
CONNECTICUT STUDENT WRITERS

Volume III May 1990



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Selection Committee:

*Ann Alpert
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Arline March
Barbara Merkelson
William R. Molineaux
Mary Plummer
Joan Sereda
Steve Sweet
Mary Ellen Tibits
Dale Woodiel*

Editor: Constance Aloise

Logo design: Solomon Cicero, art teacher at Bloomfield Junior High School

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Typist: Kim Legette

Cover photo by: Neil Robbins '90

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Information about subscriptions and submissions can be obtained from Mary Mackley, Director of the Connecticut Writing Project, University of Connecticut, U-25A, Storrs, Connecticut 06268

Foreword

America's children are increasingly more diverse, "a rich vibrant mosaic--a dynamic composite of children from a variety of cultures, linguistic backgrounds, and religions" notes the report from *The English Coalition Conference: Democracy Through Language*. The Connecticut Writing Project and the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English are mindful of Connecticut school childrens' diversity and thus seek ways to celebrate their differences. The CWP and the CCTE believe that writing provides opportunities to understand and respect cultural and social diversity as children express, think, feel, and interact through their writing.

Because America's school children will live most of their lives in the information age of the twenty-first century, teachers can only speculate as to what they will need most. The CWP and the CCTE want each child to greet the twenty-first century with the wonder, the curiosity, the imagination, and the understanding that writing nurtures.

Following is a small sample of the best of over three thousand submissions to *Connecticut Student Writers*. They ring of compassion and hope, truth and experience, knowledge and vision. We celebrate these young writers and their parents and teachers who have provided opportunities for children to share their diversity. Perhaps, one day, this sharing will reveal a world far, far richer than any of us has known before.



Nicole Perrin
Kindergarten
Kendall School
Norwalk

I Like Horses (Dedicated to Mom)

I like black palominos.
They have five stripes. One stripe is on his forehead and one stripe is on each leg.
I wish that I could own one, because I would ride him in my back yard.
I would bring all of my friends to ride him.
I would keep him in a stable in Stamford.
I would love him forever and ever.



Tiffany Rasmussen
Kindergarten
Plantsville Elementary
Plantsville

SUPER BOOK THINGS I LIKE Tiffany wrote this book

The girl says the pool is nice and blue.
The sun is hot, the pool is warm.
We are jumping nice and high—Seth and I are jumping high.
The horse is nice and slow—Hi, Tara.
I like the house, it is so cozy.
I like to play in the rain.
I love my friends lots and lots.
Numbers are fun.
Sunsets are beautiful.
She is waving hi.
School is fun.
I love the colors to the rainbow.
Weddings are fun.
I am swimming in the pool.
Jenna thinks the sky is beautiful.



Paul A. DelGreco
Grade 1
Nathan Hale Elementary
Enfield

Yucky Germs

Germs on the skin,
Yucky germs.
The bubbles are making them melt.

They float into the water.
I hope they don't make more germs.
The germs float down the drain.
Go germs go!



The Lie

I lied to my mom today.
Then I got sent to my room.
I got sad, sad, sad.
Mom hugged me—
She loved me!
I won't lie again.



My Favorite Drink

I like hot chocolate
When it is cold outside
It makes me feel
Like I have a quilt on.



Zachosaurus

Once there was a boy named Zachory. One day he was very bored. He decided to go to his friend Professor Nobel Prize to see his latest invention he was always bugging him about. It turned out to be a time machine.

"Would you like to go back in time?" asked Professor Nobel Prize.

"Yes," Zachory exclaimed.

"Then hop in!" said Professor Nobel Prize.

So Zachory went in, pushed a few buttons, and before he knew it he was in the dinosaur age! He found a friendly dinosaur and decided to take it home. So Zachory pushed some buttons and they were beamed back to Zachory's time. They hit a

Emily Hargraves
Grade 1
Nathan Hale School
Enfield

Ryan Shea
Grade 1
Natchaug School
Willimantic

Jacob Brown
Grade 2
Burr District Elementary School
Higganum

bump. Professor Nobel Prize's lab doors flew open, and Zachory and the dinosaur got tossed on two platforms. A mutating ray zapped the two. Then, standing on the right hand platform was a dinosaur version of Zachory! Zachory had been mutated with the dinosaur! Professor Nobel Prize ran out of the lab screaming for help. But unfortunately his mother found out about this...Zachosaur. But she wasn't the only one who found out... Zachory was stomping through New York in his prehistoric body! People were running after him from every direction. Zachory accidentally knocked a building over with his tail! Now the people were really mad! They had just built that building and it took three months! Finally, Zachory proved to Professor Nobel Prize who he was. They went back to the lab.

"Stand still," said Professor Nobel Prize as he pulled a lazer out of his pocket. He zapped Zachory with the lazer and he was normal again. They helped build another building and they lived happily ever after. But he still has two horns sticking up from his head.



Jessica Webb
Grade 2
West Stafford School
Stafford Springs

The Pear

Once there was a pear who wanted to be picked at the pear orchard. Nobody ever picked him. "If I don't get picked pretty soon I'll rot," he said. "Why does everyone walk right past me? Am I poison?" he thought. "Nah," he said.

One night something popped out of him. All the other pears tried to tell him that he had a worm in him. When he woke up, he was shaking. Then a tiny worm fell out. "Now I know why nobody picked me." Later the pear was picked and eaten.



Michelle George
Grade 2
Washington Primary
Washington Depot

Rabbit And Toad Go To School

Toad and Rabbit were best friends. They wanted to go to school, but they were only four years old. On Toad's birthday Toad wished and wished a wish. But she wouldn't tell anyone because if she told her wish, it wouldn't come true. Then one time her Grandma came to her and said, "Please, PLEASE, tell me your wish. You have to tell me your wish or you will be very sad that you didn't get your wish." So Toad whispered her wish to Grandma. Grandma told Mother, Mother told Father, Father told the kindergarten teacher, the kindergarten teacher made plans. The next day Toad woke up singing softly. "I wish I could go to kindergarten." Then her mom came in and said, "You are going to kindergarten." Toad got dressed and ate

and ran over to Rabbit's house and told Rabbit she was going to school. Rabbit got very sad and started to cry. Then Frog said, "Cheer up. I can bring you for Show and Tell." So Rabbit cheered up. Then they went for Show and Tell. The kids liked Rabbit so much that he became a student. They lived happily ever after.



Tornado

Stronger than a muscle man!
Lifts up rooftops and kills trees.
It crackles, it twirls, it whistles!
It makes the sky so dark
That the Lord can't see no more.



My Stepfather

My stepfather, his name is Dave Lazo, is a carpenter. He works in Fairfield. He works at peoples' houses. He fixes things. He races with a dirtbike and a motorcycle. When I was six, I let him sleep with my teddy bear. He put it in my crib at night. He plays tricks on me. I hug him. He hugs me back. He drinks beer. He likes nachos and ribs and pizza and onion rings. He thinks of me. He wonders about me.



The Great Adventure

THE LONELY HORSE CHAPTER ONE

Once upon a time, there was a baby horse. It was very sad. Its mother died when it was two days old and its dad died when the bad king killed him. The bad king died of old age. The horse went on and on until she came to a deep wood, then she went into the wood and went on and on. Then she said, "Oh no, it is getting late." Then she found a mossy spot and went to bed. In the middle of the night a

Elizabeth Thomas
Grade 2
Spring Glen Elementary
Hamden

Amy O'Malley
Grade 2
Kendall Elementary School
Norwalk

Lynsea Russi
Grade 2
Oak Grove Montessori
Mansfield

and

Rosie Byron
Grade 3
Oak Grove Montessori
Mansfield

fairy came and put a good spell on her. The spell was she would come to a magic pool and she would jump in it. After coming out, she would have a horn and wings.

In the morning she walked out of the wood. She was so happy she danced around and around. Then she saw a squirrel on a tree. She said, "You are so cute, will you please play with me?" The squirrel said, "Yes." So they played together. Then the horse said, "I have to go." So she went. Then two years later it happened.

THE MAGIC UNICORN CHAPTER TWO

The horse found a magic pool. She was hot so she jumped in it. When she got out a horn appeared on her forehead and wings appeared on her sides. She was a unicorn! She started to fly right away. She was so happy! She went to tell her friends. Her friends said, "Where! Where! We want to have a horn and wings." So she told them and they went. She sat down and saw a bunny. The bunny was behind a bush and it was magic. It was magic because it changed colors. The unicorn said, "Want to play?" The bunny said, "OK." So they played and played. It was getting late so the unicorn said, "Let's go to bed."

THE VERY NICE UNICORN CHAPTER THREE

When the unicorn got up, she said to the bunny, "Let's find something to eat." The bunny said, "I can get some food." So the bunny used its magic to get some food. They had grass, daisies, and good things like that. When they were done, they played games. When they were done playing their games, the unicorn said, "Let's go and find something to do." The bunny said, "OK," so they went. Then they came to a pond. There were trees all around. It was beautiful. The unicorn saw a baby bird on the ground. The bunny put magic on the unicorn then the unicorn could help the bird. Then the unicorn went on and said, "I'm tired" so she went to bed.

