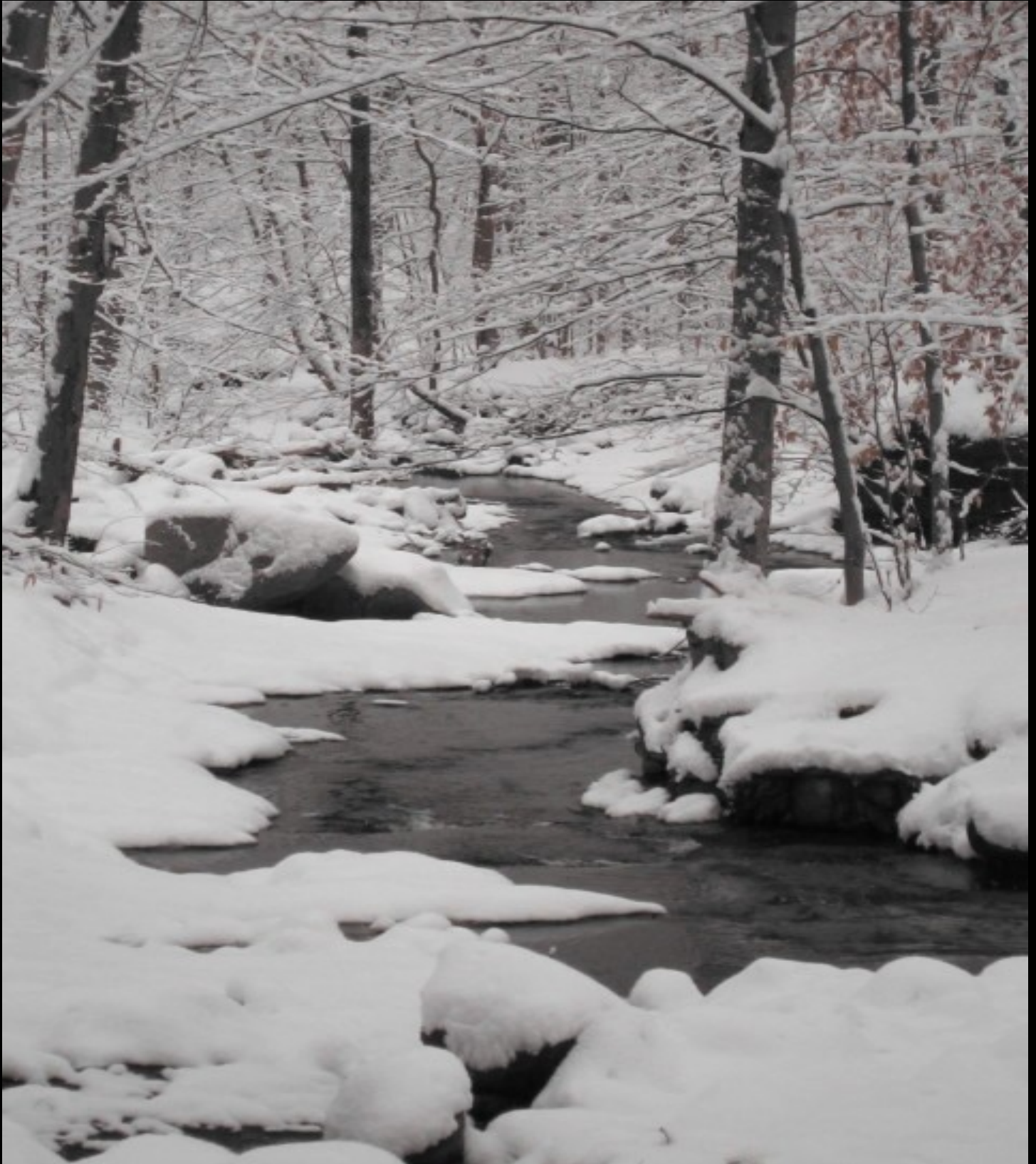


Volume 28 2012

# Stepping Stones

A Junior High Literary/Art Magazine



PARK RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL • 2 PARK AVENUE • PARK RIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07656

# Stepping Stones

A Junior High Literary/Art Magazine

## Staff Note:

*Written and illustrated by Park Ridge Middle School students, the Stepping Stones magazine offers a new level of imagery to every reader. Each page introduces a student's masterpiece; as writers show an outstanding level of creativity, vibrant imagination, and passion for writing. Some expressed in heartfelt poems, others in comical short stories, with illustrations to go with both, this magazine's pieces perfectly tie together young writers' love for literature. Let our writers/illustrators invite you into a vast world of creativity, all in one magazine!*

*The very famous author Jack London once said, "You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club.", meaning finding inspiration for writing, drawing, or any kind of creating is never done without effort. Even though the writers make it seem effortless, the*

*work displayed in this magazine takes extensive amounts of time, inspiration, and focus. Reading it will make you proud to call these students your peers, and hopefully you'll appreciate the hard work that goes into these pieces to make them so beautiful. Gratitude goes out to the students who took a risk in putting themselves out there, and submitting their work into our magazine.*

*Although the talented students wrote and illustrated these pieces, creating this magazine would not be possible without the dedication of our amazing teachers and staff members. Volunteering their time, effort, and encouragement has made so much of an impact on us as writers and illustrators, and made this magazine possible. A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Muller, Ms. Rotella, Mrs. McClair, Mrs. Maher, Mrs. Russo, and Mrs. Groveman!*

*Hanna Kiefer  
Grade 8*

# Stepping Stones

A Junior High Literary/Art Magazine

**Staff:**

Dominick Petillo  
Michelle Baird  
Grace Kim  
Hanna Kiefer  
Hyun Jin An  
Cara Mastrangelo  
Amanda Lauer



**Advisors:**

Ms. Rotella  
Mrs. Muller

**Photo:** Dominick Petillo-Grade 8  
*Digital photo: Computer generated*

**Cover Design:**

Dominick Petillo-Grade 8

*A talented young photographer who has captured the essence of nature in his photographs with a mature understanding of composition and design.. For this photo Dominick used the digital Nikon Coolpix P90. We encourage Dominick to continue his passion of photography and share with us more of his exceptional photographic works.*

**From the Advisors:**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those students who volunteered their time in helping with the production of the magazine and to those students whose literary and art contributions were selected to be published. Our 7th & 8th grade students are a very talented group of young writers and artists and we are very proud to share their talents with our readers.

At the start of the school year, all 7th & 8th grade students were offered the opportunity of joining the staff of *Stepping Stones*. Meetings were held bi-monthly. Literary works submitted were either classroom assignments or voluntary contributions. Artwork was done in pen and ink or pencil with the exception of the cover. The cover was an original photograph. Selections for the magazine were chosen by the student staff members with final approval from the advisors. Microsoft Publisher was used for layout and design. Printing was done by a professional outside source, Imageworks, in Park Ridge NJ. There were approximately 300 copies produced and distributed, free of charge, to all 7th and 8th grade students, as well as to all faculty, staff and administrators.

We are hopeful that our young writers and artists will continue to exercise their creative talents and become inspired to contribute and share their works in future school publications.

Ms. Rotella,  
Mrs. Muller

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## **Dreams**

*By Anna Rizzie*

My thoughts of dreams bear no resemblance from various times  
I try to follow my dreams to transform my life  
I just have to believe with trust in my heart  
I feel my head pounding at night trying to trust myself, everything will be okay  
Uncontrollable and unbelievable my thoughts may be  
But the miracle and wonders all come true at night  
As thoughts rush through my mind I dream  
Emotions show, gratified to sorrowful  
Gratified at the accomplishments I made  
Sorrowful to thing that have brought me down over various times  
It's my time to get all of my feelings out  
There are hopes, wishes, desires and ambition  
I dream about sports, people who matter in my life  
I lay myself down to sleep  
I pray to the lord for my soul to keep  
Visitations  
Death  
I see them now but never again  
In my dreams I see my loved ones. They visit me  
I dream about my grandparents who are gone now  
I miss them, a lot  
I feel frightened, startled, with a quick jolt I am then awake  
I have nightmares about all different things  
I can also feel loved, or heartbroken  
I dream about people I love, or I have loved but hurt me after that  
Then my heart shares my feelings with my mind  
My heart is gentle with a musical beat  
My dreams seem to dance in my mind in various ways  
Then my thoughts of dreams alter in all directions  
But as I lay there,  
I just close my eyes and dream my dream.

