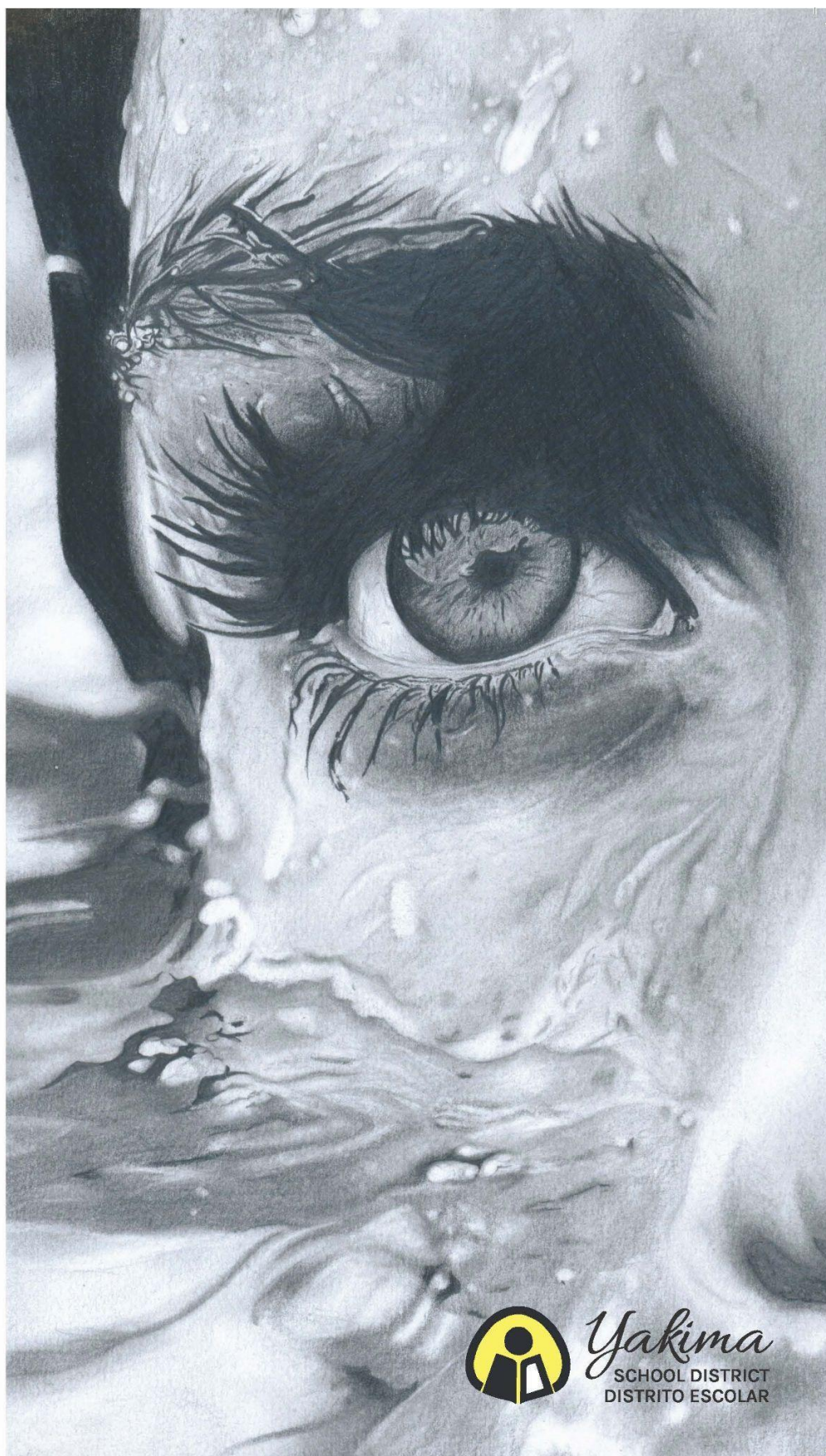


2020-2021

Voices/Voces
ANTHOLOGY



Yakima
SCHOOL DISTRICT
DISTRITO ESCOLAR

*The following pieces of writing
represent the unique, compelling,
and engaging voices of Yakima
School District students and staff.*

All writings are published as submitted

*Los siguientes escritos representan
las voces únicas, convincentes y
atractivas de los estudiantes y el
personal del Distrito Escolar de
Yakima.*

Todos los escritos se publican tal como se envían.

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2026

Voices

Voces

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2026

Voices

Voces

Narrative Writing

Escritura Narrativa

Writing that conveys experience, either real or imagined, and provides glimpses into the writer's or character's life through the creation of vivid pictures. Narratives can take the form of personal narratives, creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, autobiographies, etc.

Escritura que transmite experiencias, ya sean reales o imaginarias, y que deja entrever la vida del escritor o del personaje a través de la creación de imágenes vívidas. Las narrativas pueden tomar la forma de narraciones personales, historias ficticias creativas, anécdotas, autobiografías, etc.

Jesus Zavala Villalobos

1st Grade, Adams Elementary School

Teacher: D Canales

Un amigo extraordinario

Había una vez un niño llamado paquito, paquito era un niño muy inteligente, amable y muy amistoso le gustaba pasar el recreo jugando fútbol con sus amigos.

Un día llegó a la escuela un niño llamado Nacho.

Nacho tenía una silla de ruedas, la usaba porque tenía un problema en sus piernitas y no podía caminar!

Los compañeros de paquito veían con asombro a Nacho, Pues 10 veían diferente.

Paquito se acercó y Nacho feliz de hacer un amigo nuevo, pero Nacho era un niño muy tímido y no quiso jugar.

Paquito no se dio por vencido, buscó de una de otra y otra y otra manera hasta convencer a Nacho de jugar.

Todos los niños los miraban asombrados de ver todos los juegos divertidos que podían jugar y un estando en esa silla de ruedas.

Todos querían jugar y ser amigos de Nacho pues se dieron cuenta de que no había nada diferente en él. Nacho era un niño extraordinario.

Desde entonces paquito y Nacho fueron

Los mejores amigos por siempre.

Todos los niños deberíamos de ser como paquito y ser amigo de todos sin importar quien sea.

fin...

Jaylin Schoel

2nd Grade, Garfield Elementary School

Teacher: R Schwindt

The old tree

When I went to go outside I saw the Tree the tree was old. I touched the tree it felt like a cat scratched me. when I went back to my house at 3:00 clock to climb the tree but my dad said he we went to the store to get groceries

Nasir Reeves

2nd Grade, Barge Elementary School

Teacher: C Manjarrez Delgado

Creatura misteriosa

Un dia encontre a una creatura misteriosa. Era de color verde. Era muy chiquita y estaba en el patio. Habian muchos en toda la planeta. Entonces yo y mis hermanos ayudamos a toda las personas. Primero ayudamos a nuestra familia menos nuestros padres. Por que estaban en vacaciones. Despues que ayudamo a toda la America, ayudamos a nuestros padres que estaban en Espana. Despues fuimos a Mexico. Luego ayudamos toda la planeta y color ir colorado este cuento se ha acabado.

Natalia Pena Moscote

3rd Grade, Martin Luther King Elementary School

Teacher: A Caltenco

La navidad de terror

Había una vez una familia festejando navidad pero luego escuchas un ruido y dices Tu: Esperen escuche algo ahorita vuelvo- cuando estás viendo para todos lados para ver que hizo el ruido, uno de los juguetes de tu hermano empieza a moverse solo te asustas y sales corriendo con tu familia para contarle lo sucedido. Después de que cuentas lo que pasó celebras un rato más. Como a las 3:00am se va tu familia y recoges todo hasta que... ves como al frente de tus ojos se mueve una silla de la mesa. Te vas al cuarto de tus papás muy asustada. Alrededor de las 3:40am terminas de recoger todo el desorden y te vas a dormir luego escuchas como golpean la ventana del cuarto de tu hermanito no le prestas atención hasta que ves una sombra, les empiezas a decir a tus papás que tienen que irse de la casa por que está embrujada pero no te hacen caso porque es tu imaginación y blah blah blah. Te enojas con ellos por lo que te dijeron, te vas a dormir y escuchas como en tu oído te susurran 'Vete o te mataré'. Otra vez vas con tus papás y les dices que esto ya está fuera de control porque te dijeron 'Vete o te mataré'. Empiezan a meter su ropa en las maletas. Levantas a tu hermano le dices que se van a ir del país a Puerto Rico se van al carro y arrancan, tu decides dormirte un rato. Te levantan porque ya llegaron al aeropuerto se sientan a esperar y tu hermano de repente te dice hermano: porque nos vamos a ir del país? Tu: este no es el momento para contarlo te cuento en el avión ok? Hermano: ok hermanita. Esperan en la fila hasta que los atienden y se van al avión. Te dice tu hermano hermano: ¿ya me puedes contar lo que pasó para movernos del país? Tu: es que desde que empezamos a festejar escuche un ruido, después se movió una silla cuando estaba recogiendo el desorden y cuando me fui a dormir se escuchó como golpearon la ventana yo no le hice caso pero después vi como una sombra pasó y le fui a contar a nuestros papás pero puedes creer que no me creyeron? Me fui otra vez a dormir y escuche como en mi oído me dijeron 'vete o te mataré' y por eso nos movimos del país. Después llegaron como a las 8:09am Como ahí vivían sus abuelos se quedaron unos días, los papás consiguieron trabajo y pudieron comprar un departamento, pidieron un taxi y como el conductor era buena onda iban platicando. Llegaron a su destino acomodaron todo y así fue como una familia en su celebración de navidad se convirtió en una noche muy tenebrosa.

