on his face, handed me a paper and declared: "I have decided the percussion section should have a solo in the performance. It shouldn't be hard. I have my utmost faith in you."

As he continued talking about the formalities and strange time signatures I glanced over at Danny, who looked just as surprised as I was.

"You got all that?" Mr. Parker asked.

"Yes, sir," I said, with slight hesitation.

"Great! I can't wait to see you perform," he finished as he patted me on the shoulder.

As he left I stood there, processing what had just happened. Danny came over and gave me a friendly punch to the shoulder.

"Look at you!" he said. "First year as lead percussion and you already got yourself a section solo!"

I shrugged as I examined the five-paged solo.

"This is great!" he said patting me on the back.

I glanced at him, as the weight of what I was just handed sunk in on me.

"I gotta go," I said abruptly, leaving Danny alone.

*1 week later...*

That week before the performance was

## 10th Grade Prose

probably one of the worst in my life. Every day, I barely ate, drank, or slept. I developed dark circles around my eyes and my grades started to plummet. My parents and friends clearly concerned tried to help me, but I just pushed them away. My brown curly hair became matted and my skin tanned from days of marching band grew lighter. My life turned gray. I felt nothing. I wasted that week alone in the band room in a creaky chair contemplating the solo. I tried hundreds of different ideas and methods to make it better. Dylan suggested more cymbals, Harper said we needed more marimba, and Drake said we needed to do more stick flips. But none of their suggestions brought it together.

On the Wednesday before the performance. I was in the band room playing different beats on the drum set. Trying to get my brain to put together something that could add the flare needed for this solo. I eventually gave up, plopped down on the floor, and laid my head in my hands. I must have dozed off because the next thing I remembered was a hand on my shoulder. I looked up to see the face of Danny showing a mix of concern and excitement; I felt a stab of guilt for pushing him away for these past weeks. I was so focused on the future I didn't take time in the present. I glimpsed over and saw his trumpet case in his hand.

"I know what will make you feel better," he said as he helped me up from the floor. I studied his face with curiosity as the weight of the solo rushed back to my shoulders. I contemplated just pushing him away again.

"Come on." he pleaded, "trust me."

"Okay," I said reluctantly, sitting down behind the drumset.

Danny started playing as I accompanied him.

We played some jazz and then switched to blues and then to pop, and finally some 80s rock to finish it off. As I played, the rush of happiness brought on by pure adrenaline revived me. The world went from gray to flooded with colors. I had almost forgotten what it was like to feel. Danny stopped for a second to catch his breath when a boulder shattered the door. Well, not a literal boulder, but something very close. Mr. Parker exploded into the band room panting. While he was composing himself, Danny gave me a look of pure bewilderment mixed with fear.

"Boys, you must play that for the solo! It was amazing!" He then looked at me with a face of slight shock as I still hadn't slept well in a number of days and my hair looked like I had just stuck my finger in an electrical outlet said, "Vincent, forget about the percussion ensemble solo, instead you and Danny will perform this masterpiece." He then left quickly but with a slight limp (probably due to the speed at which he came).

I looked at Danny who was still looking at the band door.

"Hey," I started, "I am so sorry for pushing you away, I should have just trusted you."

He waved his hand in a dismissive manner.

"That's what friends are for."

"Well," he continued, cracking his knuckles, "looks like we've got a lot of work to do."

Devin Elliott  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Prose

## A New Home

*Log 36: This is Dr. Von Askew. We just got word today of the destruction. I knew the Earth was on its last limb, but I never thought it was this bad. It's crazy to think that I'm one of the last humans to ever exist. We have begun to make our way to the third solar system that looks like it could be habitable. I just hope this is it, and we don't have to keep doing this. My stomach is starting to curl every time we try a new planet. The other two worlds we've been to have been complete duds. We arrived at the first one, and we immediately started getting pelted by ice the size of your head. Our ship was horrifically damaged by this because we didn't see it as we were landing. However, the second planet we visited was nicer. The only thing was that it had a large infestation of bacteria. The bacteria would eat our skin off our bodies, then continue to eat down to the bone. That is not a pleasurable experience. It's like the universe just keeps pushing us further and farther away, we have no way home.*

"Hey Miles, come here real quick," Dr. Von spoke with haste.

"Yea Doc, what's up?" Miles replied, as he came around the corner to see what Dr. Von was staring so intently at, "Oh no Doc, we have a problem."

"That's why I called you here, Miles," Dr. Von said with a shiver.

"Well, what are we going to do, Doc?" Miles asked.

"Well, kid, I guess we will have to find more fuel. If not, we may not make it to another planet. But if there's a will, there's a way," Dr. Von said, as he turned away, there was a cold shiver in the room. There was nothing they could do for

now.

*Log 42: Well, we are officially out of fuel. It seems at this point that there is no hope. The only thing we have left is reserve fuel so that we can try and use it to get to a planet that we found called Ananias. From our scans, it is only 3.7 clicks away. It should have great oil that we can transfuse on the ship to make fuel. If that doesn't work, I think the crew will give up all hope.*

"Start the drilling!" Connie yells at Robo.

And with a thumbs up, Robo pressed the button and began to drill into the core of Annais. Within a couple of seconds, oil came up into the container.

"Do you know, now that we've done this we can almost explore any planet in the universe," Dr. Von said with a soft accent

"That's crazy," Miles replied.

*Log 55: Now that we have fuel for the ship, there has been renewed hope among the crew. It's crazy how the human mind thinks. When you have very little of something, you get all scared and you don't wanna use it, and when you have a lot of something, you get boastful and confident. But I am a doctor, not a psychologist, so what do I know?*

"Well, now that we have fuel, we need to decide where we are going to go?" Dr. Von asked.

"I think Stella Neuar is the best option," Robo said, very entitled.

"Why is that?" Dr. Von replied.

"Well, it is 87% water and the land looks to be very fertile and growing a lot. We also have not

## 10th Grade Prose

found any bacteria or man-eating diseases like on other planets. I mean, the least that can happen is that we go there and then come back. "It's not gonna melt or face off or anything," Robo answered.

"That's OK with me if y'all are," Connie said.

"Sounds good, all in favor, say I," Dr. Von said with a smile.

They all replied in unison, "I."

*Log 68: The crew has decided on Stella Neuar. It is about 37 clicks away, so it should take us about 22 days. Our scans indicate you should be set for life. But you never know until you try. There has been some tension within the ship lately. Feelings of wealth may be harming the crew. We should arrive at Stella Neuar in about 22 days. I can't wait to see what comes out.*

"There it is, Stella Neuar. I can't believe how green and lush it is. Anyway, I will go ahead and get my suit on and get ready for departure," Robo said with a sense of awe.

"Be safe out there," Connie said, caringly.

"I will," Robo replied.

"Landed the ship, ready to go," Dr. Von shouted to the crew.

Robo walked into the containment room. The door to the outside opened abruptly. Robo took a step up to explore the new home. He took a deep breath and walked onto the ground. As he did this, he melted away. Like snot running down your face on a winter day. The ship froze with disbelief

*Log 104: We lost Robo... I've never seen anything like it in my life. I don't know how I*

*can continue.*

"We're all going to die, aren't we?" Miles shook

"Well, if we're going to die on a random rock, why not finish the one we started?" Connie, still in awe, said.

"Are you saying we just go back to Earth?" Miles questioned.

"Yes," Connie sharply responded.

"We are not going to die," Dr. Von spoke quietly.

"But what if we do? I need to go back," Connie cried.

"Ok, I understand," Dr. Von said softly.

*Log 173: It took quite some time, but we have finally arrived on Earth. It seems that Earth has started to regenerate itself and rebuild off of the nuclear destruction that happened. I'm pretty sure with the technology we have we could speed this process up to do it in about 77 years. This would be enough to make a new planet. I'm going to live on Earth again.*

Brody Finch  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

## 10th Grade Prose

### *The Embrace of the Cold*

As I walk through the snowy mountains alone watching the powder fall onto the ground, I keep my pace through the coldness. My breath is fanning my face in front of me and can be seen in the air. The crunching beneath my feet from the snow makes tracks but will soon be covered by the newly fallen snow. The sun is setting and getting dark fast. I lose track of time from the stillness of everything around me as if it hasn't been touched by mankind. I take comfort in it.

I move to set up a fire under a tree with the kindling I have found and take out my matches from my pocket. Seeing that I only have a few left, yet I feel confident in my abilities. I started setting everything I have down to make the fire. I light my match yet it goes out as quickly as it was lit. I scoff and it can be seen through the cold. I light another match, this time it lasts a lot longer. I place it in the kindling hoping it will catch fire. I blow on it so the rest will catch on. My lips are already turning blue and I can't feel them. My fingers are numb and there is a stinging sensation on my nose but I know making a fire is more important.

The wood catches fire but only lasts thirty seconds and goes out. I yell in frustration the sound getting lost in the endless solitude of the Rocky Mountains and throw my bag onto the frozen ground. The sun is already down and the moon shines above me and all I can see is through a dim light from the moon. I move my stuff over trying to make another fire. I drop my matches and try to retrieve them but my fingers are too stiff to move. I sit there almost crying, now with little circulation through my fingers.

I drift in and out of consciousness yet a noise wakes me up. I look to see a deer in front of me.

Its antlers are long and wide with many points. It's like my eyes can only focus on it, everything else makes me dizzy and looks blurry.

"Who are you?" I say. For some reason I feel as if it could speak to me. "Please help me." I speak out but it is barely audible. The deer stared at me and somehow just as thought. It spoke out to me.

"The cold is embracing, it gives you a hug but it stings like needles," the deer's voice sounds rough and raspy, "The cold is a killer that is misjudged. It seems insignificant yet it sets in before you can do anything. All you will feel is your body slowly becoming numb. It is almost as if darkness is slowly filling you and before you even know it it's too late." And with that its final words started to move.

"Goodbye Jack." It says at last.

The deer starts to leave and all I can do is yell after it to not leave. Realizing I am only yelling to the wind because it is all an illusion, an image in my mind made up out of desperation to keep going. My voice is rough and hoarse though. I start to sob but the only thing coming out is raspy sounds. It is only dry tears from how dehydrated and frozen I am.

I cannot die like this. I look around but my eyes are having trouble focusing. I look at the ground and the moon's glistening light glides over the snow almost as if reflecting off it. My eyes begin to focus on my bag about thirty feet away that I had thrown in the heat of the moment earlier. Thinking I could use anything from it. Remember to pack water and food but there may have been a chance that I packed extra matches. The food was already gone. But there may be the chance of having an extra box of matches.

I make an attempt to get up yet my legs have

## 10th Grade Prose

given up on me. My ears are burning and I am having a harder time breathing. I try to scream in frustration. The mistakes I have made from the beginning. I scream out yet nothing comes through. I try to crawl over there through the snow, giving up on everything and going to my last resort. The snow embraces me just like the cold, I start to lose consciousness again but I smash my head into the thick snow. The feeling of pain is numbed out from the fact I am dying. I realize I won't make it in time and I have no more hope left. I have nothing left.

I stare at the moon as it hangs above me taking deep breaths as best as I can looking at the stars for what I know is the last time. I rethink everything in my life up until now. Thinking about what ifs and maybes. Like "What if I didn't go on a hike today?" or "What if I didn't underestimate the cold?" I feel stupid for my mistakes yet my sense of reasoning had left me a long time ago. All I can think is what my own hallucinations told me. The cold really does embrace you, like stinging needles driven through your skin.

I take in the beauty of the moon above me one more time. Taking a deep breath and accepting that even in this solitude, the cold makes you never alone. I attempt to cry one more time yet still nothing comes out. My last sense of consciousness is centered on how much I fear the cold. Breathing my last breath, it stings my lungs but everything is already shutting down in my body and I drift into sleep with the cold embrace of the snow beneath me.

Carys Doxey  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Prose

## *A Wintry Night*

Snow poured from the clouds above and coated the forest floor beneath. It was dusk deep in the forest in Northern Maine. Hunter Knox and his friend, Parker Wood were wandering, seeking a house told of in many tales. As the sun fell behind a nearby mountain, Hunter saw a flame flickering in the dark distance, and so they began to walk towards it. As they approached it, they saw just one man, cloaked in black, covering everything but the tip of his nose.

“Who are you and what do you want?” he growled at them.

“Hey, I’m Hunter and this is Parker,” Hunter replied, “we’re looking for an old house.”

“Ah, you are not the first to seek this place,” the man said gruffly. “Many others have tried. I am all that remains.”

“Do you know where it is?”

“Yes,” he muttered, as he pointed into the distance towards the mountain.

“Ok, we’ll head that way!”

“Do not break the promise!” he cried out as the boys ran west, but to no avail, for they were already out of earshot.

The boys ran through the tall trees that towered over them. As they ran west, a house came into view, appearing just as people had described it. It was of colonial style, and clearly had been uninhabited for a long time. The outer walls were charred, and shattered glass littered the ground around the windows. Up on the third floor, a lone light shone out a window. Parker motioned to turn back, but as he did

this, the snow simply came down more heavily. And so Hunter walked ahead of Parker, not noticing the flickering flame above, and opened the door.

Inside the house, dust coated everything, from ancient furniture, to the aging floorboards. Hunter looked at Parker and said “Ok, we’ll look around, then we’ll go.”

All right, if you say so.” He was shivering, but not from the cold.

“You scared man?” Hunter joked.

“N-no, I’m good. Let’s go.” His voice exposed his fear.

“Ok, calm down then.”