## Thor

*By Maia Rippe/illustrated by Hyun Jin An*

At three months old and four pounds  
My new dog Thor was homeward bound  
The car ride home, him on my arm  
Made me realize the bond we would form  
His eyes aglow in curious suspense  
Then slowly closing,  
Drooping  
Quickly, until he's  
Asleep

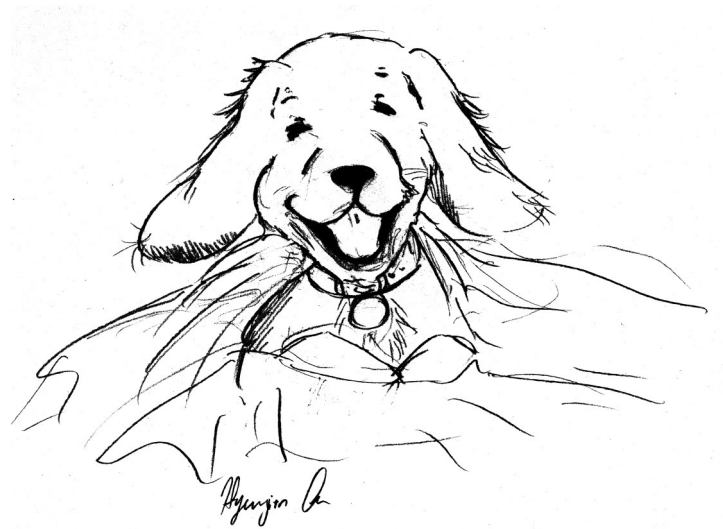
Thor got used to our family fast, pretending his life was our entire past  
He's loving, crazy, and hyper too, and his high-pitched bark is too cute to be true

Taking him outside,  
A wag in his tail  
A small smile on his lips  
Lingering eagerness as he sprints on the lawn  
Running towards the street  
Then back down the hill  
Towards the door

Playfulness arrives after dinner  
His little legs carrying him around the room  
A slight growl escaping  
A quick bite on your hands  
Running in circles, trailing his toy  
Barks at our fingers  
Lots of gentle rubs on his little  
Stomach

At night when sleep finally washes through, he cuddles up to me and yawns  
As he begins to fall into slumber, I rub his ears  
Glancing up, he shows hope in his eyes, then rubs his nose against my thigh  
A subtle lick quickly grazes my skin, and at that moment I know he has fallen asleep

Thor is special and very loving  
His smirk can bring anyone running  
He has become not only my pet  
But the best new family anyone could get



## Here Comes The Sun

*By Cara Mastrangelo/illustrated by Author*

As I glazed out of my room window  
I watched the sun rise from the clouds  
Awaking the world to its powerful rays  
Shimmering down from above  
While spreading warmth and light  
To creatures down on Earth  
As I wonder outside I feel the sun's warmth  
Spreading to every part of my body  
Keeping me content and safe  
Guiding my way through life's many obstacles  
Through thick and thin  
The sun is there  
Many people take it for granted  
But one day the sun won't be there  
And without it no life will exist  
Such as the harmony of birds chirping in the morning  
Or flowers budding in the spring  
At night when the sun becomes hidden  
I anxiously wait until the morning  
To see the brightest star  
Smiling down on our world and keeping it safe  
From the dangers and troubles  
Yet  
To  
Come

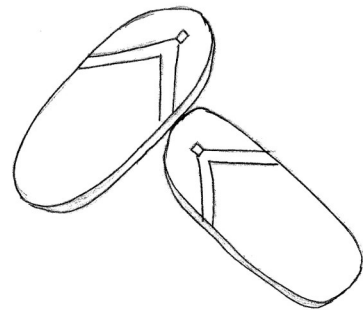


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## Summertime

*By Eunique Nyonly/illustrated by Amanda Lauer*

Butterflies flutter  
Toast and butter  
Love blooms in the summertime  
Good times, fun times  
So many trees to climb  
Laughter chimes, smiles shine  
I just can't wait for the summertime





## The Rain

*By Ako Matsumura/illustrated by Michelle Baird*

I sit on the couch  
With a mystery book in hand  
Looking out the dark, stormy window  
Seeing the rain.  
Can't go anywhere  
In the pouring rain.  
I open the book,  
And start reading  
Page after page. . .  
Feeling the suspense  
Creep up upon me  
Haunting me.  
Only hearing the CLAP of thunder  
Only hearing the rain  
Pour from the sky.  
While I  
Was lost  
In a world of mystery.



---

## Wind

*By Dominick Petillo*

Invisible, Light  
Blowing, Cooling, Destructing  
Calm, Peaceful, Refreshing, Frightening  
Tornado

## **Gym**

*By Ben Michalowicz*

I wake up one morning, sleepy as usual, and I see  
Gym is my first event.  
Jumping jacks, and push-ups, and sit-ups, oh my!  
What is this, boot camp?  
Then I have to run the mile.  
Although cold most of the time,  
Most everyone still breaks a sweat by the time they're finished.  
In the end I'm tired, drenched in sweat, and  
Feeling like I'm going to trip over my own shoes, while  
Hurrying up to get ready for Social Studies.

---

## **The Winning Stadium**

*By Preston De Marco*

You walk into the stadium,  
Expecting your team to win,  
The stadium is packed with people,  
And smell the overly priced food they are selling,  
You get your snacks,  
Take your seat,  
You see everyone packed into one confined place,  
You cheer when they get a homerun,  
You "Boo" when they give up a homerun,  
When they score, you want more,  
People scrounging for foul balls,  
Bats being broken with anger,  
People leaving because they're getting bored,  
You cheer again because they win the game,  
And that is Yankee Stadium.

## Chicharito

*By Yazmit Castelan/illustrated by Hyun Jin An*

In Mexico we refer to him as Chicharito.  
He is known as “little pea”.  
Many people may not know him but he is Javier Hernandez.  
He stands 5ft 9in tall.  
He is short indeed, but stands truly proud among the rest.  
He is an outstanding striker.  
He plays the unexpected at the unexpected time.  
He #14, the shining star of my country, Mexico.  
Mexico is truly proud of his accomplishments.  
What an inspirational human being!  
He has shown to never give up on your dreams.  
He started from the bottom and rose to the top.  
He is a hard worker for sure.  
He currently plays with the English Premier League: Manchester United.  
And Mexico’s National Soccer team.  
He made history, indeed.  
He is the FIRST Mexican player to play on such a high standard European League.  
He is proud to have this opportunity in life.  
Many did not believe such dreams can become reality.  
But that didn’t stop him.  
Javier Hernandez. . .  
Dreamed it.  
Believed it.  
Living it.



## Mexico

*By Yazmit Castelan*

Mexico is a beautiful place.  
Every corner you go, you see. . .  
Festivals and traditional dances going on.  
This is my home, my place in life.  
I love our traditional festivities and the food served.  
In Mexico, there is one festivity I am waiting for.  
My Quince.. it’s a traditional party of becoming a woman.  
Mexico my dear home, I will always have you in my heart.  
I am Latina and I am proud!



## **The Trojan Horse**

*By Jacqueline Sun*

The horse stretched its majestic neck  
as it rolled across the floor.

Lauren, Evan, Daniel, and I  
pulled it along on a string.

We had worked long and hard  
On a beautiful, sunny, spring day,  
To create this piece of art,  
All for some extra credit.

The smell of glue wafted through the air,  
As Lauren glued chips on the horse,  
As Evan started falling asleep,  
As Daniel glued himself to the floor,  
And as I jabbered away. . .

All to create this 1-foot tall horse, with a light brown stubby, wooden mane.

We spent the day laughing, and joking  
And telling tales of laughter.

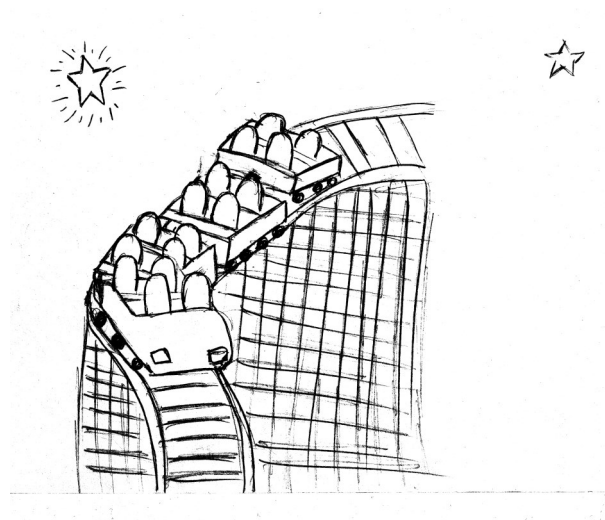
We told stories of flaming marshmallows,  
And joked over sweet, Italian ice.

We spend the day together, as friends  
All because of a small wooden horse.

## Motivation

*By Shayna Bohus/illustrated by Grace Kim*

I see a star I want to be,  
I don't let anybody stop me.  
For I will reach high and low,  
To get where I would like to go.  
Even though times can be rough,  
I keep my head held high even when I've had enough.  
Life is a rollercoaster with all its twists and turns,  
As every one of us eventually learns.  
Be patient for however long it takes,  
Failure can be one of my small mistakes.  
There is always failure before success,  
Defeat is one great access.  
I will do what I know is right,  
Even when no one else is in sight.  
I will try to be extreme,  
In order to pursue my dream.



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## A Regular School Day

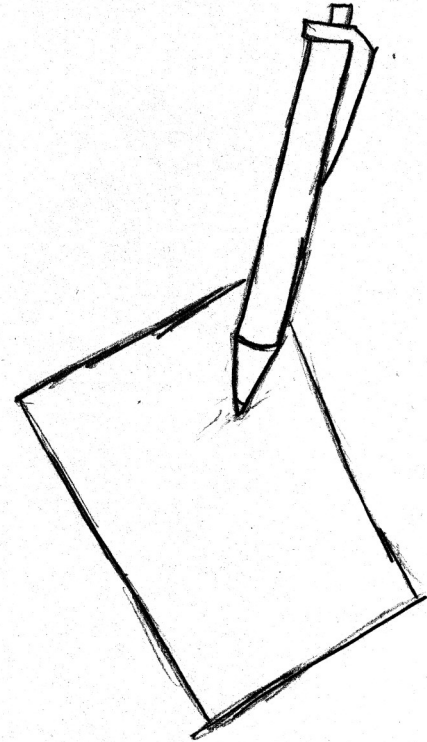
*By Adam Michalowicz*

It starts at Park Ridge Middle School.  
I count down the days until summer break.  
It is tedious from beginning to end.  
The work load is more than I wish to say.  
But no, homework is what makes the day.  
Soon comes the time I wish to relax.  
Then the cruelty starts all over again.

