

A TWCA PUBLICATION

The Mustard Seed

ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2021



THE MUSTARD SEED

The Woodlands Christian Academy

5800 Academy Way, The Woodlands, TX 77384

936.273.2555 | www.twca.net



Birds by Mercer R. Grade 9

Welcome!

The Woodlands Christian Academy's first edition of *The Mustard Seed* was born only five short years ago. Though it began as a middle school publication, it seemed to capture the heart of the school and the imagination blooming within our students. This year *The Mustard Seed* will include art and writing from all grade levels. The expansion truly embodies what our publication is all about... embracing our God-given gifts, no matter how big or small, for the glory of Jesus Christ. *The Mustard Seed* showcases how God has blessed students from the kindergarten class to the senior class, by providing tangible examples of students embracing their creative spirits, developing their gifts, all for God's glory.

The Little Warrior

by Virginia F. Grade 8

A cool breeze rushes through my feathers. I look up at Mama, she's looking out toward the violent sunrise. She always does this. Once, I asked her why she likes to watch the sun come up. She told me that she does this because it's a gift from God. He provided us with such beautiful things for every creature to enjoy. So every now and then, when I wake up early enough, I watch with her while my brothers and sisters sleep.

When Nick, the head rooster and leader of our flock crows, that means it's time for us to get up. I rushed out from under Mama. I love breakfast time. We always go to this one spot in the yard and Mama digs up worms for us. My sisters, Nugget, Lucy, Charlie, Jesse, Tej, and Sasha always eat first. Then my brothers, Jacob, Jack, Mason, and I eat. Mama says that we always need to eat breakfast before we run off and do other activities. So after I stuff five worms in my beak, I run off to chase dragonflies. I end up bumping into Nick and fall on my back which also results in my breakfast flying everywhere, including onto Nick's crown. "Son, if you are going to run like that, at least keep your eyes open!" Nick doesn't like me that much.

"Sorry, Dad," I say, and then I run away. Thinking back about it, calling Nick "Dad" might have been a mistake. He prefers us to call him Nick. Anyway, I fly off to chase dragonflies because it gives me something to do other than follow Mama everywhere, like my brothers and sisters do. I run so fast that I almost caught one. I could see the light bouncing off the fluorescent blue tail of the dragonfly. After I chase the blue dragonfly a little while longer, I went to rest with my grandma. The humans that take care of us call her "Sweetie Pie." She is the most amazing hen of our flock. She is so wise that she knows how to tell when I feel good or bad. "Good morning, Alex" she said to me as I walked up to her lying under a big tree, "Good morning Seanmhair." I call her "Seanmhair" because one of the hands in our flock is from Scotland, and she told me that grandmother in Scottish is Seanmhair and that is what I have called her since then.

A few minutes past by as I talked to my grandmother about anything I could think of as she listened. But as I was telling her about chasing the dragonfly, I heard one of the hens scream "snake!" And then, Seanmhair tucked me under her wing quickly and ran off. I couldn't see where we were going. All I could hear was the cries of the hens and Mama. I heard somethings slithering around, but only for a minute or so. I was scared. I didn't know what was happening. What was a snake? Where was my grandmother taking me?



Lines by Avery G. Grade 2

The next thing I remember was waking up under Seanmhair's wing. We were sitting in a bush under a huge tree "Where are—" She hushed me, "Shush, don't say a word." She was looking at something, I tried to see what she was looking at. That's when I saw it... It was this long thing with no limbs. It had huge things and was slimy looking. "What's that?" I said it in the softest voice I could. "That's a snake," Seanmhair said quietly. I looked closer, and there was something moving with it, I finally saw that it was some of my siblings! I jolted up in panic. Seanmhair restrain me from moving another inch. Those are my brothers and sisters! Fortunately, it looks like there was only five of them, but it's still not good. There were also lumps inside of the snake. Lumps that looked very familiar, they were eggs from the coop. I figured, I was moving so much that I actually got out of Seanmhair's grasp. I ran up to the snake "What are you doing with my siblings

and eggs from the chicken coop,?" "Let them go!" I said with rage. The snake tackled. "Boy, I don't care if they are your siblings. And I also only care about these eggs, because they are my lunch. I will not let them go, now scram!" I charged at him as fast as my little feet could go. All of a sudden, I was knocked back onto my tail end. "I will spare you this one last time little cockerel, Do not test me," the beast said. I looked at my siblings, they were terrified. I couldn't bare to see them like that, and I got up and ran, not toward my grandmother, or at least until the snake wasn't looking. But then, being the immature boy that I am, I charged at the snake again. My heart was beating along with the pitter patter of my feet. I got closer to the beast, jump, and kept him as he turned his head around. I close my eyes hoping for the best. I heard a scream come from him. It sounds good as if he was in pain. I open my eyes to see one of his eyes missing. Then I look down, light green, but soulless eye was lying in front of me. "You little—" The snake was furious. I ran away for real this time. I have no idea how I just did that.

The snake was furious. I ran away for real this time. I have no idea how I just did that. The snake surprisingly did not try to attack me, he just slithered away with my siblings. When they were gone, Seanmhair came running up to me and said "you could have been killed!" And she took me under her wing again and we walked back home.

When we got there, it was quiet. Everything was torn up. All of the eggs were gone. I looked over at Nick and he didn't look so good. There were bruises all over him and when I looked closer, there were two bite marks on his wing. The snake had bitten him. The hands were making a commotion in the coop talking about all that had happened while my grandmother went over to help Nick. I walked into the coop and all of the hands turn to look at me. I stared at them blankly and they stepped aside to make a walkway for me. I didn't know why until I saw what was at the end of the walkway. It was Mama. She was lying down, still... like a statue. My brother and sisters were dodging her. No response. My heart tightened. I couldn't breathe. "Mama...?" I said with uncertainty that it couldn't be true. "Mama" I said, but there was still no response. That's it, she was gone. I trembled at the thought that I didn't get to say goodbye to her. But that was of no use. I couldn't change what had happened.

A few days past and Nick healed from the attack. But mama wasn't here to help out and teach my brother and sisters and I how to do things. We had to learn from the other hens. One day, Nick called me over and talked to me about everything that had happened that week. He said that he knew about how I attacked the snake that had my siblings captive because Seanmhair told him. He wanted to teach me how to fight. So I said yes.

The next few weeks were very progressive for me. Nick said that I was a fast learner and that I was becoming quite the rooster. I grew a lot as well, so that helped too. I was always the runt and now I am almost as big as Nick. I learned so fast and got so strong that Nick said that he was proud to have me as a son and that...**that** was a huge compliment .

After many weeks of training, Nick came up to me and told me that I was ready for another snake attack if it happened again. But I wanted nothing more than to get my brothers and sisters back from that wretched snake. And Nick new that. Luckily, there was a hen in our flock that knew exactly where that snake lived. Her name was Midnight. I don't know exactly how she got that name, but I thought it was cool. I would have gone to Seanmhair, but that was a longer trip.

Midnight gave me directions to the snake's home. As I was about to go retrieve my siblings from the snake, the hens all crowded me, telling me to stay safe and bring them home, and to slay the snake. It made me so happy that everyone was rooting for me. Then my siblings stood in front of me. "Brother" Jack said, "please stay safe. We can't loose you too" I walked up to him "I promise. And I will bring back the ones we love" I hugged him and my three sisters, I hoped that this wouldn't be the last time that I saw them.

I set out to find the snake and as I looked back, all of the flock was watching me. Including my father, Nick. I walked up to where the yard stopped. There was a hole in the fence. Midnight had told me, "just beyond the fence is where you will find him" and I repeated that over and over. I stepped through the hole and out of the yard. I scanned the open field to see where the snake was. And I saw him. In the middle of the yard. Coiled up. I could hear my siblings. And I saw one of them, run out from behind the snake. I hid in a bush close by. My plan was to use the trees as a shield so that the snake wouldn't see me and then I would charge. So that is what I did. I got so close to them without being seen. And when I peeked behind the tree to see the snake lift his head up, he said "come out little cockerel" I couldn't believe that he saw me. But wait....he never opened his eyes. But his tongue kept doing something weird. Maybe he smelled me. I came out from behind the tree. I stared at him. He laughed and said "come back to be defeated" I filled with rage. I wanted to take his other eye. How dare he mock me. It's because of him that Mama was gone. I charged at him. He tried to bite me but I dodged him. I had gotten pretty fast with my training. I ran behind him and up his scales. I trampled on his head. I ran circles around him as he tried to bite me. This made him so dizzy that when I stopped, his head was still spinning. That is when I ran up and pecked him on the head and scratched his other eye. He was in pain. But he deserved it. Nobody gets to mess with our flock anymore. He had his mouth open, and I pecked his head again so hard that it brought him to the ground. He was out cold. While I was fighting the snake, my siblings came out from under a pile of leaves. "Alex?" One of them said while I was standing there catching my breath, it was Nugget. I looked over to them and they all came running up to me. I was so happy that they weren't eaten. I rushed them home before the snake could wake up. And we talked the whole way there.

As we walked through the hole in the fence and got closer to the coop, the hens looked up from eating and saw us. They all ran up to us. They greeted us with such passion. They were also happy that my siblings didn't get eaten. But a few minutes after that, came the hardest thing I had to do. My siblings asked where Mama was. And I told them the heart wrenching news. They too, could never forgive the snake.