They walked into what appeared to be a kitchen. Cobwebs were strewn from the stove to a small table that sat in the corner. Hunter walked over to the table and looked under it, and then jumped back and shouted “Whoa!”

“What is it?” Parker asked, trembling.

“Nothing,” Hunter laughed. “Scared you.”

“Dude calm down,” Parker angrily said. “It’s not funny.”

The two boys walked back into the entryway, only to find that the front door was now blocked. The wall above had partially collapsed, blocking the only exit to the house.

“I guess we go up,” Hunter whispered, slightly shaken by the thought of being trapped.

“You go.” Parker’s face was pale.

Parker stayed by the door as Hunter started his way up. When he was about halfway up the stairs, he hesitated. As he was about to say

## 10th Grade Prose

something to Parker, the ceiling behind him collapsed.

“Parker, help!” Hunter shouted.

“How?” Parker yelled back.

“I don’t know,” Hunter said through the wreckage. “Try and clear some of this, I’m gonna see if there’s a way out.”

Alone. Again. Before he met Parker, he did everything for himself. No siblings, few friends, and no one to trust. He never really had trusted anyone but himself. Now that he was alone, he realized how valuable friends are. “What do I do? What do I do?” he muttered to himself.

And so he set off around the second floor of the house. He noticed a hole in the ceiling. From it, the only light in the house shone through. “Someone must be up there,” Hunter thought. “They can help me out of here.” He began to scale up a small ladder set there. It appeared to be rickety, and this was proven to him when the first step snapped in half underneath his foot. “Okay, climb light.” As he reached the top, he saw the fire, blazing in the corner.

He crept over to it, trying to remain quiet in case whoever lit the fire was not kind. As he reached the fire, he saw a shadow on the opposite wall. “Who’s there?” he called out.

“You do not know me,” a voice croaked. “But I know you, Hunter Knox. You have lived life alone for many years. I offer you something. If you go from here and never speak of this place, never return, and never walk in these woods again, I will take away your problems. But if you do any of these things, you will be sentenced to live in this forest forever.”

“I-I’m fifteen. Why should I listen to you?”

“This decision is for you, not me.”

“Alright, I promise. Just take it all away.”

“Your troubles are no more. You may leave this place. And as for your friend, do not tell him what has transpired tonight.”

Once he said this, Hunter scrambled down the rickety ladder and staircase that Parker cleared and out of a shattered window.

As the boys ran from the house, they saw the cloaked man at the campfire from earlier in the night. “So?” the man asked.

“We found it all right,” Hunter replied.

“And did you promise anything?”

“Yes, that I would—” he stopped as he realized his mistake. “Oh no, oh no. Parker,” his face was white, “we’re trapped.”

“Why?” Parker replied, “What happened, Hunter?”

Hunter started running. Running away from his problems, running from his mistake, he was ready to hide. He was going to escape the icy, haunted forest.

“Hunter!” Parker called, “Come back!” but Hunter was gone.

As Hunter ran, he saw a building in the distance. He charged towards it, dreaming of freedom. The snow began falling faster. As he got close enough to recognize the building, he stopped. “It can’t be. It’s not possible,” he whispered as he realized that even though he had run east, towards the rising sun, he had

## 10th Grade Prose

arrived at the house, the house that was to the west.

Evan Lynch

10th Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Corley Humphrey

## 11th Grade Prose

### *The Initiation*

I didn't start the fire.

I know I shouldn't have gone with them, but I couldn't help myself. Starting a new school had been hard, and teenagers were judgemental. I would have done anything to fit in.

Jenna brought the masks and paint. That tall blonde girl...was her name Rose? No, a different flower – Lily. Lily brought the crowbar. We all met in front of the school at midnight. They acted like this was a fun game or a day at the mall. Nobody seemed to care that getting caught would mean expulsion and possibly juvie, depending on how much damage we did.

Jenna passed around the box of masks and the tube of paint.

“Put on the masks and cover the rest of your face with paint,” she instructed. “We don't want the security cameras to see our faces.”

Her friend Peyton hadn't mentioned the security cameras when she invited me yesterday. It probably wasn't a big deal for her; there were tons of small, dark-haired girls at Pearson High School. I, however, am 5'11” with bright red hair. If the security cameras caught a glimpse of my hair, it wouldn't be hard to figure out my identity. I cinched the strings of my sweatshirt hood tighter.

Jenna let that stupid jock boyfriend of hers, Brandon, bash in the door. I wasn't expecting that; he just took the crowbar and smashed out the glass so he could reach the lock inside. He hit the door a few extra times, denting it in, probably to assert his dominance. Idiot.

I didn't know for sure why Peyton asked me to go. I had figured this was some sort of

initiation, and if I was cool enough to break into the school with them, I was cool enough to hang out with them. I had accepted immediately; after all, what's the worse that could happen? Did I want to get caught? No. Could I get shipped off to a different school and foster family if I did? Sure, but that wasn't anything new to me. It was worth the risk.

I shuffled behind the group, not sure what we were doing and too afraid to ask. Jenna, Peyton, and Lily were chattering away. The boys were bumping shoulders and violently shoving one another into lockers, chuckling at the crunching, shrieking noises the metal made. I cringed with each crash.

“Lighten up, Ava,” Peyton giggled to me.

“There's nobody here, and the cameras only capture video, not audio. Nobody will hear us.”

I knew she was right. I was still nervous though; I had done some reckless things before, but never breaking and entering or vandalism. I glanced around at the group. None of them had spray cans or paint, other than the small tube we had used to paint our faces. I guess we weren't going to vandalize....

“What are we doing?” I finally asked. I couldn't stand it much longer.

Jenna smiled as we stopped in front of a janitor's closet.

“Come on in, you'll see.”

We filed into the closet. Brandon grabbed a metal trash can filled with crumpled paper and other garbage. He produced a small box – what was that? – and tossed it into the can. I was about to ask him what he'd thrown in when one of the football guys pulled a lighter out of his pocket and handed it to Jenna. My throat

## 11th Grade Prose

constricted, and I choked.

“You’re not going to...?”

Jenna turned to me. “Are you in or not? You can leave now.”

Her eyes held a challenge. If I left, they would never speak to me again, and it would be even worse if I ratted them out to an adult. If I stayed, I would pass the test. I’d be one of them. Arson was serious; but I couldn’t stand being an outcast for much longer.

“Of course I’m in,” I told Jenna flippantly.

She grinned, a satisfied glint in her eyes.

“Good. You might want to step back.”

And with that, Jenna lit the papers on fire.

I watched it, mesmerized. The flames crackled inside the basket. It was staying contained, for now. I should put it out; it could get out of hand....

No. I couldn’t back down now.

Was this the whole initiation? Setting a fire in the trashcan?

I turned to say something to Jenna. She was gone. They were *all* gone.

“Jenna? Peyton? Bran-”

A hissing noise stopped me. I whirled back to the trashcan to see the flames licking at the box Brandon had thrown in.

*What is-*

It exploded. I remember a bright light and fire. So much fire.

Pain. I felt pain all over. I could hear voices...what were they saying? It was muffled. Why were they whispering? Why was it dark? I tried to open my mouth to speak, and a burning agony exploded over my face.

The initiation test cost me much more than just expulsion. They say that I’ll be okay, and the wounds will mostly heal. I don’t believe them. My hearing is back, but I still can’t see. I don’t think they can fix that.

They caught the other kids while I was unconscious. Brandon admitted to throwing an explosive in the trashcan. He hadn’t intended for the explosion to be so big.

As soon as I was lucid, I was given a lecture from the police, my foster parents, and everyone else who felt the need to chew me out. Half of the school had been burned down in the fire.

The rest of the gang was in bigger trouble than I was, since they had started the fire and then run away. In my mind, I was just as guilty. I was there too, and I ignored my conscience.

I didn’t start the fire.

I just sat back like a coward and watched it burn.

Isabella Dixon  
11th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

## 11th Grade Prose

### *What's Left of the Twenty-First Century*

Everyone was supposed to meet when and wherever the boat pulled in, but when Oscar got there, he was the only one. The first thing he did was check the car's GPS, assuming that he was in the wrong place. To his surprise, he had actually made it to the meeting spot, and was even there at the right time. He checked his phone to see if there had been a change of plans: there weren't any new texts or voicemails. There wasn't a proper boat anywhere, either, just a dinghy tied to a tree.

Made pretty much helpless, he just decided to wait in the car for a minute and see if anyone showed up. To pass the time, he played a game on his phone for about five minutes, then ten, then finally lost his patience after fifteen. He picked the first number he had been given and called. It rang for a minute, then went to voicemail. The others did too, and the rain starting only annoyed him more. That was the nail in the coffin, and he decided that he needed to get moving before the area got any more flooded.

Throughout the entire trip there, Oscar was checking that the camera had been properly wrapped. It had to be wrapped in several plastic bags, and it almost didn't fit into his jacket. When he did start rowing in the dinghy, he took it as slow as possible to not get splashed too much. To make things even longer, he had to stop every few minutes to check the map. His boss had given it to him when he was assigned the article, and his mistreatment of the already ancient paper made it harder to read. Someone in the office said that it had been printed sometime in the 2030s, and it made him feel a little guilty that he had taken so little care of something so old. As he sailed through the water, he took in the scenery. The branches of drowned cypresses

only poked out of the water by a few feet, and a few others were growing up where hills had stayed closer to the surface. Combined with the gray color of the overcast weather and the light pattering of rain, the lake seemed completely alien. The feeling grew when he realized how it was compared to the old map: all of the old roads leading through Louisiana to Houma had been sunken under feet upon feet of water. Again, it grew when the tops of the buildings came into view.

Old concrete boxes and shingled roofs stood atop the water, some only a foot or two above and others by one or two stories. The dead trees thinned out, and solar panels or makeshift rafts floated in the space between. Just by sheer concentration, there were things hitting the raft constantly, practically tipping the boat a few times. Within five minutes of entering what he thought was the city limit, it had clumped together so closely that the dinghy couldn't go any further.

He was forced to stop in the middle of a bunch of offices, so he picked the tallest and rowed towards it. Strange as it was, he figured that it was probably best to row through one of the larger windows and keep the boat inside. Most of the windows had already been broken out, but it was awkward trying to get positioned to where he could fit through a wider one properly. Once inside, things got more awkward as he climbed out and started jumping across desks and office chairs. The whole time, he clenched the camera through his jacket, ironically almost losing his balance on some of the chairs.

Papers were still spread out on some of the desks, and he stopped here and there to look through them. Mostly just accounting from before people left it to AI, nothing worth being put in the article. He wondered what there might be in the rooms to the sides, but he saw a

## 11th Grade Prose

stairwell through the closest wall and decided to go for it first. To not risk someone else's camera, he stuck to desk jumps, but had to scoot one of the chairs along to get through the door to the stairs themselves. When he came through the window, he didn't think about it too much, but the stairs led straight up to the roof.

Oscar realized that this would be the best place for pictures, since he would have the best view. It was perfect timing as well, since the clouds had opened around the horizon to let in some sun and the rain had let up -at least for a bit. Right then, his phone went off.

It was from his boss: "The guys who were supposed to meet you had to reschedule, can you meet them in a few days?"

Oscar took a moment before responding, just looking out over what was left of Houma. The flight was long, the drive was long, and the rowing was long; he decided that he had had enough of this article. He attached a picture and acted on impulse: "I can send you some more of these, but I quit. I probably won't even come back to NY, just throw my stuff out."

Before he turned to go back downstairs, he went to his messages and picked out the conversation with his dad. After going this far, he really had no self discipline left, and he decided to act on his impulses again: "I just quit my job, can I move in there for a few weeks?"

Levi Adcock  
11th Grade  
Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts  
Meri Sowders

## 12th Grade Prose

### *Fantasy Fiction*

Typically, I am a responsible, non-procrastinating, to-do list sort of person, but when it comes to fantasy fiction, I find it so engaging that I lose all track of time. I find everything about this genre—books, series, movies—captivating because it is so creative. This fascination with creativity is a big reason why a career in engineering or architecture intrigues me; I love to create, whether it be building a new Lego set, making a mountain bike jump, or drawing a new Dungeons and Dragons map. Because of the incredible stories and complex worlds, fantasy fiction makes me desire what the Creator of the universe made me to do: create in order to glorify Him. Fantasy fiction isn't just for fun; it allows us to experience and learn to love adventure and teaches practical values and deep themes in an easy-to-understand way.

Fantasy fiction has led me to love adventure, and this reflects what I enjoy doing. Involvement in Boy Scouts of America, my main extracurricular activity, provides adventures in the form of camping, hiking, and backpacking. In my Boy Scout troop, I often plan and lead campouts, and I love designing activities for the younger scouts and teaching younger scouts how to set up camp. I also love researching and reading about big fantasy worlds, such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the Star Wars universe, and the world of The Lord of the Rings, because of the details, scope, creativity, and endless adventure of these worlds. Most of the book series by my favorite author, Brandon Sanderson, are set in the same universe called the Cosmere, and I love searching for connections between the books using the websites Sanderson and his fans write about his books. The world's magic and lore are exciting elements in any book series or movie, and they are exceptionally

detailed and outstanding in the Cosmere.

The truthful themes and values in fantasy fiction bring so much more depth to a story—it teaches us about the real world, and even though the conflicts in the stories are vast, themes like good versus evil are still concrete. It can seem like the lessons we learn from fantasy can not be applied to our lives because of how crazy the scenarios can be. Still, when you take out the dragons and magic, the messages of determination, proactivity, perseverance, survival skills, and relationship skills are highly applicable to our daily lives. I have shown persistence and determination when earning Eagle Scout and completing mountain bike races. A big lesson from my favorite book, *The Way of Kings* by Brandon Sanderson, is about morality: how we achieve victory is as important as the victory itself. Another big reason I love fantasy is the characters; they are an essential part of any story because they offer a connection to the story, giving someone relatable to follow in the fantasy world. Learning how characters deal with their problems can help us understand how to deal with issues in our world.