THE FLYING UNICORN CHAPTER FOUR

The unicorn had a great adventure. The adventure was that the unicorn went to a field. The field was beautiful. She ran through it as fast as she could. She loved it. This is what it looked like. It had flowers all over and there were lots of other unicorns also.

One of the other unicorns came over to her and said, "Hi, will you play with me?" She said, "Yes." They went to play. They had a lot of fun. Then another unicorn joined them. That unicorn's name was Starlight. When they were playing tag, there was a silence. There was a scary noise. The scary noise was a dog. The dog was barking like crazy. "He is hurt," I said. The other unicorns ran fast over to

the dog. "The dog is in a trap," said Starlight. "Poor thing," said my friend. "She is five, go get help," I said. So she got help and the dog was fine.

THE BEAUTIFUL ADVENTURE CHAPTER FIVE

The unicorn said, "I have to go now." The other unicorns said, "Okay" and she went. When she stopped, it was dark so she could not see anything. When she woke up, she saw a beautiful sight. There were crystals everywhere and crystal clear water. She said, "This will be my home forever." Then she heard a sound. The sound was the bunny. The bunny said, "Hi, how are you?" The unicorn said, "Hi, how are you?" The bunny said, "Fine." The unicorn said, "Why are you here?" The bunny said, "This is my home."

THE MAGIC POOL AND THE TWO PRINCESSES CHAPTER SIX

After Sparkle played in the meadow she said, "I'm so tired from running I'm going to sit down." So she did. Then Sparkle the unicorn said to herself, "I'm going to go back to the magic pool." So she flew back to the magic pool. When she got there, it was getting dark so Sparkle went to bed. When Sparkle woke up, she jumped in the magic pool. When Sparkle got out, she was a princess! Sparkle jumped for joy. Then she went out of the woods and went for a walk. Sparkle had no clothes on so she made a dress out of leaves. She made it by getting a pine needle and sewed the leaves together. Then Sparkle found some flowers and sewed them on her dress and made a crown of flowers to put on her head. She was so beautiful. Then she found another princess! The other princess' name was Chris. Chris had a brother whose name was John. Sparkle met him. They they got married and lived in a pink castle and had children and lived happily ever after.



Weird Pets

Amanda Gelleys
Keeps the weirdest pets.
I think once I saw a vampire bat.
I'm definite: once I saw a green cat.
Her monkeys should keep their noise level down.
They always wake up the entire town.
Her wild horse is a bit too wild.

*Diana Janik
Grade 3
William H. Hatton School
Southington*

It acts like a little three-year-old child.
If you see her, tell her I said,
"I don't think it's too healthy
To sleep with alligators in your bed!"

Stacy Bell
Grade 3
Holland Hill School
Fairfield

The White Winter Ghost

Winter is a white ghost,
Wandering around the world
Dancing with the wind.
The wind takes a bow to the white ghost,
And does a wonderful winter twist.

It's time for the sun to go to bed,
And let the moon do its lighting
Of the night.
Twisting
and
Turning,
All through the wonderish black world.

Pierre Calmels
Grade 3
Huckleberry Hill School
Brookfield

Nothing Is

Nothing is the color of a grey and dim wave
floating across space.
Nothing is the forever burning sun.
Nothing is a flower blooming in the Spring.
Nothing is a tree arching over a stream.
Nothing is a puff of smoke rising up into the sky.
Nothing is the activeness of night crawling on the ground.
Nothing is a gleaming red light stealing your imagination.
Nothing is Jupiter with its fiery red.
And who am I?
I am nothing.

Wild Flower Dance

The aster stood alone
studying a pine cone.
The buttercup gave a sleepy nod
and the ragweed danced with the goldenrod.
The monkshood crept
as the phlox leaped.
The Queen Ann's lace in her gown of white
was happy to hear
the Jerusalem artichoke became a knight.
Then all those flowers laughed aloud, and went to bed very proud.



A Wonderful Thanksgiving

NARRATOR #1

Once upon a time in a forest there was a cute little bunny named Tiffy, another bunny named Fluffy, and a turkey named Willy.

NARRATOR #2

In a village nearby, there lived an Indian girl named White Fawn. She loved animals and tried to stop hunters from killing them. White Fawn was best friends with Tiffy, Fluffy, and Willy.

FLUFFY (Nobody is on stage except for Bunny)
Where is everybody?

TIFFY (Walking on stage)
I'm right here, but where's Willy?
WILLY (Pops up beside Tiffy)
Right here!

TIFFY & FLUFFY
Ah! You scared us!

TIFFY
Hey guys! Do you know what? Tomorrow is Thanksgiving.

Corey Lazar
Grade 4
Cornwall Consolidated
West Cornwall

Katherine Glick
Grade 3
Silvermine
Norwalk

and

Rachel Bohrer
Grade 3
Silvermine
Norwalk

and

Sarah DiCarlo
Grade 3
Silvermine
Norwalk

WILLY
Oh no!

FLUFFY
What's the matter Willy?

WILLY
Th-Th-Thanks G-Giving is when people hunt turkey, I'm a turkey and I-I might-t b-
be chop chop chop!

FLUFFY
Don't worry so much, you know that White Fawn will save you like she has for
many years.

WILLY
Oh No! Chop chop chop is me! Oh yeah!

WHITE FAWN (Walking in)
No it's not. I will help you like I always have.

WILLY
I really hope so.

WHITE FAWN
I will think of a plan. In fact, I have one already. When the hunter comes, I will
hide you so that the hunter cannot find you. I will get in a costume and trick the
hunter. I will dress up as a berry bush and jump out to scare the hunter.

WILLY
Thanks White Fawn, you're a good friend.

FLUFFY
What do I do in the plan?

WHITE FAWN
You get a cave that is safe.

TIFFY
What will I do?

WHITE FAWN
Help Fluffy find a cave.

NARRATOR #3

So Willy did not get chop chop chop after all.

TIFFY

Let's have a Thanksgiving feast.

WILLY

Oh no you're not.

WHITE FAWN

That's OK, we won't eat you.

FLUFFY

Ya! Let's have a Thanksgiving feast, let's start getting dinner ready right now!

WHITE FAWN

Let's wait till tomorrow to make the food, Fluffy, it might spoil over night.

NARRATOR #3

They went to bed and they had a good morning. Willy was outside when the Hunter came by.

HUNTER

A turkey! I'll shoot him.

WILLY

Ah! I'll be chop chop chop in a minute! Ah!

HUNTER

BANG!!! What happened? Oh no, I don't have any bullets in my gun!

WILLY (Running into a cave)

Yipe! I'd better get out of here!

HUNTER (Walking away)

Oh man, now I can't get that fat fat turkey.

WILLY

I'm not fat, you fat hunter!

WHITE FAWN (Jumping out of bush)

BOO!

WILLY

He went away, you don't have to scare him.

FLUFFY

It's getting late, why don't we have our feast now?

ALL

OK.

NARRATOR #1

So, they got ready for the feast.

NARRATOR #2

Willy came in with a chicken.

WILLY

I brought a chicken because there isn't gonna be some of my friends dead at this feast to eat. Yuck, turkey for dinner!

TIFFY

But you're supposed to have turkey on Thanksgiving.

WILLY

I feel a little bit embarrassed.

WHITE FAWN

That's Ok. We don't need a turkey, we just need the friendship we have.

WILLY

I don't mean that, I think I'm a little fat.

ALL

Ah ha ha ha ha.

FLUFFY

We don't think you're fat.

WHITE FAWN

We just think the fat fat fat hunter is really fat fat fat, Oh Yea!

ALL

It doesn't matter if you're fat or not, it just matters that our friendship stays together.



The Foyer At Night

Sitting in the foyer at night
It is perfectly silent except for
The distant scratching of the cat.
The moon casts an eerie light
As I put on my sneakers.
I sit on the rug
Watching the silhouette of the cat
Now preening herself.
Suddenly, lights flash on me!
A car on the road rushes by!
I am left alone in the dark.
I get up and look around.
The cat is gone.
I watch my shadow as I leave the room.
That is the foyer at night.



Green

Green is a swamp where the green frogs live.
Green is the sourness that pickles give.
Green is the mold that gets on your cheese.
Green is the seaweed you find in the seas.
Green are the peas that your mom makes you eat.
Green is the grass you feel with your feet.
Green are the cucumbers with all the seeds.
Green is a garden filled with weeds.
Green are the aliens from far away places.
Green are the children with very sick faces.
Green are the bubbles in a magical pool.
Green is the baby food that the babies drool.
Green is spring when winter has died.
Green is everywhere when you go outside.
Green are the tops of unripe bananas.
Green is a lizard from Louisiana.
Green is a bush with lots of leaves.
Green are the bugs that live in the trees.
Green is a monster who harasses your dreams.
Green is a garden hose that shoots water beams.
I cannot name all the rest, but these are some reasons I like green the best.