The next morning, I woke up and it was still early. Early enough to walk out to the top of the coop, and sit there. Watching the sun come up. Thinking of Mama. I heard putter patters of many feet. So I looked down. It was my siblings. All nine of them. They looked at me, and they started climbing. They all came to the top of the coop. And they sat down with me. "Why are you watching the sun come up Alex?" Nugget said. "Because it is a gift from God for every creature to enjoy" I said. And we watched as the sun peeked out from behind the treetops, "Good morning mama" I said. And all of us sat there, enjoying God's gift.

Escape

by Zoe W. Grade 10

The feeling when you can't hold on anymore
But you know you have to since you are only a sophomore
It's like when you act happy but you know it's a lie
And when you get home all you do in your bedroom is cry
Your parents see it like nothing is wrong
Because you seem okay all day long
Your life seems like it is falling apart
It feels like a dagger inside of your heart
You get used to the feeling of friendships fading away
Since you feel like you lose someone every day
You wonder if God will even listen to you if you pray
Having this feeling makes you want to die
It makes you want to say goodbye
You know in your heart that you need to stay alive
So instead you decide to just escape life.

Brown

by Cate N. Grade 5

I feel the breeze of a bible closing
I see a cross running away
I look over and there is a piece of cardboard posing
I saw a tree stump looking at me today
My drawing looks like a potato, looking back at me
I see that my crayon looking stressed
Brown is not as confident as he should be
Brown doesn't feel confident on how he dressed
Brown is always scared about his project
Brown is always scared of the car
My brown crayon forgot its object
Brown is now confident, and became a superstar



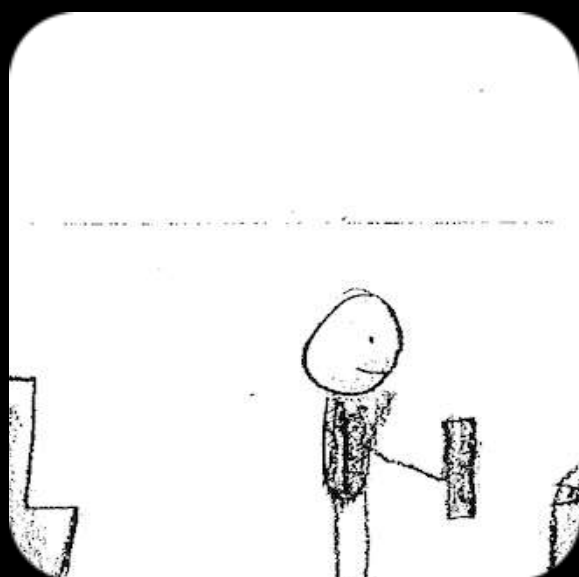
Snowflake *by Camila S. Grade 1*



Fall by Mia T. Grade 10

How to Read a Book

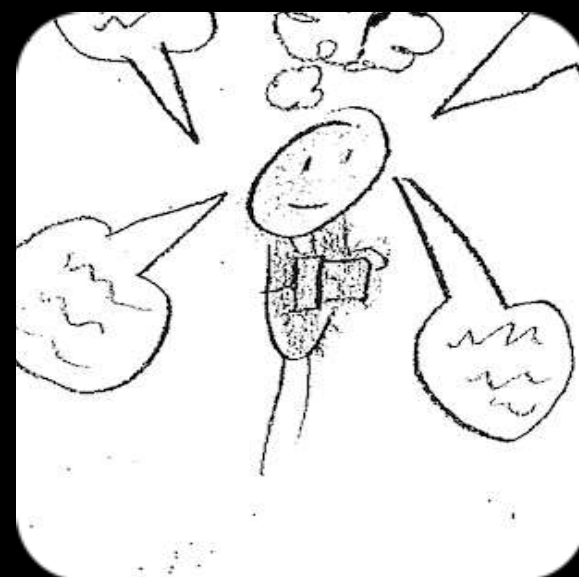
by Henry S. Grade 1



Frst you take a book.



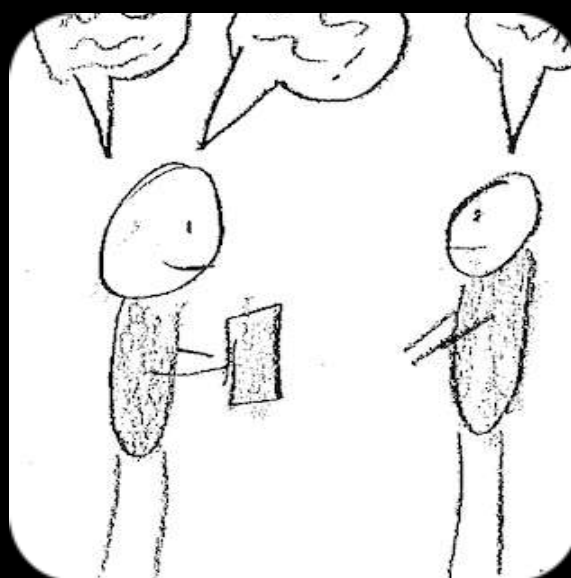
Then you tack a sneak-peack of the book.



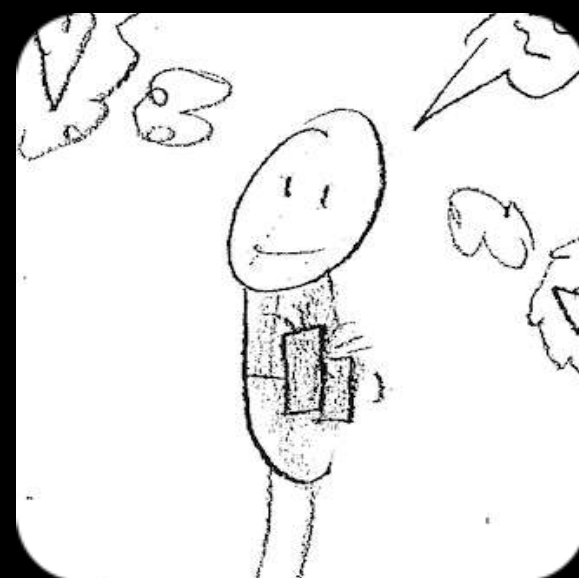
Next you read the book. It you can't read sound the words out.



You can re-read to understand the book.



You can show your friends the book.



Last you can go back to your favrite part of the book.

Marriage Is A Private Affair: Creative Ending

by Abigail S. Grade 10

With his mind stuck on the grandchildren, Okeke lost sleep. The old man could not help

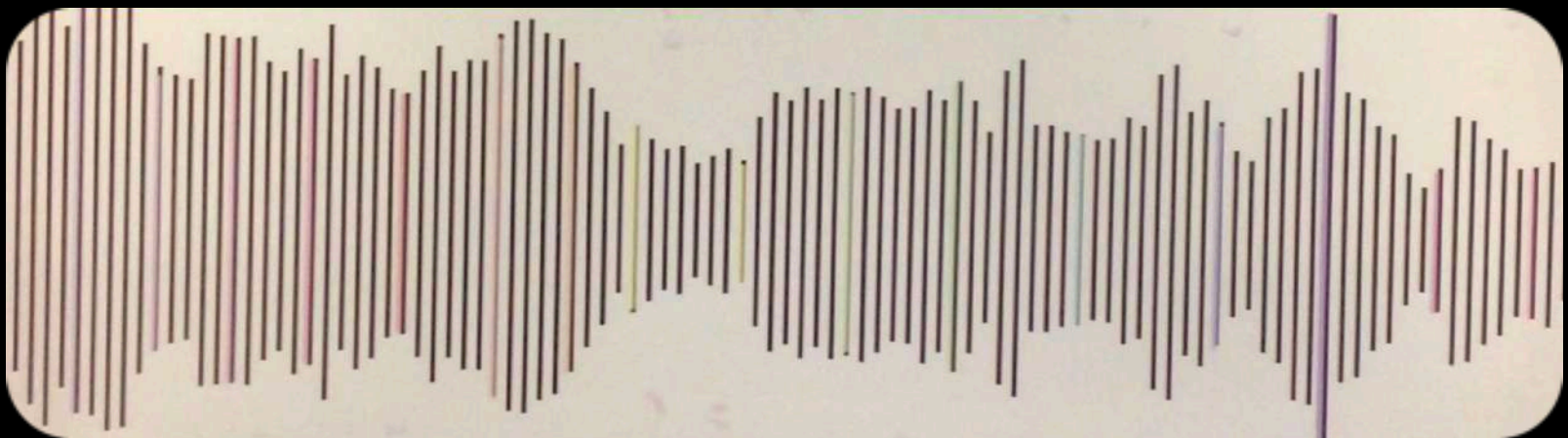
but wonder if his relationship with his son would change as well if he were to see his grandchildren for the first time as Nene had requested.

Suddenly, Okeke found himself picking up some paper and pencil and starting to write. He wrote exactly what he was feeling. This included some apologies as well as times he was free for them to come and visit. Yes, he felt horribly for how he had handled some situations but, it was still how he and his tribe saw betrayal from his son to their traditions. With that, he had agreed to see the children.

A week later Okeke had opened the door to a familiar face, and for the first time in a very long time, he started to weep. He was filled with a burst of emotion that included anger, fear, happiness and guilt. For a moment all the family did was stand there in silence until one of Nnaemeka and Nene's sons walked up and hugged one of their grandfathers legs.

After the greeting between his grandchildren and himself, Okeke looked at his son, who the last time he saw him looked as if he had been crying for days. Whereas now he looked the happiest he had ever been, but still with the most nervous and angry smile on his face. Nnaemeka went in for a polite handshake but, Okeke did not shake his hand. Instead he grabbed his son and gave him a hug trying to hold back the tears like the scary man he was perceived to be.