## The Pen That Won't Write

By Steven Rizzie/illustrated by Grace Kim

When a poem strikes my mind  
My realm of thoughts spill on the page  
Metaphors, interpretations, experiences  
While many specifications and details  
Fill the chasms and trenches,  
Nooks and crannies  
But now. . .  
What do I have to write about?  
How I interpret the sub-conscious mind and dreams?  
Did that. . .  
Relation to a previous occurrence?  
Too obvious. . .  
Nothing ever comes to me,  
When I am told to write a poem.  
I am too focused on when the assignment must be completed  
As opposed to making it efficient  
And I am left with "The Pen That Won't Write"  
Over a plain, blank paper  
Representing my world of blank thoughts  
And all I can do is sit there  
Motionless  
Staring into the space that once contained thoughts  
But now is entirely blank  
I push and push my self to remember something  
However, nothing seems to come to me  
So  
Without further hesitation,  
Here is my poem.



## A Stolen Childhood

*By Alyssa Glynn*

You think back.  
You remember:  
Playing,  
Laughing,  
Jumping,  
Running.  
You are 12.  
Now you think  
About the present.  
You see:  
Shooting,  
Shelling,  
Damage,  
Empty streets.  
You are 12,  
However you  
Could be 35 and  
Fought in a  
WAR.  
You had a  
Shot childhood  
And now,  
You have to be  
Strong.  
Not for your  
Own sake,  
For your  
Parents'.  
You used to  
Be carefree,  
And have  
Meltdowns  
When you  
Needed to.  
Now you  
Aren't allowed  
To meltdown,  
Not by your  
Parents'  
Standards.  
By your  
Own.

You think:  
*My childhood  
Has been Stolen.  
It has  
Been  
Beaten,  
Defeated,  
And has  
Lost all  
Of it's  
Purpose.*  
Skip a few  
Years. The  
WAR  
Has ended.  
You are now 14.  
You don't join  
CLUBS.  
You think::  
What's the  
POINT?  
You don't have  
FRIENDS.  
You think:  
What's the  
POINT?  
The point is  
That  
YOU  
Had your childhood  
STOLEN!  
You  
Don't know  
How to be  
A child!  
Because you  
NEVER  
Got the  
CHANCE  
To be one!

## Innocence

*By Hanna Kiefer/illustrated by Grace Kim*

### **In-no-cence** *noun*

Freedom from guilt or evil  
Lack of worldly knowledge

Innocence is playing games labeled 'ages 3-6'

Innocence is not caring about the scent of the candle, but the color your fingertips will turn after  
you dip them in hat wax

Innocence is cutting your own hair

Innocence is crayon murals on the walls

Innocence is playing make-believe

Innocence is hearing bedtime stories, the ones you swear will come true

Innocence is playing dress-up!

Innocence is painting the dogs nails

Innocence is bedtime at six-thirty

Innocence is a coloring book collection

Innocence is Santa's existence

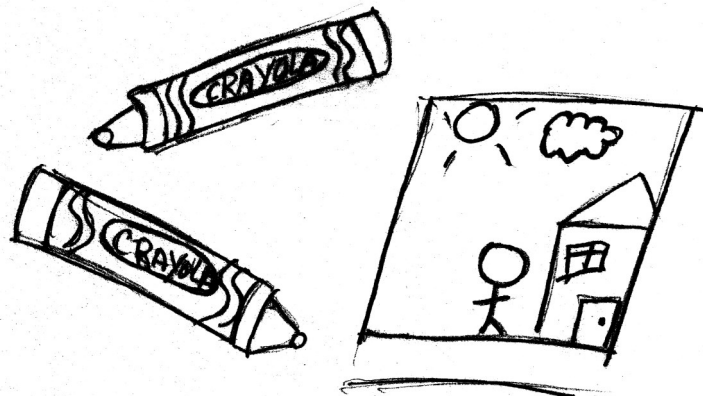
Innocence is a loose tooth

Innocence is homemade birthday gifts

Innocence is love for everyone

Innocence is not knowing right from wrong

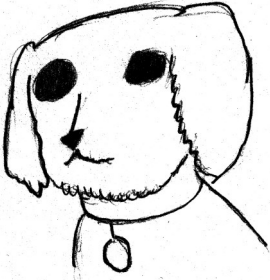
Innocence is still seeing the "glass half full"





## My Dogs

*By Michael Shappell/illustrated by Grace Kim*



I have two dogs their  
names are Maggie and  
Rocky

They are very big and very  
sloppy.

They run and they play,  
every night and every day.

I don't lie when I say they  
are yeah high.

They are very tall and very  
shy.

Maggie is black, white  
and brown, she never has a  
frown.

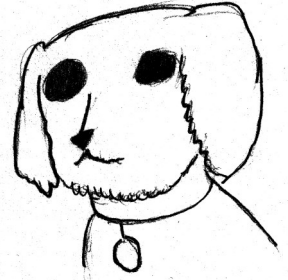
Rocky is a dark yellow and  
is very mellow. (Most of  
the time)

They love when bunnies  
come out to play.

They chase, chase, chase  
all day

I love my dogs more than I  
do my brother.

And they love me more  
than any other



## The Hunter

*By Bennett Rosner/illustrated by Hyun Jin An*

He waits in the shadows in the middle of the night  
Waiting for the perfect prey to come into sight  
Diligent, and unseen, the Hunter can bide his time  
While the prey comes right into his trap,  
The perfect crime  
Hour after hour, the prey come and go  
But the perfect one for the hunter,  
When it comes he will know  
Finally the largest and fattest deer ever seen  
Coming right to the intelligent hunter,  
The deer, not so keen  
The deer right in front of the hunters' station  
Finally the hunter is not so patient  
He leaps at the deer with a powerful bound  
But the deer was quick, and leapt without a sound  
With the deer nowhere in site,  
The hunter goes back to the shadows,  
With nothing to bite  
Although the hunter did not succeed now  
He will try again any how  
For the hunter will not try as much, as to strain  
But the clever hunter does not care,  
For he will strike again.



## **Best Friends**

*By Katie Scheidle*

Through smiles and laughs	Because that's what best friends do
Through tears and fights	So no matter what happened
I knew everything would be alright	With us and
Through love and hate	With life
Through betrayal and debate	Through all of the wrongs
For you I would always have faith	Through all of the rights
Being your sister	I'm here for you
As well as your best friend	To be a best friend that's true
I know this friendship will never end	Because I love you
By your side I will always stand	And that's what best friends do.
And you'll stand by me too	

---

## **Highway**

*By Ally Jago*

Sitting in my car, I watch the high beams flash by me  
A contrast to the night surrounding the cars.  
The whoosh of passing vehicles  
The hum of an idle engine.  
In a place so fast moving,  
All seemed still  
There, was the perfect place to sit,  
To let thought flow through your brain like the rain dripping down the window  
“Why is it called a parkway, when you're driving?”  
“Why is it called a driveway when you're parked?”  
Sleepiness, I could tell washed over all in the car.  
Stuck like legos we were in traffic.  
Traffic, traffic, traffic.  
In a place formerly fast moving,  
Now all was still.

## **Paddle Boarding**

*By Dylan Metzdorf*

The late August sun is beating on my back

In overwhelming warmth

Dip, pull, lift, switch and repeat

I follow the repetitive pattern

The motion is similar to kayaking

Paddle left, paddle right, paddle left. . .

Clear, crisp, tranquil, beautiful

Paddle boarding is like most things in life; you must start somewhere

I seem to be a natural at it, not falling once

After three days I become quite good

I sail along on the glistening sea enjoying the beauty of St. Thomas

I am suddenly sprayed with water

Startled "what is that?" I ask

My father pops up out of the water!

Laughing, "I fell off again," he explains

A wave comes and for the first time I lose my balance and fall in the drink

My dad and I bob up and down side by side, in the refreshing water

It is then I realize the path to success is a bumpy ride

## **A Nightmare**

*By Nicholas Corso*

Blood, gore, and horror fill the streets and houses  
Nobody dares to go outside  
People fear that their days may be numbered  
No one wants to die  
You hide waiting for something to happen  
Nothing ever does happen at this time  
Then when you least expect it,  
**BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!**  
Scared and hungry, you don't know what to do  
You smell smoke and know something is on fire  
Praying is all that you can do  
Your instincts tell you that something is wrong  
When somebody comes over, you hope for good news  
But you only get bad news  
Another person injured, and another person killed  
It seems like everyone you know is dead  
However, you think about life without any deaths  
You remember the days where everything was perfect  
Then you realize that those days are gone  
Everybody cries and weeps throughout the nights  
Eventually things will be alright  
Though now you suffer  
You just have to live through the pain  
War is a nightmare

## One Letter, One Change

*By Natalie Olynick.*

Here and There  
One letter difference  
Here and There  
Yet such different meanings  
Here and There  
But the thing to remember  
Here and There  
One matters, one doesn't  
Here and There  
Focus on now, the people around you  
Here and There  
Just one letter

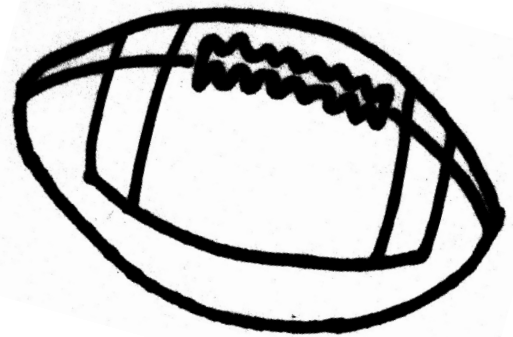
Here and There  
And other words as well  
Sweet and sweat  
Plain and plane  
Leave and levee  
But the one thing that changes  
Here and There  
Is the way you look at it  
Here and There  
Attitude makes the difference

---

## Football

*By Danny Sherlock/Cara Mastrangelo*

As I step out into the cold weather,  
BAM! I am thrown a ball of leather.  
The score is 21-21 and we need a touchdown.  
The pressure is on, it's fourth down.  
The ball is snapped.  
We have the defense trapped.  
The ball is handed off to me.  
The end zone is the only thing I see.  
I am determined to get a touchdown.  
I don't let the defender bring me down.  
I suddenly see a clear path.  
I will make the opposing team feel our wrath  
I hear the roar of the crowd.  
The cheers are especially loud.  
I am in the end zone!