Aleagia Mercer-Falkoff
Grade 4
John B. Sliney School
Branford

Matthew Bruce
Grade 4
Spring Glen School
Hamden

20,000 Leagues Under The Ground

CHAPTER 1: A Strange Discovery

3:21 p.m. A lone hiker tramped over the endless drifts in the Rockies. The snow glistened and all was silent except the rhythmic crunch, crunch of hiking boots in crusty snow. Suddenly, there was a soft scratching noise like a tiny avalanche. Then, the ground shook as a giant grinding noise grew to an ear-splitting roar. A huge crevice split and grew, opening into a dark, forbidding cavity. Sliding snow dragged the hiker toward the sharp edge. He tumbled miles and miles through the pit and then broke the surface of dark water. Moments later, he felt a muddy seabed. As he struggled to free his boots from the mud, his eyes opened wide and an expression of sheer horror dominated his face as he realized he would not reach the life-sustaining air, even though it was inches from his hair which was waving in the current. In minutes, his body crumpled to the seabed.

CHAPTER 2: Ryan Nelson, Discoverer

On a nearby mountain, Ryan Nelson was watching the diamond-like sparkles of the new-fallen snow. He had seen a giant black streak race across the valley from the base of his mountain. He saw the man swirling and screaming in the current of the rushing river of snow. He ran and slid down to the spot where he had seen the red dot disappear. He yelled, "Wait! Where...? Do you need any help?!" He listened, but all he heard was his echo, "... Help?!" He rushed down to the ranger shack and slammed open the small, rickety door. He rushed in and grabbed the ranger. He dragged the man over the desk, across the floor, out the door, and through the drifts. The ranger picked himself up, brushed the snow off his face, and asked, "Are you crazy?" Ryan was offended at the ranger thinking him crazy. He explained about the man in the crevice and both men rushed through the knee-deep piles.

As they neared the crevice, another small snow avalanche dragged them toward the edge. The ranger toppled over the cliff. As he disappeared into the echoing darkness, his windbreaker tore off and fluttered down after him. Ryan caught himself at the edge and hung by his fingernails. As he peered down towards nothingness, he shivered. He saw his own legs dangling over the dark, black void. Three small clumps of snow sailed down and away, and Mr. Ryan Nelson shuddered.

CHAPTER 3: Is It Possible?

When he came to, Mr. Nelson saw three masked men leaning over him. His arms ached and a bright light shone into his eyes. He groggily asked, "Wha-wha-whad the... the..." Then he remembered: the face peering over the edge, the ambulance, and finally the mask just before treatment on his broken arms.

Later, dressed in hospital pajamas, he sat down on his bed to watch TV. It was all dark and quiet in the hospital at 11:00, and he turned on the late news. He suddenly yelled, and hopping off the bed, shouted out, "Ha, ha! I knew it all along!" For the shining TV said, "Today, Ryan Nelson of Terrywitch, Colorado, found, by a crevice running between two low mountains in the Rockies, that North America may be an iceberg! Neil Armstrong, Jacques Cousteau, Ryan Nelson and John Glenn will soon be training for a cross-country submarine expedition. They will begin at noon on Thursday, January 9. Pushing off from Cape Canaveral and submerging 20,000 leagues, and then going at 3.4 knots, they will cross under Florida, Alabama, and up to Jeselton, Canada, where they will come down under Montana, Idaho, and will finally land in Beverly Hills, California. They will have ten feet above and below the sub."

At that moment a nurse walked in and said, "Mr. Nelson, a letter." Ryan opened it and read, "Dear Mr. Nelson, John Glenn, Jacques Cousteau, and Neil Armstrong with President Bush request your presence at the U.N.P.W.V.T.C. (United Nations Peaceful War Vehicle Training Camp) in Washington. You will fly here free in the President's private airplane. Good luck, and glad you can come. G. Bush." He immediately jumped out of his p.j.'s and into his business suit. His long legs pumped in the effort to lift his two arm casts. He jumped over the back of a wheelchair and chair-boarded down and out the door, knocking over a tray of soup. He signaled a taxi and tore the door off by mistake when he bashed the hinge with his arm casts. He told the taxi driver, "To General Hitlit Airport." The taxi driver pulled out of the curb and once again became a terror as one, two, three cars swerved off the road as he passed them on the busy Denver streets. Soon the yellow car drove into the airport. Five men in black suits and dark sunglasses tossed the taxi driver a pack of \$50 bills through the window. The taxi driver took one look at the green paper next to him on the seat and drove off... fast! The government agents took Ryan to a private airplane. He climbed in and was on his way.

CHAPTER 4: Below the Depths

After ten days of submarine training and arm-healing, Ryan took a train with Mr. Armstrong to Florida where they would rest for two days before their start. After lounging around, hotels and movies, the four sub men got ready on the dock. As they prepared to quietly enter the sub, Ryan whispered, "Shh! Did you hear something?" At that moment a loud cheer arose as a huge parade rounded the corner. Confetti rained into the water as the sub dived. Immediately all was silent except for the whirl of the engines. The glass only showed a dark navy blue with occasional light turquoise stripes. Sunlight filtered through in green fingers of light. John Glenn saw the slightest denting inward of the metal as the pressure increased. Then, they saw it--a huge black hole directly in front. They were at the beginning of their mission.

CHAPTER 5: Saved by a Whale

It had been two days now. The sub was shooting noiselessly through the dark waters. Right now, they were near Kansas. Then, it happened. A huge white wall appeared in the glare of the sub's searchlight. John Glenn told Jacques Cousteau, "We've hit the very lowest point of the iceberg. We can't go over, under, or around it." "We've got to go through it then!" Jacques replied. It was then that the command, "Fire one!" echoed through the sub. Four torpedoes were wasted until the captain realized what was happening. Then he went nuts, "Oh!!! All over... Oh! In! No, out! Dead ice! Froze in!!! Help!" Finally, he was confined to his quarters. But Ryan Nelson realized it too. As they had tried to blow up the wall, the water had frozen around them and was closing in fast! Either they would starve or the ice would crush them. For hours they sat in their rooms, waiting for death to come. Then John Glenn heard a squeak. Whales! There was a huge crash as migrating whales blasted the prison of ice. Masses of black bodies came zooming past the sub. The propellers started, and the sub zipped past the herds of whales. The captain got up and gunned the engines, not caring if they ran out of gas. Then, they all relaxed to a feast as the sub, once again free, sped along through the dark waters.

CHAPTER 6: A Happy Ending... Or Is It?

Very soon (three weeks) light appeared and the sub shot up through the fingers of light. It blasted through the surface and the hatch opened and the four men jumped out and swam to shore. One month after they had departed, they arrived at Beverly Hills. North American was an iceberg!!!

The snow crunched under a lone hiker's boots in the Alps. Suddenly a giant crevice opened and down he fell. As he tumbled he yelled, "Europe, too, huh?!"

§

Emily Calkins
Grade 4
John B. Sliney
Branford

The Horse People

Once there was a farmer's daughter. Her name was Alison. She was very beautiful, kind, and she loved animals, especially horses. She always thought it would be wonderful to be a horse. Her favorite horse on the farm was Windy.

Windy was a kind, gentle horse. In her spare time, Alison took care of him, cleaned him, etc. Windy was also the fastest horse on her father's farm.

Besides Alison and her father, there was a cook. The cook's name was Hilda.

Hilda was gruff and enormously fat, but good tempered. She didn't really care about getting paid, she just wanted to work for a nice family with a decent horse.

The farm was not just any farm. It was a magical farm, for many miracles were about to happen.

One day Alison was doing the wash which was one of her favorite things, but she was not very happy because Hilda had gotten stung by a horsefly which she claimed was poisonous. Hilda had said, "Once, when I worked on a farm for an old meanie (that is what Hilda called mean people) that same horsefly stung the man's pigs and three days later they died!"

"That's not gonna happen to you! Anyway how can you tell if it's the same one? That one's probably dead by now," Alison's father said, not very sure of himself.

"Cause it has the same awful eyes." She paused, "All black with little red pupils."

So Alison had to make breakfast because Hilda wasn't feeling well, and that frustrated her because the old stove seemed to burn everything to cinders. So Alison was very unhappy and in a bad mood.

When she started mixing the soap and water, she began thinking how much she loved Windy.

"If only I could be a horse," Alison said aloud.

Then she plunged Hilda's apron in the water. Just as Alison began rubbing the apron together, a huge bubble floated up. Alison looked up just in time to see it pop. Out of the bubble, came a fairy.

"Who are you?" asked Alison.

"I'm Bubblelina," said the fairy.

"What are you doing here?" asked Alison.

"I have come to help you," said Bubblelina.

"To do the wash?" asked Alison.

"No," said Bubblelina. "To help you discover your true love and many other things."

"What?" asked Alison immediately.

"You'll find out," said the fairy. "First you must do your chores."

Alison nodded.

"I must leave, but this will help you." Bubblelina disappeared, and a piece of paper floated to the ground.

Alison dried her hands on her dress and picked up the piece of paper. The first thing it said was, "Bubble, bubble, bubble, pop, pop, pop. Wush, wush, swush, plop, plop, plop!"

"I know!" thought Alison. "It's telling me to do the wash and hang it on the clothesline!" So she hurried through the wash. Then she looked down at the list. The next thing it said was, "Snort, snort, snort, oink, oink, oink."

"Oh, I know, I have to slop the hogs." Alison said out loud.

She didn't usually call the pigs hogs unless she was in a good mood. So Alison

slopped the hogs quickly and messily.

Then she looked at the list again. It said, "Cock-adad-doooo" and "Cluck, cluck, cluck."