Okeke new that it would take his son a very long time to forgive him for all that he has said and done. Although, he now believes that by becoming a grandfather he can use this opportunity to not just grow the relationship with his son again but show them that he is not completely cold hearted no matter what his beliefs are.



I Love My Sister *by Blake P. Grade 4*

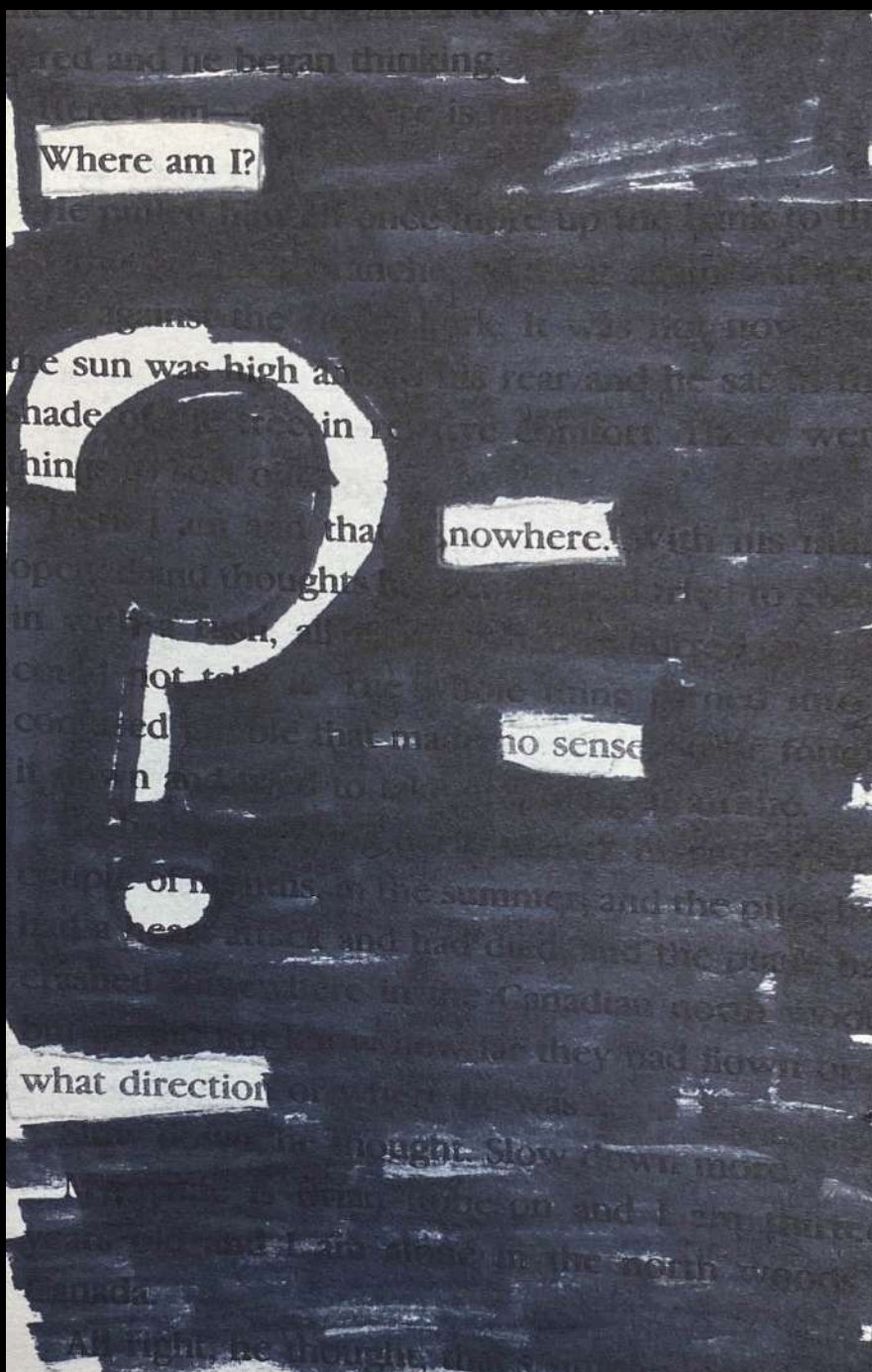
The End of the Race

by Bryce J. Grade 7

Some say the end of the race is near
Others say we aren't close
And while it seems everything is happening this year
God is the only one that knows

Our sin has torn us from his hands Now we must make a decision
God has wonderful plans
However the devil has an evil vision

But on that day when I walk down the heavenly hall I'll know that God is in control
His sacrifice many years ago bought freedom for all But its our choice to use it



Where Am I? by Ajay J. Grade 5

Anchor

by Jocey B. Grade 8

An anchor is something very useful
 An anchor keeps boats in place
 An anchor is something very useful
 It keeps calmness on the sailors face
 An anchor is sometimes forgotten
 You never want to thank her
 But anchors are very useful
 And God is my anchor
 He keeps me calm in times of terror
 And guides me on my way
 I am his wisdom bearer
 And I will always pray
 If you ever question anything
 Remember to say
 God is my anchor
 And he will lead me on his way

Space

by Macie P. Grade 2

The sun is really, really hot!
 From Earth comes an astronaut.
 In space there are lots of stars.
 You can blast off onto Mars.
 Meteors fly by from space.
 You can watch them from any place!



Lighthouse by Sarah P. Grade 8



My Thigh
 With out my thigh I
 wouldn't walk. with
 out my thigh I
 couldn't play with
 chalk. With out my
 thigh I couldn't
 move. With out my
 thigh I couldn't
 grove. With out my
 thigh what would I
 do?

Best Part of Me by Anna L. Grade 3

My Best Rock

by Natalie Y. Grade 1

I think the flint rock is the winr chican dinr because it macs fires also because it looks cool also its black! The other rocks are normol because they do not make fires and I like roks that make fires.

The flint is so cool it also feels good. I think the flint is rusty. I like the flint because my family gave it to me. I also think it feels old. Also, wen I hit it with a pensol it makes a wily nies sownd like ching ching ching. I thin it is speshol to me because wen I hold it in my hand I feel good, strong and brave. I love the flint because it makes me feel loved.



Winter by Teagan J. Grade 7

Pear Flower

by Rilee K. Grade 8

Sweet pear flower, white as the snow,
Did you not get enough time to grow?
Did they cause your life to fall to destruction?
I know you've been told that it takes five to
function,
Did you talk to the moon that night in October?
Were you crying as she sank lower?
Did you stop to think about Me and U?
How long did you think about what you did?
To your life, a goodbye did you bid?
Did you stare into Amber eyes as you fell?
Did you think of it as your final Victory Song?
As you slip into Crystal clarity,
I hope you remember those who miss you
terribly.

Darkness

by Tori W. Grade 10

They condemned us to a familiar place, One that
would soon feel like a prison. Our wings held
back by chains
As we cried out but they wouldn't listen.

Time began to crawl
The darkness filling our rooms, They were no
longer familiar to us As fate sealed humanity's
tombs.

We wish to fly once again, To be able to soar
To feel free and chain-less To be able to explore.

Our minds fantasize of escape,
We crave it's sweetness
More than ever to leave this place
Forever longing for the feeling of completeness.

Rainbows

By Matilda S. Grade 2

They come after rain
Colorful stripes in the sky
Treasure at the end



Cat by Mia T. Grade 10

The Fort

by John R. Grade 2

A couple of years ago I went to Meme and Papa's house. After a couple of hours, Meme and I built a fort. The fort was long, it had tons of pillows and blankets. I crawled fast! Different colors were everywhere because the blankets are different colors and reflecting the sun. It looked like a rainbow.! Then I told Meme to go inside. Meme said, "OK!" So meme crawled inside. She's not a fan of crawling! Meme go to the back of it, but then Meme realized... she was STUCK! So Meme yelled, "Help." Mommy ran as fast as she could. Meme was stuck, but then Meme got an idea. She crawled and crawled and Meme was almost there! The fort is... falling! Now it is harder for Meme to get out. Mommy pulled and pulled like a man trying to pull an apple off a tree. SWOOSH, bang!... Meme was free! When I turned around, there was a mess. I said, "Can we do that again?" Meme said, "No!"

The Definition of Heroism

by Sofia W. Grade 8

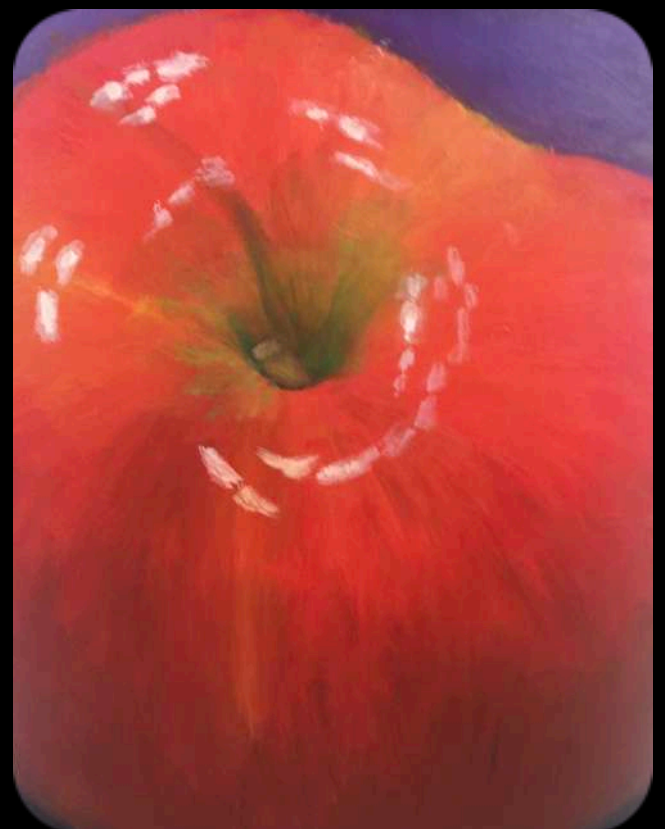
In the eighteen-hundreds, Ralph Waldo Emerson stated that, "Heroism feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right." In this one sentence, he has defined heroism at its very core- to feel and act with the want to help others, instead of to act with logic and self-desire. Often times we choose to define heroism with fictional characters such as Superman or Spider-Man, or with soldiers and army-men, and simply use heroism as an adjective for humans and their actions. Even if these people's acts are said to be heroic, they themselves do not define heroism. Heroism is not something to define people, it is instead defined by momentary acts of kindness, strength, and selfless intent.