Alyson Anaya Barrera

3rd Grade, Martin Luther King Elementary School

Teacher: A Caltenco

Dulce hogar

Había una vez una familia que buscaba un hogar. Los hijos ya estaban cansados que los papas solo decían: -esta casa esta muy chiquita y esta muy fea. Hasta que Ana, la hija les gritó a sus papás. -yaaa callensee- Luego llegó el hermano Alex y también les gritó a sus papá, no tan feo -si ya callense!-- Hasta que los padres les gritaron a los 2 hijos—hey que les pasa! A sus cuartos rápido que ahorita vamos por el cinto chamacos estoy que se creen para gritarnos y los 2 serán castigados—

Ana le dice a Alex: -que hacemos que tengo miedo- Alex-nose Ana ¿y si nos escondemos?-- Ana- no eso no es buena idea porque o sino nos van pegar mas fuerte- Alex- tienes razón- lo peor fue el cinto nos van a gritar. Pero la verdad fueron castigados por casi un mes. Los papás todavía estaban enojados, se movían y se movían de casas hasta que encontraron una hermosa casa que tenía jardín y estaba grande pero nomas faltaba remodelar la casa. Pasaron casi 10 meses o un año pero un día por fin la terminaron.

La casa era hermosa, tenía 3 cuartos uno para Ana, uno para Alex y un cuarto para los papás. La familia pusieron una hermosa sala una hermosa cocina todos se abrazaron y cada uno se dijo: te amo, te amo te amo y te amo. Ana-me encanta me encanta me encanta demasiado la casa mamá-oye Ana calmate yo se que es hermosa ami tambien me encanta- y luego Ana y Alex se pelearon por un cuarto Ana- noo este será mi cuarto! Alex-!que no! Este será mi cuarto, se pidieron perdón y se calmaron y cada uno tuvo su cuarto. Ana-perdon Alex- Alex perdon Ana. Al día siguiente todos se pusieron a acomodar los muebles. Pusieron teles en cada cuarto también decoraron afuera. Ana decoró su hermoso cuarto con luces de colores y todo lo necesario de su cuarto. El cuarto de Alex también tenía luces pero su cuarto era tipo gamer. El cuarto de los papas era también hermoso una semana pasó hasta que por fin terminaron de decorar la casa.

Asi fue como dulce hogar se hace con una familia hermosa buscando un nuevo hogar.

Amya Gonzalez-Gutierrez

4th Grade, Martin Luther King Elementary School

Teacher: E Gottschalk

My Dad and the mustace incedent

This book is about a story that happened to my dad and how I remember him.

This book is detecated to my Loving dad that sadly past away.

I hope you enjoy the book I made for you.

I was small when he Died but I still remember his face though he mostly had a thin beard and a thin mustace. I also remember his laugh it wasn't loud or a long laugh it was kinda like a chuckle. The last thing I'd remember of him was when he was in the hospital. At the time he couldn't speack so the nurse asked him if he wanted her to shave his mustace. He - actally said No but she thought he said yes. So she started to shave his mustace and tried saying No. Until she noticed he was saying No and she shaved half of his mustace and left the rest of his mustace on his face. When I saw him I laughed it was so funny.

The End!

Lucas Hartley

4th Grade, Parent Partnership

Teacher: W Wickersham

A Slug Named Methuselah

There once was a slug name Methuselah who ate other slugs. The thing is, that all his friends were beetles, and they were herbivores. They always teased Methuselah because he ate other slugs.

One day, Methuselah was creeping up on another slug. The slug heard him and stopped then said, "Why are you always trying to eat us? Aren't we just as good as you? Would YOU want to be eaten by a slug?" Methuselah stopped and couldn't find any words to say, he was astonished. The slug went away, but Methuselah stayed there, still astonished.

Methuselah told his beetle friends the story, and they agreed to help him stop eating slugs. And from that day on, Methuselah was an herbivore just like his beetle friends, and became a kind-hearted slug to other slugs.

Parker Steward

5th Grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: K Clift

The Nightmare Problem

As Jeremy was watching a scary movie, he fell asleep on the couch ...

"I sure hope this works," said Jeremy to himself in his dream. He had a problem with nightmares and was searching for a cure. Poor Jeremy was desperate. He was going around asking everyone if they have a cure to get nightmares to go away. He asked everyone in sight. He even asked a homeless guy.

"You really think I know a cure!?" laughed the homeless guy.

"Aw man" cried Jeremy.

"Of course I know a cure," said the homeless guy.

"Really!?" said Jeremy, astonished.

"Us homeless act like we know nothing, but really we know everything! Just don't tell anyone."

"Ok, I won't tell" said Jeremy.

"So you need to see a wizard. You need to tell him to make you a non-nightmare potion," explained the homeless guy.

"Ok, what's your name?"

"Well, my name is Chase," said the homeless guy.

"Ok, Chase, do you know where a wizard is?"

"Yes indeed I do. It is a dangerous journey though. You have to go to Wizard Peak," said Chase

"The mountain!? I heard it's a volcano and it will erupt soon."

"Well, aren't you desperate?" asked Chase.

"Well, yes I am ... " said Jeremy.

"On you go then," said Chase.

"Ok bye," said Jeremy.

Jeremy needed a car. It would take days or even weeks to get to Wizard Peak on foot. He didn't think of bringing any money, so he only had a couple pennies. "No way I could even rent a car," cried Jeremy. But then he saw a motorcycle on the ground near McDonalds. Then Jeremy grabbed the motorcycle, hopped on and drove quickly to Wizards Peak. When he finally got there, he walked in and then an arrow flew across his face. "What the heck was that?!" screamed Jeremy. There were booby traps everywhere! He ran and ran and dodged every arrow that tried to hit him; he didn't die.

He got to the Wizard named Fred and asked him for a non-nightmare potion. The Fred the Wizard asked "Why? Do you have a nightmare problem?"

"Um,I guess you can say that," said Jeremy.

"Here take this," said the wizard.

Jeremy drank the potion and suddenly,then the volcano erupted! Jeremy fell asleep while the volcano erupted! The wizard grabbed Jeremy and chugged down a super speed potion. The wizard and Jermey made it out safely. When Jeremy woke up the wizard was making a healing potion. Apparently, while the wizard was running out of the volcano one of his booby traps activated and shot an arrow at his leg!

"I'm fine," said the wizard.

"Well if you say so" said Jeremy. "I'll go home now," said Jeremy.

"Well, scram already , my boy!" yelled the wizard.

"Ok,ok I will go now,"said Jeremy.

Jeremy got into bed and fell asleep in under 5 minutes.Since the day he drank the potion from the wizard, he hadn't had nightmares! Jeremy thanked Fred the Wizard.

Suddenly, Jeremy woke up, sitting up straight on the couch screaming.

"Aaaaaaaaaaah! ! ! ! !"

"Are you ok? You've been sleeping. You must've been dreaming. Maybe you shouldn't have watched that movie" lectured his mom.

"I. .. I had a ... um ... nightmare," stuttered Jeremy."May I go to Fred's house?"asked Jeremy.

"Sure.be back by dinnertime!"said Jeremy's mom.

"Ok,see ya!"said Jeremy as he walked to Fred's house. Jeremy muttered under his breath. "I hope he is actually my friend and that was just a nightmare,"Jeremy walked inside Fred's house.

"Hello!" said Fred (who no longer looked like a wizard) as he walked toward Jeremy.

"Hi"said Jeremy.

Jeremy thought "Phew,that was just a nightmare"

Restlessness

I held two full boxes as I walked into my new apartment. I was really happy I could have my own place now since I was going into college.

"Wow, it looks really nice!" I murmured to myself. I then set down the boxes on the floor.

"Well, I'm glad I didn't have a lot of stuff!" I thought to myself. Since it was early in the day, I started unpacking. I got exhausted after a bit, so I plopped down on my mattress that is on the fluffy carpet.

"Mhh, so soft," I whispered to myself. I wrapped myself in my cozy blanket and drifted off to sleep.

"Ughh," I grunted as I rubbed my eyes, then yawned. Then I saw a tall figure standing in the background. I turned my head quickly.

"What was that?" I thought, "Maybe I'm paranoid that I'm alone," I then dragged myself out of bed and served myself coffee.

"Yum! I love coffee," I cheered. I then stopped mid drink. It felt like someone was telling me to break my cup. The urge was so strong. I let the cup fall. I snapped out of it when the cup shattered into pieces.

"Why did I do that?" I sighed, and grabbed the dust pan and broom.

After the incident, I finished unpacking, which took the rest of the day. I was so exhausted, I wasn't even hungry. I fell into my soft bed that felt like a cloud. I woke up in the middle of the night sweating, and my stomach was hurting. I tried to check the time on my phone, but I couldn't get up. I felt pressure on my chest. I couldn't breathe. I also felt like I wasn't in my own body. After a long two minutes, I could finally breathe and move again. I was still shaken up. I scooted towards the wall and leaned back struggling to fall asleep.

In the morning, I woke, but everything felt surreal. "Oh my gosh, my head is pounding! What's happening to me?" I grabbed my head and slowly made my way to the bathroom. I looked in the mirror and saw an uglier, older, and paranormal face flash for a split second in the reflection. I stumbled back and started breathing heavier. Then I unlocked the door to my apartment to go outside and stopped.

"I can't breathe. What was that?" I exhaled. My breath came out shaky. I shook my head and walked slowly inside. I made my way to my room and quickly changed and grabbed my keys. I stepped outside and heard the wind whistling in my ears as I walked to my car.

I started the car and drove to my local pharmacy. I got out and walked inside, still feeling paranoid. A strong hospital scent filled my lungs. I browsed the aisles and got melatonin and speed walked to the cashier. The cashier questioned me, "Will that be all for you?"

"Oh yes, sorry, I was zoning out".

"Don't worry, sweetie, it happens to the best of us," she said. I nodded and paid.

"Have a great day!" she said happily.

"Yes, you too," I replied. I walked outside, got into my car, and drove off.

Once night fell, I took two melatonin pills and fell into a deep sleep. I woke up with the sun hitting my face. Suddenly, a voice called my name.

"Nolana, look at the caterpillar!" said a familiar voice. I turned around quickly and saw my brother Gustine. He was the same as I remember him when he was ten, curly brown. I saw myself get up and run to my brother. We stared at the caterpillar.