So she fed the chickens and the rooster.

After that the list said, "Now you have completed the chores, go over the biggest lump to the pieces of gold; pick the one with the longest stem. Don't stop for anyone or anything, nothing."

"The biggest lump?" thought Alison.

"Oh!" she said aloud. "The biggest hill."

"Pieces of gold?" puzzled Alison. She thought for awhile.

"Wheat!" she shouted.

At once she started running. Things whizzed by her. Finally she reached the top of the largest hill. She paused for only a second. Then all of a sudden that same awful horsefly whizzed in front of her.

"Going somewhere?" it asked.

Its eyes were so awful that Alison had to look away.

"I asked you a question!" it roared.

"The letter said not to stop for anyone or anything," thought Alison.

So she forced herself on. "I must! I must!" thought Alison.

She flew down the hill, but that awful voice kept ringing in her ear. Alison glided to the middle wheat stalk and yanked it up. Underneath was the most beautiful bridle ever! It was silver and gold with opals. Underneath it was a scroll. Alison picked up the bridle with care and unrolled the scroll. It said in the most exquisite handwriting, "Now put the bridle on your most loved horse. Be careful, be gentle, but also be swift as the horse."

Before she knew it, she was running on air! In a few minutes, Alison got to Windy's stable. Quickly, she slipped the bridle on Windy.

All of a sudden, he changed shape! He was a man! The bridle was around his neck like a necklace.

"Who are you?" asked Alison startled.

"I am your Windy," he said.

"But you're human," said Alison.

"Yes. When I was a boy, I made a deal with the fairies," said the man. "When I was a colt, I lived in Horse Land. Then the Horsefly-Witch was born, and she took over. I was lucky, I escaped just in time!"

"But the bridle..." she began.

"Ah, yes the prophesy," he said. "After two, um... a..."

"Years," she finished for him.

"Two years!" he exclaimed. "Has it been that long?"

"Yes," she replied meekly.

"Well, I fell in love with you, and I know you love me," he said.

"Yes, I do," Alison said.

"We'll live as horses for the rest of our lives. I know you want to do that. We

must kill Elvira, the Horsefly-Witch!" he exclaimed.

Just then Elvira appeared with an army of hornets.

"Are you ready King Horse?" the witch asked.

"King? I didn't know you were a king," said Alison.

"Yes," he said to Alison, and to the witch he said, "Almost."

He snapped his fingers and all the farm animals appeared. They fought and fought and just as Elvira was about to sting Windy, Bubblelina appeared with a bottle of soap and squashed Elvira. The witch disappeared.

Alison and the Horse King asked the farmer's permission to be married and be horses, and of course he said, "Yes."

Hilda got better.

So they lived in Horse Land galloping ever after.



Ride of Terror

Every day there are signs of winter approaching. Leaves falling off trees, colder nights, and cooler days are all signs that summer has ended. My mind wanders back, back to a warm summer day. Picture it... Riverside Amusement Park, 1989.

I was waiting in line to go on a ride called the Cyclone. Was I scared! It was like... well, let's say I was causing an earthquake, I was shaking so much!

Finally, it was time, time to decide if I were man or mouse. I chose mouse. But my father said, "No way, Bud! You promised. Now get in line!" I got back in line. I really didn't want to, but I did. When it was my turn to get into the small car, my dad and I got in. I was sitting there and my legs were trembling.

The bar in front of us closed and so did my eyes. Suddenly I felt a jerk, and when I opened my eyes, the car was in motion. We were reaching the first hill, and it appeared like a mountain to me. Halfway up the hill, my short life flashed before my eyes. When we finally reached the top, I wrapped my arms around the bar in front of me. My father turned with a devilish grin on his face.

Whammo! We were on our way down, and my butt went at least three inches off the seat. I started to scream, and my father started to laugh.

When we reached the bottom, there was a sharp turn. Then came my favorite part... another hill.

We started to climb it. At the top, there was a small dip, followed by a sharp turn and that went almost sideways. Then came a steep fall. Again, I wrapped my arms around the bar.

After the ride was over... boy, my stomach felt weird. It felt like I was in a washing machine during the spin cycle. I was really relieved to have my feet back on the ground.

There is nothing this winter that can compare with the thrill of an amusement park ride on a warm summer day.



Alan Warga
Grade 5
Veterans Memorial School
Norwich

Kristen Sullivan
Grade 5
Beecher Road School
Woodbridge

Moon

A bright light shining on the city.
A cold snowball stuck in the sky.
An object that signals a werewolf.
A flashlight shining in the dark.
A pure white marble on a black surface.
A vanilla cookie with a bite taken out of it.
A drop of milk falling onto a black carpet.



Danny DiCamillo
Grade 5
Ridgebury Elementary
School
Ridgefield

Pirates of the Deep

Divers break the crisp ocean surface
Sinking into the dark ocean depths
Strange and exotic fish scan them
Queer feelings come over them.

Suddenly they come upon strange objects
Partly covered in the sand
Hearts beating, beating like drums
Anxious to unravel the mystery.

Ancient artifacts decaying for millennia
Glimmering light grows stronger
Sea explorers burst from the water
Hands laden with buried treasure.



Anne Elizabeth Dowling
Grade 5
Greenwich Academy
Greenwich

When I Went Shopping

“Darling, hurry up. We have to get going if we’re going to catch that train.”
“OK, Mom. I’ll be right down.”
I’m Cassandra Smith but everyone calls me Cassy, and I’m in a big rush to get to the train station to go to New York City with my mom.
We are going on a shopping spree to buy Christmas presents for our family.
“Hurry up honey.”

"I'm hurrying!"

I went down stairs, grabbed a cookie, and headed to the car. My mom was waiting impatiently for me in the car. I got in and we zoomed off.

We got to the train station just as the train arrived. We rushed on to the platform and jumped on to the train.

"Whew! Close call."

"Well, don't blame me."

"I wasn't blaming anyone."

My mother can be touchy at times.

The train ride was very boring and the only time that I got excited was when the train pulled into Grand Central Station. It screeched to a stop, and the doors banged open. Everyone rushed out. I guess they were as bored as I was with the long ride. My mom said that New Yorkers always rushed.

We got off the train and into Grand Central Station. It's huge, and there are constellations all over the ceiling. (Just in case you haven't been there.) We went outside and hailed a cab.

"F.A.O. Swartz please."

As the cab pulled away from the curb, I glanced out the window at the bustling crowd and holiday decorations. My mom asked the driver if we could, by any chance, take a detour past the Christmas windows of Lord and Taylor. They were spectacular! With animated winter scenes from old New York. The one I liked the best was a Christmas ball with glittery dresses everywhere. (I saw that one because mom and I got out to look at them.)

Finally, we got to F.A.O. Swartz. I dashed inside and couldn't wait to start shopping. I walked slowly through the first floor, staring at the huge animals and toys. This is heaven, I thought.

"Cassy, Earth to Cassy."

"What, what?"

"We're going up the escalator, not into the toddler toy department."

"Oh."

As we reached the second floor, I heard a scream and a lady, who appeared to be very rich cried, "I've been robbed. Stop thief!"

Did she really think that the thief would stop, come back, and apologize? All of a sudden a man rushed toward me. He was carrying a big blue bag. I was standing against a wall and there was no escape. As I stepped back, looking for some way to get out of this mess, my back hit something that moved. Then, I got a great idea. Just as the man was about to hit me he swerved and I stuck out my foot. He tripped over it and was sent sprawling on the floor, and the impact of his fall knocked him out. People swarmed around me, and the man and I fainted.

When I revived, I was in the manager's office lying on the sofa with the rich lady and my mother bending over me and asking if I was all right. Please, they were acting like I was a baby. Then the rich lady who called herself Mrs. Van de Camp said, "Dear you saved my purse. I would like to do something for you. Pick out any

two things in the store, and I'll buy them for you."

"Oh really Mrs. Van de Camp, that's quite all right," said my mother.

"But I insist."

We finished our shopping (and I picked out my two things) then we got back into a cab and drove off to the train station.

About halfway through the train ride, I saw a man in front of me grab a lady's purse and run into the next car. I started to get up, but my mom pushed me back into my seat.

"Not this time young lady!"



Lili Corn

Grade 5

*Ridgebury Elementary School
Ridgefield*

Little Miss 1562

A colorful clown on stilts walks by
Ooos and aahs
Heard through the audience
But one inhales the smoke of a cigarette
And drops it to the sandy surface below.

Not an instant later--a spark appears,
And then a small flame.
But people are too involved with
The show. No one notices.

Everyone hushes while the acrobat flies.
Then a spine-chilling scream
Breaks the silence.

A fire! A fire! screams the ringmaster!
Everyone runs
For they do not want to be caught
In the life-taking demon!

Then the tent top explodes in flames!

The firemen with heavy yellow suits
Rush to the scene but they are too
Late! The demon has already
Unleashed its fury.

A day later, people line up to find
Their perished relatives.
When one is found it is carefully
Written down.

After the crowd leaves
One is left, a little girl
A search begins at once but
No one can find her identity.

A mistake? but no!
Everything so carefully checked!
The years pass, nothing is found
Others have been buried and forgotten.