Instead of being a permanent label, heroism is something that sleeps inside of everybody, and is unleashed through certain actions and decisions. The term itself has no flaw, but humans have many- and therefore no human can truly obtain the term of heroism- but we can momentarily stand on its side. An action we can make to take the side of heroism could be a grand gesture like you read in comic books or see in movies, but the most personally impactful acts of heroism are found in small and kind momentary gestures. By tipping your waiter a little bit extra, you could be the hero of their life by helping them pay their bills a little longer. You could volunteer to help a friend study for a test, and be the hero of their story by not letting them fail. Things like this, simple and yet hard to come across nowadays, are just one of the many things that define heroism and can make a hero.

The hero in question is somebody whose actions and choices can be referred to with the term of heroism, but this notion conflicts with the concept that nobody can constantly submit to the grand nature of heroism- so we have no choice but to ask, what is a hero, truly? If you think hard enough, you will come to realize that a hero is only fictional in the sense that you act heroically and with heroism at all times- but what if the term a hero on its own was merely an adjective? Considering this, a true hero is all of us, really. Just like heroism, being a hero is only momentary, and can end just as soon as it starts. So by choosing to partake in heroism, we are also choosing to be heroes- but how else can we do this? Other than being kind, we can also be a hero by choosing to be strong. Strength is another complicated word, for it can mean emotionally, physically and subjectively powerful- but what makes strength heroic is how you choose to use it. Strength will make you a hero if you use your strengths in certain areas to do good upon others- for instance a teacher can be a hero for helping others gain knowledge with their strengths in a subject, or someone you know could use their strengths in driving to take you home when your parents are busy. Heroic strength is not taking advantage of your skills in manipulation or lying to get your way, because that would conflict with yet another heroic quality- that when we choose to be heroes, we loose our selfish intents.

If you continue to ask yourself why you're doing something, you will eventually come to find that your actions are in the best nature of something you want to happen for yourself. At the root of our minds, we act in best interest of ourselves and our interests, but this is something we can't escape- it's merely a part of the human condition. In storybooks, heroes are able to overcome the human condition with supernatural abilities and godlike wisdom, but after all, our world is only reality, and we cannot escape what we are. Despite this, for a moment or two we can chose to help someone achieve their wants or needs. Our actions may be for selfish reasons deep-down, but while we act as heroes we can forget about this. Sometimes helping others will harm us somehow or cause inconvenience to us, and this is where the line is drawn between a hero and somebody who is just strong and kind. Someone who could be labeled as a hero for a moment will be able to put themself in danger for the goodness of others- which is why we consider soldiers and police-officers as heroes so commonly. They could easily not wake up tomorrow due to the dangers they willingly put themselves in, and they take that risk for the betterment of the majority. They will make their legacy as a hero, while others with these traits will only momentarily be a hero; yet in the minds of those who knew us, we will all be remembered as heroes in a way.

A hero is somebody who can momentarily be kind, strong and act selflessly. The more prominently we show these traits, the more we are remembered as heroes. In this life full of many labels and complications, I believe that it is important for us to remember that the biggest heroes can be found in the smallest locations. Whether they show their traits of heroic nature and heroism through undaunted strength and kindness, or just by doing the best they can, we can all be heroes if we just try to act with our heart every once in a while; because after all, heroism feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right.



Apple by Mercer R. Grade 9



Street by Lily D. Grade 6

Blue

by Maddox F. Grade 5

Blue is so dark,
It is drowning like a memory no one else can borrow,
You're the only one thinking about it stuck inside of the sorrow,
Blue is a color that sits still and there is no changing it.

Blue is the color that speaks soft and slow
But when you hear it you drown like a fast flow.
Blue holds a gripping hand on your moment that you can't
forget Blue pulls you down into the moment which you regret.

Blue is scared of the water and stays out,
I go in and I feel blue making me pout,
Blue forces me to go into that scary dark place,
I think of it as a game that I have to be first out like a race.

Who Am I?

by Manuela S. Grade 1

I am a girl. My family has four people. I have a dog. My favorite food is hamburger. My favorite animal is a squirrel. I was born in Brazil. I have a smaller brother. My favorite color is pink. My favorite play to go is the beach. I like her music. I like to sleep a lot.

Marriage Is A Private Affair: Creative Ending

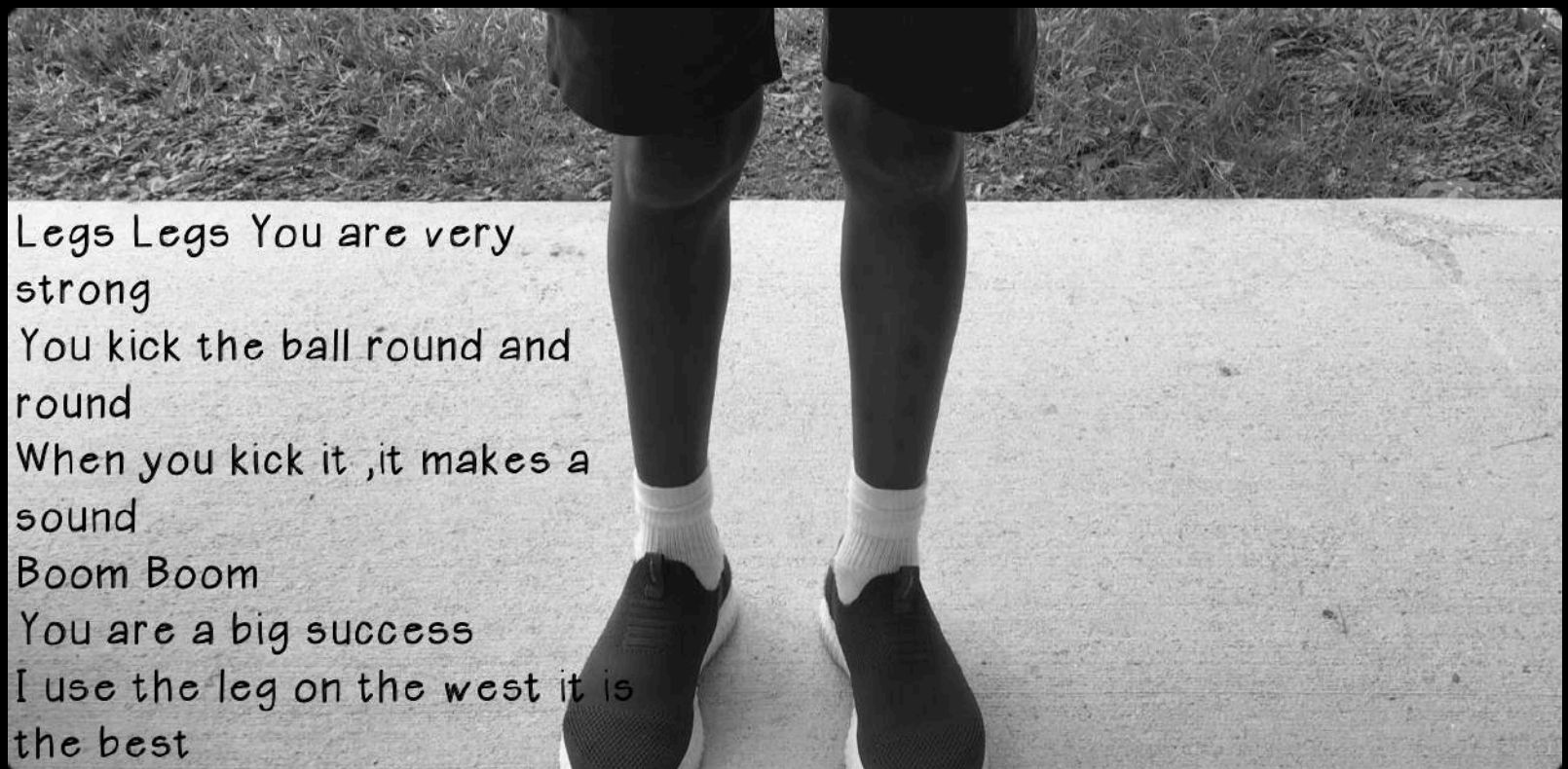
by Johnathan C. Grade 10

Okeke goes to bed thinking about his grandsons and wonders what they are like. The next day Okeke is back at the cassia tree reading his Bible. He settles upon the verse, 1 Peter 4:8, *"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*, and realizes that avoiding his son is not the answer. He thinks about all of the time that has past and tears begin to stream down his face. Okeke quickly walks home and begins to write a letter to his son, Nnaemeka asking for forgiveness and requests that Nnaemeka brings his sons and wife back home to them. A few days later, Nene finds a letter in the mail and brings it to Nnaemeka. Nnaemeka reads the letter out loud to his family and they rejoice and begin to pack for the journey back to Nnaemeka's hometown. The next day Nnemeka's family arrive at Okeke's door. The grandsons knock on the door and Okeke opens it. As soon as he sees his grandson's faces, he immediately embraces them and looks into his own son's eyes with a look of contentment. Okeke glances over to NeNe and a wide smile covers his face. NeNe knows at this moment she is finally accepted into the family.