Fantasy fiction's elaborate worlds full of adventure and marvelous stories full of intense themes and true-to-life values give me a sincere love for God's creation and an earnest desire to create. The idea of creating a world and communicating a story is fascinating because it directly emulates God's creativity in fashioning our world. Fantasy fiction can teach us about the natural world; it's not just entertainment. Through its many profound themes, practical lessons, and weighty values, fantasy fiction has stimulated my imagination, boosted my vocabulary, led me to be a critical thinker and a problem solver, and steered me toward a career in engineering or architecture. Fantasy fiction embodies creativity, so the

## 12th Grade Prose

expansive and enthralling genre will always be something I love to explore, examine, and experience.

Jacob Oster

12th Grade

Hilger Higher Learning

Shelly George

## 12th Grade Prose

### *A Lovely Day*

Melody Anne Starr was an enigma. At five years old she was a veritable academic prodigy, chasing after any new knowledge with a passion usually reserved for those of mature age. If she applied herself, it was no doubt that she would excel past all of her peers. However, the source of her enigmatic nature was that she didn't quite know how to apply herself. Melody was too timid to speak up in school and her parents were repulsed by the constant questions buzzing around in her head. She didn't understand other children and they didn't understand her, so she passed off her days in a sort of lonely isolation. The structure of school bored her and her parents worried she was dumb, or “challenged” as they so delicately put it. But she wasn't dumb! And she knew it! She loved to read and write, but in school, her nervousness overpowered her ability to focus. Unfortunately, it is difficult for a five-year-old to express these struggles and it is quite a burden on your happiness when everyone thinks you are something you are not.

Despite the aforementioned information, Melody wasn't an entirely unhappy child. In fact, there was one day that stood out in her mind as the happiest, most perfect day that she had ever had. It had rained tirelessly the previous day, leaving the afternoon grey, dreary, and muddy. Her mother was in bad humor and her father was away, so she was left to occupy herself in whatever way she pleased. Melody found herself wandering through the fields outside. In the field to her left, owned by her sweet neighbor Mrs. Sandy, there was a flock of chickens that piqued her interest. Wading through the ankle-deep mud in her prized yellow rain boots, she reached the chicken house and greeted the fowl.

“Hello, chickens! My name is Melody,” she

stated, realizing that introducing herself to chickens was far easier than introducing herself to people. The chickens clucked and ruffled about happily, and Melody thought they looked so impossibly soft that she must hold one. Upon opening the latch to the coop, she realized her mistake. The chickens' content and complacent nature in the cage was a ruse! She felt deceived, as the chickens burst into motion and out the open door. All eight of them scattered through the mud in every direction as Melody shouted after them, to no avail. Her panic increased as she realized that she must get every chicken back as soon as possible. She dove towards the nearest chicken at full force and with full determination, momentarily forgetting about the mud her feet were encapsulated in. Her body lurched forward; her feet held fast in the mud. She face-planted so spectacularly that the resulting “smack” startled the chickens and was heard by Mrs. Sandy, who was tending a garden in the adjacent field.

Melody was not discouraged. She laughed at her gooey predicament, sloughed the mud off her arms, wrung out her curls, and began pursuing the chickens again. Her small five-year-old legs carried her as fast as they could. Soon enough, she snatched two of the chickens and returned them to their cage. Now, this was fun! Melody loved a challenge. She waddled through the mud and grabbed another by the tail feathers, a mistake she paid for with a sharp beak to the arm. That chicken was thrown back into the cage with much less grace than the previous two. Two more gave up on freedom and wandered back on their own, leaving three more fugitives to detain. Melody ran, swung her arms towards chicken number six, and missed. These last three seemed more elusive, and she chased, flung her arms toward them, and came back with nothing but air. The chickens clucked at her, laughing at the way she ran and they

## 12th Grade Prose

dodged.

Unbeknownst to Melody, Mrs. Sandy was watching from the hill above. It was quite the amusing scene, watching little Melody, pink-cheeked, laughing, and covered in mud flailing after her chickens. In her experience, Melody was a very timid and quiet child, so the girl's boisterous laughter was an unexpected and heartwarming contrast. It was also amusing to see just how determined the girl was. Mrs. Sandy laughed aloud as Melody snuck up behind one of the remaining chickens and snatched it up, earning a startled cry from the defeated bird. The next one she slid towards on her knees, the way that a baseball player might slide into a base. Mrs. Sandy was impressed by this strategy and it was far too advanced for the chicken to evade. At last, there was only one bird left. The woman watched the girl in anticipation as her biggest, meanest, most stubborn hen became the soul target.

Melody was down to one chicken. She was out of breath, coated in a mixture of feathers and mud, and having a wonderful time. All of the birds had so much personality, some laughing and dodging for fun while others skirted and scraped in fear of losing their freedom. This last bird was different. She stuck out her feathers in defiance and stalked, full of pride, around Melody. They stared, moving around in a slow circle as each assessed the other. In flash, Melody started towards the prey. It was a whirlwind of clucks, shrieks, and mud flying in every direction. The chicken made the terrible mistake of running through an abandoned barrel where Melody was waiting on the other side. As the bird exited, unaware of its predator, Melody scooped him up. With the triumph of victory, she returned him to his cage.

"Now, that might have been some of the best chicken wranglin' I've ever seen," said Mrs.

Sandy as she approached, arms full with a pitcher of lemonade and a basket of cookies. Melody smiled, and they picnicked together as the sun set, the perfect ending to the perfect day.

Rachel Hutchings  
12th Grade  
Sale Creek High School  
Jerry Harwood

## 12th Grade Prose

### *Bob and Ava*

One day a young little boy named Bob was walking down a bumpy trail. We do not know where he was going or where he is from, all we know is that his name is Bob and slightly small for his age. Bob is a young boy, yet he does not have any parents. This makes three things we know about Bob. There are many things we think about Bob, but we do not know. As Bob was walking down the bumpy trail, the same trail that we do not where is begins or where it goes, he trips on a rock and falls. He is now on the ground. He cannot get up without someone's help. There is no apparent reason why he cannot get up, he just cannot.

By luck, there was also a girl on the bumpy trail not far behind. Why there was another person on the trail that has no beginning with and end, is unknown. What we do know is she is a girl, her name is Ava, and she is also young. She also does not have any parents. We suspect Bob and Ava are related however it falls into the category of things we 'do not know'. All we know is that Ava is young, a girl, and appears to not have any parents.

Similar to Bob, there are many things we think about Ava but do not know. When Ava finds Bob she helps him up. Neither Ava nor Bob speak to one another at any moment during their meeting. Bob, after having been helped up, continues his walk on the bumpy trail. The trail also has an end now. How a trail with no end or beginning now has an end is unknown but it happened and that is known. Bob now continues his walk down the bumpy trail to the end. Bob can not see the end but he knows it is there and that is where he heads. Ava follows Bob exactly five steps behind. Bob neither questions or acknowledges Ava following him, which leads us to believe they have met before. However, this is unknown. Bob continues his

walk to the end of the bumpy trail. The trail opens into a clearing with a large mountain in the center. Ava having maintained her exact five steps behind Bob, now rushes ahead to the mountain. Bob appears confused, but does not speak, and follows Ava to the base of the mountain. We do not know much about this mountain, all we know is that it is large, made of rock and evil. How we know the mountain is evil is unknown. Bob and Ava also know the mountain is evil. How they know of the mountain's evil unknown. The mountain also has steps, something we now know. Ava begins to climb the steps with Bob following exactly ten steps behind. Bob and Ava know they need to climb the mountain to defeat the evil, the evil will be gone, it can only be them together, and this is what they do. How they knew to climb the mountain to get rid of the evil is unknown. It is not known what happened when Bob and Ava reached the top of the mountain. All we know is that Bob and Ava reached the top of the mountain and the now evil is gone. We assume Bob and Ava destroy the evil, however it falls into 'the unknown things'. What we know is that life is better with the evil gone and more are happy than before. As such, Bob and Ava did something good which we know. We do not know where Bob and Ava are and no one is able to reach the top of the mountain to look for them. Why only Bob and Ava were able to reach the top of the mountain is unknown. All we know is that we do not know a lot and what we know is very little. We suspect that the unknown is magic however it falls into the things we 'do not know'. The world is happy now, and the happiness makes up for the things we do not know.

Richard Shank  
12th Grade  
Homeschool  
Teresa Shank

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Where I'm From*

I am from kayaks, on the Tennessee river.  
From flowery and bunny.  
I am from the small house on the big hill  
And the trampoline.  
I am the dogwood tree whose limbs we used to  
climb.

I am from the little driveway, and our pink and  
purple scooters.

From my mother's eyes and my father's smile.

I am from my uncle's crazy ideas and my  
siblings'  
kindness. And from my father's teasing.

From my grandmother's food.  
I am from the red art bag.

From the pink and  
purple blankets.

I am from those moments spent  
in the playroom, eating food, watching tv, and  
playing.

Eve Atkinson  
6th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet School  
Sara Clarich-Page

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Colors and Junctures*

Dust as old as time floats like glistening ember  
in the air  
As I lean on the trees as sodden as clouds  
I hear the running water as the campfire  
crackles like my friend's laughter  
I taste the slippery bamboo, lushly growing on  
the other side of the hill  
I slip and slide through the bubbling mud,  
flowing languidly through the afternoon  
dust  
I hear the crunch of leaves like chewing  
They shine like plush cashmere blankets,  
coating the rocky landscape  
It becomes quieter, as the birds seem to stop  
moving  
Horses prance by as the blissfully autumn  
leaves fall from the heavens, like spirits  
I walk through the dried-up paths of the forest  
that never ends  
I stare into the depths of the campfire  
wandering  
The lily pads shed their flowers just as we shed  
our jackets in the neoteric dust  
Wandering, blindfolded and happy through the  
forest that sprawls, like stars in the sky  
Snow flowers sway in the wind, like mute bells  
that don't care about time  
Or the barren leaves that will blossom again in  
the spring  
As I walk through the dry paths, parched as the  
deserts in the middle Summer,  
boreal as ice cream  
As the bloodless plants cover the ground like  
sheets on a bassinet  
While we walk to sip thick coco and play in the  
soft, irascible snow  
Blossoming flowers can't compare with the way  
we feel  
Walking through the wet grass that lightly  
brushes our bare feet  
Trees flower like exploding fireworks before our

eyes

The bawdy scent of the idle mud flowing down  
the creek again as boats made of  
pinecones flow  
Colors out of reach shimmer in the sky  
The smell of honeysuckle floats in the air, like  
the unspoken joy filling Everything  
three hundred acres of elegant petals that have  
the aroma of hibiscus at the end of  
this transcendent line

HUMANITY Falls off the edge  
WITH Separation of families  
Of each other  
Things change  
Times change  
Earths change  
I change  
You change  
People Fall like leaves  
Memories don't change

Fritz Parman  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Regan Fazio

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Four Seasons Poem*

Summer brings beaches  
pure and blinding  
sand stretching across the land like a golden  
blanket  
the clear ocean water ripples through multiple  
shades of blue  
and blends into the shore  
the breeze blows through my fingers  
making them dance on the wind  
as I walk  
the cool water brushes my ankles like ice  
and calms the blazing sand  
I sip my Pina colada as the crisp  
salt air  
lifts my hair into my face.  
waves crash to shore then draw back into the  
ocean as if they are frightened  
the scent of sunscreen and barbecue from a  
food truck drift in the breeze  
keep walking  
Fall brings leaves  
colorful  
dancing  
floating  
leaves  
jack-o-lanterns glowing warmly  
guide me through the night  
the wind carries a leaf  
gently  
to my palm  
where I watch it  
crumble  
the crisp air tickles my nose  
as I walk  
the air smells of distant wood smoke and soil  
a faint taste of pumpkin pie and damp Earth  
lingers in my mouth  
leaves crunch under my feet  
and the wind begins to howl  
keep walking  
Winter brings snow  
swirling

falling  
drifting  
snow  
It weighs down the trees  
and makes them groan in the wind  
the snow lands on my palms  
my head  
my eyelashes  
my arms  
my legs  
I marvel at them as best I can  
before they melt  
disappearing into my skin and taking a new  
form as water  
I don't feel it  
the snow  
not on my arms and legs  
only on my head and hands  
Instead I feel the warmth of my scarf and jacket  
the crisp air  
cold air  
forces me to pull my layers closer against the  
snow  
wind  
and air  
I stick out my tongue  
even though I know I will never catch even one  
snowflake  
still they tempt me falling in their lazy paths  
the snow crunches under my feet  
the scent of mint and pine trees float in the air  
the trees blow in the wind and give fleeting  
glimpses of the gray sky above  
I feel small against it  
and walk on  
almost there  
Spring brings flowers  
small yet beautiful  
colorful  
and sweet  
the canopy of the trees hovers over them  
shielding them  
the swaying branches create an umbrella above  
us

## 6th Grade Poetry

letting just enough light through for the path to  
show  
the rays of sun  
that drift through the leaves warm my skin  
I stop to taste a honeysuckle  
not ripe yet  
the echo of birds all around me rings in my ears  
I walk on amongst their eager notes  
the breeze makes the trees sway as they  
whisper and slowly awaken  
the smell of pollen and dew lay heavy in the air  
the path ends  
I have arrived  
At the end of the path lies understanding  
the world's change is the same as yours  
though you display it in different ways  
seasons  
years  
friends  
peers  
nature shares life  
you play a small role in a big world