But the memory of the little girl
Lives on. The Question remains,
Who was she? Why was she never
Identified? Why must her only
Name be: Little Miss 1562?



The Final Hours Of A Waking Dream

His eyes glistening with life were blinded
His ears filled with sounds were deafened
But his mind was not harmed at all.

He sat in the darkness, in the shadow of his past,
Thinking about the darkening future.
His days were numbered but he did not know how.

As he rose he looked graceful and caring
He did not have a family but he knew that someone cared.
I saw him stand in the doorway and then look up.

He did not speak but he just turned and left the room
He was crying but not showing his emotions
He lay to sleep and woke up only to find the same old room.

Michael Ragozzino
Grade 6
Newfield Elementary
Stamford

He was not confused anymore.
He whispered to me that it was time for him to leave
His body faded, and was gone.

I looked up and saw nothing.
He was gone, he was not coming back
He was my friend and companion
But yet he was my enemy and opponent.

I left wondering a simple thought
Are we real and alive
Or are we just blowing through the enchanted mind
Of someone else.



Kimberly S. Thompson
Grade 6
East Lyme Junior High School
East Lyme

Unicorns Of Fantasy

The Unicorn enchants me
As magic and mystics will do
I'm thrilled when I may witness
The majesty and beauty too.

So many dreams forgotten
Labyrinths left unexplored
Doors locked against the unknown
Lost are thoughts of a gallant lord.

Wishes no longer are granted
Crystal tears no longer are shed
Sunsets end without magic
And golden rainbows are dead.

For now you must paint your own rainbow
Now you must stalk your own dreams
Sew the unknown together with the strongest seams
Keep your feet on the ground and your head in the sky
Don't doom Unicorns forever to die.



The Homeless

Ever thought about living on the streets? Homeless in minus 20° weather during a snowstorm while people one block away are laughing, eating, and having a good time? Well this is happening right this minute, as we speak. To date, an estimated 250,000 to 3 million people are homeless. Is that any way to treat people in the richest country in the world?

Now I know you're wondering why so many people are homeless. Well the answer to that question varies. During the 1950's and 1960's, mental hospitals let a lot of people out and put them in their own towns and cities. New drugs were developed for these people to help them live a normal life. For a lot of these people the drugs worked, but for others they didn't. This group of people went back to living on the streets. Other reasons for homeless people being on the street are because of alcohol, drugs, poverty, and other related problems.

Now I know another question lingering in your mind is what's being done about this huge problem, and to tell you the truth, not much is happening. There are a few state and government run shelters, but the problem with them is they don't house a lot of people. You're most likely going to find shelters run privately or by a church. Even these shelters run out of money every once in a while.

While shelters are a good idea, most are not open all day, and the homeless people must find a place to go while they're closed.

SOLUTION: In my opinion, the best thing to do is keep shelters open all day, build more and larger shelters, and use a small amount of tax money to keep them open and stocked with food. Also we should try to help solve the problem of poverty.



Wall Of Wishes

I will never forget the horrible, pained look on Mama's face when the border guard told us the news. "Herr Schweitzer has been shot for trying to escape East Berlin over the Wall, and one other man was with him," was the information she received. But what can you expect if your brother-in-law was killed the afternoon when your husband turns up missing?

I was a girl of fourteen at the time. A series of events to follow would make me older in a way that passing years don't. And it all began that afternoon.

Pirmin, my older brother, and I were worried about Mama. Perhaps she was sick before she heard the guard's story, but it certainly didn't help any. The doctor said she had pneumonia, and often she complained of bad headaches. One afternoon when her fever was high, she called for my father. "Gunter, where have you gone? Come help me!" Although I knew she would later forget those words, I wouldn't. My own curiosity wanted to know if Papa was alive or not, and it was high time to find out.

Andy Kerchoff
Grade 6
Saxe Middle School
New Canaan

Amy Gembala
Grade 6
Martin School
Manchester

I hoped the shadows provided enough cover. I had come so far from that factory town I called home, it was unthinkable to turn back. I tried not to think of the border guards with their guns; it didn't make me feel any braver. Oh! I nearly cried out with surprise when one turned in my general direction. Crouching behind the dumpster in an uncomfortable position, I could see that the man was not Herr Schweitzer, whom I was looking for. Moving on in the darkness, using trial and error, I found the right guard. He knew me well, as any cousin would, even recognized my muted whisper.

"Helmut!" I hissed.

"Freida! Go home, the Wall at night is no place for a child!"

"I'm crossing over, going to my grandparents' house. Grandfather would know where Papa is."

"You can't go. Papa or not, my job is my job. Now leave! Hurry, or I'll call your mother!"

I pretended not to hear this last remark. Crossing out into the soft glow of the street light, I faced him squarely.

"How can you stop me--you're my cousin, not an army of tanks." I checked once--no other guards were around--and walked over to the Brandenburg Gate. "So long!"

I leapt through the exit, a million fears beating with every pulse of my heart. "Escaper!" shouted Helmut Schweitzer. Despicable traitor! Bastard! He had no place in my family. At the speed of light, a bullet blast into the night air--not Helmut's, but another guard's. A few more footsteps to go--but it nicked me on the shoulder, summoning a flow of blood. Grandfather's house was close by...

The sound of the doorbell echoed throughout the empty West German street. A crack of light appeared in the door as it was opened, and it grew larger and brighter until I could see a face framed in it. It was not an elderly man or woman who stood there, but their son! What was HE doing here?

"Papa, Mama is very sick, I had to find you... had to know if you were... if what happened to Uncle Reuben happened to you." Father and daughter were sitting comfortably in the living room of Grandfather Schweitzer's home.

"It almost did happen to me. I would have been next... But you understand why I had to come here, to a country forbidden to the East Berliners for so long. My mother was dying of cancer and she had not long to live. All the things I never told her for twenty-four years since the Wall was built had to be said. So here I am, and I was almost too late. If only you could have met her." Papa sighed forlornly after his unfortunate tale.

"How about some hot chocolate to cheer you up?" asked Grandfather as he entered the room. "Forget the past for now. The future is what worries me, with all the young people," he gestured to me, "who will be prevented from traveling, from freedom because of that wall. Take a bulldozer to it, I say, or remove it in any way you can."

Papa's father lived to see his wish. In November of 1989, East German leaders declared the Wall open for travel--the citizens could leave!

Young and old were overjoyed. They no longer lived in shadow of the stone structure, the scar on the German land. The first person my family visited was Grandfather, and he and Pirmin found they had much in common right away. We brought him a brick from the Berlin Wall because by then, he was too old to get his own.

Grandfather's wish was fulfilled, and so were the wishes of many others. Families kept apart were reunited. People fled East Germany by the thousands to find the answers to their dreams of travel, hope, and freedom. My own family moved into Grandfather's house only weeks after the great announcement. And after everything the Wall stood for was gone, so was the Wall.



River

A river curves around the bend of time,
 Flowing over stones of darkness,
 Falling over sands of dawn.
Running under the bridge of memories,
 Flooding fields of love.
Meeting in silver pools of life.



Crazy?..

She was a plump, middle-aged
Woman with long copper hair that
In the sunlight seemed to
Shine like a new penny.

She was always seen with
Babies balanced
On both her hips, and
With children following her.

Jalana Lazar
Grade 7
Cornwall Consolidated
West Cornwall

Chinh Tran
Grade 7
Kelly Junior High School
Norwich

She had never been very tidy or
Neat; many times she would forget
To put on one of her earrings,
Or she would let her slip show.

She never showed how she felt inside;
On her face you could always see a smile.
People thought she was crazy, and that
Her kids should be taken away from her.

But I had known her as she truly was--
The best Mom ever born.

Adriane Vawter
Grade 7
Kelly Junior High School
Norwich

A World Of My Own

My viola is like a blank page,
Or a face without a name,
Until I pick it up.

I draw my bow with a skilled wrist,
The music flowing free.
I am lost in a world of my own,

A world of half-notes, clefts and tone.

Jimmy Tenret
Grade 7
Coleytown Middle School
Westport

Yearly Cleaning

"Food fight!" He heard the voice across the room and watched in despair as a slice of pepperoni pizza shot through the air and landed on his parent's treasured velvet couch. A large wad of gum was stuck on the ceiling, threatening to fall on anyone who might dare to pass under it. The refrigerator door was wide open, and an overturned bottle of Pepsi was emptying its contents onto the tile floor.

He sank down into a chair, his head pounding to the beat of The Grateful Dead. How he wished his parents would come home and somehow magically life all responsibility off his shoulders. He had imagined this weekend for years, a weekend where no one but himself would be home in his large, spacious house in Connecti-

cut. A weekend where he would have no one to tell him how to act or what to do. Now that he had gotten the opportunity, he had blown it. He cursed himself silently for his stupidity.

He could hear the neighbors yelling to turn down the music, but he didn't have the energy or the will to get up himself. They stopped their yelling and retreated back into their house shaking their heads.

He looked around the room, and as if to distract himself from his worries, began to count the people. He had just reached the mid-thirties when he heard a loud knock on the door. He rose, somewhat annoyed that someone had disrupted his counting. He had no sooner opened the door when two police officers stepped past him into the crowded room. After the police had escorted everyone out the door, they told him that they had been asked to come by an anonymous caller living on the street. Still in a daze, he managed to give them the necessary information for them to write a report.