Hawaiian Flower b

by Leah F. Grade 11



Legs Legs You are very
strong
You kick the ball round and
round
When you kick it ,it makes a
sound
Boom Boom
You are a big success
I use the leg on the west it is
the best

Best Part Of Me by Imisi A. Grade 3



Clouds by Leah F. Grade 11



Time by Renner P. Grade 5

How to Swing

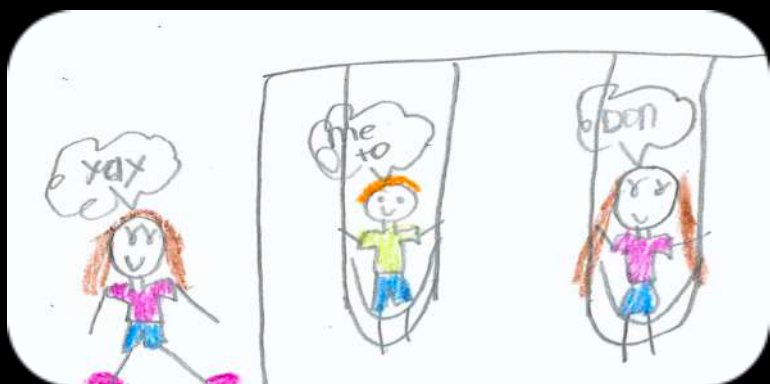
by Elanor B. Kindergarten



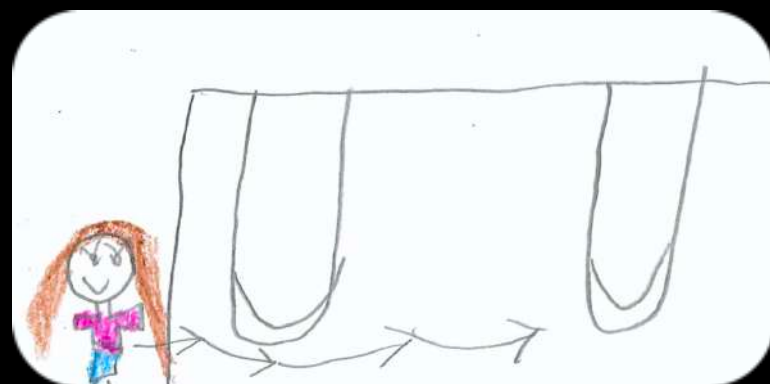
First you go to the swings.



Next you wait until the person on the swing counts to 90.



Then once the person is done counting you get on.

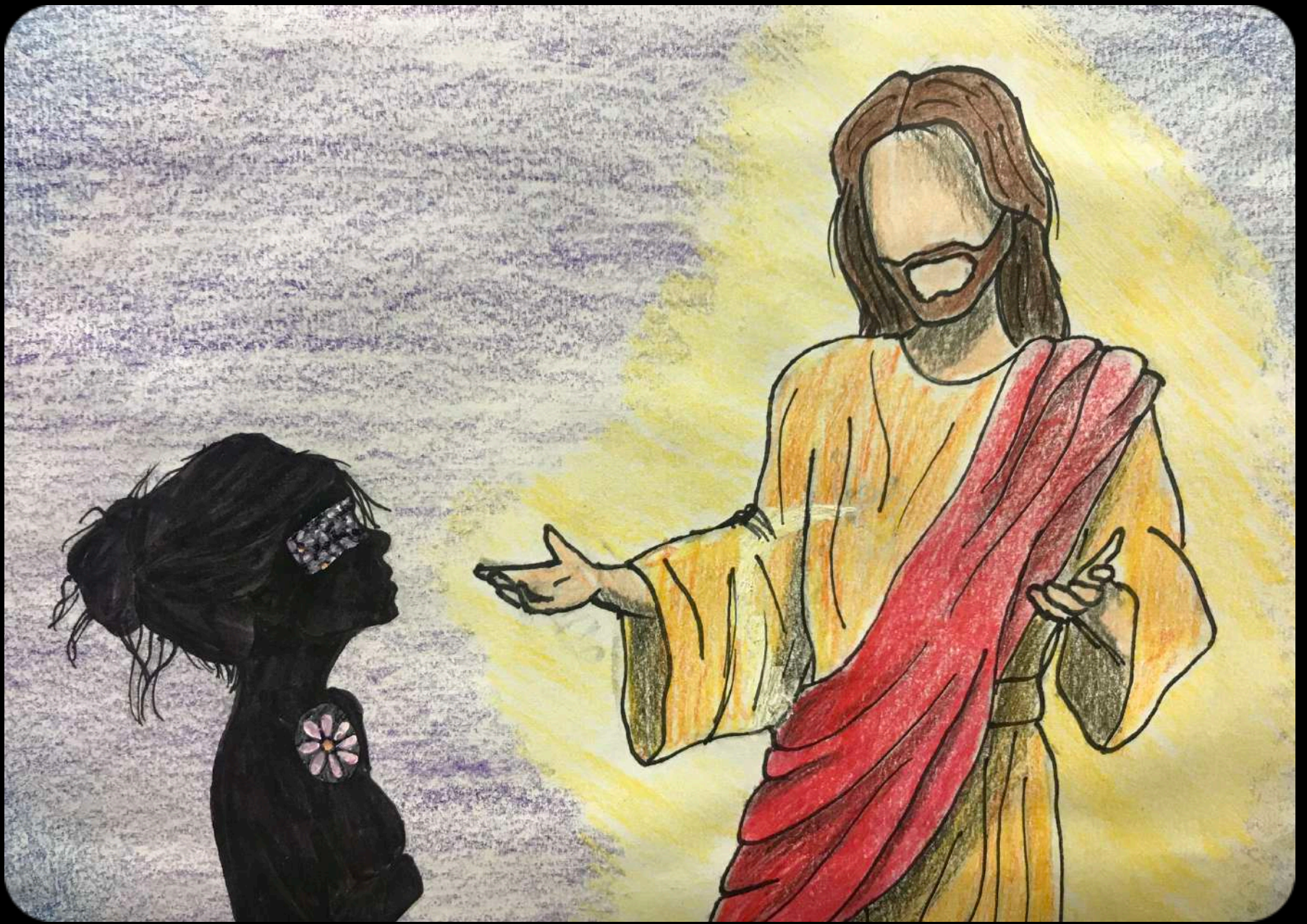


Last you swing down forget to count to 90 if someone is waiting.

My eyes, the best part of me. You are sapphire blue and beautiful. You let me see the world around me. You let me see the fuzzy, fluffy animals, they are so cute. You let me see the awesome rainbow in the sky! My eyes can adjust to the light around me and help me to express my feelings. My eyes, the best part of me!



Best Part of Me by Emma T. Grade 3



My Savior by Virginia F. Grade 8

Where I am From

by Michael A. Grade 5

I am from the broken in baseball mitt
 From Rawlings and Demarini
 I am from the family of five next to the lake
 Active, always driving, family who loves sports I am from
 short astroturf
 that helps the ball roll
 I am from setting up the tree and finding the elf during
 Christmas From mom and dad
 I am from the blue eyed and light brown hair
 From the farmers of Oklahoma and the deep South
 I am from a bible, black leather
 I am from Houston, Texas
 Pasta, steaks, potatoes, spinach
 From the dad who was a great fisherman
 The mom who made everyone laugh Albums, frames
 we keep all the special things

COVID Strikes Again

by Madelyn M. Grade 10

The chaos of too many voices in one house
 Every room is taken with working parents and
 kids The tv on a constant loop with virus
 updates

The walls are closing in. Stresses are high, fear
 is higher It is time for an escape

Longing for lunchrooms filled with friends
 Missing sleepovers with the girls
 Wishing for a mask-less conversation with a
 teacher Praying for our church to re open

The walls are closing in. Stresses are high, fear
 is higher It is time for an escape

I plan my escape
 An amazing vacation with my family and friends
 to get away Looking forward to the beautiful
 beaches and fresh air Dinners planned and
 excursions reserved

My escape got cancelled due to Covid

Another Day in Office

by Bryce J. Grade 7

"I did it!" Xavier thought to himself.

Xavier had survived yet another day of the mess that was this year. He had just landed a big deal to build a factory for the Air Force. Everyday was a mess during the war. Every day seemed to be another major battle. Everyone around Xavier seemed to be overseas fighting for America. There was nothing Xavier could do but pray that his sons would make it home, and not face the same fate his wife did. He settled down and watched some Netflix to cheer him up.

"Bzzt. Bzzt. Bzzt," His phone rang. Xavier had slept through the night on his couch. He answered the phone grudgingly, "Hello?"

A mysterious man answered, "Xavier Young! We understand you are retired, but we need you immediately. There's been rumors of a bomb planted under Houston. We need you to investigate. We have a private plane ready a few minutes from your home."

"Oh, wow, okay," Xavier responded. He took off a few minutes later.

When he arrived, a squad of soldiers were ready for him with guns and equipment prepared. They traveled into the city shortly after.

"Looks like there are some heat signatures under NRG stadium," A soldier reported.

They ventured inside, looking for a way down. Soon they found a passage that went under the field.