"I don't get how you can touch these," I said in disgust.

"I like bugs," Gustine replied.

"I can tell," I said while rolling my eyes. While I was staring at the creature, my brother went to follow something, and I didn't notice.

"Gustine, where are you?" I said, noticing he wasn't next to me. I turned around and saw him in a crouching position in the middle of the road. My eyes widened, and I yelled, "Gustine, move!"

Then he got hit. I woke up and started ugly crying.

"It's my fault," I said between sobs.

I barely got any sleep. I felt so guilty for something I didn't do. I thought maybe I should go see a doctor. I drove to my local urgent care. I walked in, and I told the doctor my symptoms. He asked me a lot of questions and did some tests. After fifteen minutes, he came back and had a diagnosis of what I had.

"You have schizophrenia," he said in a serious manner. I was shocked that this was causing my hallucinations this whole time. I just nodded.

The doctor said in a firm voice, "We don't have a cure yet, but we can get you medication until you can see a specialist."

"Okay, I appreciate everything, thank you," I said softly. I was glad I finally knew what caused this.

I drove home with a comforting silence. I exited the car with my bag and keys and opened the door. I locked the door then went straight to my bed and stretched out. I let out a sigh of relief as I dozed off.

Ashley Garcia

7th Grade, Wilson Middle School

Teacher: K Cline

Camping at Silverwood

It was a hot summer day in June and I was on a camping trip at Silverwood Theme Park. We were camping with my best friend, Camila, and her family for the weekend. Upon arrival, my family and I set up our camping tent and organized our area. The campground was beautiful, with lush vegetation growing around a playground, a beach volleyball court, a showerhouse, and a winding trail for exploring on bikes. I was going to have fun!

It was bright and early the next morning and I was already in line to enter Silverwood. Today was the day I got to go on big kid rides. As I was entering I could smell the cinnamon of the churros and the carnival fried food mingled with the smell of chlorine from the water park. There were lots of burgers, ice cream, pizza, and candy stands, with games of skills like ring toss, dunk tank, balloon darts and lots of rides.

My friend, Camila, and I ran over to get on the rides. The first ride I got on was Timber of Terrors, the roller coaster that had lots of ups and downs. The best part was that it went underground. As we got on, the ride started to ascend slowly, (clickety-clack, clickety-clack) and then, the ride reached its highest pinnacle point and stopped. I could see the view of the entire park, people appeared small, and bright lights twinkled all around. Suddenly, my insides felt weird and uneasy. Whoosh, without a warning the ride went straight down underground with so much force and velocity. I could hear everyone else around me screaming, except me, I was laughing maniacally the whole ride. The sudden drop made my stomach feel ticklish. We got off the ride with so much adrenaline that we went to all the other roller coaster rides, one after the other.

After the rides we all headed back to the camping site for lunch. The dads were grilling meat on the Blackstone and the moms were chatting away with embarrassing stories about us. While us kids waited for the food, we passed time by racing each other on bikes and running competitive relay races. When lunch was ready, we ate some green salad, potato salad and hot dogs with chips and cool drinks. After we finished eating we each took turns in the showerhouse, changing into our swim wear because we were finally going to the waterpark.

The waterpark was filled with kids running around, families and lifeguards. It was loud, noisy, chaotic, and the temperature was hot and the air humid. Camila and I looked for a chair to put our stuff on, took off our shoes and ran to the slides. I experienced all the water park slides, but the Eagle Hunt was my favorite. We climbed lots of stairs, and when we finally got to the top our legs were shaking. Nervously, Camila and I got on the double person tube. Then, the lifeguard pushed us and scared us by saying, "Oops! You weren't supposed to go!"

We were terrified that we were going to bump into someone else. The Eagle Hunt had lots of splashes, spins, turns, ups, and downs. This was the first ride to make me scream in fright.

By the end of the day everyone was exhausted because we had spent hours in the theme park and in Boulder Beach, we went from rides to slides, wave pools to the lazy river. This day was an accomplishment and a huge success because we went on all the rides and slides. The rest of my afternoon was spent peacefully, riding my bike slowly back to the camping site. As I was riding my bike I felt the warm, summer breeze brush past me. When I got back to the camp, I ate some crunchy spicy tacos and roasted sweet marshmallows in the blazing firepit. I couldn't wait to go to Silverwood again the following day.

This was the best summer vacation, spending time with my best friend, going for rides at Silverwood Theme Park and eating lots of carnival food.

The Consequences of Jealousy

This story is a legend that comes from the Cherokee people; here is my version.

A very long time ago, Opossum was a proud and greedy creature. He was proud because his tail was insanely white, fluffy, and lustrous. One day while taking a walk, Opossum spotted Raccoon preening himself on a tree, his elegant black and white rings glowing in the sun, which led him to ask, "How did you get those pretty rings on your tail?" Raccoon, who was a shady and mischievous character lightly replied, "I wrapped cedar bark around my tail and stuck it into the hot coals of a fire. The fir that wasn't covered turned black while the fir under the bark stayed white." Opossum eagerly bounded off toward the nearby grove of cedar trees. When he arrived, he successfully wrapped long, dry pieces of bark around his tail. He promptly left and darted for the bonfire where all the other critters were enjoying themselves. When the roaring bonfire finally died down (which was when most of the critters started to leave), Opossum hopped toward the hot coals of the fire and smacked his tail right down into the center; the cedar bark and the exposed fir immediately ignited, which turned into a blazing torch. He screamed and went flying into the lake. However, it was too late. His life was saved, but he had no fur left. He waited and waited, but no fur grew back, and that is why the opossum has a bare tail.

Harper Pualani

8th Grade, Franklin Middle School

Teacher: K Lootens

Love of Music

Playing violin helped shape my life. I knew ever since I was five that it was something I wanted to pursue. My dad started playing the cello in 8th grade and has been playing ever since. In his early 20's, he started a non-profit after school music program. When I was five, he brought me to work with him, and that was when I saw someone playing the violin. I told my dad that was what I wanted to do, and once I was six and big enough to hold one, I started learning. Playing violin has also helped me make so many connections and new friends, but at the end of the day, the violin can't do all the work for me. I grew up and continued playing violin. In December of 2024, my school orchestra teacher told me she heard about an audition-only orchestra performance happening in Spokane in February. I told my dad about it and signed up. I was a very shy 13-year-old who only spoke when spoken to and tried to stick very close to the people I knew. I knew going to a brand new orchestra with a bunch of kids I've never met before would be scary, but it was an amazing opportunity. My dad, of course, thought this experience would be good for me. My dad is very outgoing. I suppose you have to be to be a teacher, but he's just so natural about it. My orchestra teacher gave me the audition material, and after many attempts, I submitted it. By January, my teacher told me that I had got in and I was so excited. A week later, she gave me the three pieces of music I would be playing. I was left on my own to practice.

February rolled around, and so we were off to Spokane. We arrived around dinner time, and decided to walk to a ramen place that we had been to many times before. It was dark out, and the streets were only lit up by street lights. Snow was falling and skimmed across the sidewalk.

"So, Harper, how are you feeling?" my mom asked.

Everyone in my family plays an instrument except my mom, so she doesn't really understand the nerves. My brother, Gabe, chose the cello like my dad. I think the cello is for more outgoing and bold people. I wouldn't necessarily use the word bold to describe my brother, but I do think he's a bit more outgoing than me.

"Very nervous," I responded. I've never been good at making friends; even when I try,

it's very awkward.

"You'll be fine, Harps. Don't worry so much," my dad said while he slurped down some ramen.

"I know." I groaned.

After we finished eating, we made our way to the hotel and went to sleep. When I woke up, I had butterflies in my stomach. I did my makeup, my hair, then put on my black slacks and black long-sleeve shirt. I was ready. We got in the car and we were off.

Once we arrived at the building, I grew more and more anxious. The car line was huge, so my mom, my brother, and I just got out and headed inside while my dad parked. It was a huge convention center, with ceilings 20 feet high and windows from bottom to top. It was so big that there were escalators every right and left turn, all leading to smaller rooms used for who knows what. Eventually, we made it to a much smaller room with a pop-up stage and chairs set up. The room was alive with chatter, people saying goodbye to their parents, and others just talking with their friends. My mom helped me find my seat. Each seat had a piece of paper taped to it with a kid's name and school. I found mine all the way in the back, right in front of the bassists, and sat down. Before my mom left, she had something to tell me.

"Harps, don't forget to talk to your stand partner. Ask her where she's from."

"Okay, Mom."

Now, I was alone. I practiced for about 10 minutes before my stand partner arrived. She was a short girl, with a black bob. I said hi, and asked for her name. She told me, but I was so nervous that I couldn't remember it now. Shortly after, the conductor came out. After she introduced herself, we began to do some "icebreakers," if you could even call it that. It was stupid things like,

"Stand up if you have a dog."

Nothing that would actually help us talk or learn anything about each other. Then, we began rehearsing. The pieces were decently hard, but I had been practicing them myself for about a month now. A piece of music should be like a conversation flowing from section to section, and it's difficult to have a conversation with other instruments if you've only been practicing your end. It was a bit faster than I had practiced, but I could adapt. What I didn't expect was that we would be going for hours straight, three to be specific. At this point in my life, the longest I've ever played in an orchestra has been around an hour or so, so this was a big change for me. We would

get the occasional 10-minute bathroom break, and after the first three hours, we got a lunch break. I didn't realize just how many people there really were. There were at least three other orchestras there that I hadn't seen, so I was surprised to see so many faces. I found a spot in a back hallway and sat down by myself. At that point I wished I had made some friends. After lunch, I made my way back to the tiny orchestra room, when a worker outside said something to me.

"I like your pants!"

"Thank you!" I smiled.