After calming down considerably, he forced himself to survey the damage. He tried to convince himself that the party had never happened, that he was dreaming, that somehow he had lived another person's life, but each time he was jolted back to reality by the large stains on the carpet and furniture. He then stopped in his bedroom and decided that he had endured more than his share of worry for the night. He lay down in his bed and for the next twelve hours he was at peace with the world.

When he woke up, the memories of the previous night rushed back to him like a recurring nightmare that cannot be shaken. He forced himself to get up, and briefly debated going back to bed for another two years. Against his best judgment, however, he remained up for the rest of the day. When he first stepped out the door, his foot was greeted by a bath in cold tomato sauce on a slice of pizza. After consulting his watch to make sure it wasn't Monday, he proceeded on to the bathroom where he found a large picture drawn in hot pink lipstick on the mirror. He then strayed into the kitchen where he searched fruitlessly for some remaining scraps of edible material that had not been consumed. Forgetting the idea of breakfast, he went to the closet where his mother kept the cleaning supplies. He chose his weapons carefully, selected a medium-sized yellow sponge, a broom, a mop, a bottle of Mr. Clean and a bottle of Windex.

Starting with the beautiful artwork in the bathroom, he scrubbed and swept his way back to the kitchen. He then ran out to pick up three foot-long hot dogs and two milkshakes at the store on the corner before returning to his remaining labor. By the end of the evening, he had obtained a lifelong dislike of tomato sauce, the worst offender of the stains. He had scrubbed all afternoon and into the evening, checking with everyone from his grandmother to his best friend on the most effective methods of removing tomato sauce stains. Finally, he decided to use all the methods, alternating from vinegar to soapy water to a brand name fabric cleaner. Now, at 8:30 at night, he was thoroughly exhausted as he threw himself down on the couch. He flipped on the answering machine, curious to see if any of his friends had called while he was vacuuming. After the first beep, he recognized his parent's voice. He

sat up, eager to hear when they would be returning. His mom was talking and the message was somewhat like this: "Hi honey! It's me. (No kidding!) I just called to say that we'll be returning on the 7:14 flight home tomorrow, and we should be home by 10:00. I can't wait to see you again! Oh, by the way, I almost forgot to tell you that I called the cleaners and scheduled an appointment for them to come clean the house tomorrow from top to bottom, so you won't have to worry about cleaning up! Bye now!"

Michael Snediker
Grade 8
Saxe Middle School
New Canaan

Death Of Summer

An orange canvas etched with bony trees
A foreground for the full October moon.
Once hidden by a scarf of violet clouds, it
Climbs the everchanging evening sky.

Along the harbor boats stand long alone
Bereaved of constant care and constant use.
Above the ocean waters soon to freeze
Below the Rose Rugosa soon to die.

Stacey Roth
Grade 8
Timothy Edwards Middle
School
South Windsor

They Took Him Away

"Mama, when is Dad coming home?" little Tommy asked me. I looked at him sadly. His troubled face hurt me. Why did this have to happen to us?

"Tommy, I don't know when he's coming home. Why do you want to know?"

"Because I hate him!"

"Tommy!" I scolded. The words hurt me. Why should a child have to hate his father? "Why do you hate him?"

"He's mean, and he hits you and me," he answered starting to cry. I held him close; his little body shook. I lifted his head. "He won't hurt us anymore, I promise," I comforted. I lay his head down again and told him to go to sleep. He obeyed and I left the room.

Suddenly, the door slammed shut. A wave of fear shook my body. I continued to walk down the stairs and met him at the door. The smell of alcohol was heavy on his breath.

"Hello, Dear, how was your day?" I stuttered. He walked past me into the kitchen. He opened the cabinet. When he reached in, he caused boxes to fall onto the floor. He pulled out a clear bottle, opened it, and drank from it heavily. The temptation to go to him, take the bottle, and break it over his head lingered in me. His blood-shot eyes glanced at me and then at the stairs. "Where's Tommy?" he ordered. I hesitated to answer. "Where is he?" he snapped.

"In bed," I mumbled.

"Why don't you leave him up so he can see his dad?" he shouted.

"He doesn't want to see you; he hates you!" I shouted. He looked at me angrily. He placed his bottle on the counter and walked toward me. I moved away regretting that I had said that to him. He stomped past me and up the stairs.

Following him, I pleaded for him to tell me what he was going to do. He turned around and struck me in the face. The pain stung. He moved away and walked into Tommy's room. I slowly followed until I heard his harsh voice, scolding Tommy. I ran to the room and banged on the locked door. From the other side I heard Tommy screaming for me. After kicking the door open, I saw him holding Tommy in the air, shaking him vigorously.

"Let him go!!!!" I screamed. He didn't respond at all. I grabbed Tommy's bat and swung it at him, hitting his back. He cringed and dropped Tommy. Holding on to Tommy, I ran out of the room. Soon after I heard his weakened footsteps following. I grabbed the phone and called the police. They came and took my husband away.



Torn In All Directions

I stand desolate and unsure,
Listening to the false "liberty" bell ring.
Am I right or wrong to speak my beliefs
In the treacherous waters of the classroom?
Many sharks are tearing ruthlessly at me.
They seem to find me guilty before all of the proceedings are over.
I am looked at with disdain and interest,
Like a creature under a microscope.
A bird is allowed to sing.
Why can't I speak my feelings?



Melissa Friedman
Grade 8
Cloonan Middle School
Stamford

Holly Kennedy

Grade 8

Timothy Edwards Middle School
South Windsor

The Wall

As we approached the Vietnam War Memorial, I wondered what our reaction would be.

My uncle was killed in the Vietnam War. I can't remember him very well because I was only three when he left for Vietnam. Now I'm seventeen, and I think about him a lot. My father also fought in this war, but he never talks about it nor his brother. Once I asked him, but he ignored me and walked away. I think I saw a tear roll down his cheek, so I didn't push it. I wonder how he is going to act when he sees his brother's name on the wall. Will he cry? I have never seen my father cry. Will I cry?

As we walked down the path along the wall, I carried a wreath of flowers, and my father held a white rose. I looked at his expression and wondered what he was thinking. Maybe he was thinking that it should have been him. Did he see his brother die?

When we walked to the area where his name was, we stopped. Klin, Klin, Koop, and then William Kooper. My father took his two fingers and gently rubbed them along his brother's name. I followed my dad's actions. Then I peered at my father's face. Tears. He was crying and so was I. I laid the wreath of flowers under William Kooper's name and wondered when my father would lay his white rose.

Suddenly, he moved away and went to another section. After he painfully stroked his hand lightly along Tom Tucker's name, he then rested the white rose at the base of the wall. Was he a friend? I didn't ask, but maybe someday my father will tell me about him. Then again, maybe he won't.



Karen Walter

Grade 8

Granby Memorial Middle
School
Granby

It Was All Too Much

Dhani's dad's strawberry wine.
Dhani's spiritual thoughts
answers in kind
jelly beans
of British flavour
a rhythm guitar
that his dad
wouldn't teach him how to play.
The Moonlight Sonata
at six every evening
Dhani spitting watermelon seeds
onto the rocks in the stream

for his kitten to chase.
I can remember
how he spilled ginger ale on the stereo
and how his dad
called it God's will
when it rained
the day of Dhani's cricket match.
Our schoolbooks, that we
dunked in the stream
one by one
until they disintegrated
my parents laughed and disciplined
his parents spoke of the laws of the Vsnu
and of higher religious learning
Dhani's dad, we called "His Lectureship"
when he wasn't around
which was often
Dhani says
before his dad
threw my family out of his house
but he did leave.
Saturday morning
I could still remember
Dhani's face
without looking at the picture
of us
my mom had taken
but it didn't matter much
His dad rang us up
around three
to say that everything was all right,
it was all over now.
To tell us
with a sneer in his drunken voice
that Dhani would not be seeing us again
as he'd hung himself
at school.
My parents were surprised
that I didn't say much
but I named the cat
Vsnu
to remind me
that laws did get broken

and then I broke one
myself
and went to visit Dhani's dad.
And if I were writing this
on a piece of paper
instead of scratching it into cinderblock walls
then maybe
a dove could fly it
up to heaven so Dhani could read it.
But I guess now
I'll be doing that
myself
too.

Kjerstan Kowack
Grade 8
Wheeler Junior High School
North Stonington

Embarrassed

B-r-r-r-i-i-n-n-g-g-g. "Good morning. It's October 23, 1989. In Groton it is 70°, in New London it is 68, and on your radio it's 126.5 on your F.M. dial. It's 7:00 and the 37th day of school and that means you have to wake up, Annie Wartzingham! HaHaHaHaHaHaHa."

I awoke from my dream. Thinking it was real, I grabbed the alarm clock-radio and--SMASH!--I threw it against the wall. Shoot! Because of that, my homework was a little bit burned and my glasses were broken in half.

Only after I taped my glasses back together and tried to salvage my homework, did I realize that I had fifteen minutes to get dressed, eat breakfast, put on my brand-new make-up, and get to school on time. When I was finally finished eating breakfast, I asked my mom to give me a ride to school.