## **HWISDONE5000**

*By Christopher Bolella*

Kids face it every night and nobody likes it,

Especially me, though.

So, I came up with a solution to fighting the deadly plague known as homework

It's very simple actually.

You see, I created this machine that gets it done for you.

It's a machine called HWISDONE 5000.

All you have to do is take your homework, place it in the machine,

And Voila! It's all done. It's that easy.

Ever since I have created this machine, I have had no stress,

And I have PLENTY of time to play!

You might ask me, are there any malfunctions with the machine?

Well let's let my Power School take care of the question.

As you can see I have straight one hundreds

Wait a minute,

60, 55, 71, 45!!!

Perhaps the HWISDONE5000 is not such a great idea after all.

Well I guess I'm going back to the old fashioned way.

Homework: 1

Me: 0

## **War**

*By Misaki Dreispan*

War

Takes innocent people's lives  
Can scar you for life  
Expresses hatred  
Can last for years

War

Peace's enemy  
Hurts people physically and mentally  
Separates families  
Causes funerals

War

Causes people to do mischievous things  
Brings out the worst in people  
Makes families worry  
Makes the world cry

War

Causes parents to miss out on their children's lives  
Causes kids to miss out on memories with their parents  
Millions of people die or get wounded  
Destroys people's homes

War

Kills friendships  
Kills peace  
Kills happiness  
Kills families

War

Death  
Destruction  
Violence  
Depression



## **Grandpa**

*By Brandon Malloy*

Off the coast of Europe he sat on his ship,  
He was sailing on the USS Marine Wolf for the U.S. NAVY,  
Every day he knew what might happen but still he found a way through it,  
This person is my grandfather said my grandma.  
I had asked my grandma about a picture of a man dressed in a white suit wearing a weird hat,  
She explained to me how he was in the NAVY but couldn't swim,  
How some men got off the ship and never returned,  
Of course I'm an ocean away from the horrors of war but I could still imagine it,  
In the world's darkest hour my grandpa and the men of his ship were amongst the few,  
These few who were part of our country's finest generation in my opinion,  
He was 18 years old and the youngest man in his unit,  
But yet some of his superiors didn't make it to see the light of the next day,  
Serving from 1943 until 1945, the war's end,  
He transported Nazi war criminals back to England to be tried in court for war crimes,  
My grandma told me about all of this so I would understand,  
This is what got me interested in learning military tactics and strategy,  
Not that my grandpa passed away and my grandma has Alzheimer's.  
I can only think, if I only paid more attention to the stories they told,  
But now no longer when I walk pass the picture now sitting in my living room,  
I don't think of him as a guy with a weird hat but as a member of an elite few of the greatest  
generation and an entire breed of soldiers now known as heroes.

## **Cheetah At The Zoo**

*By Kevin Yu*

Lustrous golden and black fur,  
Sharp fangs,  
And quick feet  
Do not provoke,  
Or prepare for action  
Just go ahead and meet a cheetah  
The golden and black dots  
INVITE YOU  
BAM!  
It started sprinting,  
Its legs stretching,  
Its eyes wild,  
Its tail wailing in the wind  
Heavily breathing  
Behind the glass  
I knew I was safe  
Protected from the  
Sharp fangs,  
Quick feet,  
And golden fur  
It was very scary  
But I knew I was safe  
Protected,  
Heavily breathing

## **Bogota**

*By Garwyn Primus*

On an early Saturday morning  
My team walks onto the field  
For the first time since last year  
We are wearing our shoulder pads and gear  
Our first time wearing our game jerseys  
Wearing maroon, white and black  
We stand tall and big  
While the others stand puny and weak  
The game is about to start  
We were wearing maroon and white  
They were wearing purple and gold  
The first quarter  
The score was 7-0 them  
We were down and we had to come back and win  
The second quarter 14-0 them  
It was half time now  
We were still down and the coaches were so angry  
at us  
Third quarter the score was 14-7  
We scored, we were all screaming  
YAYYYY! WOOOOHOOOO!  
The person who scored was Samuel Schneider  
Fourth quarter we were winning 21-14  
The game was over , we won  
We were now  
1-0  
We then all started chanting  
1 and 0  
1 and 0  
We then went to end the season  
2-7

## The Other Part Of Me

*By Madeline Clancy/illustrated by Hyun Jin An*

As I look at the hand enclosed in my own

I see a past, present and a future to come.

I look at the person that makes me

Cry

Laugh

Smile

Hurt

I don't know how long we will be together,

Because I'm not thinking about forever.

But as long as I'm with you

There is nothing we can't get through.



---

## Loving and Hating

*By Alyssa Sansone*

Family will be there for each other.

They will provide you with love, food, inspiration, protection and shelter.

Family is also fun, they play with you and crack jokes.

Family can be supportive for you, like for games or surgery or anything that is tough for you.

Family can be caring for you, like if your break a bone or if you go on a far away trip.

Family can be annoying for you, like embarrassing you in front of your friends.

Family can fight over you, like a divorce and your parents fighting where you should go.

Family can break for you, everyone going their separate ways.

Family can be there for you, when you someday have your family with children and a husband.

And your kids will say that family can be loving, fun, supportive, caring, annoying, and will maybe fight over me.

But in the end, family is family and that you are going to have to deal with your annoying little brother and your two older sisters,

But mostly your mom and dad.

Even though you might say that you hate them and you know inside that you really do love them.

## Timeless

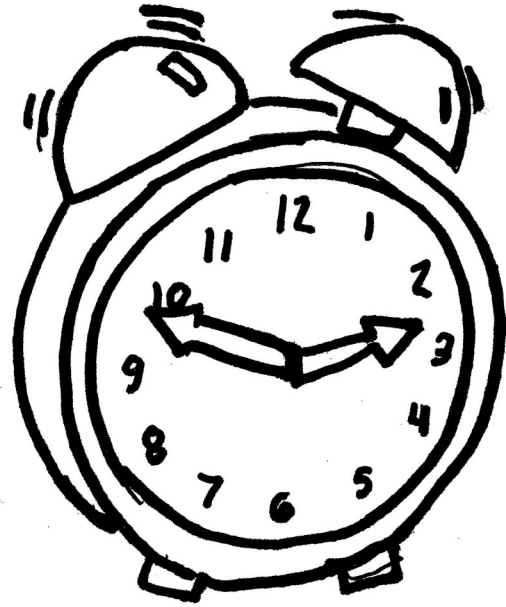
*By Stephanie Nativo/illustrated by Cara Mastrangelo*

Time is far to come,  
Time is near.  
Time to split;  
Time can be queer.

Time can be short when having fun,  
But sometimes it goes on and on.  
Time to start a race,  
Time to pick up the pace!

Time to begin,  
And time to see who loses and wins.  
Time is a pest!

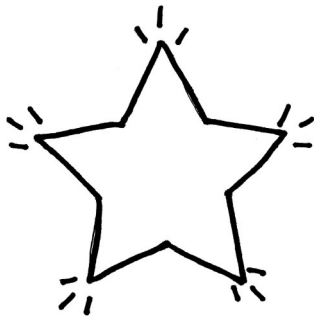
Time to take a test,  
And time for a quiz.  
Now, can you tell me what time it is?