Lila Montgomery  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Regan Fazio

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Over Again Through the Seasons*

The orange sun  
bathes everything  
in  
a golden light  
lush grass,  
like emeralds  
in its afternoon glimmer  
gentle ripples  
of water in the creek,  
flowing through the land  
gurgling,  
as it flows towards something bigger  
the soft soil's  
gentle pulse,  
the heartbeat  
of the world  
the taste of a sweet  
and juicy  
pineapple,  
its sourness  
prickling my tongue  
vibrant colors  
of leaves  
so bright as they dance  
in the gentle wind  
trees,  
holding rainbows  
some have fallen  
swirling as they go  
the bright  
orange  
pumpkins  
with such  
smooth  
outsides  
a s'more  
the gooey,  
sweet  
taste of chocolate  
dances on my tongue

songs

of birds soon to migrate  
so sad  
but meaningful  
as each one  
says their goodbyes until  
spring  
powdery,  
fluffy, snow  
like powdered sugar  
covering the hills  
glimmering icicles  
dangling over tree branches,  
making them part  
of their frosty

crystal  
bare trees  
hide nothing  
behind them,  
as what once was a shield  
has now fallen  
the warm mug  
containing sweet, minty,  
hot chocolate  
the tiny trickle  
of the creek  
gently flows down  
the frozen path  
dew strewn grass,  
majestic birds  
fly all around  
saying hello  
to friends they haven't seen  
all winter  
color  
has returned  
to the flowers

restoring them  
to their bold  
and beautiful  
states  
soft and delicate  
petals

## 6th Grade Poetry

of wildflowers  
spread along the ground  
covering it  
in one colorful  
blanket  
the honeysuckles have returned  
Raindrops  
gently fall  
into the creek  
disturbing  
the stillness  
of the water  
as it creates ripples  
spring means new life  
the constant changing

of the seasons  
as each one  
comes  
and goes  
everything  
remaining the same  
but so different too  
showing the possibilities  
of what nature can do  
and that change is always possible.

Madeleine Horn  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Regan Fazio

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Shadow*

A hum  
So quiet yet  
Distinctive  
Just to become  
Once more  
The visitor knocking at my door  
With a neck hung low  
But a head hung high  
On that Moonlit Tuesday  
A burning flame  
Ready to fall and collapse  
Projecting your melody  
The mocking  
Bird forgotten  
A Tickle  
An ember  
Alone in the neglectful sky  
I whispered meekly  
And descended  
Down my path  
In a peculiar manner  
A shake so serious  
Yet a faint yell in the background  
Mirrors  
Staring into the  
Ghost, fabricated in your  
Face pale and happy.

Pei-Ying Olsen  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Regan Fazio

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *China Plate*

Vera Gardner

6th Grade

Chattanooga School for Arts and Science

Laycica Harjes

1 Today I broke a china plate  
2 My mother gasped, her eyes irate  
3 I ran to get the superglue  
4 But mother said "That will not do"  
5 I rushed back, expecting pain  
6 But got much worse, lots of shame  
7 She sent me down into the town  
8 Kintsugi worker met with a frown  
9 When i told him what happened to our glass  
10 He shook his head and said "Alas"  
11 I kindly took him to our house  
12 My mother solemn in her blouse  
13 He picked up the shards of the china plate  
14 He put it back down and said "This is its  
fate."  
15 My mother sighed and picked up the glass 16  
And to my shock, threw it in the trash  
17 I hugged her tight, weeping too  
18 Apologized, asked, "What could I do?"  
19 Instead, she sent me to my room  
20 Said I could come out in a minute or two  
21 She joined me there, hugging me tight 22 For  
she knew of my blight  
23 Was not about the china shattered there  
25 But she felt the guilt that I did wear  
26 She hugged me tight until guilt left  
27 We stood up, our relief deft  
28 As we felt our sadness lacks  
29 Tiny plants in floorboard cracks  
30 Mushrooms sprouting from the walls  
31 Sprouts and plants flourish in the halls  
32 Dust and grime, the house askew  
33 But in the kitchen, something new  
34 Sits the fragile china plate  
35 Fresh and gleaming, it sits in wait  
36 But in the mirror, we both do see  
37 An adult staring back at me  
38 No longer the child that I used to be  
39 My mother is now an old lady  
40 We walk out the house as it crumbles down  
41 Leaving the china plate there to be found

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Under the Mask*

When I think about school  
I think about my friends  
How I can make them laugh  
What face should I put on today?  
My happy, sad, or sleepy face  
When I think about home I think about the real  
Putting on my real style  
My real smile  
When I'm home  
I wear my real mask at home  
I am real.

Sha'Ryiah Bailey  
6th Grade  
The Bethlehem Center's After-School Program  
Gwen Mullins

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Endless Cycle*

In the humid air of summer  
I sit upon a rock that overlooks a small valley  
lit by slants of sun poking through the leaves.  
Under my fingertips I feel cold stone  
and patches of ageless moss.  
In the shadow of the seemingly infinite trees  
a breeze comes to cool me.  
Chicks cry for their mothers, asking for food.  
I can hear the trickling waterfall  
that hides in solitude around the corner.  
The salty scent of sweat fills my nostrils  
as it mixes with the smell of damp soil.

In Fall a vibrant mural  
of reds, oranges, yellows, and browns  
dapple the hills below me.  
Beautiful browns from the dry,  
dead leaves that have fallen.  
Hitting my face, the breeze cools my body.  
My jacket wraps around me like a blanket of  
warmth  
hiding me from the cold.  
More wind comes,  
and it blows the leaves that rest on the dirt.  
Swirling them around, drawing the patterns of  
the wind.

Just like that winter is here.  
It looks as though it's lacking its past  
exuberance.  
The waterfall has dissipated,  
and the moss has withered from the rock.  
Birds have stopped calling.  
The silence is deafening.  
I look up at the empty branches and see a  
twisting,  
turning maze.  
Like a giant bird's nest,  
nestled up high above the earth.  
Each limb intertwining with one another.  
This magnificent sight overrides me with  
wonder.

Spring, the proof of new beginnings  
stands right before my eyes.  
Buds burst from the previously lonely  
branches.  
Weeds and flowers erupt from the ground.  
New colors accentuate the deep,  
rich shades of brown.  
Underneath me I again feel the soft moss  
which leaves hardly any room for boring soil.  
In this freshly grown sanctuary plants thrive.  
The constant downpour soaks the soil  
bringing out a smell of fresh petrichor.

Out here surrounded by trees,  
I can truly relax.  
Even in the cold winter months  
I feel at peace with the world.

Lauren Reisman  
6th Grade  
Baylor School  
Suzanne Collins

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

In the Summer, I go to my neighbor's house every Sunday.

We sit on the same smooth wooden bench outside.

We sip different flavored smoothies and we give them funny names.

Our favorite one is Mango Fango.

We talk about life experiences, dogs, and family.

Her voice sounds sweet like the smoothies.

We see our dogs play around together in the garden.

Every Sunday of Summer smells like humidity and sweat.

In the Fall, I go to my neighbor's house every Sunday.

We sit in the same smooth wooden bench outside.

We eat warm bagels with orange juice.

I can taste the baked blueberries in the sweet bagel.

The citrus from the juice fills my nose.

We like to talk about our daily life and school.

We can see the old tree's leaves changing color and watch them fall.

The cold makes us wear our soft and puffy jackets.

We hear the squeaks of the squirrels as they play with our dogs.

In the Winter, I go to my neighbor's house every Sunday.

We sit in the same smooth wooden bench outside.

We drink hot chocolate with marshmallows and eat waffles with butter.

The hot chocolate is light and airy.

The marshmallows would melt like ice.

We talk about school, winter break plans, Christmas, and Argentina.

We see that our little dogs stayed inside

because of the cold.

We bring them some soft and fuzzy blankets.

You can smell our hot chocolate and waffles from miles away.

In the Spring, I go to my neighbor's house every Sunday.

We sit in the same smooth wooden bench outside.

We like to eat seasonal fruits— bananas, mangos, and watermelons too.

The fruits taste like candy in my mouth.

The watermelon tastes like spoon-fulls of sugar water.

We talk about end of school, summer plans, family, and vacation time.

We see our dogs playing between the flowers.

Running around the long fence— enjoying the grass.

I can smell the pollen of the beautiful flowers all around the garden.

Alba Ortega Mac Lean

6th Grade

Baylor School

Suzanne Collins

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

The beach so freely designed,  
The breeze blowing through the reeds.  
The sand rushing out to meet me,  
In between my toes,dancing all around.  
The ocean shimmering so bright, That dreamy  
paradise blue,  
Just come to welcome you.  
The silky white clouds, Twisting through the  
sky.  
The shining sun,  
soaking through my skin.  
The blue sky so smooth, And delighting.  
The palm trees, so happy they look, laughing  
and giggling as I walk by. The shells clapping  
and clanking, when the water comes to play  
with them. Oh how beautiful Gods creation is!

Mae Mae Dorizas  
6th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelly George

## 6th Grade Poetry

*The World Can Be a Better Place...*

The world can be a better place,  
If we make doing good the case.

Showing compassion to others,  
Cherishing fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers.

Helping others, being kind,  
This is a wonderful gift you can find.

Just say "hello" or "how'd you do,"  
Tell family and friends "I love you,"

Take bitterness and anger away,  
March right into a new day.

To worry about others and not ourselves,  
Don't leave your good nature on dusty shelves.

A goal is all we need,  
To make this wonderful plan succeed.

We need each citizen, so c'mon let's go!  
We can all show kindness, I know!

It's never easy to be good,  
We can always try, we always should.

The world, my friend, can be a better place  
If we make showing love, the case.

Julia Hall  
6th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *The Love of my Life*

The sun is as bright as her smile  
Her hair is as dark as the night  
Her ocean blue eyes are such a delight

The sun is as bright as her smile as well as her  
personality  
When she walks in the lights follow  
The sun is as bright as her smile  
Her tail wags when you give her a hug

But when the sun is gone she is gone  
She leaves me in the park am all alone  
But she is a retriever so will she retrieve my  
heart

Lorena Dacoregio  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

# 6th Grade Poetry

## *The Talk of the Rain*

The rain pitter pattered  
On my window  
A most wonderful chatter

I look up from  
My glowing screen  
Seeing spots  
Seeing dots

The rain pitter pattered  
On my window  
A most inviting chatter

I rub my eyes  
Spots and dots fading  
Along with the pitter patter  
No longer a chatter

No longer inviting  
The rain thundered  
Shooting sharp ice  
Down at the city below

With a smash  
Ice splintered onto the ground  
With wide eyes I watch  
The ice smash  
A loud crash

My screen dimmed  
And the lights went out  
And I was scared  
As the bright city flickered out

Breelee Elliott  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

# 6th Grade Poetry

## *Chocolate Milk*

I love the taste  
of chocolate milk it's  
too good to be true

It has protein  
It's good for you  
It's healthy for  
Growing children

Also the taste  
once it hits your  
tongue it taste  
like heaven

It comes from  
cows so if  
you love animals  
you would love  
chocolate milk like  
me

I would wait 100  
hours to get the best  
Chocolate milk in the  
World.

Tallen Hobbs  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

# 6th Grade Poetry

*Darla*

\*Lick,Lick,Lick\* My alarm clock starts  
A new day has begun  
My alarm clock departs

\*Sniff,Sniff,Sniff\* her nose leads the way  
Breakfast is calling  
It's that time of day

\*Whine,Whine,Whine\* to the crate she must go  
To sleep and to wait  
The day drags so slow

\*Bark,Bark,Bark\* she is happy again  
Her humans are home  
Dinner will soon begin

\*Lick,Lick,Lick\* my alarm clock is set  
Darla is tired  
Her needs have been met

Dalton Mayne  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *Sailors*

The sailors gather round the fire  
The wind howls a ruthless roar  
The sailors jig in spite of the storm  
For they are joyful at their core

The sailors gather round the fire  
The waves slap the bow  
The sailors look towards the land  
“Don’t look back, just focus on now.”

The sailors gather round the fire  
They shower in the rain  
The sailors shut out everything else  
And power through the pain

The sailors gather round the fire  
They eat their stone cold glop  
With the waves splashing in their faces  
They drop the anchor with a plop!

The sailors gather round the fire  
They sit on through the night  
The lightning strikes it’s deadly pow’r  
And the sailors fear the thunder’s might

The sailors gather round the fire  
The boat is rockin’ left and right  
The foaming waters hit the deck  
And the sailors stare in fright

The sailors gather round the fire  
For they have hope for the glorious dawn  
Oh how long? You magnificent morning!  
And they have the courage to go on and on

Laura Beth McKinney  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

## 6th Grade Poetry

### *The Fish*

A fish what a wonderful shiny dish  
what a wish to catch a fish.  
oh such a wonderful  
big shiny dish

but so hard to catch such a shiny fish  
There's ghost, silver, and red snapper fish.  
What a big dish they can make.  
They fight like boxers,  
oh the ocean all ways housings such strong fish  
oh the ocean.

Phoenix Porter  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

# 6th Grade Poetry

## *Baseball*

Fresh cut grass,  
short and green,  
the smell in the air,  
do you know what I mean?

Red clay dirt  
around the field,  
good place to run,  
go, don't yield.

White chalk lines,  
drawn out so straight,  
from 3rd to home  
I just can't wait.