The room was cold and eerily silent. The squad marched down the halls, searching for anything unusual. Xavier noticed something odd in the wall. He examined the wall carefully. There seemed to be something off. Part of the wall was a little deeper than the rest. All of a sudden the wall slid to the right, revealing a hallway lit in blue. "What is this? Why is it here?" Xavier thought to himself.

The group of soldiers marched down the hallway. The hallway led to two different hallways, so the group split up. Xavier and three others went left, while four soldiers went right. Xavier's hallway led to a large room, filled with weapons and grenades. "Scan for heat signatures," Xavier whispered to one of the soldiers.

"There are people behind that door. Get ready. It's about to get messy," The soldier responded.

Bang! The door flew across the room. Enemy soldiers infiltrated the room, firing their rifles at Xavier's squad.

Xavier knew he had to do something fast. He darted behind cover and began to shoot down the enemies one by one. Xavier knew that there were too many of them and that he needed something big. He scanned the room for ideas.

"Come on. There has to be something. This can't be the end. It just can't!" He thought. All of a sudden, his eyes fell upon a grenade! Xavier bravely dashed across the room for it. He was immediately met with gunfire from the enemies. He avoided them and dashed for cover. Then the sharp,

stinging pain came. Xavier got behind cover and pulled up his pants, revealing the wound in his leg. A bullet hit him in his thigh, causing a burst of blood. The pain was immeasurable, but he knew he had to move on.

He was only a few feet from the grenade now, but that few feet was wide open and had nothing to hide behind. He only had one option now. He leaped forward for the grenade. He grasped it as he hit the ground, and immediately pulled the pin. He threw the grenade across the room and hid for cover.

Boom! The grenade detonated, sending all of the enemies flying in the air. When Xavier looked up, he saw possibly the greatest and worst sight all day. No one enemy soldiers was left, but none of his soldiers survived. Xavier reached for his intercom and announced, "H-hello? Do you copy? Is anyone there? Is... anyone... there,"

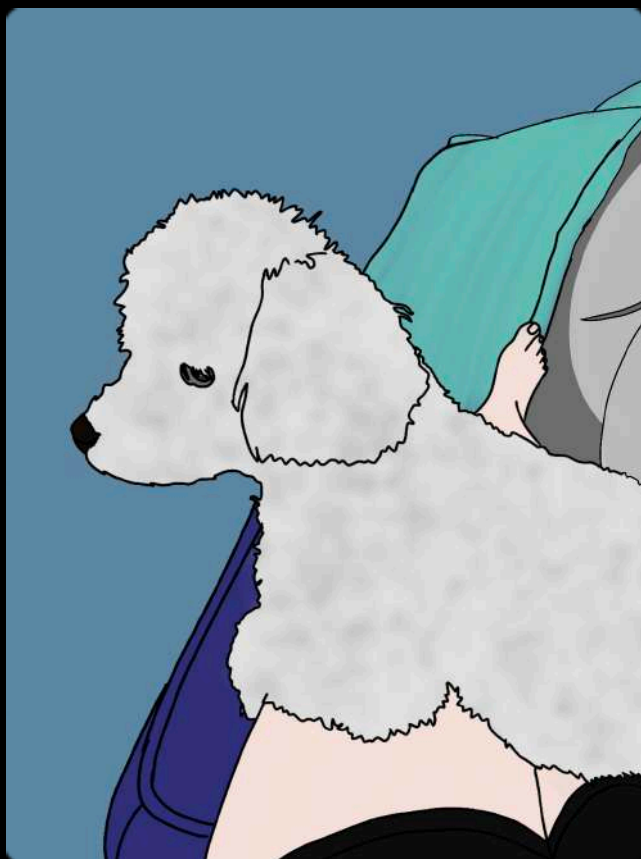
Xavier fell to the ground, gasping for air. He now knew he was the only one left. But he had to move on.

Xavier got up and limped into the hallway the enemies came from. The hallway led to a dark room. Xavier got his flashlight out and peered around. He found a large metal bomb in the middle of the room. The bomb had a countdown next to it with wires leading inside. There were only a few minutes left on the countdown.

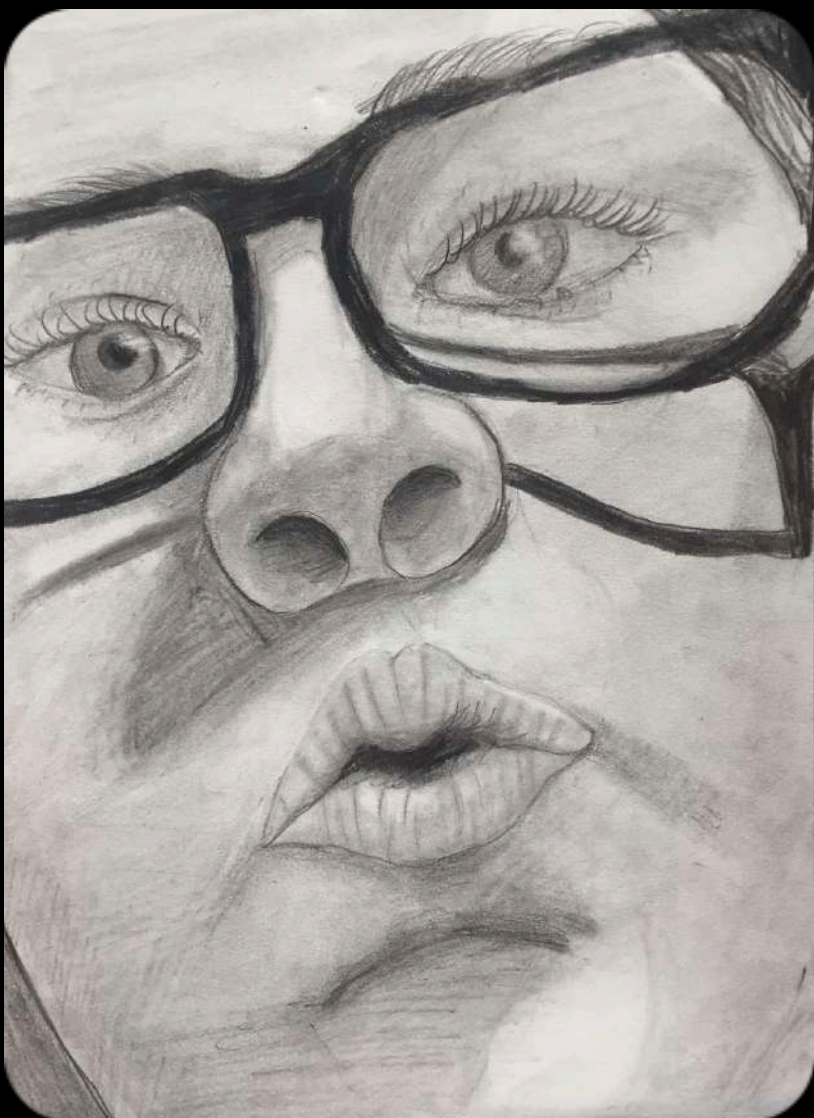
"I did it. We did it," He thought to himself as he clipped the wires. After he made sure the bomb was off, he limped out of the building.

As soon as he opened the door out of the stadium, multiple police met him and carried him into an ambulance. "Is the bomb disarmed? Where are the others?" A policeman asked him. All Xavier was focused on was seeing his family again. He answered a few questions before the ambulance left.

"We missed you. I'm so proud of you," Xavier's wife said. Xavier woke up in a hospital bed, surrounded by his family and coworkers. He looked up at the television in the corner and saw his name on the headlines. He had done it. He had saved the city of Houston.



My Pup by Martha R. Grade 8



Close Up by Rebekah S. Grade 7

The Sun and the Son

by Marlow Grace L. Grade 8

The sun,
the center of our solar system,
the center of all the planets that revolve around it.
The sun that gives us life and warmth, and is unfailing.
The sun that holds us together
with its mighty power,
and is a deep pool of
mystery.

The Son,
the center of our universe,
the center of all the lives
He has created.
The Son watches over His children as they move around
on the world He's created.
The Son keeps His steady eyes
on Creation,
and He gives them light to reflect. The Son that gives light
and warmth, and is unfailing.
The Son that holds us together
with His mighty power,
including
the sun,
the center of our solar system.
He is the center of
anything and
everything.



Snow by Kennedy S. Grade 1



Grapes by Jocelyn K. Grade 9

Salt and Sugar

by Aubree G. Grade 7

When choosing your friends it's safe to say,
pick someone who cheers you up even on the
darkest day.

Someone who cares, is loving, and is kind;
pick that kind of person even if they are hard
to find.

Even if you fight you will always work
together; they will always have your back, no
matter the weather.

Pick a friend who builds you up and doesn't
tear you down, someone who makes you a
better person and is fun to be around.

Pick a person with a good reputation and
people will remember her name, but be
careful who you pick because salt and sugar
look the same.



Me *by Martha R. Grade 8*



Faith *by Bekah M. Grade 2*

Marriage Is A Private Affair: Creative Ending

by Alexander E. Grade 10

'Okeke — I know you must not want to be hearing news from me, as you do not approve of the marriage between Nnaemeka and me, but I must be the one to tell you. Nnaemeka cannot bare your anger and close-mindedness. He has been getting more and more quiet and closed every day since you left his life. Things started to spiral out of control. He lost the will to do anything, whether it be work, do sports, or even smile. I was afraid that one day he would take his own life. You may or may not know already, but your son, my husband had left this earth. He left me a note asking me to tell you among other things. I am devastated. I can only assume that you are too, whether you know it or not.