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## Star

*By Stephanie Nativo/illustrated by Cara Mastrangelo*



A falling star shines  
Bringing hope to all who view  
Singing the old rhyme  
Wishing for dreams to come true  
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

## **I Can't Wait**

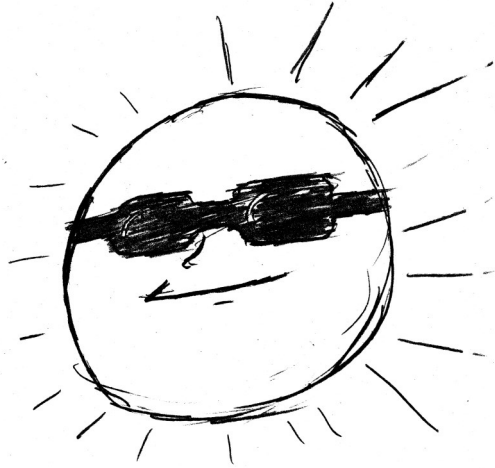
*By Sabrina Fitzpatrick*

My mind is going to blow  
Because there are only a couple more hours to go  
My bags are packed and I am still in school  
Maybe later I will go in the hotel's relaxing and heated pool  
Ring! The last bell just rang  
Bam! I leave with a bang  
I hop with my family into our blue-green car  
As we start our three hour journey to Callicoon, New York that is so far  
La, La, La! The radio plays  
I'm so happy that I'm off for a couple of days  
Now there is only an hour more to go  
Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock! The time is going so slow  
I think about all of the people I love: Grandma Lucy, Brandma Roseanne, Grandpa Mike, Aunt Mari-  
anne, Great Aunt Billie, silly cousins Carolyn, Brendan, Ava, Anthony, Jared,  
Andres, Thomas, Dan and Angelina that I'm going to see.  
At this family reunion I will be as busy as a bee  
I will be playing games, taking pictures, and preparing for the talent show  
It is the 20th anniversary for my family, the Giancaspro's  
Now we are finally here and I walk into the grand lobby of the Villa Roma Resort with a cheery smile  
on my face  
In my hand I carry a heavy navy blue suitcase  
I greet all of my loving family members as they greet me  
Now we checked in and got our room key  
As we walk down the long halls to the room I think about how I'm going to have a blast  
As the time will go by so very fast

## Vacation

*By Marisa Jago/illustrated by Michelle Baird*

The breeze hits me,  
The sun burns my skin,  
I step onto the beach.  
Soft, white sand squishes between my toes.  
The turquoise blue water,  
Teases my toes.  
Almost there!  
Centimeters away,  
Barely touching.  
Gone again.  
I can't holdback anymore.  
I surge towards the ocean,  
It races towards me.  
Finally we meet.  
The salt water touches my lips, nose, eyes, face.  
I feel the water getting to know me, learning everything to know.  
I'm safe, yet there's a slight sense of danger. Now peace.  
I'm there, just floating, floating,  
Surrounded by colors.  
Sharp,  
Loud,  
Amazing.



---

## Music

*By Camilla Nappa/illustrated by Amanda Lauer*



As the band comes together  
To make the piece complete  
My fingers glide across the keys  
And every breath I take,  
A melody escapes my flute  
The conductor waves his wand  
Which creates nothing but silence.



## **Vermont Mountains**

*By Derek Zeug*

Taking the chair  
Through falling snow and  
Arctic air

Climbing higher,  
Higher.  
Only hearing  
Skiers and boarders

I'm calm when  
Reaching the top  
Silent in words but  
Giving a small nod

One will lead  
One will follow  
One after another  
Making new trails  
Memories  
On the Vermont mountains.

## **My Second Home**

*By Michelle Baird*

Flip Flops  
Shovels  
Pails  
Shells

Items that have fallen into the ocean

Collecting memories of those who have  
walked its shores  
Of people just like me  
The strong breeze blows my hair in my face  
Taking away my sight  
The birds "Squawk"  
Flying away when I try to approach them  
Wishing I could get closer

The salty smell of the sea reminds me  
Of the years I have come here  
Filled with fun and family  
Friends and adventure  
My second home

## The Joys of Figure Skating

*By Julia Drubel/illustrated by Amanda Lauer*

The music starts,  
She pushes off.  
3-turn, into backward crossover  
Everyone is silent,

1

2

3!

She flies through the air-  
Lands!

The audience applauds,  
The music swells, she leaps on the upbeat!  
She uses her blades to carve her performance into the ice.

The song is coming to a close,  
In the center of the ice she steps in and spins,

1

2

3

4

5 revolutions!

She crosses her legs to finish the spin.

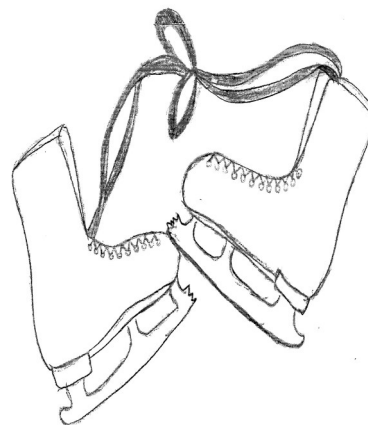
The music ends.

A bow to the judges,

A bow to the audience,

The judges silently converse

Her scores are. . . .





## Short By A Crack

*By Bob Richardson/illustrated by Cara Mastrangelo*

It was the night before the season opener, and I couldn't get to sleep.

Thinking about scoring a touchdown in this fall game against Bogota made my heart sprint.

As I prepared for the game, the very next day, I said to my self I have to run my hardest and hit hard.

The game started with both teams neck and neck, with the score of 21-16.

It was a furious battle with kids getting decked.

As the game wound down, we were still down by 5 points.

Everyone was tired with pain in their joints.

Coach Allen called the play a handoff to me.

Now I have a chance to show what I can be.

I hit the 5 hole, the left gap between the end and tackle.

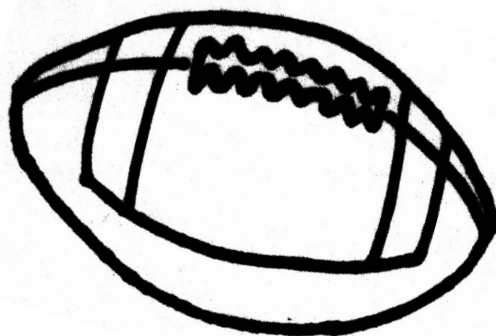
I ran 30 yards down to the 5 yard line.

I thought I would take it to the house until I saw the 6 foot 4 inch 220 pound monster lineman

lower his shoulder.

I ran down to the 2 yard line, and reached the ball out, but it was short by a crack.

I still thought I had a chance, but the monster lineman knocked me flat on my back.



## Clouds

*By Cara Mastrangelo/illustrated by author*

Flying high in the sky  
Holding moisture and precipitation  
Until it becomes ready to plunge down  
Towards earth granting life for civilizations to grow  
For when the precipitation has stopped  
It evaporates back into the air  
Ready to start the process,  
All over again



---

## Fall

*By Jen Malespina*

The air becomes chilled  
And the leaves begin to fall  
Right to the ground  
CRUNCH  
I step on them  
As I'm walking inside  
Candles fill the house  
Pumpkin pie and apple cider  
I can almost taste them  
I turn to my left  
Where I can see Jack-o-lanterns carved  
Decorations are hung  
In a wait for Halloween  
Summer came and went  
Won't be back for a year  
But it doesn't matter 'cause  
Autumn is here  
Fall!

## **Basketball**

*By Kristopher Conroy*

As I step out onto the court, my legs feel like they are where they belong.  
As I get ready for game time, I relax my muscles and take a couple of shots.

My arms are now relaxed and ready to play.

It's game time.

The referee blows his whistle with a roar as the ball is released from his hands.

I get ready to be unleashed like a horse at the gate.

I run pass the defender with a sweep under my feet.

The ball is finally passed to me and an open shot awaits.

I take my time prepared not to miss.

To my satisfaction, the shot goes in.

"This is great" I announce as I rush back to defense

But I thought better and decided not to get too carried away.

With outstanding defense the ball turns into our favor.

We rush past the defenders with speed and agility like you couldn't believe.

The crowd screams in support of us, as a three pointer is hanging in mid air.

With a swish the ball goes in, we are still ahead and prepared for anything that may come our way.

With resisting defense, and outstanding offense, we win the game!

This is where I belong, this is my game.

This is

Basketball

---

## **Wrestling**

*By Sam Schneider*

Practice every day.

Trying to be the best.

Never stop, never give up.

## Video Games

*By Danny Beer/illustrated by Cara Mastrangelo*

Whether you like the mature, strategy kind of game,  
Or the playful, kids games kind,  
Everyone has their favorite, none the same.  
Don't let people put you down and leave you in shame.  
If you like them, play them! You're not out of your mind.  
Video games are what I love; it's like a special bond,  
Where I get to be my self, where no one can call me lame.  
Nor do I care what they say, but who am I to blame.  
I love every genre, they have all shined.  
I love playing them with friends on PS3, or over the PC.  
Video games are the main side of me, that's who I am.  
Music and sports are also there, but not above it all.  
Whether I'm mad, glad, or sad, I'll sit down to see,  
How much time I have to play, before studying for an exam.  
Whatever you love, do it, and stand real tall.



## With Patience Comes Passion

By Daria Beatini/illustrated by Cara Mastrangelo

Throughout my childhood, I had never particularly excelled in or had enthusiasm for art, singing, or athletics. I lacked the nerve to get up in front of people, the creativity to draw, or the grace to sprint down a basketball court without tripping over my own two feet. Admittedly, I remember being envious of those who these things came easily to; of the kids who could do them without the effort I put into them. I longed for a talent of my own; something special that I could do on my first try. I now know that it was my belief that I would be able to pick up my guitar and play full songs immediately that made the learning process so frustrating, but that my determination to have a skill of my own ultimately allowed me to work towards my goals while learning to play. It was this same determination that sparked this passion I had, and still have today, for playing the guitar.

As I walked into Woodside Music for my first lesson, a third grader at the time, I had no doubt in my mind that I would be the next Kurt Cobain by the time my thirty minute lesson was over. I stumbled over to the creaky wooden bench, trying carefully to maneuver around the closet sized store with my guitar that was nearly as tall as I was, slung over my shoulder. I sat down on the bench next to my mom, beginning to feel a type of nervous-excitement as I awaited for the teacher I had only heard about call me back to begin my lesson.

Finally, a man in his early twenties who introduced himself as Leon emerged from a hallway I hadn't noticed, called my name, and said hello to my mother and me. After saying a rushed goodbye to my mom, I followed him down the hallway he had come out of and we soon turned into a small room with just two chairs and a music stand. We sat down, and he took my guitar to tune it briefly, asking me the typical "getting to know you" questions all at the same time. When I was once again armed with my guitar, he began to start the lesson off.