Ball in glove  
to make the catch,  
pop fly or grounder,  
this hit is no match.

Ball to bat,  
swing hard, don't miss,  
No game on earth  
is better than this.

Kaden Rungruang  
6th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Lauren Burnette

## 7th Grade Poetry

### *Beauty and Bitterness*

Wistfully wandering the rolling hills of the  
ocean,  
With caps of white and beyond is blinding blue,  
And deeper still is darker than the darkest night  
of winter.

Waves are heard slapping against the boat like  
a beating drum,  
While seagulls are serenading the seabed  
below.  
The salty air smells sweet and crisp as the  
morning.  
Touch the glistening water.  
It's as cold as ice but as warm as the firelight.  
It creates a world of mysteries and magic and  
of fear and freedom and everything in between.  
In times past the ocean has taken many  
captives.  
The winds will blow,  
The waves will surge hard as rock on the  
wooden frame.  
When finally the mast has fallen, though the  
crew protests,  
The ocean does not give mercy.  
It deftly yanks down the once beautiful ship to  
its watery demise.  
The ghastly grip of the ocean won't let anyone  
escape.  
One way or the other they won't awake.  
The ocean leaves a legacy of beauty and  
heartache.

Eliana Jones  
7th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

## 7th Grade Poetry

### *Epiphany*

No man can describe the pain that I hear  
Salt falls from my eyes onto my jeans  
That's seventeen today, I say  
Not counting the news leaks  
Only what I know and pray  
Holding onto gray amounts  
Of fragile fingers, losing count  
Something I can never speak about  
Hidden in the clean palace alone  
Finding nothing but a loss of my bleak hope  
That's forty two this week, i screech  
Made up for the fire blown  
Not counting what I haven't seen  
Folding scrubs through storm clouds now  
Beeping lines have flattened out  
Something we can never speak about  
I know this flight is not an option, please  
And neither is the fight, you see  
So we'll just freeze  
Waiting for some epiphany  
No mention of the heartbreaks we free  
Mom, it's not my fault, you see  
We broke down when we saw her fading plea  
Hold each other's hands right now  
Yes, I know they're crashing out  
But we have to be strong when we go out  
Hold onto the lightning now  
Families are falling down  
Some things we just will not speak about  
Flight is not a choice of feats  
Nor are the fights we decree  
Let us just freeze  
In this epiphany

Maddie Dixon

7th Grade

Grace Baptist Academy

Shana Ivarson

# 7th Grade Poetry

## *Untitled*

In the quiet meadows,  
In the tallest peak,  
And in the old great shack  
Where thunder weeps  
Here in this place where a blood moon rises,  
Why, why you may ask, this world sure is full of  
surprises,  
When the world turns red,  
And your blood boils,  
You know something truly terrible is about to  
happen,  
Because when a blood moon rises, blood has  
been spilt  
This blood is from war,  
War could be pointless, it usually may have a  
good reason,  
However in the end, the only thing war does is  
kill  
It is horrifying on how much blood could spill,  
War brings death, which is just a fact,  
But after the battles are won, they sign a pact  
There may be peace for years,  
But then you hear something that sparks your  
ears,  
And war is started again, and again, and again  
With no end and no limit,  
But people like to bend the humans they  
control  
And when that happens,  
The Blood moon rises

Ben Sallee

7th Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet

Sarah Andrews

## 7th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

Roses are red, violets are blue, I am dead and  
so are you.

There's a theory that we are all dead, our lives  
are flashing before our eyes, and that it's all in  
our head. Death took you into its dark depths,  
and death uses its deceiving charm to make  
you believe you are still alive.

And at the end of your memories' rope you no  
longer think, see, smell, taste. Just silence in  
the void of death.

May your soul pass to another place -Heaven or  
Hell- is unknown to everyone, but you.

Austin Tomya

7th Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet

Sarah Andrews

## 7th Grade Poetry

### *My Mother Is My Friend*

I trace my veins  
and circle my scars  
making small artistic shapes  
and drawings with my fingerprint.  
I think happy thoughts  
as I stare blankly at my ceiling.  
My mother asks me what is wrong  
and I say nothing.  
She sighs and says fine  
then she sways her hips  
in circles as she walks away,  
My mother and I have a dynamic,  
friend-like dynamics,  
she gets mad at me  
I get mad at her  
then we love each other afterwards,  
I love mine and my mother's friendship.  
It's brutal  
but it's brilliant  
and home.

Sandra James  
7th Grade  
Center for Creative Arts  
Mary LeDoux

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *Wisps of Condensed Air*

Wisps of condensed air illuminating the sky as a  
light would a room  
The light behind peeking through to look at the  
life below  
Covering the entire world's eyes like a big  
blanket  
Making the world look up in wonder

Their amazed gaze remained on the rays until  
they were invisible  
The soaring steam seemed spectacularly grand  
Even though the sight isn't unforeseen, it's  
always admired  
The view is unplanned but never gone  
undesired

Breanne Hood  
8th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Jason Williams

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *The Endless Run*

You're running with no escape.  
No energy.  
No explanation.  
The dull lifeless trees sharply contrast with the  
lush green grass beneath your feet.  
The wind is screaming in your face,  
As the darkness decides your fate.  
But you just run the endless run.  
It's like a predator chasing its prey  
but its prey just can't get away  
What are you running from?  
Your past?  
Yourself?  
You're confronted with a choice  
Take someone with you and survive this run,  
Or do this on your own and probably not make  
it home  
You do this on your own.  
BOOM!  
It's over  
You can't move.  
You can't speak.  
You couldn't do it alone.  
You needed someone to pick you up and help  
you home.  
You start thinking about everyone who meant  
everything to you.  
It's too late. It's like running the race you didn't  
train for.  
It's like running the race you knew you couldn't  
finish.  
It's like an endless run

Molly Payne  
8th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Jason Williams

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *The Life That is In Front of You*

What will happen in the end?  
What will you decide?  
She looked like a rose but was as sharp as the  
thorns  
Look at the life that is in front of you  
Can you make up your mind?  
A million thoughts at once, overflowing your  
head  
Chasing your very last goal  
What will you choose instead?  
The life that is in front of you, but is it enough?  
When you see the rest of them  
Will you be filled with envy? Wishing for more  
She treats them like an evil queen treats her  
peasants  
It won't ever be enough.  
You receive and receive, but do you ever give?  
They don't mean anything to you  
Crunch! crack!  
The rose has withered, they leave you behind  
Is it the way you treated them? Do you regret  
it?  
Would you go back and change the way you  
acted?  
The life that is in front of you  
It will never be enough.

Sadie Burnette  
8th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Jason Williams

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Fall is on Vacation*

As the days turn and weeks burn, fall is on  
vacation  
The leaves find a new color and sour down with  
the breeze  
And the leaves start to fall; they come down to  
your knees  
The forest does not halt, for it does not waste  
time  
It goes on until every single leaf has sunk in like  
grime  
When all the trees have undressed, and they  
don't look their best, fall is on vacation  
Through the forest, you hear the sound telling  
us that fall is on vacation  
From the clapping of the leaves on the ground  
To the howling of the magnificent hound  
From the crickets chirping and chirping  
  
To the ants lurking and working  
Then the birds leave with the gentle bees  
telling us fall is on vacation

Charles Martin  
8th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Jason Williams

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Rain*

The clouds are running to blanket the sky  
Gray and sad to the eyes.  
Animals find shelter, people hide  
From the fierceness brewing way up high.  
Drops of water begin to fall  
Like the avalanches in Canada.  
Loud like symphonies in Carnegie Hall  
And musical to the crying frog.  
With help from the wind, a relentless friend,  
The water gets louder and louder again.  
Leaves and sticks blowing round and round  
Until you hear its whooshing sound.  
Clouds departing no more drops dropping  
The wind has gone away.  
The frog cries no more and gray is gone  
Awaiting to come again.

Farrah Tran  
8th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Jason Williams

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Hope Be Blended*

When is it where and how is it only now not the  
time to begin the where and how?

Sentimental / Lucky number's 38 41 9 67 31 0 2  
49

The future is now and the now was when, and a  
stranger will show you that.

Best used by 6/30/08

"This fortune cookie is awful."

Cameron Kitts

8th Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet

Daniel Schmidt

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *Untitled*

Let's talk about cats and small little bats.  
The princess who laid on a hat,  
But never put it on her head yet always stayed  
in bed.  
Pineapples,  
Bananas,  
Tomato,  
Tomoto,  
I love the fall temperature and the tall trees  
getting miniature.  
The fall leaves form around me and the bees  
swarm all around me,  
One sting equals one ring.  
The sound of my dogs' paws as my brother  
rushes down the halls.  
He was yelling and screaming, and the monkeys  
were cleaning.  
Pancakes,  
Butterflies,  
Apple pie,  
I can see the dark dark night sky  
Hands held high, mom singing a lullaby.

Maggie Pollak  
8th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet  
Daniel Schmidt

## 8th Grade Poetry

*A bittersweet word...*

Hurt,

A bittersweet word that shows both where we  
have been, and where we are to go.

A dangerous, bittersweet word.

Like hot black coffee on the tip of your tongue,  
burning all around. yet leaving a strong  
distinctive taste on the tip of your tongue that  
we think of for days, as we try to heal.

Bitter.

When we are injured by this bittersweet pain  
over and over, we can lose the ability to heal.  
When you drink from that scalding hot cup so  
many times it leaves a stain on the teeth of the  
future.

If we let this stain keep us down, or hold us  
back, we will never be able to reach our full  
potential.

And we shall never get rid of the burning left in  
our mouths, crippling us and sealing our fates.

Delaney Arnold

8th Grade

Normal Park Museum Magnet School

Daniel Schmidt

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

It comes quick with no warning  
It's cold aura oh so haunting  
Will Thou live it's hard to say  
If Thou argue Thou seal your fate  
On the cold street haunting your dreams  
Thou beg Thou plead  
But deep down Thou know Thou agree  
You've done bad things  
Thou thought they'd never notice  
Thou may be cunning  
But there's no point in running  
Death will catch up  
It always does  
It comes fast  
With no warning  
Thou open the mast  
Set sail to the seas  
But it catches up  
As quickly as can be  
Thou panic  
Thou cower  
Thou gaze in terror  
Thou jump  
Trying to flee  
But it jumps  
Swimming after Thou  
Why do Thou run?  
Why do Thou hide?  
Thou know Thou cannot escape  
For death comes quick with no warning  
Thou swim deeper and deeper  
Trying to escape  
Death's cold grasp  
But Thou look back  
Only to see  
Death is not to be seen  
Then Thou realize  
Then Thou panic  
For now Thou know  
Thou are dead

Ben Kammerer  
8th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet  
Daniel Schmidt

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *Untitled*

This is a poem  
I like this poem  
Do you like this poem  
244 million kids around the world don't have an  
education  
They can't write this poem  
They can't read this poem  
I Like this poem  
Do you like this poem?

This is a poem  
I like this poem  
Do you like this poem  
811 million people don't know where their next  
meal is coming from  
They cant eat this poem  
They cant drink this poem  
I like this poem  
Do you like this poem?

Moses Windemuller  
8th Grade  
Normal Park Museum Magnet School  
Daniel Schmidt

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

Anger, fear, hurt, shame  
Love, laughter this all feels like game  
One day I'm joyous, and one day I'm not.  
My tears fill the rim of this drawn pot.  
I lose myself in flower beds while daydreaming  
of a life lived  
Slowly. I'm delicate like an orchid, each  
emotion  
Sprouting like the beautiful light colors  
And spread like the sheets on a bed.  
The sun nourishes me with kisses,  
Reminding me of the needless child I used to  
be.  
Why can't I be the person I seek to see?

KareA' Lawson  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Paige Phillips

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *Untitled*

I want to fall in love.  
And not with a person

In a romantic way  
I dont care to light candles  
And pluck roses  
And cuddle up and whisper sweet nothings  
I want to fall in love with living life.  
I want to fall in with the stars,  
And watching them twinkle saying hello to me  
every night.  
In between every blade of grass  
I will find crickets, grasshoppers, ladybugs, and  
even spiders having conversations.

I'll gossip to the moon about every joys and  
sorrows in life  
Ill call my dad every day  
And ill tell him that I skipped rocks  
Or watched a dumb movie  
Or scraped my knee trying to relearn how to  
roller skate  
But only because I want to fall in love

Georgia Clemons  
8th Grade  
East Ridge Middle School  
Audrey Laurell and Landry Smith

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Roll of thunder, hear my cry  
Or I by and by shall die,  
Here in the thick of the storm stand I  
Demanding why, why, why.

Roll of thunder, hear my cry  
Do you see me where I lie?  
Cast out of the frying pan, into the fire

I lay another stick on my funeral pyre.  
Roll of thunder, hear my cry  
Give me wings on which to fly,

Is there freedom from this place,  
From this prejudice, this disgrace?  
Roll of thunder, hear my cry  
Thunder is never forced to comply,  
Thunder never hides his face,  
Tell me thunder, where is grace?

Charis Lea  
Grade 8  
Maple Key Tutoring  
Rachel Lonas

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *A Free Verse Poem about Undertale*

lazy days, layin' about. bro is shouting for me to  
get out.  
mingling at grillby's, with my canine friends.  
bone tired of knowing it won't matter in the  
end.  
keep up that smile. keep up those puns.  
let the memories fade that you never could've  
won.  
joke around, walk around, guide a human to  
snowdin town.  
'cause i got a promise to keep, yknow.  
deja vu, feeling blue, visions of death, sorrow,  
of no tomorrow.  
judgment bells ringin', elegies singin'.  
flowers and demons, the pain i saw papyrus  
in....  
keep it up sans. just go with the flow.  
it's raining somewhere else, yknow.