I hated these pants. I bought them specifically for this, but that comment made me feel better. I somehow survived the next six hours of grueling rehearsal until 5:00 pm rolled around, and it was time to set up for the actual performance. The room we would be performing in was a long, warehouse-like space with tall ceilings and concrete floors. Some employees gave us all snacks, and I found a corner to set my stuff down and sit. I looked around and began to feel sad. It seemed like everyone knew someone. I wanted to talk to someone, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I ended up calling my mom and talking to my family until it was time to perform. 5:30 rolled around and it was time to play.

My group was the first to play. Once I got on stage with my stand, I noticed my stand partner had her own stand. I didn't really mind; I could sit by myself. Once everyone was situated, we began. I felt a bit nervous, but luckily, since I was sitting in the back, nobody in the audience could see me. I made it through the performance with very few mistakes. The first piece went very smoothly, and the other two I had only missed a few notes and rhythms. I was relieved, and very proud of myself. I exited the stage and packed up my violin. While the other group settled onto stage, I began going up and down the aisles looking for my parents, when a hand reached out and grabbed me.

It was my dad. He pulled me in and gave me a big hug. My mom, dad, and brother were all seated in the middle of the endless rows of chairs.

"You did so well!" my dad exclaimed. "You couldn't even see me." I laughed.

"Doesn't matter." said my mom. "I know you did good."

While the other groups played, my dad and I looked through the program. It had everybody's school, name, and town on it. That's how we found out I was the only kid from

Yakima in all three of the orchestras. I thought it was really cool, since there were hundreds of kids there from all around Washington state, and I could tell my parents were proud of me. After the last group finished playing, I grabbed my violin and we left. By the time we got to the car, it was about 7:30. We just decided to get food somewhere and drive the three hours home that night.

Although I wish I could've been more outgoing, I'm proud of my shy, 13-year-old self for putting myself out there to do something I truly love. Ever since then, I have tried to make friends in every orchestra I play in, because I know we all have one thing in common: our love for music.

To Be Free

The cat stared out the living room window at the dog playing tug of war with his owner across the street, stewing in jealousy at the sight of how free the inferior animal was. Not to mention frustration at how the dog had the ability to do whatever and go wherever he wanted, yet chose to stay within the confines of his human's property. What an idiot.

If she ever even got a sliver of an opportunity at getting out of her prison, the cat knew that she would run and never look back. She would be much happier on her own without a warden to control everything she does-when she eats, where she sleeps, what she does.

It would be a dream. To be free means happiness, and the dog across the street wasn't appreciating his freedom as much as he should. It drove the cat insane every day that she sat watching him through thick glass.

Fortunately, she was torn from her thoughts by the sound of a door opening. Unfortunately, the door opening was the one that connected her owner's bedroom door to the living room.

Her owner reached down to pet her head, but she shrugged out of the way of the offending limb, choosing to instead glare at the person looming over her. Her owner sighed and grabbed the keys sitting haphazardly on the edge of the oak coffee table, giving the cat a half-hearted farewell before moving for the door.

As she did every time her owner left the house, the cat followed to the door so she could attempt to slip through the sliver of sunlight before it was shut, and she was locked in once again. She had never succeeded before, but that didn't mean she was ever going to stop trying.

Her persistence had clearly paid off, because she managed to escape this time. Happiness radiated through her body as warmth, her glee spurring her acceleration in evasion of her owner's outstretched arms. Panicked shouts and pounding feet chased after her with purpose. Her legs burned and her breath was short, but she was determined to find a way to lose her persistent pursuer.

An opportunity presented itself as a tall chain-link fence with a hole at the bottom seemingly just big enough for her to crawl through. She got stuck halfway through and thought that it was over, that she'd be caught and become more of a prisoner than before. Forcing herself through just in time, her owner stopped at the fence seconds behind her-yelling out helpless cries for her to come back and looking around wildly for a way around the tall fence.

The cat cast a smug look to her distraught owner, before dashing away and out of sight. This moment marked the beginning of her new life. A better life.

She walked around aimlessly for a few hours, appreciating all the outside world had to offer. That is until she felt a pang in her stomach that signaled the hunger she hadn't noticed encroaching. If she was back in captivity, she would have simply walked over to her bowl of bone-dry kibble and eaten until the empty feeling was satisfied. But her new life called for a more creative approach to her problem.

Recalling the bugs that she would find inside her old home and chase, she decided that it wouldn't be too hard to catch something in the wild. After all, she was incredibly well-practiced. There was a field nearby that her instincts told her to go to, so she did.

The cat settled into a crouched position in the long reeds, looking around and tuning her ears into every slight sound in hopes of finding signs of a grub or critter she could attack. It was silent for quite a while- but she couldn't tell time so it could have been hours or only minutes and she wouldn't know. She was about to give up and find somewhere else to hunt, when she heard a quiet rustling far to her right.

Full of confidence and renewed energy, the cat quickly and almost silently stalked in the direction of the noise. Peeking through the long blades of grass into a clearing with shorter weeds proved her ears heard correctly. There was a small brown mouse, his nose twitching and tiny paws wrapped around a seed of some kind. Without hesitation, the cat charged forward claws out and ready to strike.

She was just centimeters away from catching her prey when the little mouse slipped away. It didn't stop her, however, as she followed the small skittering rodent through undergrowth and prickly bushes. The mouse was practically unscathed, but her clean fur was destroyed by dirt and thorns. Her adrenaline allowed her to ignore the physical tiredness and pain from the barbs, so she was able to keep going after the varmint.

There were many close calls where she was just out of reach of her target, yet she ultimately lost the battle when he ran into the side of a narrow hollowed-out log. The cat tried to squeeze through but couldn't get in any further than her head.

Finally admitting defeat, she managed to find her way outside of the clearing of trees she had found herself in. Nature had always seemed perfect and utopian to her, but now it just felt suffocating. What would be perfect would be a nice place to sleep for the night.

Once again, she was wandering the streets of the small town she had never before known the bounds of. Her exhausted body was seconds from giving out when she found an adequate bench. The last thought running through her head as she curled up and was swept into a land of dreams was, *'Surely. tomorrow will be better.'*

That last thought echoing through her mind was a laugh in the face when she woke up being pelted by small drops of water. It was raining and her bench had no cover to protect her from the chilling precipitation. Back arched and ears pinned back she scurried away to the safety a small shop's beige awning offered.

There she waited out the rain and tried to stifle the shivers that wracked her small body. Eventually it stopped, but she remained frozen in her place while she thought about her next move. Everything had been a disaster since she left her home, so maybe she should go back to remind herself that it was better to be out on her own.

A man came out of the shop with a broom, interrupting her thoughts. He hit her with the broom and yelled at her to "Get!". Get she did, in what she hoped was the direction of her old house. Despite being new to the outside world, her surroundings were becoming more and more familiar as she walked.

The cat finally spotted her house and was filled with an aching feeling of guilt and desperation. Luckily, the dog across the street was out in front of his house again and hadn't noticed her approach. He would serve as an excellent distraction.

She hid in a bush at the edge of his yard and watched as he rolled around in the grass. 'Embarrassing,' she mentally noted, her disgust for the other species ever present even when she was unsure about all else. He was covered in grass and dirt when he got up and trotted over to a metal bowl full of clear water, lapping up the water greedily without a care in the world. The cat sure wished she had easy access to water now. And that she had not taken the luxury for granted before.

But that wasn't the final straw. The final straw was the dog's human opening their door with a wide smile across their face, petting their dog and laughing when he jumped on them. It wasn't until that moment that the cat realized she truly did miss her own human, no matter how overbearing and warden-like. Her owner took care of her and loved her, no matter what.

This is what made her abandon the shadows of her bush and walk up to her house's door. She clawed at the door until she heard the thundering of footsteps approaching that she had once resented but now adored.

The next day, when her owner left, she didn't even look up from the place she laid on the overstuffed sofa. She now knew that her life was much better in the confines of her home-where she had food and water, comfortable places to sleep, and the ability to do what she wanted without fear. It had been her life's dream to be free, but it was now clear she was much better suited to the life of a domesticated pet. She supposes that it takes living your dream to realize that what you want is not always what is best for you.

The Perfect Day

Today is the day, one of the most exciting mornings to wake up on, and just the mere thought of the trip we're about to take sends thrills right down to my toes. What could possibly be so exciting that it's all we talk about for weeks, that we nearly die with anticipation on the endless forty-minute drive to this place, and scream with delight when we see the welcoming sign? Silverwood, of course! Among the rugged mountains and towering pines of Athol, Idaho, the colorful roller coasters and spinning rides of Silverwood Theme Park rise above the trees, and my heart pounds with anticipation as I survey the familiar sights. My family and I enter the gates and are immediately greeted with tinkling carnival music, brilliant flower baskets, tantalizing aromas, and the delighted screams of the ride-goers as they brave the wild coasters. Silverwood is a huge attraction in North Idaho, particularly during the summer when their water park, Boulder Beach, is open, but we like to visit in the fall when the weather is cooler, and there is still a wide variety of rides, with high thrillers for daredevils like me, low thrillers for the kids, and fun rides for the whole family. My brothers and I unanimously agree that Silverwood is one of our favorite places in the world, and when I tell you about our amazing day and the crazy things we did, you'll see why.