"This note's called an 'F'," he explained, placing his left pointer finger on the first string, first fret of his guitar. With his right hand, he plucked the string, letting the note ring out loudly and clearly.

"You try it now." He said simply, motioning for me to copy the placement of his finger. It seemed simple enough; just one finger down and a quick pluck of a string. So, I put my first finger on the first string, in the first fret, preparing for my the debut in my career as a guitarist, and as I ever so carefully plucked that first string, I was shocked to hear the dull "*thwap*" that I had created, as opposed to the clear ringing note that Leon had played.

Bitter frustration and disappointment seemed to swallow me, only to be quelled by Leon's voice saying, "Try again."

This time, I set my left hand up flawlessly: making sure it wouldn't sneak away from where it was supposed to be like it had just done. Once I made sure that I had set up my left hand, I played the first string once again, just hard enough to hear the "F" note slip out from my guitar delicately and softly. It was all I needed. All I needed to give me the motivation to move onto learn how to play "G" and eventually taking the leap to all of the notes on the second string and on.

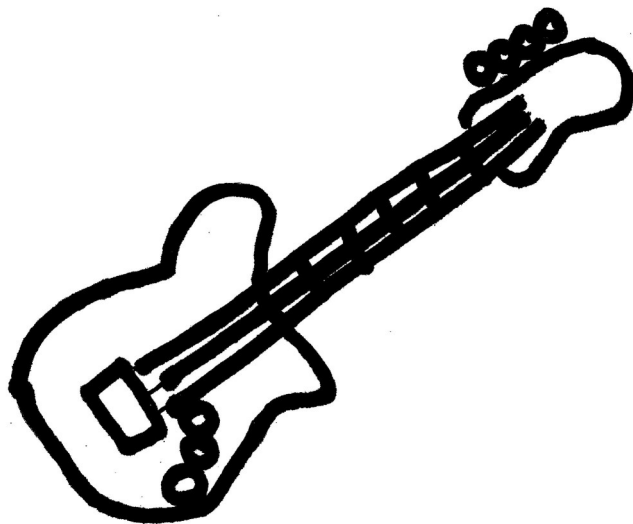
### *With Patience Comes Passion (cont)*

When we had finished all of the basic notes, Leon announced one day that we would be moving onto chords. Once again, the haunting, dreaded "*thwap*" of my notes not ringing out clearly came back. But instead of getting it down on my second try, time and time again, I couldn't do it. After leaving my lesson that day filled with harsh disappointment, my determination only increased: I would not be satisfied until I could play those chords.

For the remainder of the week I repeated the chords with a newfound obsession, with the expectation of perfection in my mind and the refusal to accept anything less. I played until my fingers ached, then I played some more, my blistered fingers screaming in raw pain, and still I played longer until the blisters turned to calluses and my muffled chords transformed into music.

Sweet satisfaction burned throughout my mind and aching hands, my accomplishment finally letting me be content. It was then that I learned that I was the only one who could determine how well or how poorly I would be able to play my guitar. Lessons would only get me so far; I had to take it upon myself to practice enough to progress onto bigger things. Along with this, I came to the realization that playing the guitar was by no means a talent that I would immediately be capable of. To know a skill, one must learn it.

As I play my guitar today, I can definitely say I am better than I was in third grade. I can also say that I have found the passion I was once jealous of in other people, and I have finally gained the talent I worked so hard to acquire. By beginning to learn to play the guitar, I learned much more than how to read music and play chords. I learned that my contentment and satisfaction would only be reached by meeting the goals I set for myself: and that if I wanted to accomplish something, it was up to me to do it.



## **Snowboarding Falls Can't Keep Me Down**

*By Daniel Confreda*

I still feel pain in my tailbone. I remember the exact moment when I fell and I knew I bruised my tailbone. I was filming that day while I was riding, and the whole thing was caught on tape. I filmed the whole day, and here is what's on the video.

It was a cold sunny morning, and I got up at seven with immense bed hair. I combed my hair; then I got changed. I had so many butterflies in my stomach I thought my stomach was going to fly away like a bird. My mom and I got into the car and headed to Tuxedo Ridge New York, which is a ski resort. I was going to attempt to snowboard that day. The only reason my mom was letting me go is because Park Ridge Police D.A.R.E. was having a ski day there and gave discounted prices. After forty five minutes in the car we pulled up in the parking lot just as the place opened. My mom and I went inside to purchase my ski lift ticket. After we purchased it we went over to the rental section where Thomas, a twenty seven year old employee there, helped me pick out the right boots, board, bindings, and helmet. He gave me a gray snowboard with a black striped design. I got a black helmet and gray boots, size 10.

After I got all my gear on, I went to hit the slopes. I recall my mom telling me right before I started: "Be careful and don't get hurt."

I got a little frightened after she told me that I didn't know what I was in for. I went to the easiest hill which looked immensely big to me. I went to the snowboard instructor for my lesson. The instructor's name was John, and he taught all the basics first to the group, which was Marshall with his son James and me. We learned how to move around with one foot, and then he taught us how to ride down hill. He said: "There are two ways you ride, heel side, and then toe side. Heel side is when you lean on your heels and toe side is when you lean on your heels."

I caught on okay and I was ridding down the bottom part of the hill and stopping. I surprised myself because I wasn't falling. After he thought we were all ready he sent us all out on our own. I stood at the bottom of the enormous hill that stood 90,000 feet tall. You couldn't even see the top of the mountain because it went up into the clouds.

I got on the ski lift and went up the mountain. Looking straight ahead I wondered if this ski lift would ever end. It took me two hours but I finally got to the top. I finally reached the top, and I got off the ski lift and sat down on the snow, so I could buckle my feet in. Once I was buckled in I stood up and went down the mountain. I wasn't sure how to go down the hill, because we only went down like the last thirty feet, and now had 90,000 feet to go down. I picked up too much speed, going eighty miles per hour, and when I tried to turn to my heel side I completely wiped out. It hurt a little but I got right back up because I wanted to learn how to snowboard. I wiped out five more times on the way down the mountain.

My left arm was really hurting me, but I thought of it as nothing. So determined to snowboard I went right back up the mountain on the ski lift. On my second run of the day I fell about five times on the way down. I fell on my tailbone once, but it didn't really hurt. So I went back up the mountain for my third run. I was getting really fed up by that time. As I started to go down the hill I was getting a lot of speed and I lost control and flipped backwards landing on my tailbone. My tailbone hit a patch of ice and then I started to roll down the hill.

## *Snowboarding Falls Can't Keep Me Down (cont)*

After about 45 feet I finally stopped rolling and landed in a sitting position. I was in excruciating pain. It hurt so much to sit in on the snow, but I wanted to finish the run strong. I ended up falling four more times on that run. My left arm was really hurting me, but I thought of it as nothing. So determined to snowboard I went right back up the mountain on the ski lift. On my second run of the day I fell about five times on the way down. I fell on my tailbone once, but it didn't really hurt. So I went back up the mountain for my third run. I was getting really fed up by that time. As I started to go down the hill I was getting a lot of speed and I lost control and flipped backwards landing on my tailbone. My tailbone hit a patch of ice and then I started to roll down the hill. After about forty five feet I finally stopped rolling and landed in a sitting position. I was in excruciating pain. It hurt so much to sit in on the snow, but I wanted to finish the run strong. I ended up falling 4 more times on that run.

When I finally reached the bottom I went to go rest for a little and find my mom. I found her in the warming hut and I sat across from her in a booth. She saw the expression on my face and knew I wasn't having fun. That's when she said:

"Do you what to go home? I know you're not having fun.

That's when I replied "I want to snowboard though. This is the one thing I wanted to do all winter. I want to do this; I don't care if I'm not having fun yet."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure. We paid for it already and I'm not wasting the money."

"I don't care about the money; we can leave if you want."

"I care about it and I want to learn how to snowboard."

"If you want to, go back out there then."

"My tailbone still hurts though. I'm just going to sit here a little longer and rest."

"If it hurts that much we should go."

"No it's not that bad. I'm going to give it another try."

"Okay I'll see you later."

Then I left the room and went back up the ski lift. I sat at the top of the mountain watching the other snowboarders go down. After watching them I had a better idea of how to control my speed and make nice easy turns.

I started down the mountain and I was doing well, and got the furthest I've gotten without falling. Then I fell but I got right back up. My confidence was starting to build because I only fell two more times that run. In the next two runs I only fell two times. My tailbone was still in pain, but not falling as much and having my confidence build took my mind off the pain. Then hours later after falling a bunch of times I landed a perfect run without falling. Then I started to have real fun. All my runs for the rest of the day were perfected. I didn't fall anymore and my tailbone didn't really hurt me, because I was having so much fun. My mom told it was time to go after being there for about nine hours. I returned all my rentals and headed to the car. I took off my snow clothes and put them in the trunk. My tailbone started to hurt again once I sat down in the car.

Although my tailbone still hurts today it was all worth it. I had so much fun, and I learned something about myself that day. I'm not a quitter and that I'm determined to reach my goals. Although I kept falling and got some injuries I kept getting back up and trying again. Whatever knocks people down; if it's literally or not, they have to get right back up or they won't reach their big goal. I didn't let anything stop me that day no matter how much pain I felt. I was determined and I reached my goal. Now I know how to snowboard, all because I kept getting right back up.



## **Lost in Darkness**

*By Glen Hafemeister*

As I drive through the roads near East Brook Elementary School I can recall almost every memory I've had there. But on this particular afternoon, one sticks out to me. I remember a while ago at the exact spot I was driving by, was the scene for a pretty unexpected event. I start to think back.