Isaac Muriente

8th Grade

Chattanooga School for the Liberal Arts

Jill McDonald

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Ducks, Oh Ducks*

Ducks, oh ducks, with feathers so fine,  
Swimming and splashing in the pond,  
Their quacks and their waddles were a sight to  
behold,  
As they glide across the water, with grace, and  
with gold.

In the early morning, they take to the sky,  
Their wings beat the air, as they rise up high.  
With a flourish and a flutter, they disappear  
from sight,  
Leaving behind ripples on the surface of the  
water, bright.

But as the day wears on and the sun begins to  
set,  
They return once more, to the safety of their  
nest.  
With their young ones in tow, they settle down  
for the night,  
Ready to face the new day, with all their might.

So here's to ducks, our feathered friends,  
May our love for them never end.  
For they are indeed a wonder to behold,  
Bringing joy and beauty to the world, young  
and old.

Brandon Leach  
8th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Curtain Call*

“10 minutes until curtain”

My teacher pops in the door and scurries out

I hurriedly spray my crunchy curls for the millionth time

And glancing in the mirror

An unfamiliar reflection catches my eye

With my cat winged eyes with long black feathery eyelashes,

Bright pink blush on my powdered face, and lips painted as red as rubies

I brush down my green satin dress covered with tiny pink bows

I close my eyes and try to keep down the butterflies swarming around in my stomach

And my heart beating out of my chest

Three more deep breaths...1..2..3..

I open my eyes and walk out the door to back stage

All my fears melt away once the curtain rolls up and the music I recognize fills my ears

The blinding spotlight shines on my smiling face and I feel like I'm floating

Into the world of sugarplum fairies and snow angels

Twirling in my dress, my feet take off into the air

This is what I've worked for

Hours of sweat, sore toes, and repetition...

1..2..3..

Spreading my arms like branches on a tree

As soon as it started,

I'm off the stage and feel adrenaline rushing through me

and I want to go back out to the applauding audience

I picture three year old me feeling the same as I do now

Performing in a little auditorium

With tiny pink slippers half the size of my feet

Waiting for this part

And now I can exhale. 1..2..3..

Ashley Yim

8th Grade

Baylor School

Henry Blue

# 8th Grade Poetry

*Insert Title Here*

Draft due at the end of class  
A clean white paper sits at my desk  
My shoulders sag as I welcome my old friend:  
Writer's block

Mind as blank as my paper,  
My eyes wander to my hard working classmates  
Their number two pencils working tirelessly  
As I turn my own pencil in my hands

The scratches of their pencils can easily be  
heard over my nonexistent thoughts  
The giant wall blocking my creative flow lets a  
whisper of an idea come to me  
But the weak thought withers as my mind  
continues to wander  
Focus

What's left of my brain gets up and walks out of  
the classroom  
Miles behind the rest of my class  
I scour my memory for an inkling of an idea  
But I come up empty-handed

On the verge of a complete breakdown,  
I feel as dumb as a doorknob  
Unexpected rage flairs

The frustration slowly subsides  
I look down at my blank paper and sigh  
I close my eyes  
The almost silent room lets the thoughts echo  
in my head  
Focus

As the rest of the kids pack up  
The mental road block gradually moves away  
And the light switch finally flips on

Caroline Daniel  
8th Grade  
Baylor School  
Henry Blue

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *The Lord's Castle*

In that castle with walls so thick I was trapped  
My darkness tormenting me day in and day out  
I would run in panic but it would always follow  
I was hopeless in pain and sorrow  
When one day I heard a calming voice  
It called out my name  
My chains broke; I was free  
I ran with all my might toward the voice  
The darkness was right behind me  
I could hear it's screams and wails  
Reaching its claws out to me  
Trying to pull me back to it  
But every time it missed  
I burst through the doors of the castle  
I was suddenly pulled up to safety  
It was by the calming voice I had heard  
Only it wasn't just a voice or a light  
It was a person my Savior  
But with them was an army  
They did what I couldn't  
They defeated my darkness and took back the  
castle  
I was taught to fight in his army  
I learned their ways  
Now my castle is the Lord's  
For he set me free  
I fight with my Lord to save captives  
I have joined his army and work daily to add to  
his kingdom  
He has made me his child and adopted me into  
his family  
Now whenever the darkness tries to come back  
Or I have nightmares  
He is there to protect me  
His voice calms me  
For he is my Father and I am his child  
I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Abigail R. Laskowski  
8th Grade  
Grace Baptist Academy  
Shana Ivarson

## 8th Grade Poetry

*Untitled*

Stuck.

Knee to chest, strain to hope

Step by step, strain to hope

Lift yourself from each plate

From each loss

And from each fate

Push forward, push to hope

Hands outward, push to hope

Move yourself to the future

For each loss

And for each fate

And then, you can hope

Step again

And then, you can hope

Push again

And then you are

Stuck

Feet cemented together alone

Spiral down

Down

Down

Reach up, hold on to hope

Keep your eyes open, hold on to hope

How long? How long until what?

Are you hungry? Hungry for what?

I'm starving, satiated by nothing

The emptiness hurts, in waves

Again and again

My stomach is smaller than a pinprick

Drier than a prune

What was I hoping for?

I'm stuck and starving

I've eaten all hope.

Margo Windemuller

8th Grade

Chattanooga Christian School

Christy Piersant

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Death by Two Halves*

New reaper-  
Deadly beauty under the light  
Hidden secrets play at midnight  
Roses dance among the posies  
I Strung myself up  
It hurts it hurns  
As I always say

Was It worth the wait?  
A teardrop  
I sit still in the *tree*  
Dead  
Hung up but alive

Happy but crying  
Please help I'm dying  
No  
Among the living or among the dead?  
The ones who pay the price we earned

Under the *Oak Tree*  
String up unliving

-Old Reaper  
Deadly beauty in the Night  
There's nothing but the deadly moonlight  
Roses dead among the posies  
I held myself down  
I wish I could Feel  
Death has its ways

Was it worth the while?  
A bloodstain  
I sit under my *favorite tree*  
Living  
Alive but unliving

Sad but smiling  
Do you think it was worth the wait?  
Do you want to be among the living  
Can't you tell what we are?  
You earned your place

In my *favorite tree*  
Dead but alive

Chelsea Eldridge  
8th Grade  
East Ridge Middle School  
Madisyn Bullard and Evan Kelsey

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Below the Grave Within a Flower*

The dripping water from above reminds me of that day,

And they flowed to the floor along with the tears on my face.

The sadness was not wholly mine, and the miners around me groaned.

I chose death over their lives.

Then the messenger of death covered my whole body with his wings.

My body seemed immersed in darkness for a while, and the shadow of the wing made me shrink.

My voice echoed back from a lot of souls.

Her voice seemed to be heard even in the buried stones,

and I answered with my voice.

But the voices echoed through the collapsed mines, and all the messengers of death, including my wife, could hear them.

I found my wife in the locked glass vase in the collapsed mine.

It was as if the death's messenger released the black roses and guided me through my journey.

My voice echoed back from a lot of souls.

The red roses of the locked wife in the glass vase were like the red pomegranate of the god of death.

Even though it was in a glass vase, it was always alive.

She wasn't alive, but I could feel her love.

Nonetheless, my voice echoed back from a lot of souls.

My wife wanted to see the sun.

In front of that glowing sunset, she wanted to shine like the red stranger.

I was ready to give her to a mysterious stranger, I knew the way out.

My voice echoed only a little, and whispers echoed.

We had to climb a pile of collapsed stones. Now that my voice no longer echoes back, All the souls and miners wanted me to turn around and be with them.

The messenger of death spread his wings and flew up.

When the messenger of death flew up, two pieces of stone fell.

One piece fell and broke my wife's vase, and another fell with a large rock and crushed my right arm.

I knew my right arm would go with them.

They would have tried to swallow me with the waves from the darkest sea if I had started still.

But a fallen piece of glass reflected a stranger deep underground.

I started cutting my right arm with a piece of red glass,

I had a red rose in my mouth.

The blood separated from the sanctuary reflected in their eyes,

And the black sea turned into a red sea and swallowed me.

My voice was no longer heard.

My fragmented hand greeted the stranger. The rose was still in my mouth,

and I welcomed the stranger with it.

I lost my wife and my right arm, but I got the sun shining in my hands.

I heard no more whispers.

Instead, the red rye gave me a red song.

Ki Ryeon Han

8th Grade

East Hamilton Middle School

Melissa Smith

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *Bag of Bananas*

The monkey looks down at his pile of bananas  
A wave of confusion floods his mind  
The monkey should feel happy for his succes  
All his hard work finally paid off  
All the late nights

All the friends lost  
All his struggles along the way  
Was it all worth the bag?  
The monkey begins to question his succes  
He has so many bananas they have lost value in  
his eyes

The monkey feels alone  
The bananas dont keep him company

Julian Miranda  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Melissa Smith

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Sobbing on the bathroom floor*

I wish you could still be there for me  
I wish I could still be there for you  
But you make it so hard for me to  
You just pushed me away  
Now I'm just so grey  
including  
Sobbing on the bathroom floor.  
Body quivering,  
Thoughts withering,  
Head throbbing from the constant bawl  
I don't know what to do without you  
I have so much free time now  
Now that I don't spend every ounce of my day  
Talking to you  
No one can replace you  
My heart still aches everyday  
Especially when I hear your name  
Or when I see you,  
Everything comes back  
All at once  
All those nights  
We used to spend talking to each other  
Constantly  
You made me feel so whole  
Like the piece of me that has always been  
missing  
Was now there  
But now  
Your gone  
And I'm sobbing on the bathroom floor

Annie Roth  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Melissa Smith

# 8th Grade Poetry

## *Things My Teacher Says*

Mrs. Dennis  
is a menace  
I'm lowkey a baddie  
My teacher said she likes Zach's daddy  
I saw a dr. Pepper and I drank it  
Teach said naughty things happen under  
blankets  
I don't like people who act aggressively  
She said You can't leave the classroom unless  
you have to poop excessively  
I hit the golf ball and yell "FORE"  
She says naughty stuff happens on the floor  
Newbies have cooties that are smelly  
She says No boobies, booties, or bellys  
My favorite star wars character is boba fet  
She asks if we've found the kids in the factory  
yet  
Mrs. Dennis  
is a menace

Cooper Bottoms  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Mark Pace

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

Fall asleep and  
Look for what you seek  
Or Be Wake  
But that is a mistake  
Sleep so your not weak  
Or wake and you might flake  
And when the day decays  
And it's time for sleep  
Look forward to what you might find  
In your mind

Aden Fernandez  
8th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Mark Pace

## 8th Grade Poetry

### *Untitled*

Inspired by Rudyard Kipling's "If"

If you can get in your car and head to the store,  
    Then buy a patty, and then grab one more.  
If you can go get some lettuce and maybe some  
tomatoes,  
    Go get some fries, made fresh from potatoes.  
If you can go to the sauce isle and pick your  
favorite one,  
    Then go one aisle over and grab a good bun.  
If you can go to the dairy section and buy some  
cheese,  
    Now you can make your way home, you have  
everything you need.  
If you can turn on the grill so it's not cold as ice,  
    Then start cooking your burger, don't forget  
the fries.  
If you can tost up the bun and make it look nice,  
    Then sauce up the bun, add a bit of spice if  
you'd like.  
If you can layer the burger, put everything on,  
    Now grab the burger, you're almost done!  
Now look at your burger and bite it with glee,  
    And - what is more - you've made a burger,  
my g.

Fisher Keene

8th Grade

East Hamilton Middle

Mark Pace

## 9th Grade Poetry

### *The Maple Tree*

There is a certain maple tree  
That has a certain limb  
And on that limb the birds do sit  
And sing their seasonal hymn.

In winter comes the cardinal  
Feathered crest on his downy head  
He trills happily in the cold air  
Cheering the gray world with his spot of red.

The hummingbird returns in spring  
Twittering his little song  
He perches on the maple's limb  
But he doesn't stay there long.

Summer brings the goldfinch  
Yellow wings soaring through the air  
Seeing the maple tree, he decides  
He should raise his little family there.

Autumn welcomes the sparrow  
A little brown bird is he  
He chirps his cheery song to all  
From the limb of the maple tree.

There is a certain maple tree  
That has a certain limb  
And on that limb the birds do sit  
And sing their seasonal hymn.

Charlette Aitken  
9th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

## 9th Grade Poetry

### *Dreams Of The Future In the Past*

Like the snow that fell upon our car that night  
Day-dreams fly and dance in my head,  
One, then the other, then another.  
My mind soars into the chaos of my  
imagination.

Through lands far away,  
Things I've only experienced in made-up reality.  
I want to go where nobody knows my name  
And live a life I haven't.

Under the stars and their silent souls  
Facing the fading sun and its reddish rays  
Watching as the disappointed trees reach their  
Arms to the sky, unable to block the fiery light.

Songs whirl through my memory, reminding  
Me of the places I have been.  
Driving back under neon lights  
In the hourglass to the time  
When I didn't know what I do now.

Nothing mattered, only  
The color blue,  
The speed I had,  
And the age I wasn't.