When we got into the car, my eyes bulged out of their sockets. "Ohhhhh myyyyyy gooooosh!" I said as I looked at her. I could've died. She was wearing a purple and yellow polka-dot nightgown underneath my dad's big yellow raincoat. She had her hair in big pink curlers with a neon pink ski cap on top, and on her feet she had on my old and shabby "cabbage patch" slippers with the heads on the front.

Every car that passed by, I ducked behind my books. When I got to school, my mom stopped in the front of the building at the place where everyone who's anyone is before school starts. I got out of the car silently so my mom wouldn't embarrass me more.

"Annie Wartzingham! Come back here and kiss your mother good-bye!" my mom yelled into the crowd. I wished I could sink into the ground. Everyone was either looking at me or my mom. I gave her a quick kiss, then started to run away, but she grabbed my collar and tried to fix it.

She was still fixing it when she said "Dear? Are you sick? Or do you have windburn or something? You have so much color on your cheeks!"

"Mooooooooooooom! That windburn is Max Factor dermatologist-tested, hypoallergenic, fragrance-free number two Satin Splendor all-purpose blush!"

She got emotional as she held my head in one hand and brushed the hair on my forehead with her free hand. "My little baby's growing up! Before I know it, you'll be off to college and I'll be left with your fa—"

"Mom, I'm only in the eighth grade and now everyone's watching! Besides, the bell is going to ring any second!" I said.

She released her hands from my head, put them on the steering wheel, and drove off, leaving me in an embarrassed state.

Kathy Amhearst, my best friend, was at my locker waiting for me. I told her about my morning: how my homework got burned and how my mom embarrassed me.

School went really well, even though I had to explain to every teacher why my homework was burned, until the last period of the day, in the class I hate the most--gym. Before going into gym, I put my glasses away, and without my glasses I'm as blind as a bat.

"Look," said Kathy. "Look! There's Morton Duehincky! He's so popular! Isn't he gorgeous?! Especially since he's with his friends!"

Well, believe me. I wasn't aware that 'their' group had left, and the new principal and the vice-principal had moved to where they'd been. So I told Kathy, "I'm going to go over to them and casually say hello." I started heading towards the principal and the vice-principal.

"No! You can't!" said Kathy. "They're not--!"

"Yes I am! And nothing is going to stop me!" I told her as I moved closer. When I got there, they stopped talking and looked at me. Great! I thought.

"Ahem! Hello!" I crooned. "You don't know me, but I know you! I'm Annie Wartzingham."

"Pleased to meet you, too! I'm Mr. Valladini, your new principal," he said with his arm extended to shake my hand. My eyes squinted real close to his face, to see if this guy was lying, then they opened real wide... it was the new principal!

I shook his hand, obviously embarrassed, then ran outside with the class to see Kathy. On the way I thought, "Great, I just made a move on the new principal!" I told Kathy about it, and she gave me some sympathy.

We all did our exercises, but I was messing up left and right. To top it off, we played my least favorite game in gym--badminton.

Playing doubles, I was paired up with Kathy and our partners were Morton Duehincky and his friend. I was trying to casually show off, but it didn't work out. They hit the birdie really close to the net. As I ran to get it, I yelled "I've got it! I've got it!" about ten times until everyone was looking at me. I almost had it, but I tripped over the net.

Since all of the nets were connected to one another, they all fell down, and all of this happened while everyone was looking at me, even Morton. I started crying out

of shock. It made my blush smear all over, so I quickly wiped my cheeks off onto my sleeves. My sleeves were so red that the gym teacher asked me, "Are you all right? Oh my gosh! You're bleeding! Kathy, take her to the nurse!"

"No, it's not blood," I said. "It's blush. Yes, I'm alright and I'm not going to the nurse. I'm going to get changed."

No one laughed, but I could feel everyone's stares and hear them whispering as Kathy escorted me to the gym lockers.

I quickly changed to avoid everyone when they came in and I told Kathy to go on to the bus without me after the bell. I walked slowly to the buses, I saw Morton coming near me. I didn't care because I was embarrassed. Besides, he was probably going to make a remark or walk right past me.

"Hi," he said.

I didn't answer because I didn't think he was talking to me.

"Hi, Annie. Are you hurt from gym?"

I looked up. He was walking beside me now.

"No, just embarrassed."

We got on the bus together. He sat next to me, and we talked all the way home. I found out that he was really easy to talk to, and we could talk about almost anything. We got off at the same stop, and as I was going down the aisle, Kathy poked me and grinned at me. I smiled back and said goodbye.

Morton and I talked some more, since we still had about a quarter of a mile left. When we stopped at my house, he asked me if he could pick me up tomorrow. I said sure.

Then he looked behind my shoulder and gave a half laugh. I turned around. There was my mom with the curtain wide open, looking at us!

"My mom!" I meekly explained.

He laughed again and said his mom was just like that too! I waved good-bye and ran into the house. My mom got emotional. She gave me a hug and said, "My baby's growing up right in front of me!"

I gave her a hug, then went up into my room and did my homework.

I was so embarrassed!



Elisabeth Nevins
Grade 9
Simsbury High School
Simsbury

Pages

Breathe in, breathe out.

Clip-clop, clip-clop.

The imprisoned maiden is swept off
Her feet by the tall, dark stranger.

This charming man resurrects a sleeper.
As seven little bodies
Observe the ritual.
A glorious golden sphere lost;
An innocent amphibious kiss.
Hearts join and enchantment broken.

Squash--carrying passengers
With only half pairs of shoes
The love that emerges depends on the foot.

Cobwebs extending from nose tip to foot.
A century of slumber abruptly halted--
Breakfast of love for the dreamer.

Breathe in, breathe out.

Pages unfold without turning...



Choose What To Believe In

The small cottage was located on a long, sandy beach on the coast of North Carolina. My family and I visited my grandmother each summer there. When I was very young, the trips were dreaded for I feared the aging stranger but, as I grew up, the quiet, old woman in the rocking chair didn't seem so scary.

Grandma and I sat together on the rickety porch swing every evening and watched the sun disappear, watched it sink into the water far, far away. As we admired the beautiful colors in the sky change and mix and finally fade away, she told stories; stories that fascinated my seven-year-old mind. Mostly, the tales were about her childhood. But, sometimes, when the whole world seemed to be listening, she told tales of lost ships, pirates, and mermaids. From the bright, twinkling stars in her eyes, I knew that these were her favorite to tell.

"Do you see it? Look there!"

"See what, Grandma?" I asked.

"Out there, a mermaid!" she gasped.

"I don't see it."

Grandma explained, "Not everyone can see the mermaids, but I can."

"You can?!" I was astonished.

"Why, of course, child. Anyone who truly believes can see them. There's another."

Erin Wysong
Grade 9
Simsbury High School
Simsbury

"Can I believe, too? Please?" I begged.

"Come sit at my feet." I dropped to my knees and stared out at sea. "Close your eyes. Believe with your heart, with your soul. They are out there; not only the mermaids, but anything you want to see. Imagine. Create the picture in your mind." She paused a moment, and then continued. "Open your eyes now, child. Do you see them?"

I opened my eyes and scanned the surface of the water. The dark waves crashed upon the shore, and I saw the sun settling behind the sea, but no mermaids appeared.

She must have seen the disappointment painted on my face because Grandmother then said, "Someday. Someday, they'll be there. You see, I've lived a long, long time. And I've learned to believe in the things I choose to believe in. Just give it time, love."

Darkness had, by then, swept the last bit of light under the water. I kissed my grandmother goodnight and headed for the comfort of my bed. That night, I dreamt about Grandmother and her stories. It was a wonderful dream.

Early one summer morning, I woke to find my parents talking to a tall, ugly man wearing a starched, white jumpsuit. He asked them several questions I didn't understand, but they were making my mother cry.

"Stop it!" I screamed. "Don't make my mommy cry! Leave our house!" I ran for Grandma's comforting arms. Only when I entered her room, she wasn't there. I thought nothing of it, and made my way out to the porch, the other place I usually found her each morning. But she wasn't there, either.

"Mommy, Daddy!" I called as I ran back to where I had seen them talking before. "Where's Grandma?" I noticed the man had gone.

"Erika, honey, come sit on my lap," my mother answered as she wiped the tears from her face. "Last night, Grandma... went to heaven. She's not going to be with us anymore. Can you... do you understand what I'm telling you?"

I collected all of my panicked thoughts and asked, "Does that mean she won't tell me stories on the porch anymore? Does that mean I'll never see her again? Is she gone forever and ever?"

My parents looked at one another, and then looked at me. My father solemnly nodded. Tears poured down my face.

The porch swing creaks as my old bones and tired, wrinkled body sit down upon it. The water is calm, and the sun has decided it is time to go. It's at times such as these that I miss my husband and wish he was here with me to view the ocean enveloping the distant sun. I then think to myself about what Grandmother said many years ago on this very same porch. And my husband is sitting beside me, and I see the mermaids swimming out to sea.