The warm September sunshine peeks through the shady trees as we hurry down the wide path, leaving behind the intriguing little shops and stores, the colorful kiddie rides and the children's shouts of laughter, then we step through the high archway into the most terrifying part of Silverwood: Coaster Alley. The towers and tracks of these enormous rides rise like skyscrapers in the big, blue sky as the roller coasters whiz by at a sickening speed, and the frantic screams of those brave enough to venture onto one of these reach our ears. My family gasps and shudders at the monstrosity of the fearsome rides, but I smile in secret delight; this is the best part of the amusement park, and the first one up is my favorite coaster: Stunt Pilot. Most of my family members are loath to try this ride, but my dad and I love the thrill of flying through the air in the red-and-white, airplane-style cars; Stunt Pilot's amazing speed and tremendous loopy-loops make it seem a lot more terrifying than it is. Without a doubt, the two wooden roller coasters, Timber Terror and Tremors, are my family's favorites; I especially enjoy Tremors, the first real coaster I ever rode on, because it rattles and shakes like an earthquake and shoots you through black tunnels at the astonishing speed of sixty miles per hour. Not surprisingly, I feel like I have survived an earthquake by the time I get off that thing. You know what they say- nothin' like a good, scary roller coaster to get you to pray! (Okay, I made that one up.) My parents and brothers mostly stick to the smaller, safer coasters, but I, with my daredevil, I'll-face-anything personality, beg my parents to let me ride

on of the huge, dangerous contraptions and they reluctantly let me go. Heart pounding, I climb into a seat on Panic Plunge and smile at my family, then the ride slowly begins climbing the gigantic tower. I watch the beautiful scenery with growing trepidation, realizing I've made the same mistake again; every time I climb on Panic Plunge I regret it, and here I am, doing it again. I groan inwardly, brace myself, and close my eyes until I hear the ominous click, and the ride takes a sudden, sickening plunge to the ground, the air whooshing around me, my screams barely audible, even to my own ears. Safe again on solid land I head off with my family to find something to eat, and I laugh to myself because I know that won't be the last time I go on a wild ride like Panic Plunge. A trip to Silverwood just wouldn't be the same if I didn't do something crazy, and I already have my sights on some other rides that are sure to be thrillers, too.

By the time the sun is high overhead we're all ravenous, thirsty, and ready for a break, so we stop at a food stand to buy some crispy chicken, hot fries, cheesy burritos and gooey nachos- definitely not health food, but hey, we're on vacation. Chowling down our delicious lunch and enjoying the sunshine and fresh air, our family laughs and talks together, although it's more like yelling, since the Timber Terror coaster goes by every few minutes and the roar is almost deafening. Teasing each other is one of the main parts of the fun, and we do it all day long at Silverwood. My parents poke fun at each other because my mom is scared of the ride that my dad loves, and vice versa, I try to sweet-talk my dad into coming with me on some of the terrifying, put-your-life-at-risk rides, and I tease my younger brother mercilessly because he refuses to ride Stunt Pilot and Spin Cycle and all the other fun ones. The one roller coaster we all agree on is Tremors, and the best part is they take your picture during the ride; ours usually turn out hilarious and we all stand around in the gift shop, laughing our heads off, while the other people give us funny looks and the employees try to keep a straight face. As our wonderful day comes to a close, my family and I head over to the treat shops, and though the desserts are often hotly debated, we all end up in the ice cream shop, as usual, and I am delightfully satisfied by my double-scoop, creamy cone, as always. Warm from all the exercise and happy as can be, with tired bodies and aching feet, we exit the park, leaving behind the twinkling lights and bright displays, the carnival music and sounds of laughter: our fun-filled, exhilarating day at Silverwood is over. Our trip to this beautiful amusement park was wild and exciting, yet still enjoyable and relaxing, and I've only told you the half of it. If you ever drive through North Idaho you'll see gorgeous blue mountains, rugged peaks and rolling forests, wild creatures, sparkling lakes, and through the tall trees, a glimpse of something exciting and unusual- the swooping coasters and colorful rides of my favorite place to visit: Silverwood.

2026

Voices

Voces

Poetry

Poesía

Writing that develops an idea in a fresh, original way, in a format that breaks from traditional prose through the use of line breaks, word placement, rhythm, rhyme, and/or other poetic elements.

Escritura que desarrolla una idea de una manera nueva y original, en un formato que rompe con la prosa tradicional por medio del uso de pausas, colocación de palabras, ritmo, rima u otros elementos poéticos.

Verna Pearson

2nd Grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: H Lee

The Moon

The moon is big and round, made of rock you see.

Pretty up so high.

Many forms of the moon, pretty in each one.

So high up in the sky the white glowing moon! In the black sky.

the moon orbits the earth.

So big, pretty, and round.

Oh the moon, The moon moon moon.

During Halloween, you are scary

In the Black Sky!

A wolf howls at the moon when it is full. The big white moon.

Full or crescent or big or pretty or white or black you have many meanings.

So stay like yourself.

Rain or snow or thundery sky.

STAY LIKE YOURSELF!!

Andres Gomez

2nd Grade, Garfield Elementary School

Teacher: S Maldonado

Soy de Mexico

Soy de mi television y mi cama aguada.

Soy de birria y tamales de salsa verde.

Soy de Disneyland y la Playa.

Soy de mi mamá y mi papá.

Soy de mi primer día en un avión a Mexico.

Soy de me “pongo las pilas” y “Sana Sana colita de rana”.

Soy de pascua y mi cumpleaños.

Juan Baez Villa

3rd Grade, Martin Luther King Elementary School

Teacher: A Caltenco

Loque para mi significa ser bilingue:

Bonita experencia

Idiomas

Ler en diferentes idiomas

Increible

No hacerle caso a los que digan de ti. Genial

Unico

Energia

Stephen Bruseau

3rd Grade, Martin Luther King Elementary School

Teacher: A Caltenco

El language Español

Español es un language

Special

Porque

Ay letras únicos que no están en inglés como

N para nino y

Otras palabras. Y la otra letra es

Li para llave, pero en español se escucha como la letra Y,

En inglés se escucha como la letra L.

Es por eso que a mi me gusta Español porque no es

Muy complicado.

Omar Garcia

4th Grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: T Lynde

Outdoor Wonders

In the bright, strong, outdoor woods,
Where every creature stood,
I wore my hood within the wood,
Though I bad sworn to still be good,
Then I started sinking into my thinking.

I wondered- did bears feel rare?
Did they dare to share with a hare?
I wondered if owls scowl at growls?
I wondered-did the tall, thick trees resent the bees?
I wondered if foxes hate being boxed with ease?
I wondered-did bats feel like cats?
I wondered do deers fear my tracks?
I wondered if Moose runs around loose?
I wondered .

Katherine Russell

4th Grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: R Rowe

True and New

I've been looking for some one new ooh ya, some one that is so true ohh ya, I've been on a long quest looking south and west and I came to this town looking all around and I found this guy just ask him why, (hold note for three sec.) ya (stop for two sec). It's you right there in the blue T shirt just trying to flirt with me baby, I love you and you love me why aren't we the perfect team ya, ya, ya, oh, oh, oh, ya, ya, ya, oh, oh, oh. What if you were an angel and I was a devil what would we make if we combined together so many possibilities if you and me combined baby. I've been looking for some one new ohh ya some one that is so true ohh I've been on quest looking south and west and I came to this town looking all around and I found this guy just ask him why, (hold note for three sec)

Just ask him why. (hold note for five sec).

Annika Hengeveld

5th Grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: K Clift

Dear Grandma

Dear Grandma, thank you for putting up with the girls and me especially when we were really loud while you were trying to work

Dear Grandma, thank you for "Girls Days" when we would get our nails done

Dear Grandma, thank you for teaching me to not let anyone get under my skin

Dear Grandma, Thank you for teaching me to be strong when you were really sick

I promise to do well in school and get good grades

I promise to take good care of my little cousins

I promise to make sure Papa decorates the Christmas tree correctly

I promise to be strong, just like you

I promise to keep your memory alive

I promise to see you again some day

Dear Grandma, you're unforgettable

Dear Grandma, you're amazing

Dear Grandma, I love you to the moon and back

Dear Grandma, fly high

Dear Grandma, My love for you is out of this world

Camila Lopez-Rodriguez

5th Grade, Garfield Elementary School

Teacher: P Pacheco

Luna

My Luna, the way your soft fur felt
Era el mejor de ti,
The sound of you purring and meowing
Fue una alegría saber de ti
The way you slept in my arms
Fue un placer sentir,

I miss when you wanted to play,
I miss when you circled around my legs,
Oh my luna I miss you
But we'll never be apart
Mientras estas en mi corazón

Xiomara Sevilla

6th Grade, Franklin Middle School

Teacher: R Archer

Life is like a Roller Coaster

La vida es como una montaña rusa. Te alegras haber podido montarlo pero a veces no quieres seguir adelante y algunos desafortunadamente se rinden. Ves lo peor de lo mejor y lo mejor de lo peor, desde diferentes puntos de vista. Vas por altos y bajos. Es entretenido; da miedo y esta lleno de sorpresas en el camino, pero tambien podria ser peligroso, y termina como todas las otras atracciones.

La vida es como una montaña rusa

Ashley Garcia

7th Grade, Wilson Middle School

Teacher: K Cline

A Mariposas Journey

A butterfly with two wings *crece y se pone lista para volar,*
Va a volar to a better lugar,
Vuela para trabajar,
Cuando esta lista she goes.

Vuela sobre las pirámides de Teotihuacan,
Vuela sobre las montañas, bosques exuberantes, y las desiertos,
Pasa las ciudades llenos de Mexicanos pasando por su día,
En su viaje percibe el aroma de las tortillas, pozole, tamales- el sabor de México,
Ella inhala su último olor de un país que una vez llamó hogar.

At last the butterfly gets to a different country,
A country with mountain ranges, rainforests, plains, rivers and lakes,
A country that is now home,
This is a place where she has to adjust,
A different weather she must warm up to,
The butterfly is tired, weak and hungry from her long journey,
But she must work and not quit,
For now she has to take care of her caterpillars.

La mariposa works and works,
Cada mañana se levanta in the morning,
Polinizar y Pollinate until dusk,
And she makes sure *que siempre haya comida para sus caterpillars.*

Si ella no trabaja we would have a bad environment,
Un medio ambiente con a few plants,
An environment with *poco color y luz,*
We need *las mariposas,*
They need to stay.