Talia Carrillo  
9th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

# 9th Grade Poetry

## *Monday*

Monday is the weekly equivalent of the day  
after Christmas.  
It smells like work left from the previous day.  
It smells like anything but fresh air.  
It tastes like leftovers from the weekend  
restaurant visit.  
It tastes like gum that lost its flavor hours ago.  
It sounds like the ticking of the clock, slowly,  
seemingly endlessly.  
It sounds like gray noise, deep and persistent.  
It feels like room temperature water, shallow  
and boring.  
It feels like warm plastic, simply  
uncomfortable.  
It looks gray, like clouds blocking the sun.  
It looks familiar, too familiar.

Kai Baker  
9th Grade  
Chattanooga School for the Liberal Arts  
Jessica Wooten

## 9th Grade Poetry

### *Something Special*

The day begins with the orange sun rising  
above the mountains like a fire from wood  
It's soft morning light reflects off the lake in  
front  
As the smell of coffee flows through the  
morning breeze  
My owner rocks back and forth while the porch  
creaks below him  
Without fail every day he goes to the feed  
these magnificent beasts  
They stand tall like a mountain, with its rocky  
shoulders  
Strong as an oak standing out in the forest  
But somehow he has managed to tame the  
beasts  
The breeze from the lake blows through their  
manes flowing like leaves on a tree  
“Horses” he calls them, a mystery to me how  
they eat the green of the ground  
All the other creatures he calls the names by  
the masses “pigs, cattle, and hens”  
But he calls me something special, he calls me  
“Leroy.”

Ryan Beavers  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

## 9th Grade Poetry

### *Alvin the Deviant*

Alvin is a troublemaker  
Creator of tomfoolery  
He destroys everything that he decides he  
doesn't like with a boom  
He's like a shadow in the dark  
Only faintly seen with his short gray fur  
He is short and thin  
His throne is a trash can which he destroys  
normally  
He sits high up as if to say he's better than  
everyone else  
And if you try to overthrow him, he attacks you  
He sneaks up on you and follows you in still  
silence  
Waiting for the time to strike  
Then he claws and bites and then runs

Cooper Edwards  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

# 9th Grade Poetry

## *Best Friends*

Five teenage girls  
By the water  
As the sun reflects off of it  
Standing in the sand  
Wearing fancy dresses

Some are shimmery or have beads  
Two blue one black and a green and purple  
They are filled with laughter  
as the wind is blowing the curls in their hair

Some girls have flowers  
Holding them tight in their hands  
One is pink and the other is white

Look like they are about to go to a dance  
And will dance until their legs give out  
Because they are probably all best friends

Kora Neighbors  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

## 9th Grade Poetry

### *Just Me and My Dad*

My white blonde hair with bangs  
In two pigtails  
And bright blue eyes  
In a pink shirt and yellow shorts  
Scared as I could be

On a ride  
Sitting in the seat

Next to me was my dad  
Shaved head  
Pattern shirt and khakis  
Laughing at me  
And holding my hand

Madi Bowling  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

# 9th Grade Poetry

## *The Catch*

Late in the evening on a crisp fall day  
The sun began to set on the horizon  
The skyline was as colorful as a rainbow  
With shades of oranges and pinks.

The water was as still as a mouse  
I had my fishing pole in hand  
Ready for the catch of my life  
Time was running out, darkness was near

My arms grew tired as I cast time after time  
Not even a nibble, not even a bite  
I could see the ripples as fish swam around  
Then a snapping turtle broke the surface

As I packed up my tackle I thought one last time  
Then my line grew tight and I reeled for dear  
life  
I thought it was the turtle but no  
Up came the large-mouth bass so sweet and  
fine

Connor Mirabella  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

# 9th Grade Poetry

## *Windy Autumn Day*

It was a windy autumn day, just chilly enough  
to give me goosebumps  
As I took a step outside, I heard a subtle crunch  
beneath my feet  
Amber colored leaves, a blanket over the soft  
earth  
Protecting the critters until spring arrives, until  
the sun shows himself once again

The trees were covered with these fire-like  
leaves  
Almost as if they were infused with the sun's  
flames  
Everything seemed so still, as if time had  
suddenly stopped  
Nothing dared to move, not even the birds in  
the trees

As I began walking down this path, a sound  
caught my attention  
It wasn't an animal, nor was it a human, but a  
small black cricket  
This little critter was all alone, but singing such  
an alluring song  
A song I never would have imagined having  
come from such a miniscule thing

Slowly, I realized a sense of calmness had  
overwhelmed me  
This gravel path was seemingly never-ending  
I could have ran down this dirt road for an  
eternity without ever finding the end  
Walking down this road, all alone, just me and  
the trees

Alyssa Fischer  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

## 9th Grade Poetry

### *The Night with The Stars*

In the light with the boys  
With a bow tie and a fresh cut  
This moment so uncommon grinding  
The white shirt is like a white flower

I felt confident, ready to rizz  
Me and the guys felt so sharp  
You could cut wood off us  
I felt so relaxed and calm

I was going into the night good  
Music was like someone screaming in your ear  
It was packed like a concert  
It was a special night for the moonlight

Kobe Jackson  
9th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Joy Fisk

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *Nirvana of the Modern World*

Put your records on and mute the radio  
It doesn't play the music you like  
Besides the commercials have become  
    Way  
        Too  
            Much  
The record got boring  
As many things do in this day and age  
You flip the tv on only to find  
The president got older  
the world got hotter  
It has all become  
    Way  
        Too  
            Much  
So much so your record snapped and melted  
So even if you wanted to listen  
You can't  
The TV volume increases  
The house starts to shake  
It  
    All  
        Falls  
            Down  
Emerge from the rubble  
Run in the silence  
Only to realize  
You're back where you started  
And the radio starts to play  
The record is intact  
And the tv is ready to be played, paused and  
replayed  
And this will go on  
    Till  
        Something  
            Actually  
                Changes  
And as you have learned time and time again  
I will stay here  
And watch you lose it

Till  
    Something  
        In you  
            Actually  
                Changes

Katie Dungan  
10th Grade  
Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts  
Meri Sowders

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *What Could Have Been*

A family stands solemnly in a half circle.  
A mom. A dad. A son. Two daughters.  
Tears roll off of their faces and sink into the  
grass below.  
Five people in a family.  
My family.  
We stare at a grave marker.  
Four names.  
Four sons.  
Four brothers.  
Four baby boys gone without a whisper.  
Grief is a funny thing.  
Why do my sister and I grieve for brothers we  
never met?  
Who died years before we were born?  
My dad kneels to brush the grass off their  
names.  
My mom bows her head, perhaps lost in  
unpleasant memories.  
My sister snuffles, her eyes red as she clings to  
my brother's arm.  
My brother lays a reassuring hand on my  
mom's back.  
I ponder what could have been.  
What it would have been like to be nine people  
in a family.  
My family.  
I wonder if they would have all looked the  
same.  
Four identical boys causing mischief.  
Or maybe they would have been responsible  
and sweet.  
Maybe a mix of the two.  
They would have looked similar to each other, I  
think.  
Tall and sturdy.  
Dark brown hair, wavy and thick.  
Freckles kissing their cheeks and noses.  
Blue or maybe Hazel eyes.  
Or maybe not.  
Genetics are a funny thing.  
Would we have gotten along?

Would they have been protective of me?  
Or would we have grown up as strangers under  
one roof?  
I like to think that we would be friends.  
Forging the special bonds that brothers and  
sisters do.  
They would have driven me around,  
Blasting music as the wind playfully tugged at  
our hair.  
I would have sat on the floor in front of them as  
they played video games,  
cheering no matter who won.  
We would have stayed up late to talk,  
Each of us offering our own opinions.  
I would have cried when they left the house for  
college all at once.  
I would have texted them every day when we  
became adults,  
when we never saw each other anymore.  
But...  
It just didn't work out that way.  
We are only five people in a family.  
Staring at a grave marker  
and grieving for what could have been.

Nora Stone  
10th Grade  
Boyd Buchanan School  
Temple Davis

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *The Little Bird*

Little little bird  
Tiny tiny wings  
Squeaky squeaky chirp  
I hear between the leaves and things

Little little bird  
Lifting lifting wings  
Takes off to the air  
Flapping flapping free

Little little bird  
Tell me tell me now  
Do you like the wind?  
Do you like the sound?

Little little bird  
Are you truly free?  
Little little bird  
Tell these things to me

The humans believe you live the privileged life  
Without a restriction guiding your little little  
time  
But what of the eagle that rides up high?  
Or the cats that hide in the night?  
And what of the flinches at a stir of grass?  
Why do you not sing when a cloud pass?

Little little bird  
Tell me tell me now  
Are you the true freedom?  
Are you truly safe and sound?

Olivia "Koa" Harrell  
10th Grade  
East Hamilton Middle School  
Kelly McElhiney

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *Wintertide Splendor*

Gloomy, gray clouds stalwartly appear,  
partially exposing a forgotten sun.  
The longer days of harvest and turning vibrant  
leaves are done.  
After the bright, colorful parade of autumnal  
colors have become her,  
The tranquility is perceptible as nature enjoys  
her brumal slumber.  
Winter creeps in. Bone-chilling cold as a thief in  
the night  
Ushering in crisp, frosty mornings enshrouded  
in white.  
Jade holly leaves jeweled with ruby red pearls  
enveloped in the dust of diamonds – snow  
Signaling the moment the pan of Jack Frost will  
most melodiously blow.  
Hopeful blue jays sit perched on naked  
branches  
As the frigid wind triumphantly puffs upon its  
flute and dances.  
Ice-covered tree limbs resemble a wonderland  
of light.  
Such blank-slated beauty shines in this plight.  
Crystal nights create magic in the biting air  
As shivering trees creak and sway with  
simplistic, majestic flair.  
It is a time to rest, to rejuvenate, and to borrow  
Peaceful quietude as distractions are absorbed  
deep inside the snow.  
It is a period of beauty and struggle and letting  
go.

John Wood  
10th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *House of Possibilities*

In a house of possibilities  
There's a man who backward talks,  
A duck that backward walks,  
And a weird pair of backward socks.  
There's a cat that never lands on its feet,  
A dog that looks very neat,  
One brightly orange cleat,  
And a bad smelling beat.  
There's an elephant with toes,  
A giraffe that shoots bows,  
Luckily there's no foes,  
In a house of infinite possibilities.

Ryder Haustein  
10th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *A walk around the block*

The lonely call of the crow  
The leaves crunching under my shoe  
The trees swaying in the wind  
The cold thin air  
The crisp burning inhale  
The foggy exhale  
Nature is a way of life  
The slightly sweet smell from the flowers  
The brown in the trees  
The red in the leaves  
Nature is a way of life  
The cold numb fingers  
The play of a child  
The tightness in the body  
Nature is a way of life  
Lonely and gray or Happy and green  
Calming and white or the colors of spring  
No matter what...  
Nature is a way of life

Brady Clift  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Poetry

*pathetic*

i have cotton candy cheeks  
and a knack for silly tricks  
you'll like me again for a couple of weeks  
i'm just a scratch you like to itch

i'll be balloon girl  
please just hold the string  
i make you roller-coaster wanna hurl  
shove me off when i start to cling

it's my habit to always love more  
the one still dancing when the curtain drops  
it won't be a shock when you stroll out the door  
i go back to sitting with the props

Cylia Baggett  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *A Lost Purpose*

A wasteland  
Sounds of fire cracking.  
Bodies on the ground  
A field of lives lost  
Aftermath of a generational rivalry ended.

A warrior  
That's all he's ever been.  
standing alone  
No hope, No purpose.

He longs for, but dreads going home  
The journey begins  
No plan or path to follow.  
All he's ever known, gone  
A warrior he is no more.

Caleb Askew  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *Sadness*

Sadness is like a vine  
It climbs into our souls  
When hope is lost that vine climbs up  
It brings the sorrow of life  
That keeps our hearts in misery  
The vine keeps growing  
In every walk of life  
Sometimes it dies away  
But it always comes back  
To haunt us

Julia Mayo  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *Long Halls*

She walked the long halls  
Lockers shutting and people talking  
She felt a part of the crowd but still alone  
It was a strange and foreign feeling to her  
Moving wasn't her idea  
A new school was never her plan  
But here she was  
A new state, new school, and new people  
Everything pointed back to her lonely feeling  
How could she escape it?  
It was consuming her thoughts  
Wrapping her up in a blanket of insecurity and  
sadness  
Was there light at the end of the tunnel?  
Her mind filled with thoughts  
The ring of the bell stopped her in her tracks  
She could not be late for her first class

Anna Kate Thomas  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 10th Grade Poetry

## *The Afflicted Soul*

1

Hear my prayer, [REDACTED]

2

[REDACTED] I am in distress.

[REDACTED] answer [REDACTED] quickly.

3

[REDACTED] my [REDACTED]  
my bones burn like glowing embers.

4

[REDACTED]  
I [REDACTED] eat [REDACTED]

5

In [REDACTED] distress I groan [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] reduced to skin and bones.

6

I am [REDACTED]

7

[REDACTED] alone [REDACTED]

8

All [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] use my name as a  
curse.

9

[REDACTED] ashes [REDACTED]  
and [REDACTED] tears

10

[REDACTED] thrown [REDACTED]  
aside.