— Nene'

The letter slipped from Okeke's fingers and glided to the floor. For some odd reason he, for a split second felt suspicious of this letter and news. The people of the village talked of Nnaemeka and Nene being a happy couple causing his distrust. Regardless of that, he knew that Nene respected him and from what everyone had said, could be considered decent, and so he did not believe that she had it in her to lie to him, especially on something this big. Reality crashed down on him, realizing that his son, who he loved despite his misgivings, was gone. Why did he not do the right thing and listen to his boy? WHY? He collapsed to the ground sobbing uncontrollably.

Dark and heavy clouds outside crackled with thunder and lightning. The storm had arrived. Minutes later, lightning flashed and struck the roof of Okeke's wooden house. The thatched roof burst into flames, and slowly spread throughout the rest of the house. He knew that he would die if he did not exit as soon as he could, but the loss of his son blindsided him with anguish and pain. The fire spread from Okeke's house to many of the other buildings in the village. The screams of villagers could be heard over the storm throughout the night.

Hours later, at dawn, the storm subsided and the survivors who had fled into the nearby cave came back to see the destruction caused to there once proud village. Nene and her son did not find out about the devastating news right away. Immediately after Nene sent the letter to Okeke, she took her son and got on a flight to the United States. She took the decision to never remarry. She had a few friends in the States who helped her when they could and if she needed it. She found a well-paying job at a local elementary school and enjoyed teaching there. However she was never quite the same. Her son would never find out what happened to his father or grandfather, or even the life that they could have had. He one day would find out, when the time was right.



I Love Sleep by Luke Y. Grade 4



Bass by Hunter E. Grade 11

In the Face of Fantasy

by Ash F. Grade 8

In the face of fantasy
 In the face of fantasy
 I see danger on its way
 I see fairies flocking
 And mermaids at bay
 In the face of fantasy
 I see mice running along
 I see pirates ashore
 And listen to the princesses song
 In the face of fantasy
 I see unicorns in the clouds I see dragons breathing
 fire And kings screaming loud
 I bow down to the royal majesty All in the face of
 fantasy

Rain

by Audrey S. Grade 7

The world begins to darken
 Gently falling
 Tranquility at last
 Life held in its delicate hands.
 Quiet mind.
 Can you feel it?

Just as Birds

by Kayden E. Grade 7

Just as birds flutter past the trees
 You left me when I was begging on
 my knees
 Just as birds tear up a seed until they
 are done
 You picked me apart one by one
 Just as birds learn to fly out the nest
 You taught me to jump and figure out
 the rest
 Just as a hatchling will fight to survive
 I am determined to learn how to
 thrive
 On my own
 Every once in awhile I may break a
 bone
 But I'll be ok
 I'm glad you didn't stay



Found Photo by Tanner S. Grade 3

Flight-Mare!

by Will B. Grade 7

Liam packed up his suitcase with his belongings; his overnight bag was filled with his toothbrush, toothpaste, and comb. Next he filled his arms full with some of his video games, and tossed them in the bag. Lastly, Liam took some of his clothes and threw them carelessly into the suitcase. He was excited for the annual family trip to Michigan, and this year was going to be special. They were going on a once in a lifetime trip on the newest airplane technology - the super plane. The plane had five rooms, each set to their family's favorite places, and had super relaxing seats that made you feel as if you were laying on clouds. "I'm ready to go!" He yelled to his mom downstairs, who was packing her own suitcase as well. "Okay!" She said. "We'll leave in 15 minutes!"

Liam was so jittery as he hopped into the car, that he forgot to buckle his seatbelt. The car started, and then they were off. Ten minutes into the ride, Liam felt like he was being watched. He stole a quick glance over his shoulder and immediately knew he shouldn't have. There was a man in the car behind them with no expression staring at him. He wore dark glasses covering his eyes, and he was wearing a suit as well, with a black shirt and tie. He slowly curled his lips into a grin and Liam whipped his head back around, in the process banging his arm on the side of the car. "Everything alright back there?" His mom asked. "Yep, everything's fine!" He said. Liam drew in a deep breath, and realized sweat was dripping down his forehead.

It wasn't even a minute until something hit them from behind again, sending Liam tumbling into the seat in front of him. Liam barely had time to sit back up when something hit them again, sending him sprawling to the floor a second time. He slowly turned around, and saw the man in all black, grinning at them from behind the windshield. "I knew I should've buckled my seatbelt," Liam thought to himself as his dad gunned the engine. They didn't want to pull over, in fear that the man would damage them or the car more.

"There's no serious damage," Liam's dad said as they inspected their car at the airport. "I wonder who hit us." Liam decided to stay silent about the man, and kept his worries to himself. Since it was a new technology, and was the first flight, they got to meet the pilot; something they could never do in the past. Liam's mom asked where they could meet the pilot, and a man told them to go to the front of the plane. The pilot had his back turned to them, and when he

turned around and saw Liam, he grinned slightly. Liam gasped and suddenly felt very light headed. The pilot was wearing glasses, dark as night, and held out his hand. Liam unwillingly shook it, and the skin felt like a cold fish. Liam excused himself to the restroom and thought, "Why did I ever go on this vacation?"

Liam dozed off for a moment, and dreamt about getting trapped in an elevator with a person wearing a dark hooded sweatshirt. He said hello, and the person turned around, and had no eyes, only empty eye sockets. Liam screamed, and woke up sweating. There was something odd, he realized as he took in deep breaths. It was very, almost eerie quiet. No one was talking, and as he turned around, he thought, "NO ONE WAS THERE!!!"

Liam closed his eyes and rubbed them, time and time again, but saw the same thing. No one was on the plane, not his family, not any of the other passengers, only him. He knew he didn't want to, but he had to go see the pilot. He walked up to the closed door, and knocked on it. The pilot didn't turn around, so he knocked again, but to no use. Liam decided to just open the door. But there was one little problem- it was locked, and the handle was on the other side.

Liam slumped down in the nearest seat, and thought about home, his family and how much he missed them, when there was a sudden stop. Liam fell to the ground, knocking the wind out of him, and the door behind him slowly creaked open, revealing darkness. He started walking towards it, but it wasn't him controlling his feet. There was an invisible force controlling them, and he fell through the doorway, into the darkness.

He was in an elevator, he realized. Just like the one in the nightmare. He didn't even want to think about who was behind him. He quickly turned around, and saw a middle-aged man in a dark green hoodie. "Oh no," Liam thought, panicking. He ran to the other side of the elevator, and started slamming his fists on the buttons. He felt a tap on his shoulder, and whipped his head around. He saw the empty eye sockets, and screamed.

Liam was in his soft, cushioned seat in the airplane. He was breathing rapidly, and his hands were shaking uncontrollably. "What just happened?" He said out loud. It was as if he was in the nightmare, but not there at the same time. All of a sudden, Liam heard a crackling sound coming from one of the intercoms. "This is your captain speaking. Get ready for landing."



Found Art by Collin S. Grade 3

At first, Liam felt calm. Then he got all scared again and ran up to the pilot's room. He wasn't going to risk falling into the blackness again. If he had to break his hands to open the door, then so be it. He started banging his fists where the handle should've been, and to his surprise, the door opened. He just managed to take one step into the room, when he heard the same static noise. "There is no escaping E.V.I.L., Liam. Accept your fate."

Liam's head was whirling. Where was he, what just happened, and what the heck is E.V.I.L.? All of a sudden, Liam flew through the windshield and onto the nose of the plane. He realized what had just happened. They had landed.

Liam tried to get up, groaning. The impact had him seeing stars. Just then, something bony hit him from behind. Liam got tossed aside onto the ground like a doll. He dizzily got up, and saw the pilot walking towards him. He tried to get up, but to no use. Liam was beaten, and he knew it. The pilot crouched down so he was eye level with him. His hand reached up to his glasses, and slowly took them off. There was nothing but empty eye sockets.

Liam screamed, startling the pilot. He felt a burst of adrenaline, and threw him off. He hopped up, and suddenly felt no pain. His hands felt like they could punch through iron. The pilot got up, and so did Liam. They both

started running at each other at the same time, and got ready for a fight to the death.

Liam punched, kicked, and dodged. He swiped up with his hand, uppercutting the pilot, sending him sprawling on the ground. He got up and dusted himself off like it was nothing. Liam saw his chance. He gathered all of his strength and smashed his fist into the pilot's ugly face. He didn't even flinch. While Liam was standing there, dumbfounded, the pilot was ready to retaliate. The pilot chopped a hand to Liam's windpipe, cutting off his breath. He stumbled backwards, dazed, but the pilot didn't stop there. He picked him up, and started carrying him to the source of the airplane's power; the supersonic fire jet.