The caterpillars *crecen y crecen* to beautiful butterflies *que brillan,*
Ahora son su turno to make their *padres* proud,
Make them *orgullosos de una oportunidad* that they didn't have,
Bring *luz, guía y esperanza* to a cold, harsh world *que alguna vez fue cálido y amable.*

Maggie-Mae Ortiz

7th Grade, Lewis and Clark Middle School

Teacher: L Cordero

Echoes in the Land

Echoes in the land Hand over heart,
The children stood to swear their loyalty to this country.
But the words are fragile, empty, and meaningless.
A chant for weary kids with tired breaths.
They whisper of a dream that's faded,
Reciting the same hollow pledge.
One Nation?
Look at the scared people on the chaotic street.
The tired defeat of innocent people fighting for their rights.
We are a mosaic of broken pieces on the floors that were once united,
Staring through feelings of exhaustion, unable to support the restless.
We are divided by hate, by the angry red, white, and blue.
United only in fear that the end is drawing near for human rights.
Under God? Or under lies?
With prayers sold, And truth taken away.
We pray to a nonexistent power every day,
While justice remains with the cowardly,
Unable to confront truths against lies.
Indivisible?
Families get torn apart. Souls die, and people are now divided by race.
We claw at nonexistent chains, feeling trapped in this country,
Ignoring the comfort of death to keep fighting for our beliefs.
Liberty is now just a brand name,
And justice?
Justice is a game.
For All?
The echo answers to no one but itself.
For who? The young? The poor? The old?
Or just for those who hold the power in this land,
While hate drives everyone in charge?
So keep your hand on your chest,
But let the empty promise rest.
The oath means nothing; the promise is lost,
Just empty words, softly spoken
When truth is gone and greed has taken over,
The pledge is a silent echo shouted into nothing.

Jasmine Penaloza

8th Grade, Lewis & Clark Middle School

Teacher: M Johnson

“My Path”

He made my Path
He forgives me for my Past
He makes me happy
like a baby with candy
every single Sunday
is such a fun day
He gives me so many blessing
and never leaves me guesing
wheather or not im worthy
but always reminds me of my beuty
My Path has it's ups and downs
but he alway rites my frowns
He made my Path
He forgives me for my Past
He is my lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Jazmin Zepeda Castillo

8th Grade, Lewis & Clark Middle School

Teacher: B Manrique

Nuevo comienzo, nuevo dolor

Una nueva ciudad, una nueva vida.

Una nueva vida, un nuevo idioma.

Un nuevo idioma, una nostalgia abrasiva.

Hasta el día de hoy, es difícil encontrar pal a bras para expresar mi dolor.

Cada que intento, revivo el ahora rencor de haberme despedido de mi cultura con dolor. De mis amigos, de mi familia.

Es el dolor de haber dejado lo que puede ser, dentro de un boleto de avión.

Jonah Charles-Mercado

9th Grade, Parent Partnership

Teacher: C Charles-Mercado

What Would The Table Say?

Our lovely kitchen table has served us day by day
But if it had a voice to speak what would the table say

What would the table talk about if it could tell a story
Would it talk about devotional or ping pong battle glories

Would it talk about the diners served or say a would-you-rather
Would it recite it's favorite joke the one about the ladder

Oh the memories the table knows if only it could share
About the moustache pizza night and the food slap double-dare

About the dogs and turtle that run around the floor
About the friendly tabby cat that lived outside the door

Would it think about the parties thrown and all the card games played
Would it think about bean boozle that makes all tongues afraid

Would it think about the people who no matter where they roam
The children and their parents who call their family home

If the table had two lips to talk what would the table shout
It would say "I love you family" it would without a doubt

I've spent far too much time writing about my table's day
But if it had a voice to speak what would your table say

Isabel Romba

10th Grade, Eisenhower High School

Teacher: K Walsh

Something Beautiful

There's something beautiful about an unopened book
Sea limitless as the eye can look
A storm of questionable existence
The mind deprived intangible substance
Lonely yet untouched, safe from the consuming crook

There's something captivating about unshared art
The cat is still alive until you open the box
Thin barriers separating ideas miles apart

There's something wonderful about an unheard song
It's notes stretch as wide as it is long
Fearfully it falls on untrained ears.

Is there anything there, anything at all
Inexplicable beauty in the eyes of the Creator
Presumed incomprehensible to the eyes of the fanatic
But that far away, unreachable beauty
May forever be
An Idea

The Patriot's Song

The land where the bald eagle freely doth soar,
Our beautiful nation where ocean billows roar.
Across mountain ridges or through seas of grain,
For us, the meaning of freedom is plain.

It rings in our hearts like a song with no end,
A song to believe in, love, and defend.
Our devotion is true, like the heroes who've died,
This feeling we call the "American pride:"

There's no compromise and no turning back,
The imprint of freedom we'll leave in each track.
The love of our nation's anthem is true.
Of Old Glory's colors- red, white, and blue.

The truest of heroes, the bravest of men,
For our freedom they were ready to fight and defend

In beauty and battle, in glory and strife,
They valued their country more than their life.

From their great example we have learned each day,
To thank God for this country, the U.S.A.
No longer the colonies, now we are one,
The joy of a free people can't be undone.

From lakes to oceans, to streams that gently weave,
From countrysides to cities, from snow to autumn leaves.
Let all the earth declare and let the heavens prolong,
One melody of freedom, the patriot's song

Aubrey Gonzalez

12th Grade, Davis High School

Teacher: S Irwin

Human Behind the Savage

Trump rally in Pennsylvania 2024 about illegal immigrants he states :

These are savage monsters

A mother's perspective:

I came seeking a better future for my kids,
and thanks to the lord ive been able to accomplish it.

A father's perspective:

I wanted a better future.
To be able to grow a family and build ours ...
And thanks to the lord, we have accomplished it.
We have a home, and a job.

An uncle's perspective:

I had to leave my family behind
which was my dad, my mom, my siblings
So that my children could have everything
That I never did.

My perspective:

They call us monsters, savages
Like we weren't even human ..
But they never saw the fear we carried.
The miles we walked. Or the families we tried to protect.
We didn't come to harm.
We came to live.
And still..
Their words cut deep.
It hurts.
Because all we ever wanted was a chance
To be seen for who we really are,
HUMAN.
We are not here to take anything from anyone,
Everything we have,
We earned with the sweat off our foreheads
We work.
We sacrifice.
We dream.
Just like anyone else, we only want a chance.
A chance to live, to learn, to be seen,
As human.

Elizabeth Garcia

Staff Gilbert Elementary School

Homenaje a mi Abuelito Filemon

Mi abuelito Filemón vivió ciento siete años,
una vida larga como los caminos del campo,
con un corazón de oro,
un hombre sabio, trabajador y bondadoso.

Recuerdo crecer escuchando sus historias:
cuando era joven,
cuando conoció a mi abuelita,
cuando hablaba de la niñez de mi papa
como si el tiempo aun viviera en su voz.

Pocos saben del esfuerzo de sus días.
Caminaba dos horas bajo el sol
para llegar a la milpa,
donde sembraba maíz y, :frijol y calabaza
para alimentar a sus siete hijos.

Lo poco que sobraba lo vendía
para que mi papá pudiera ir a la escuela,
para que sus hijos soñaran más allá del campo.

Su trabajo duro formó a mi padre,
mi padre me lo enseñó a mí,
y yo se lo paso a mis hijos,
como una herencia de fuerza y amor.

Gracias, abuelito,
por tus enseñanzas,
por los dias de alegría,
por tu fortaleza hasta el final.

Aunque ya no estes aqui,
tu historia vive en mí, en mi familia,
y en cada paso que damos siguiendo tu ejemplo.

Descansa en paz, abuelito.
Tu historia late en mi corazón para siempre.

Miss You

Not at all how I imagined it would be,
dreams of yesterday retreat, trying to flee,
my rearview mirror captures his smile,
remnants of happy times before this trial.

It came out of nowhere, a silent thief,
stage 4 cancer, hearts in disbelief.
“Be strong, “ “You’ve got this,” “Make the climb,”
yet all the while, living on borrowed time.

The ocean waves gently called to you
whispering a peaceful tune,
a life so full of laughter and love,
eyes completely focused on above.

We did our best to care for you.
even as time grew short, we knew
heaven would welcome you, arms open wide,
your eternal home across the divide.

We miss your smile and twinkling eyes,
your love of tacos and cherry pie,
your care of Mama and love for your girls,
your hugs and wisdom, out of this world.

Lessons you taught we will hold dear,
How to live out your faith, how to persevere.
Cancer took your body but couldn’t steal your light.
It shines in us ‘till, at last, we unite.

In Memoriam

Giuliana Garcia

7th Grade, Lewis & Clark Middle School

Parent: J Silva

Why are you so loud?

“Why are you so loud?”

That’s the question they always ask me

They always say “let someone else speak” or

“oh my god, you talk so much”

I always worry about if I’m enough, living life in fear,

but one thing I’ve learned is that I’m not even allowed to shed a tear,

because even that’s too loud.

I don’t know if I cry too loud, or if it’s because of me, but from that I learned to never speak.

2026

Voices

Voces

Essay Writing

Ensayo

Writing that includes opinion or argument pieces and informative/explanatory pieces in which the writer offers unique insights into a topic.

Escritura que incluye piezas de opinión o argumento y piezas informativas/explicativas en las que el escritor ofrece puntos de vista singulares sobre un tema.

Getzeman Cortez Lucena

2nd Grade, Garfield Elementary School

Teacher: A Gutierrez-Pena

Estudiante me compras una perita

Por favor me compras una perrita? Sería una buena idea que compramos una perrita porque son las mejores mascotas del mundo! Primero, me gustaría tener una perrita porque su cabello es suavecito. Enseguida, yo quiero una perrita porque puedo jugar con ella. Después, a mi me gustaría tener una perrita porque cuando están dormidas se ven muy tiernas. Finalmente, desearía tener una perrita porque se ven muy bonitas. A mi me gustaría una perrita porque me acompañaría y salieramos a caminar.