I can vividly remember when pitch black darkness descended upon me as I walked through the streets of Park Ridge on Halloween night in the fifth grade. My friends Luke, Peter, Hari and I had been walking around for more than three hours. My legs were trembling from underneath me as we stood in front of the next house on our route. The house was nestled between two small hills dotted with trees on the side. The painting of the house was white with red blinds. It was a pretty elegant house with a driveway easily ninety feet. I figured that I shouldn't force my legs that were already prepared to crumple that far for just one house. But my friends didn't concur.

"This house is going to be good" Peter exclaimed after just glancing at the house.

"Ya, I'm definitely going to go up there" Luke said. Hari decided to join them. After telling them that I was going to stay down at the foot of the driveway until they came back I sat down on a patch of grass next to the side walk, that's all my legs and I needed to fall right into a light doze.

"Guys, hello, Peter, Hari, Luke!" I called out as I realized I had been asleep for about ten minutes judging by the time on my phone. I told myself I would wait there until they came back to the same spot. I wasn't sure if they were ditching me as a joke or actually forgot that I went with them.

About twenty long minutes slowly went by, by the time I decided to look for them. I started off by making my way down the abnormally steep street to the right of the house. While making my way up I could probably only see up to forty feet away from me at a time. I ran into some trees but not hard enough to stop me in my pursuit of my friends. Finally, my eyes started adjusting to the darkness of that particular street when a turn came. This one for some reason had lots of branches with leaves on them in the street so it was pretty difficult to maneuver my way through the street. I was using the street lights as a compass as a captain of a ship might use the stars.

"WOOF, WOOF!!!" barked a quite large dog on the side of the road on someone's property.

I nearly jumped out of my skin, and I'm pretty sure the hairs on the back of my neck were standing straighter than a ruler. I bolted down the street ignoring the branches that crashed and clanked off of my legs. By the time I reached the end of the streets, I slowed my pace but was still a little weary.

It took about ten minutes for me to search the backstreets for my friends but I was still unsuccessful. In the streets I had experiences of being lost and making my way through people's yard without being seen and events in that sort. With dampened spirits I trudged down Vitmar which was the street to the left of the location where this crazy hour started.

## *Lost in Darkness (cont.)*

While walking with my head down I heard familiar voices yelling my name. I peered through a couple of trees and saw all of my friends I went out with that night making their way down toward the house I dozed off on. I smiled, laughing at myself thinking that all I had to do was walk to the other side of the house real quick and I would have seen them. So I made my way down to join them.

As I continued down through the town on my car ride, I began to smile to myself as I thought of all the memories I had with my friends and about the one I just finished talking about. Although a silly event, I really did learn something from it even though I realized it later on. Sometimes when you want something, you can't wait for it to come to you, you have to go out and get it.

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## **A Trip To Paradise**

*By Luke Thompson*

Last summer my Dad surprised me with something I'd never thought he would ever say to me. "Were going to Hawaii." I was so excited, and could not wait for that event to come. I have heard before that going to Hawaii was a once in a lifetime experience, and sure it was. I have been to lots of different Caribbean islands, but I was expecting Hawaii to be much more than a Caribbean island; I was expecting it to be a trip to paradise.

The trip was scheduled in the mid of August right before we go back to school. What a way that would be to end a great summer after beating one of the top baseball teams in the country from California.

While we were boarding the plane I was so terrified. I have always hated going on planes, and this was the perfect flight to keep me terrified for an entire day (Especially when we were flying over the Pacific Ocean). The trip to Hawaii was about six and a half hours to California, and about seven hours from California to Hawaii. That was a good, long, stressed out flight to get some rest, and finish some of my summer reading.

When we were landing in Hawaii, it looked like the Jurassic Park scene where they were flying over the nice green mountains, and it was just simply beautiful. The island we went to was Maui for my dad's celebration party on reaching a certain goal in his work company. We stayed in the Ritz Carlton for ten days, and I loved every minute of it. There were so many activities to do while staying there; There was a nice beach, a pool the size of my backyard, and I just couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Not only was Hawaii a great beach island, had beautiful scenery, and known for having big waves but there is a lot of history behind the island of Maui. We went hiking and there were huge waterfalls probably three stories high. It felt like a ten pound cement block getting dropped on your head if you stand under it the waterfall for a long enough time. We also drove up to the only volcano on the island called the Haleakala National Park.

## **Dreams Are Merely A Hope; Make Something Of Them**

*By Madeleine Clancy*

A dream is a fantasy that people have about an amazing goal that would be so incredible for them to accomplish. My parents have supported all my decisions throughout my life and always tell me to chase after my dreams. My motto in life is “when the sky is the limit reach for the stars” because you will achieve so much more out of life when you try your absolute best. “Your dreams come true when you act to turn them into realities.” I believe that there is nothing you can’t achieve when you put your full heart and effort into it. Soccer entered my life when I was 4 years old and it is not just a dream to me; it is a passion.

Shaun Cryer is my soccer coach, and my inspiration. He has made my life an emotional roller coaster through soccer, but he is one of the hardest working people I have ever met. He always looks to make the best out of the worst situations. It was the summer of 2010, and my soccer team was requested to play at surf cup, a tournament in San Diego, California. My team’s acceptance to this tournament was a huge achievement. Teams from all over the world were invited, and the other team’s abilities were incredible. When I look back on the tournament I sometimes wish I could change what happened; however, it was a monumental moment for my team. As I stepped onto the plane, I did not know what a traumatic tournament that would be.

As I boarded the plane with my teammates Erin, and Bri my heart was literally pounding in my chest. I thought to myself, “I have never been so nervous in my entire life.” I looked at Erin and could see that same tense look in her eyes that I had in my own.

“Erin, I can’t believe we are going to California! I’m so excited but I’m also so nervous at the same time.” I said as I sat shaking in my seat.

“I am so scared... so much could happen, What if we lose?” Erin whispered

“Guys come on we can’t think like that we are such a great team and we have as much a chance as all the other teams.” Bri chimed in. We decided to stop talking about soccer, and just sat enjoying the rest of the ride.

When we got to the field, we approached a long bridge that people had to walk through to get to the fields. In a way, I think the bridge was meant to symbolize the quality of the tournament. It reminded me of those tunnels that professional athletes walk out of onto the field that I see on television. The words ‘best of the best’ inscribed on the wall. This was the biggest tournament I would ever encounter. We warmed up an hour before the first game started, and before we knew it we were about to start the game. Shaun called us over to state the starting lineup.

“Kelly, Ashley, Sophia, Shannon, Erin, Kristen, Mikaela.... Maddie.” I listened to all the words Shaun said telling us not to be worried and, to take our chances, but one word seemed to linger in my ear; Maddie. I felt as if he finally woke me up from my thoughts, this really was happening and the game was about to begin.

## **Dreams Are Merely A Hope; Make Something Of Them (cont.)**

No sooner than we started, the other team scored a miraculous three goals against us. I could not believe how fast this team was, and I was honored to have played against such a great team that was skilled in every aspect of the game. When the final whistle blew the score ended up the same as it was at half time: 3-0. I could see the heads of all sixteen people on my team drop lower and lower as they walked off the field. We all walked towards Shaun as if we had already lost the tournament and that in itself is a vast problem. Shaun looked us in the eyes and said,

“Girls, you lost one game it’s over now, and we can’t look back. You let your nerves get the best of you and it covered up the talent that I know all of you have. We still have a chance if we win this next game and if you go in with bad attitude it will show itself on the field.”

When Shaun walked away, we all looked around at each other as if we had no idea what to say. We gathered in a circle and the inspirational things that were said touched my heart in a way I didn’t know was possible. “We are a family” and “we can get through this together” were just some of the words that were stated. The next game came along and by that point it seemed like we had all gotten over our nerves and, were ready to face the next challenge. The game was unpredictable, and nobody knew who would win. The final ten minutes were so exhilarating; my team finally began playing our game and we were creating very good opportunities. With just a few minutes left in the game, the other team scored, and the game was over.

I had never seen a group of people in such sorrow. We all knew it was over, and even though we had a game the next day the, 7-0 loss was just a result of us losing our character. We lost faith in ourselves, and even through that strong bond we share as a team, we each let every single person down.

As Shaun said, “we lost before we even started.”

Despite how upset we were, we all gathered once again in a circle. Everyone was pitching in at a certain point. There was so much disappointment in the air and it was so unbearable. Mr. Ciarletta my health teacher once told me “you gain more from failure than success,” and from the result of that tournament, I knew I had clearly learned a lot.

My team has progressed so much from that day. Although California was by far the most difficult occurrence my team has ever had to encounter we were able to gain just as much as we lost. At the end of the day, it was not about our level of soccer it was solely our character. Perseverance is something my team struggles with to this day; however, I can count on each girl that we will get through whatever hardship comes our way. This coming May we will be facing some of the teams that we played in California in the Oregon tournament. We have enhanced all areas of our game, and we know it will be very tough. We learned that if something is worth fighting for to put everything you have, because in the end if you did not put in all your strength then that is even worse than losing.

## A Tale of a New Friend

*By Hanna Kiefer*

As I walk home from school I listen to my best friend tell me a story, and I remember when I first met her. I feel bad shutting her out like this, but it's one of my favorite memories to think about; the day I met my best friend. When I was in fifth grade, the big rumor in school was that we were getting a new student. I didn't think much of it, because I at the time I thought I was content with the friends I had at the time. Little did I know, that my friendship with the new student would be the best friendship I've ever had.