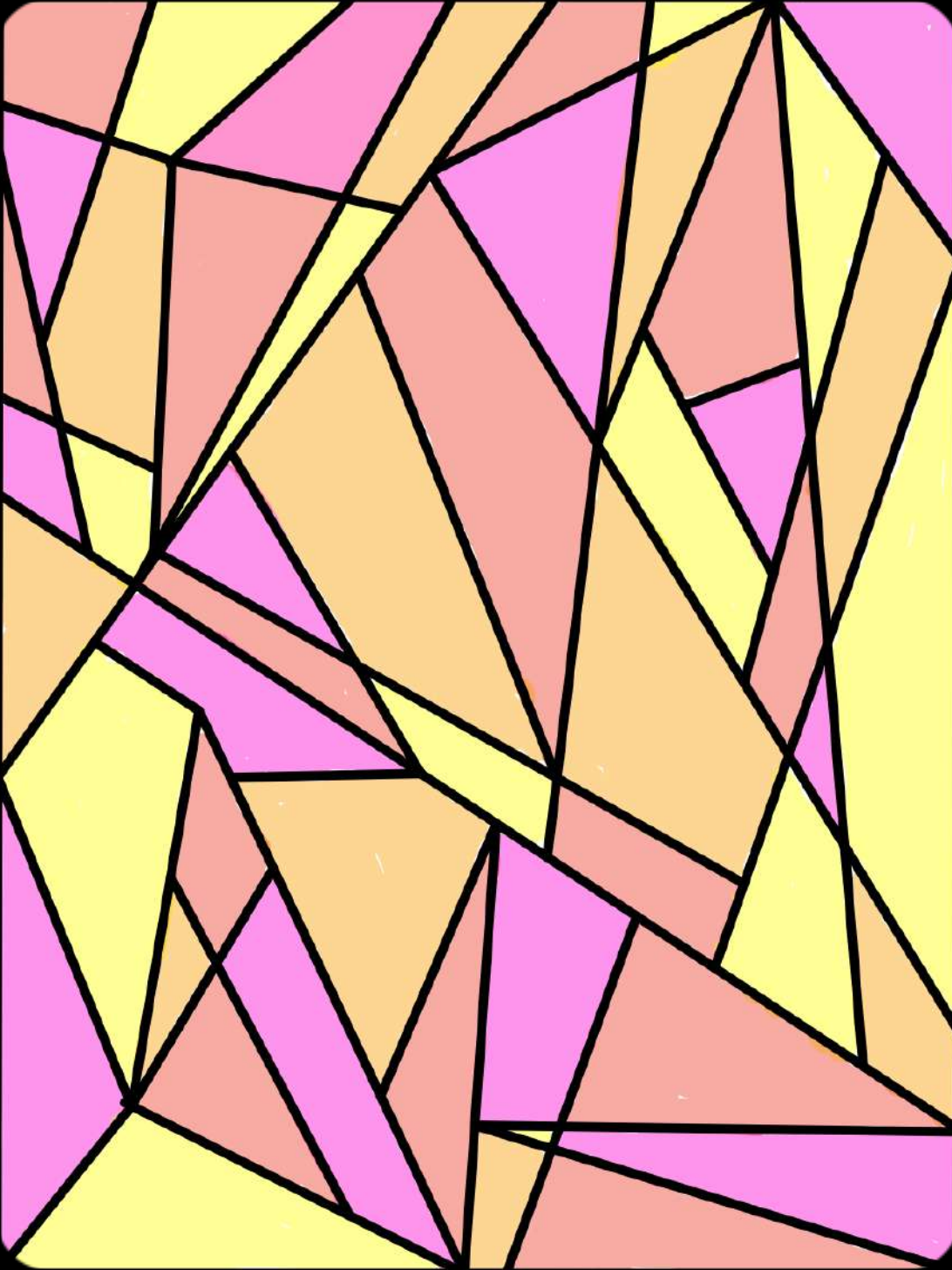
Liam bit and scratched with every ounce of his being, but to no use. His grip was like iron. With the last of his strength, he flipped over, twisted the arm of the pilot, and in one motion, threw him over his head. He looked away, but still heard the pilot's scream as he got burned up like a piece of toast.

It was all over, Liam knew, but he still was feeling some adrenaline from the fight. He'd done it, escaped E.V.I.L., that's what the pilot called it. Even through the sense of victory, he felt defeated. He couldn't find his family.

Just then, Liam saw a bright flash from inside the plane. He rushed in, and saw his family. "Mom, Dad" he said. Then he hugged them, and they hugged him back.



Fruit by Billy M. Grade 5



Lines By Nyah S. Grade 4

Where I Am From

by Bailey G. Grade 5

I am from the soccer field
From the worn out ball and goal

I am from the stone house on the lake,
Clear, and blue,
The lake Glistening like diamonds before
my eyes

I am from the magnolia tree,
towering in my grand parents back yard.

I'm from hiking in the mountains, and a
close-knit, competitive family.

From my parents, and big sis

I am from family games of Rummy, and trips
to Colorado.

From "dream big", and "SIT STILL!"

I am from a Christian church, walking with
the lord.

I am from Magnolia Texas, spaghetti
dinners, and Taco Tuesdays

From all the times my dad flipped my mom
and I off the tube.

And all funny stories of grandpa Dee who
shares the same middle name as me

I am from family photoshoots with Mrs. Cat,
and photo collages on the hall wall.

And mostly I am from the family tree blanket
with all are family names, because even
when they're gone there memories will
always stay.



Apple by Colby G. Grade 10



Hand by Catherine V. Grade 1

Willow Tree

by Lily S. Grade 8

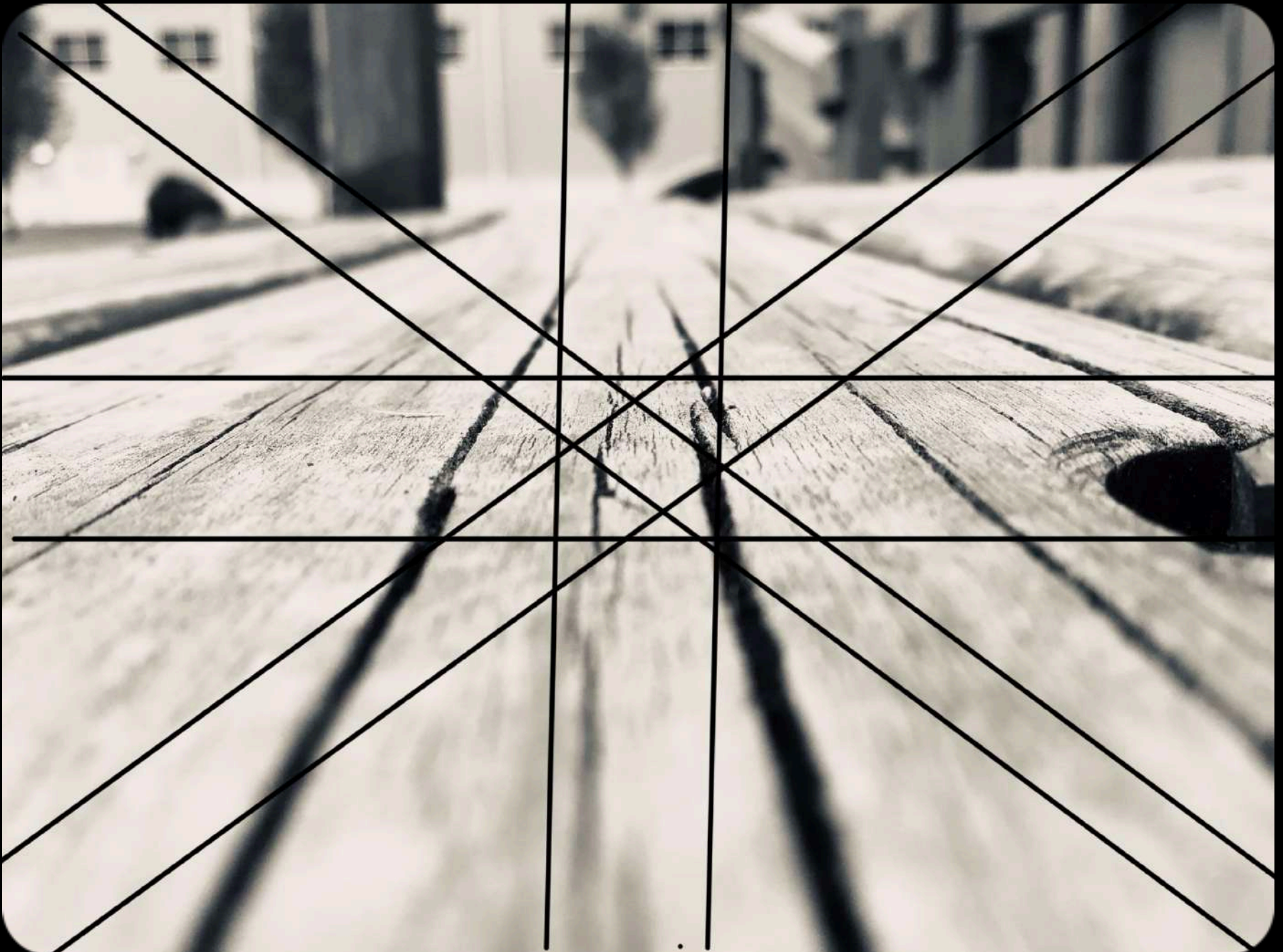
The giant willow tree has stood there for hundreds of centuries
 This tree is a marvelous part of God's creation
 This tree has a long torso dressed with bark It has long arms that reach out and
 arc

The giant willow tree has deep roots
 So that when the winds come the foundation will not come loose The willow
 tree has so many beloved memories
 It has mementos from past centuries
 The willow tree is home to so many of God's creatures The tree has so many
 unique features

It is the perfect tree for animals to create families The tree gives so much
 hospitality

The tree gives slithering snakes a chance to sleep in the shade It gives
 nocturnal animals somewhere to sleep in the day
 It gives anything or anyone the home they really need It gives any animals the
 food they need to feed

This tree gives me so many memories ingrained in my mind This tree really
 helped me find my own kind



Lines by Bella E. Grade 3



THE WOODLANDS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

The Woodlands Christian Academy is an independent, Christ-centered college preparatory school that integrates learning with Biblical faith and spiritual growth, and challenges students to reach their highest potential – intellectually, creatively, physically and socially – for the glory of Jesus Christ.

**5800 ACADEMY WAY, THE WOODLANDS, TX
936.273.2555 | WWW.TWCA.NET**