11

[REDACTED]  
I wither away [REDACTED]

Kaeden Arbuckle  
10th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Corley Humphrey

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Comes Out Wrong*

I remember how, one morning,  
I woke up and it felt different  
Nothing sounded the same  
And my tongue felt strange in my mouth

Every day since, I can't get things to settle right  
I look in the mirror and the man in it seems  
tired  
Not because he's older, that's a given

It's because of the bags under his eyes  
The bedhead and stubble don't help either

When he speaks, his voice stays so low  
And it seems like he never speaks up

And by now, he's tired of the wordplay  
So much so that I quit  
When it's a gamble of whether or not the words  
come out right  
I'd rather put things bluntly

But that's the worst part  
Because I can remember how it was  
Entranced in all the bits and pieces of a  
thought  
Throwing it all together for a great big bonfire

By now there's only embers  
And they don't dance, either  
They're just holding on, simmering  
Coughed out of the charcoal like an  
afterthought

If I'd only blow on them, they may burn again  
And maybe my voice won't come out thin  
If I play with the words, what will the man in the  
mirror think then?

Levi Adcock  
11th Grade  
Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts  
Meri Sowders

## 11th Grade Poetry

### *In Ink, Will It Stay?*

Ink or graphite spills words onto pages,  
Desperately trying to keep up with minds' fast  
paces;  
Some people write, others do not;  
Some writing is bought or sought,  
Some text is read all over the world,  
The sharing of stories, ideas, or ideals,  
Fiction or nonfiction,  
Or something in between,  
Truly the pen is a wonderful thing;  
History can now be preserved for generations,  
From the mass amount of copies,  
We cannot change history to our narration.  
No longer will stories,  
Be forgotten with the aged,  
But forever remembered,  
In ink, will it stay?

Carolina Shank  
11th Grade  
Homeschool  
Teresa Shank

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Going Home*

You're underwater  
And you can't breathe  
You push up, down, left, right  
Salt stings your eyes but you still can't see  
Your brain is swimming  
Thrashing each limb every way  
This time there's no point in winning  
Your vision begins to fade away  
Lungs choking for air  
Look how low you've sunk into despair  
In a last effort you struggle to make it  
You've gotta make it to the top  
But suddenly you just

stop

"It's fine," you say,  
"I'm going home today,  
And even if I don't,  
I'll try again anyway."

So then everything slows  
You feel every way the water flows  
Gently prying open your eyes  
Soon the burning subsides  
And then there's just

you

Time is irrelevant down here in the blue  
The warmth of the current wraps 'round like a  
hug  
You thought it'd be easy but your heart feels a  
tug  
Suspended in oceans of tears by a loving grasp  
Death, holding you with motherly tenderness,  
rasps  
intangible words, anguish and sorrow seeping  
through her voice  
So with a forgiving push, you surface the  
watery grave  
Sputtering and gasping to life by her choice

An ethereal whisper wafts through the waves  
"Darling, you can't come home just yet."

Grace Garcia  
11th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

## 11th Grade Poetry

### *Echo*

I'm convinced that I am nothing but an echo.  
I am every word written in cursive on birthday  
cards,  
I am every heart I've ever broken,  
I'm my mother's smile;  
When the poets wrote of love and rage and life,  
I'm convinced I echo them, there's dust where  
my footprints used to be;  
my voice bounces of the generations behind  
me;  
Listen, I echo every person I've ever loved.

Ansley Waters  
11th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Winter*

The wild wind whipped through the chilly air  
The fleeting fall leaves vanished from the  
ground  
The trees are skeletons, their branches bare  
A blanket of white covers all around

The sunlight clings on and tries to resist  
More and more the light of day grows shorter  
Darkness holds the earth in her iron fist  
Despite the sun's best attempt to thwart her

The temperature is twenty degrees  
Bears begin to hibernate and retire  
The squirrels have stored up nuts in their trees  
People gather around a roaring fire

The spirit of Christmas has been revived  
The season of winter has now arrived

Noah Tew  
11th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Kyndall Squires

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Rushing River*

A myriad of colors—deep blues, greens  
Winding its way across miles of mountains  
Filled with countless creatures, scores unseen,  
Its depth is unknown, unlike a fountain's

Jump into the water—first lukewarm, then cold  
Fill your lungs with air, submerge from head to  
toe  
The current is strong, it grabs and takes ahold  
As you start to float up, you look down below

You begin to pump your arms, faster and faster  
You hear the swish-swish caused by each  
stroke  
For a moment, you fear you're stuck like plaster  
But then you break the surface—that was no  
joke

Its might and splendor cause you to shiver  
As you swim in the Tennessee River.

Ellie Tucker  
11th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Kyndall Squires

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *The Cycle of the Seasons*

Flowers burst forth as the sun kisses their  
cheeks;  
Soft winds carry the scent of coming rain;  
Gleeful songs are heard coming from birds'  
beaks;  
The Earth welcomes new life once again.

Trees are full of radiant green leaves;  
The sun exhales deep breaths of scorching air;  
The sky stays light long into the eves;  
All are content, from the bee to the bear.

Summer melts into scarlet, orange, and gold;  
Leaves fall with grace to their final resting  
place;  
The air holds a hint of hot, a hint of cold;  
A squirrel adds more acorns to his stash, just in  
case.

Bare branches sparkle with fresh snow;  
Flowers long for the days when they will once  
again grow.

Ava Turner  
11th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Kyndall Squires

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Home of Ink*

Books adorn the walls  
And across the floor, they sprawl  
Ink floods my vision  
Filling my senses  
Engulfing the outside world  
Stopping the world's offenses  
Reality fails and falls  
Leaving me carved out  
Open to the torn spines  
And worn-down pages  
Covered in tear stains and messy writing  
Echoing with laughter and sorrow  
Excitement and anguish

The drowning darkness that left me desperate  
fades  
Bringing Prometheus's gift  
Filling me with fire and unending excitement  
Lifting me above the shifting waters of reality  
And sitting me with the stars  
Giving me peace and happiness  
In my home of ink and fading scars

Chris Margraves  
11th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Kyndall Squires

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Nature*

The trees are leafless and lifeless this late in  
the year  
They are pushed back and forth in the cold  
winter air  
The plant is waiting for warmth for its colors to  
reappear  
Sharp blades of fading green grass will soon  
disappear

I hear the faint chirping of birds perched on  
branches  
and a white picket fence,  
They are ready and packed for their long  
awaited winter vacation

The trees are not alone in their gradual loss of  
radiance  
The sky too, has lost much of its bright, blue  
brilliance  
Flowers forgotten like a faded memory  
But the vibrance will return in the new year

Noah Hendrix  
11th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Kyndall Squires

# 11th Grade Poetry

## *Morning Tea*

The warming breeze moves teasingly through  
like an old friend  
A Babbling brook goes on and on about it's  
morning  
The sunrise greets it's old friends with a vibrant  
conversation of pinks and oranges  
The squirrels leap on the shoulders of their  
friends enjoying the warmth of the  
conversation  
The birds squawked with great criticism  
The squirrels bark back judgment  
Darkening clouds voice their disapproval  
sending rain as punishment  
Causing the barking squirrels to hurry within  
the old reliable oak tree  
The birds sit sorrowfully on its branches, cold  
with separation  
Judgment ceases and the birds begin to  
welcome back the old warm breeze and the  
chattering  
squirrels.

Timothy Connor  
11th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Kyndall Squires

## 12th Grade Poetry

### *Poem for my favorite painting*

As I look out, I meditate  
So many years ago; hatred stirs up  
Sighing, looking at the sunset  
So pretty but yet the truth remains  
All around me tree and grass  
Sky all alight with last rays of sun  
Near this structured edifice, I never had fun  
This beautiful place I never knew  
Is a gracious home to many, but yet so few  
Father on the left and mother on the right  
The gallant trees over their resting place  
Tears fall, but none know naught  
Why I weep on a glorious night  
I stand in between, arrayed in stone  
I never did or do seek revenge  
I am pest to the world or so the world says  
Aye, the world goes on as the sun sets  
But I lay knowing of true beauty in the making

Mark Laurell  
12th Grade  
Hilger Higher Learning  
Shelley George

# 12th Grade Poetry

## *Lemonade Dreams*

I stand on the beach with a glass of fizzy  
lemonade in hand,  
My hair and golden sundress  
Swaying back and forth,  
Back and forth in the wind  
And I cannot help but wonder if somewhere  
along my way  
I made the wrong choice  
Took the wrong path.  
I imagine what it would be like to stand  
somewhere else,  
Not here, but somewhere far away  
And as I walk  
I feel the sand collapse underneath my feet  
Just like the dreams I had long ago.  
The sun beats down  
And the weight of the decision, the wrong  
choice  
Beats in time with my aching heart  
Lub, dub. Lub, dub. Lub, dub.  
Maybe it's the lemonade.  
There is no alcohol, but maybe the fizziness is  
getting to my head  
I've made it this far, what's another step?  
I'm going in the right direction. I'm taking the  
right-  
Crash  
-path.  
But am I?  
The lemonade falls to the ground,  
Shards of glass next to my feet  
And my shoes are now stained, sickly sweet,  
and yellow.  
The beverage fizzes out and becomes flat  
Just like the truth behind this life.  
I know the truth in that moment.  
I have to go back.

Erica Littleton  
12th Grade  
Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts  
Meri Sowders

# 12th Grade Poetry

## *Rainy Days*

The sun  
Lighting with its shine  
Rays of joy hitting the earth  
Molding moods with design

A gleam of “glee”  
Deceiving those beneath  
Hot and bright  
Leaving only a heath

Dark clouds  
Engulfing the light  
Soft rain drizzles  
Resulting in a plight

The rain  
Giving life relief  
Colors the world  
But it is not the belief

Sorrow  
Striking with fierceness  
Creates a world of black and white  
Stripping away the clearness

Peacefulness  
Brought by rain  
Calming the souls of Earth  
Taking away the pain

Misunderstood  
Darkness brings light  
Drips of content  
Leaving life bright

Brooke Williford  
12th Grade  
Sale Creek High School  
Jerry Harwood

# 12th Grade Poetry

## Double Side Cards - A Reverse Poem

Wanting to let go of my hand  
I am never  
Excited to play  
I am always  
Suffering  
It diminishes  
The best of me  
This game brings up  
The hard times  
It destroys  
The great memories I have  
Stop  
I don't want to  
Play more often  
If only I can  
Rest  
I don't want to  
Continue  
I want to  
Give up...  
However, I cannot  
This game is hard;  
Never ends!  
No matter how hard I try, it  
Becomes monotonous  
It's never  
Okay, and  
Fate says it's  
The luck of the draw, which  
I don't have

Zachary Pham  
12th Grade  
Red Bank High School  
Kelli Logue

# 12th Grade Poetry

## *Macbeth*

The king is completely oblivious  
to the evil of his host  
A plan devised so hideous  
the guards desert their post

Drenched in blood, the dagger waits  
for the innocent to bear the blame  
The rest of the castle takes the bait  
but Macbeth starts going insane

A close friend may have suspicions  
since he too heard the prophecy  
and a paranoid mind makes bad decisions  
So Macbeth kills again, lacking modesty

He realizes his ignorance far too late  
he was tricked far too easily  
Defeated, Macbeth accepts his fate  
he's a warning for behaving greedily

Summer Smith  
12th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Taryn Humphries

## 12th Grade Poetry

### *Rock climbing*

shall I compare thee to rock climbing days?  
up in the air looking down from above  
the worries of the ground have flown away  
the freedom you feel is enough to love

free climb without ropes is the very adventure  
more exciting than you can imagine  
but falling off the wall is a quiet the venture  
for me thee is danger but a passion

The road to the top is not an easy one  
Thy will sacrifice time and energy  
grit and focus are your friends until done  
the finish is a tough one but a memory

climbing is tough but fun to no end anytime  
work hard and patient, never waste your time

William Moyers  
12th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Taryn Humphries

## 12th Grade Poetry

### *A Sonnet: Volleyball*

You fill my every waking thought and dream  
As I slumber, somehow I do not sleep  
I watch the plays, the trials of my team  
Hundreds of thousands of teams we do sweep  
But I tire of my love, I grow weary  
I am sore now, I sweat I groan I cry  
I wish I plead not to go to bed teary  
Game today but I still must solve for pi  
My senior year, this loathing is absurd  
However, I have played for one-third of my life  
My cries and pains have gone mostly unheard  
No longer ball out, but be a housewife  
But nothing matches the rush of the game  
For Volleyball my heart is still aflame

Micaela Smith  
12th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Taryn Humphries

# 12th Grade Poetry

## *The Night*

Shall I compare thee crisp fall Friday night  
lights

The crowd yelling at a halt— cheering on their  
team:

Ring of cow bells, and whistles blown by refs  
bright,

Near the end the score coming close but  
players redeemed:

Feeling energy of the sidelines rushed onto the  
field:

Caring the spirit as the cheer team cheered the  
night away,

As the football team ran the balls victory on  
the field:

Signs thrown in the air so high reaching the sky,

Leaves turning, season changing just in time for  
joyful crowd

The time when all is right—football is the best  
component,

The school showing all their love and parents  
screaming aloud

Sometimes a slow game but never a dull  
moment,

So as long as people play ball I will list,

Your love for Friday nights will continue to not  
be dismissed.

Faith Chertkow

12th Grade

Silverdale Baptist Academy

Taryn Humphries

## 12th Grade Poetry

### *Seasons Change*

Shall I compare thee to a season's change?  
Thou art more blooming and leaves a falling  
October comes as colors start to range  
And March time has morning birds a calling

The cool fall wind blowing as leaves convey  
And shorter days begin as nights prolong  
People watch as nature's beauty portrays  
And lights bring people chanting all along

As springtime comes and things begin to grow  
Birds are a chirping sound as dawn awaits  
All The beauty in sight begins to show  
Gobbles come when turkeys begin to mate

When winter's too cold and summer too hot  
Don't forget the season when God hits the spot

Chase Manning  
12th Grade  
Silverdale Baptist Academy  
Taryn Humphries