Her first day at school came quicker than expected -I hadn't been thinking a lot about it, I'd been preoccupied with other activities, dance, gymnastics, school, family, friends, etc- but everyone welcomed her with open arms. She got the inevitable questioning:

"Where are you from?"

"I love your shirt!"

"Do you want to be my new best friend?"

But quite honestly I was disgusted. Everyone was being so fake! I decided I wasn't going to talk to her, because she'd had enough, and it was only her first day. Recess came, and I had been thinking all day about how rude I'd been by not introducing myself to her. It was not her fault that her attention angered me, so I decided to give talking to her a shot.

She was easy to find considering all I had to do was look for the huge crowd of people. I reached the top of the hill, in front of the swings where the crowd was, feeling confident; socializing was my area of expertise.

As I pushed through the crowd of people, I looked up, and to my surprise I saw a beautiful girl sitting on the bench. She had a sly smile on and interesting clothing, but for some reason my eyes were not drawn to her clothes, but instead to something bright on her wrist. It was resting on her left wrist, and it was a shiny plastic. It was bright yellow, and it was like nothing I'd ever seen before. I knew I would never wear it nor would I pick it up in a store but still, it intrigued me.

A loud girl behind me dragged me out of my gazing. I pushed through the remainder of the people and walked up to the bench, sat down, now facing the people. The amount of people giving me that 'back off she's MINE' look made me giggle, before I said...

"Hi, my name is Hanna. You're the new girl, I know, you're the talk of the town." I said with the giggle, leaving continuing the conversation up to her. She made another sly smile, but this time it wasn't out of sympathy, and loss of words to say, more like sheer annoyance. She turned her attention to the loud girl from before. "Okay?" I whispered, it coming out louder than I'd wanted it to. "Oops, sorry, thinking out loud." I said with another giggle, this one crying for forgiveness. This did more harm than good, considering she gave me a look dirtier than before and turned away. "I'm done." I thought as I got up and left.

While trying to do my homework that day, I kept hearing loud yelling and obnoxious laughter coming from my window. I peered out curiously into my new neighbors yard. I saw about nine girls, in a circle playing with a soccer ball. As I studied the scene closer, I noticed something bright on one of

## A Tale of a New Friend (cont.)

While trying to do my homework that day, I kept hearing loud yelling and obnoxious laughter coming from my window. I peered out curiously into my new neighbors yard. I saw about nine girls, in a circle playing with a soccer ball. As I studied the scene closer, I noticed something bright on one of the girls. It was on her left wrist, it looked plastic, and my eyes weren't mistaking me; it was a bright yellow color...

"No. No. No. No!" I said, talking to myself in an angry tone. "The snotty new girl is not living next to me!" I said, again talking to myself.

I decided to strongly march over there and tell her to move back to where ever she came from! Who did she think she was?!

I stomped out of my room, down the stairs, passed my mother and grandmother, and out into my yard; on the way slamming every door that tried to stop me. Walking through my backyard into theirs, suddenly realizing how ridiculous I sounded.

"This was a terrible plan." I whispered to myself not thinking any of the girls had seen me yet. "Maybe I can turn around without them ever knowing about this." I said with careful, soft words, turning around to go back into my house. But something in my stomach told me to stop...

While I was peering out of my window before I also noticed the new girl smile. It was the first time I've ever seen her smile. Part of me envied her perfect teeth, and her true look of happiness. I wasn't content with the friends I had at the time... and I concluded that it was time to stop lying to myself. As part of me envied her, the other part of me sincerely wanted to be her friend. Coming to this sudden realization, I heard a call behind me.

"Wait!" I shut my eyes tightly, and continued walking, I thought the voice was in my head. Until...

"Nahh chill! Do you wanna play with us?"

"Okay that was definitely not coming from my head." I thought as I turned around slowly on my heels. She noticed my hesitation, and said,

"I hate this town, yo. I lived in The Bronx, it's mad different! C'mon I didn't mean to flip on you earlier, but everyone was talking to me like oh-dee!"

I then realized this was the first time I'd ever heard her talk, too. I was in love with her accent, and grammatical errors. They made her unique, and while I was thinking about how unique she was, she jingled her yellow bracelet around her wrist.

"Hey, I like your bracelet. It's 'mad' cute" I said, which made both of us laugh. I concluded it was the last time I'd try the accent, because a flush feeling of embarrassment came over me; I could feel my face reddening, kind of like that feeling you get when a teacher catches you texting in class.

"So... ya gonna play?" she asked after she finally controlled her laughter, but she still had that million-dollar smile on.

"Sure!" I answered, ecstatic that everything was behind us.

Walking into her backyard together, she looked at me and said,

"Oh-em-gee I'm mad rude, my names Sofia. With a 'f' instead of a 'ph'."

## A Tale of a New Friend (cont.)

"Sure!" I answered, ecstatic that everything was behind us.

Walking into her backyard together, she looked at me and said,

"Oh-em-gee I'm mad rude, my name's Sofia. With a 'f' instead of a 'ph'."

I thought that was different, noticing that this was yet another thing that made her unique, and I'd known her for only a few minutes.

"What a beautiful name!" I said, making the word 'beautiful' sound more like 'beeeeeeeautiful', a little thing I did that always made people smile. Of course, it worked, and she smiled, and following the smile was a nice burst of laughter, which in turn made me laugh.

"Hanna..Hanna! Wow you're not listening to anything I'm saying. You're mad annoying like that." Sofia says, I snapped back into reality, and let out a giggle.

"I love you so much." I say, as I give her a big bear hug, noticing her left wrist. She's wearing that same yellow bracelet she had on three years ago, and I can't help but smile.

"Aww! I love you too Hanna..." she says with a laugh, the same laugh that always brought me back to the first time I heard it.

"It's funny, how something as little as a plastic yellow bracelet can trigger such great memories; and be the start to such great friendships." I say, as if she had followed me through that memory I'd just snapped out of.

"What?" She says with a question-marked face.

"Nothing. I love you." I repeat, hugging her.

"Hanna you mad weird. I love you too." She said smiling.

"Okay so continue your story, I want to hear it!" I say, truthfully. She gives a sly smile, and jokingly says,

"Oh so NOW you want to hear the story! OH NO, no no no no no! You ain't gonna be all flashback on me, then expect me to tell you mahh story! Ohh no."

This was my best friend, at her best. The always smiling, laughing, unique, Sofia.

## **A Jagged Beautiful Day Of Marching Band**

*By Steven Rizzie/illustrated by Cara Mastrangelo*

I remember that day, when nature caught all of us off guard. We, the band, were just marching onto the field like an average football game. The only oddity was the light flurry of snow that the clouds above were sprinkling onto the starting-to-freeze ground below. We had no idea of what was ahead of us, until it was too late to turn back.

The crowd waiting in anticipation for the kick off is watching us as we are marching toward the field. I feel the cold crawl up my spine and make my whole body shiver as I take my first step onto the field. “Did it get any colder since we first got outside?” I asked a fellow trumpet player, as we got closer to our spots for the opening show.

“Yeah, a little I guess,” he said as he pulled down the sleeves to his uniform. We both shrugged it off and arrived at our positions, and began to play the opening show of the average marching band day. “America, the Beautiful,” and “The Star Spangled Banner,” rang through the bleachers. The whole crowd, including the football players, held their hands patriotically to their hearts while the songs played. Nobody really took notice of it, but as we walked off and onto the bleachers to view the game, the snow seemed to increase from a light flurry, to a pretty decent snowfall.

As the game progressed, things got worse. The snow picked up to a point where it appeared to be endless. The local news stations had warned us of this snowstorm coming, but come on, it’s October! Snow? No way! “Hey, this snow has gotten pretty heavy and isn’t looking so good,” I said to another member of the band.

“It can’t get much worse from here, let’s be serious now, it’s October!” That’s what I had thought at first, but that doesn’t seem to be the case.

By halftime, the snowfall got so heavy, that it was snapping the limbs right off of the trees! They sound like gunshots as they crack and fall to the frozen ground. The bleachers are getting evacuated and anybody who had the willpower to stay and watch the rest of the game are watching along the side of the field. All of our gloves were frozen straight through, and our hands froze up to a point where we could barely move them. I felt sorry for the one guy who didn’t bring his gloves, because it was not only a decent snowfall anymore, it was a whiteout.



## A Jagged Beautiful Day Of Marching Band (cont)

The snow is now so intense that we aren't even marching the halftime show anymore, just playing it. And it sounds absolutely awful. We, the band as a whole, aren't marching but walking uncomfortably towards the building as quickly as possible. It is directly after our halftime performance, and I am freezing to death. "That was absolutely terrible," slipped out of my cold, dry mouth.

"You're telling me, I couldn't even play at all!" a band member announced. The snow had picked up so much that we had to just leave the game to dry our instruments so that no damage would be done and we could finally warm up our hands. Oh, our hands! They got so cold that I can't even feel them anymore, which is good because I can't feel the stinging cold, but bad because, well, I can't feel my hands!

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That might have been one of the worst experiences of my life. Our performance stunk, our hands felt like they would have to be amputated (and that's not even counting how they felt after we got feeling in them again!), and it was overall just a lousy experience. Nobody in the whole band, rookie to veteran had ever marched in such conditions. At least there was one thing I gained out of this, the gift of knowing that anything can happen anytime, especially with Mother Nature. So no matter how beautiful whatever it is that Mother Nature throws at you, don't let it catch you off guard!