Sinceramente,

Xavier Moreno Castro

2nd Grade, Garfield Elementary School

Teacher: A Gutierrez-Pena

Quiero un carrito

Queridos padres:

Yo pienso que sería una buena idea que me compres un carrito que se moneje. Primero, yo pienso que si me compras 10 puedo manejar con mi hermanito. Enseguida, quiero el carrito porque quiero jugar con mi hermanito. Después, también puedo escuchar música en el carrito. Finalmente yo puedo jugar carreras con el carro. ¡A mi me gustan los carritos porque son los mejores juguetes del mundo!

Sinceramente,

Karen Rodriguez Salazar

3rd Grade, Martin Luther King Elementary School

Teacher: A Caltenco

Un fondo azul frio

Hola como están hoy aprenderán del fondo del mar y las cosas maravillosas que hay. El mar ocupa el 70% de superficie en la tierra y no se a descubierto ni la mitad no sabemos qué oculta en las profundidades. En las exploraciones se han encontrado animales marinos como calamares de hasta 18 metros de largo. También las peces

Tienen una luz en su cabeza. La luz del sol solo llega a 200 metros abajo del mar. En el mar hay muchas teorías impresionantes de monstruos marinos que pueden comer barcos enteros. Además existe el triangulo de las bermudas es otro lugar misterioso donde desaparecen barcos y aviones hasta submarinos. Los estudios aún no han encontrado que pasa en ese lugar y alrededor de él. Hace miles de años estaba el megalodón, un tiburón de gran magnitud que se extinguió aunque algunas personas dicen que aún habita en las profundidades. El Titanic fue un lujoso barco que se hundió en 1912 en su viaje y chocó con un iceberg. Fue una de las tragedias más impresionantes en su época. También le hicieron una película. Bueno hoy aprendiste más del fondo del mar.

¿Tu irías al mar?

Rory Scheidegger

3rd Grade, McKinley Elementary School

Teacher: E Rivera

Why I Love Math

In my math class others might be bored while I stay focused and I enjoy it.

First, math is helpful in life because if you want to build a house you need to measure the length, height and width of materials. You also measure ingredients while cooking food such as cookies and cake or fun desserts. You can see how much money you spent on stuff you need like food and drinks, and also how much money you have.

Next, it's a great way to pass time because I like a good problem and it's fun to challenge others. And I enjoy math games like quizzes.

Last, it's helpful right now because I can tell time and tell how many more minutes until lunch. And it helps me with trivia. I can also help others so they have fun with math like multiplication and division.

In conclusion, given the opportunity at home and in class I would do math. Math is useful, enjoyable and handy. I wish others liked math as much as me

The Most Famous Businesses in Washington State

Dig Deep Question: What are the most famous Businesses in Washington State?

[Source2] Businesses are important to the economy. Businesses help keep money going for years and years. There are so many businesses around the world that started in Washington State. These businesses brought families to Washington State and helped the economy grow.

Starbucks is one of the most famous businesses in the state. Starbucks originated in Seattle, and it's all over the world now. It started as a small coffee shop in 1971.[Source2] Starbucks is really famous now because of its drinks and food. Starbucks is still here today because it's now an international brand.

Microsoft is from Washington state. Microsoft makes electronics like computers and gaming systems. Microsoft owns Xbox and game cards. Microsoft uses money so they could keep making the materials and the electronics so they can stay in business. The founders of Microsoft are Bill Gates and Paul Allen. [Source 3]

What is Aerospace's famous business? Boeing makes airplanes and helicopters. It took over a thousand people to make one airplane.[Source2] This creates more jobs. Aerospace was used in World War One and World War Two. The airplanes dropped the atomic bomb in World War 2 to end it.[Source1] Boeing became so big that people came to Washington to help build planes. Thousands of people wanted to help build planes and ships.

The first ever businesses in Washington are lumber, fishing and fur trading. People sold lumber so they could make money off of it. The lumber was used to build houses. Fur from otters was so valuable back then in Europe so it got shipped from Washington to Spain, France and Italy. Commercial fishermen caught and sold a lot of fish but were taking fish away from the native people and the native people didn't have fish to hunt so they couldn't survive. [Source1]

The gold rush expanded the economy in 1897 ~ 1898. [Source3] The gold rush was so big even people from all over the world came to Washington for silver and gold. [Source1] It took a lot of people to do the mining for gold and silver because they had to mine by hand, and it took a long time so the population grew. This means that more people could buy and sell stuff from the businesses.

Now look at our economy. It's even bigger than before because people came here from all over the world to work and expand our economy. Washington State has so many businesses that grew to be popular all over the world. That's why Washington State is so bigger than before. [Source 4]

[Source 1 :] Pictorial input chart, Mrs.Goins, 2025

[Source 2:] Washington, Past and Present,D. Lamber and L. Lamber

[Source 3] Google Search on computer

[Source 4] My Brain

Niamh Scheidegger

5th Grade, McKinley Elementary School

Teacher: J Grubb

What It's Like Having Three Brothers

When I get home from school, I walk through the doorway, hands filled with water cups and bags. I hear the blaring of my middle brother's trumpet. I don't have to ask where my oldest brother is because the odds are he's asleep in his room. My youngest brother comes in and runs to the desk to do math problems that even I can't do. As you can imagine, it's hard to have brothers.

Since I have no sisters, all the hand-me-downs I get are boys' clothes. Honestly, wearing shirts with Among Us and Pokemon on them is kinda weird for me because I don't really like those things.

When you have three brothers, food vanishes in the blink of an eye. When your mom or dad gets groceries, they're gone in 0.2 seconds. Never leave anything in our fridge, or someone WILL eat it!

Getting to school is also hard with three brothers. We have to be out the door by 7:40, unless we're taking my exhausted oldest brother to school, in which case it would be around 7:00. Sometimes we're late. Six people and two bathrooms don't mix.

Brothers smell gross as well. You should try being on a four-hour car ride with three different-smelling boys. They smell like cheese. Not just plain cheese, moldy cheese! They only take showers like once a week. And when they do take showers, they're very short.

Having three brothers is nice because you can split the chores evenly. In our house, chores are no joke. There are many things to do, such as putting away and loading dishes, taking the dogs out to go to the bathroom, washing and folding laundry, and more! If you split it with your siblings, you'll only have to do a couple and not all of them!

Now you understand why it's crazy to have brothers. They're stinky, messy, sleepy, and hungry all the time. But they're also nice and fun to play with. Like when we go to the park, swim, or play board games together. Brothers aren't that bad.

Abigail Lasha

5th Grade, Robertson Elementary School

Teacher: E Smith

The Rocket Squad

Here To Promote Kindness In Our School

At our school, one ordinary day with three kids being bullied turned into our school's anti-bullying club called the Rocket Squad. This club is all about promoting kindness for the people in our district and everybody else that is being bullied or needs to be shown kindness.

Why The Rocket Squad Is Promoting Kindness

Nobody likes being bullied, especially when it mainly happens in a place they have to go to 5 days a week. That's why we decided that someone had to stand up for themselves, and all the others being bullied. The Rocket Squad is here to make every one's voice heard when it comes to being bullied, whether or not that means being able to talk to someone you trust or actually being in the club and sharing ideas that make our school a better place to be. We need kindness everywhere in the world, but schools are a great place to start! One reason why I think we need to promote kindness in our schools is because many kids don't get the kindness they should be getting in other places outside of school, which is why some kids are bullies. We need to show kindness to bullies for this reason because, #1, every one deserves to be shown kindness, and #2, if we only show kindness to the people that are being bullied, that will make situations where the bullies don't receive kindness even worse. So now you know why we need to be promoting kindness in our schools, and everywhere else, and I hope that you choose to be showing kindness to the kids in your school and everyone else!

Making The Rocket Squad Known & The Future Of The Rocket Squad

The Rocket Squad is made up of 2 parts. 1st, there are the 7 seven people that attend the meetings to share ideas and come up with ways to make the Rocket Squad better, and 2nd, the people in the club part which is really just a way for people to socialize with other members of the club. The 7 people that attend the meetings are all 5th graders, while the people in the socializing club part are mostly grades 3rd-5th. At our school, we have other clubs besides the Rocket Squad that are there to help resolve conflicts, the Peer Mediation club, a club that helps during assemblies, the Leadership Team, and a club that is also for socializing, the Lunch Bunch group. Because the 7 people that are actually part of the meetings and making decisions for the Rocket Squad are all in fifth grade, we will be having a k-2nd assembly where all 7 members will be performing a kindness song & dance routine and explaining the Rocket Squad to all the kids in kindergarten- 2nd grade. This will be followed by a 3rd-5th assembly where we will

also have our song & dance routine and we will explain the Rocket Squad to all the kids in 3rd,4th,&5th grade, but we will have a special announcement for the 4th graders that they will be able to apply for one of next year's Rocket Squad members.

Counter argument

Some people think that the Rocket Squad is just a group for kids to get special treatment, like a lunch table for the people in the club, or meetings with the counselor, but it is so much more than that! The Rocket Squad is here to spread kindness and support the people who are being bullied, but others disagree with this idea because they don't see the importance of having kindness in our school, or some may have an easier time helping themselves when it comes to being bullied. But some do not have such an easy time and that is why the Rocket Squad is here to help.

Conclusion

So If you don't see the importance of kindness, or you just never have considered joining any clubs like the Rocket Squad, then I hope that after reading about promoting kindness at schools through clubs and other programs that you will become more interested and try to promote kindness in your school or home.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” - Aesop

Fault Lies with the Whitmans

Many events occurred in 1836, in Walla Walla, before the Whitman Massacre, between the Cayuse (Natives) and the Whitmans. But who was really at fault? The Whitmans or the Cayuses? The Whitmans were responsible. They were at fault for many reasons, like when they tried to change the Native's beliefs, took the Native's land, and carried infectious diseases. Some people believe the Cayuse were at fault but I disagree. Let me explain.

First, the Whitmans were trying to change the Cayuse beliefs thinking they didn't have a religion. The Cayuse actually did have a religion to share (Addis, 2024) and they started the day in prayer (Mr. Benaderet, 2025). The whole reason the Whitmans were in Walla Walla was to turn the Cayuse into Christians. They only converted a few Natives, meaning that their mission did not work (Wilma, 2003). In the video, *A Prophecy Fulfilled: The Cayuse & The Whitmans at Waiilatpu*, it says, "The Cayuse lost interest and they didn't like how the Bible was being told," (Mr. Benaderet, 2025) This shows that events were not going the way the Whitmans planned and the Cayuse started feeling frustrated. The Whitmans were trying to change longheld beliefs of the Native Americans.

Also, the Whitmans took the Cayuse land. "Whitman returned, in September 1843, he came with a wagon train of 800 emigrants," (Wilma, 2003). "The Cayuse said that the emigrants kept on coming and it would not stop... The Cayuse and other Indians told Whitman that if they continued to stay, their relationship was not going to be favorable," (Mr. Benaderet, 2025). This evidence proves that the Cayuse did not welcome the emigrants and they felt like they were getting pushed out of their land making them feel upset. Clearly, this evidence shows that the Whitmans and the emigrants were taking the Cayuse land.

Finally, the Whitmans were culpable because they carried infectious diseases, killing many Natives. According to *Whitman Murders*, it says that, "earlier fur traders had threatened Native people with infectious disease," (Addis, 2024) and the Cayuse blamed the Whitmans. In *A Prophecy Fulfilled: The Cayuse & The Whitmans at Waiilatpu*, it said that there were about, "6 deaths per day, because the medicine was not working," (Mr. Benaderet, 2025). Then the Cayuse thought the Whitmans were poisoning them because the medicine to treat the disease was working on the emigrants but not the Cayuse (Mr. Benaderet, 2025). This evidence shows that there wasn't trust and their relationship became negative because they thought the Whitmans were poisoning them. Therefore, the Whitmans and the emigrants carried disease.

In the end, the Whitmans were at fault. This is shown by the Whitmans trying to change their beliefs, taking their land, and bringing infectious disease. For all of us, perhaps we can take the lesson of the Whitmans and maybe learn to respect each other's land, beliefs and avoid putting people in danger with disease.

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Social Anxiety

Have you ever wondered what social anxiety is and what it means? Social anxiety is when someone has a fear of being judged or humiliated in social or performance situations. For example, public speaking, meeting new people, and even public eating. Another fear people may have is sweating, blushing, or trembling. Most people with social anxiety tend to stay quiet in many situations. This is because of the overwhelming feeling of being judged, humiliated or rejected. It is important to know about how to help and understand the life of someone with social anxiety. The struggles people with social anxiety face, along with ways to help and ideas for coping are important topic social anxiety face, along with ways to help and ideas for coping are important topic

For those who have social anxiety, there are many battles. In the article, Mayo clinic, it says "A common everyday experiment may be hard to endure when you have social anxiety disorder, including: Interacting with unfamiliar people or strangers, social anxiety disorder, including: Interacting with unfamiliar people or strangers, attending parties or social gatherings, starting conversations, making eye contact, entering a room in which people are already seated, eating in front of others, or using a public restroom" (The website, Mayo Clinic). This evidence shows the struggles people with social anxiety go through. I know this from experience because I do have social anxiety and often feel judged for my presence

A way to help someone with social anxiety is to offer patient, non-judgmental listening, validate their feelings, and gently encourage small steps outside their comfort zone while respecting their boundaries. When someone acts in this way in response to my social anxiety, it makes me feel like someone actually cares deeply for the person with social anxiety. The next time you see someone really quiet, you can assume they are either shy or scared. But it's not okay to quickly judge someone because of how they sound, act, or look. It's important to know and understand the person before you decide to judge.

In conclusion, social anxiety is a real and hard thing that affects how people act and feel in everyday situations. It can make simple things like talking, eating, or walking into a room feel scary. Learning about social anxiety and being kind, patient, and non-judgmental can really help someone who's struggling. Small things such as listening, believing them, and encouraging tiny steps can make a big difference. So next time you see someone quiet, try to understand instead of judge; your kindness and patience might be just what they need.

Hannah Hartley

Never Forgotten: The Battle of Iwo Jima

Uniquely beautiful, but with a devastating history, Iwo Jima is an island with a story like no other. What is so devastating about it? With its sunny beaches and hundreds of caves, Iwo Jima looks exactly like what it is: a small, volcanic island in the middle of the Pacific. However, it was a heated battleground during World War II because of its strategic location, where thousands of American and Japanese soldiers furiously fought and died. Famous battles, memorable moments, and incredible people are all a part of this island's unusual history. Although the fighting has long since ceased on Iwo Jima, it holds stories of heroism and tragedy that are still remembered today.

On February 19, 1945, the Americans launched Operation Detachment, which is what they later called the invasion of Iwo Jima. Hoping to weaken the enemy forces, the U.S. Navy began a three-day bombardment of Iwo Jima, but it had little effect on the Japanese, who were well hidden. Simultaneously, American aircraft and ships, along with thousands of U.S. troops began arriving at the island. Thus, the terrible battle was started. The Japanese cleverly waited until the beaches were full of American soldiers, then open fired on the troops, killing a tremendous number of men. Although nearly eight hundred soldiers died during the capture of Mount Suribachi, it was still a great victory for the Americans. On March 26, the Japanese emerged from their tunnels and launched a final attack on the Americans, during which the Japanese general died. Ultimately, the Americans won the battle of Iwo Jima, but it was at a high cost.

Many of the U.S. soldiers who fought at Iwo Jima were considered heroes, and rightfully so, because they were incredibly brave and loyal. Marshall Harris, a machine gunner, was known as the "Ghost of 2nd Armored," since he was extremely pale after being injured, unlike the rest of his regiment. Sadly watching Marines get hewn down in the crossfire during the attack on Mount Suribachi, Harris truly understood the high cost of loyalty. Another soldier, William Schott, was a walking miracle. After being on Iwo Jima for forty-five days, and even watching the inspiring flag raising from his foxhole, Schott, amazingly, was unharmed. Raymond Lueb, a marine, was also present when the U.S. soldiers raised the flag on Mount Suribachi. He was extremely brave, helping to put out a fire, along with two other men, and saving an estimated two hundred lives. Many ordinary men and boys became heroes on Iwo Jima.

Certainly, one of the most extraordinary moments for the American soldiers was the flag raising on Mount Suribachi. When the marines reached the summit of the mountain, they hoisted up a small American flag, but there was one minor detail they had originally overlooked. The flag was too small to be easily noticed, so they decided to replace it with a larger one. A second group of marines climbed to the summit, and because this flag was much bigger, it took six of them to raise it up. Joe Rosenthal, who was a photographer, managed to capture the proud moment, and his picture instantly became a hit. Rosenthal's photo became one of the most famous in U.S. history, and it even won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize for Photography. For the American soldiers, the bright stars and stripes waving in the wind over Mount Suribachi signaled their victory to come.

The battle of Iwo Jima is not always remembered, although Rosenthal's photo of the flag raising has been widely commemorated. Why was this battle even fought? Mercilessly attacking Iwo Jima was considered an easy way to weaken the enemy because many Japanese soldiers were stationed there. Instead of the American's victory being the most significant part of the battle, it was really the acts of courage, loyalty, and heroism shown by the brave soldiers. Men like Marshall Harris who fought on the volcanic island agree that the battle should never be forgotten.

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Aubrey Gonzalez

12th Grade, Davis High School

Teacher: S. Irwin

The color yellow

The color yellow is the kind of color that refuses to whisper. It enters a room already speaking, already shining, already asking to be noticed. It is the color of caution signs and highlighters, of sunlight that presses against closed eyelids. Yellow does not blend easily. It demands space, attention, reaction. When too much of it appears at once, it can feel overwhelming, almost exhausting, like a noise that never quite fades. And yet, without yellow, the world would feel dimmer, quieter, and less alive.

In elementary school, she was yellow. loud, bright, unfiltered. she laughed before thinking, spoke before raising her hand, felt everything at full volume. Like a yellow crayon dragged hard across white paper, she left bold marks wherever she went. Teachers noticed her. Classmates noticed her. Sometimes they smiled, sometimes they winced. Yellow does not always know when to stop glowing. It spills past the lines, confident and careless, unaware that not every space is ready for that much color. Still those early years needed yellow. It brought warmth to blank pages and joy to spaces that might have otherwise stayed empty.

But as time passed, the world began asking for softer shades.

Middle school arrived with unspoken rules and sharper edges. Brightness started to feel risky. Being loud meant being judged, being noticed meant being remembered for the wrong reasons. Slowly, the yellow dulled. She became the beige crayon, resting quietly in the box. Beige is not bold. It does not announce itself. It exists somewhere between colors, safe and subtle. Rarely chosen first, but occasionally necessary. Beige fills backgrounds, softens contrast, makes other colors stand out without asking for credit.

In middle school, she learned how to fade just enough. She spoke less, listened more. She learned when to hold back opinions, when to laugh softly instead of freely. Beige did not draw attention, but it belonged. It had a purpose, even if it was not admired. And in a world that felt confusing and critical, being beige was a kind of protection. It was easier to be overlooked than to be too much.

By high school, she became the white crayon.

White is quiet in a different way. It blends. It smooths. It erases harsh lines and covers the mistakes. White is rarely used unless it is needed, unless something has gone wrong or needed fixing. In high school, she learned how to disappear into group projects, how to soften her voice, how to hide parts of herself to make others more comfortable. She learned how to cover mistakes, both her own and those of others. White became survival.

But white also has power. It brings balance. It creates space for other colors to exist. It turns chaos into cohesion. Even when unnoticed, white is essential. Without it, nothing blends, nothing softens, nothing heals.

And somewhere beneath the white and the beige, the yellow still exists. Quieter now, more careful, but not gone. It waits patiently, knowing that one day it may be safe to glow again. Not as overwhelming, not as unchecked, but as something intentional. A reminder that brightness is not a flaw, only something that must learn when and how to shine.