Collections

A stripe of tigers

 A wag of dogs

 A scale of fish

 A leap of frogs

A throw of pillows

 A honk of horns

 A gross of slime

 A prick of thorns

A type of keys

 A kiss of lips

 A punch of holes

 A sail of ships

A giggle of sisters

 A nuisance of brothers

 A hug of fathers

 A worry of mothers



The Old Man And His Companion

The dark evening

overtook the one room hut

and

the frigid night air

numbed and stung the old man's

wrinkled skin that

was fragile,

like the last days of an autumn leaf.

A single flicker

from a candle stub

licked at the motionless air

as it cast a shaft of light

across the sickman's heart, but

there was not enough warmth

from it

to thaw the icy air.

Cara Gordon

Grade 10

Stafford High School

Stafford Springs

Natasha Young

Grade 10

Wolcott High School

Wolcott

Outside,
as the stars shone
as bright pinpoints against a black tarp,
the splitting of a log in the distance
was audible from inside
the weakman's shelter where
he joined the chorus
with a violent raspy cough.

Catching his breath,
he muttered to himself that the weather
was killing him, the fragile man
burrowed under the tattered remains
of an ancient blanket
trying to keep warm,
as well as
grasping at something invisible.

The log
splitting in the distance
continued to shatter the silence,
even though it was becoming more distant
and
because the stubborn man
would not leave
his ice castle
he faded
with the
monotonous chopping.



Jaime Uranga
Grade 10
Trumbull High School
Trumbull

School As A Caste Society

Over the past year or two, through every-day observation, I've come to the conclusion that we live in a truly and quite pathetically, if I may add, label-oriented society. These days, the enormous amount of importance stressed upon labels and the images they supposedly represent is truly amazing.

What is it about brand names like Benetton (or Esprit, or Forenza or Outback Red...) that, when their fancy insignias are sewn onto the inside of an ordinary article of clothing, some magical, mystical force beyond our comprehension serves

to automatically jack up the price to over ten times its actual worth? And the really disturbing part is that consumers continue to covet and devour them at a truly alarming rate, as if clothing was rapidly going out of style and would be valuable artifacts someday, worth twice their weight in gold. What is it that these labels supposedly symbolize, what impressions do they conjure up in people's minds, and what statements do they so successfully express that compel people to go into debt in order to buy them? I have no problem with the concept of the fashion statement, but this is really getting out of hand. Ask anyone walking down the halls of THS what phrases come to mind when presented with the mere mention of a designer label. You're likely to be assaulted with a barrage of sickeningly enthusiastic terms such as "style," "class," "money," "chic," "in," "happening," "popular," "cool," and "mint." It is amazing to observe how the mere glimpse of a designer label upon a single article of clothing could communicate so much. It seems that wearing a Forenza sweater whose cost remarkably resembles last month's mortgage is the equivalent of tattooing the phrase, "Yes, I'm a cool person" to your forehead. In any event, they would definitely have the same effect.

It is interesting or rather distressing, to note that people are labeled in the same way that clothing is, and the effect of these human labels carry an even greater weight. You'd think that we would consider ourselves a step or two above articles of clothing and would not allow ourselves to be similarly labeled. Well, not true. As a matter of fact, concerning people, "labeling" isn't strong enough a word. "Branding" is much more fitting. I have noticed that here at THS, we live in a veritable caste society whether we acknowledge it or not. A "Code of Characterization" exists which, although not written down anywhere, has somehow managed to embed itself permanently into THS student philosophy. It has been universally adopted and many students have mastered the art of it. Generalizations of this code are as follows:

1. If you dye the hair on one side of your head florescent lavender or fuchsia pink and chop it at varying lengths; if you pierce a hole through your nose so that a diamond stud protrudes from it; and if your clothing reflects your bizarre sense of color coordination, then you are considered a PUNK, a FREAK, or JUST PLAIN WEIRD.

2. If you are always found to be wearing threadbare sweatpants rolled up to the knees, white tube socks rolled down to the ankles, smelly sneakers, sweat-stained tee-shirts sporting the names of various professional athletic teams, then you are undoubtedly branded a JOCK. (Note: The term DUMB JOCK is completely unjustified. Increased dexterity in the hands and feet does not in any way indicate less brains in the head.)

3. If you are known to wear argyle socks, penny loafers (the pennies are a must), turtle necks, cardigan sweaters, tailored slacks, and polo shirts with alligators on the front, all of course boasting designer labels (yes, even the shoes), then you are by definition a PREP.

4. If you are seen around school wearing "painted-on" stretch jeans that are so tight they appear to hinder respiration; if you wear torn denim jackets and concert tee-shirts displaying the rather sleazy-looking members of questionably obscene heavy metal rock groups; and if you have mastered the art of dangling a cigarette out of the corner of your mouth while speaking, then you are of the species BURN-OUT. (Note: A good night's sleep is of the utmost importance. Anyone who consistently displays blood-shot eyes with dilated pupils and heavy, black circles beneath them is in danger of being branded a DRUGGIE.)

5. Last but not least, the remaining species of students contains all those thought of as BRAINS, or NERDS and GEEKS in less complimentary lingo. This type may be distinguished by the unlimited supply of writing utensils they always seem to have on hand, whether they be tucked inside the pockets of their double-breasted oxford shirts (pocket-protectors are optional) or stuck behind their ears. Wide-rimmed glasses containing 3-inch thick lenses which have the annoying tendency to slide down the nose are always dead giveaways. This category may be the most diverse of all, as anyone who isn't "essentially cool" (in other words, anyone whose wardrobe contains a number of non-designer articles of clothing) is thrown into it.

Over the past years, this code has proved quite successful in mass student segregation. The contempt and/or disgust that one group feels for another is apparent in their treatment toward anyone they consider an "outsider." It is also a very sad society that we live in when one thinks he can accurately determine another's ethnic background, social status, family income, sexual preference and religious denomination simply by taking into account the clothes on his back.

The whole code system would run smoothly without a hitch if it weren't for the number of confused individuals forming many hybrid species of students who can't seem to find their rightful position, and therefore fall somewhere in between the categories. Have you ever seen a cross between a PREP and a BURNOUT? Or a FREAK and a NERD? It can be a pretty nasty sight.

After months of debating, the Student Council has devised a solution for this aggravating problem. On the first of next month, those convention-like "Hello, my name is _____" labels will be distributed during an extended homeroom. Each student is to fill in their name followed by their correct "rank." There will be no "half-n-half's." Decide which ONE category you fall into and stick with it. These labels will be worn at all times so there is no confusion as to who and what you are. Be as honest as possible in determining your rank. You wouldn't want to be labeled a LIAR, now would you?

Snake

Swinging through the streets,
disdainfully dodging the
broken stained-glass river of cars
fingers caressing the smooth bag
feeling the loose ends running through
those bony fingers like the skin of a slim white snake.
Climbing four,
five flights of grey ringed stairs
head down, eyes low
pushing those thin shoulders
through the smell of sweat and blood and onions and smoke
past the thick men in small shirts, their rounded bodies
contradicting his fleshless frame.
shoving through his door
Quivering and finally stretching that white snake on the mirror,
watching until it struck—
disappearing into the dark cavities of the boy's nose—
writhing through that straw to cling tenaciously, and claim his
earthly body. The boy left,
without even a goodbye to his cat, who sat stiff and angular with
hunger in a corner.
The cat turned out and away,
the thick men took what they could
and the long pale corpse
soon disappeared into the dark cavities
of the city.



the shower

46 old ladies
bustle through my door
wearing fur coats,
bearing gifts for laura.

chattering and mimosas
and
i haven't seen you since you
were this high!

Karen Anderson
Grade 11
E.O. Smith High School
Storrs

Jennifer Casey
Grade 11
Greenwich Academy
Greenwich

rustling paper,
ribbons on a hat.
46 old ladies
ohh and ahh
and
i have never seen such strange weather as this!



Jennifer Cyr
Grade 11
Southington High School
Southington

How To Treat A Woman

So you've got a great girl with looks and brains, but you don't know how to give her the treatment she deserves. This pamphlet will give you some general tips on what women not only want, but how they expect to be treated.

First of all, (contrary to popular belief) girls don't **really** like what is commonly termed romance. Now, possibly when you asked this girl to go out with you, you got flowery about it. You may have said things such as, "I don't want other girls, only you." While you may think you've dug a deep hole for yourself, you can show her that you really aren't mushy by simply contradicting any such statements you may have made. Try to do this conscientiously, both in actions and in words.

The next common problem: the girl will probably be writing notes to you. Read them, but don't act like you paid much attention to them. Also, don't write her back: girls don't want to get notes from their boyfriends, they don't expect to, and they don't like the idea of a note (from their boyfriend) even if it's just a response to one that they wrote.

Don't call the girl, either: let her call you. Most of the time, however, don't talk to her. She expects you to be out roaming the streets or at someone's house, unavailable. If your parents are home and they answer, have them tell her you're not there. If you pick up the phone and it is her, pretend you're your father.

When the phone rings and you know for a fact that it's her, don't pick up. Later, tell her you were out or asleep or just didn't feel like answering. If you have an answering machine, she may leave a message on it. She expects you to ignore the message: you are above answering someone's message or even checking to see if any were left on the machine.

A common myth says that girls like to go out and do things with their boyfriends. This is absolutely untrue: a girl won't want to do anything with you. They may act as if they do, but don't be fooled by this act: they are just playing easy-to-get. If it is a very important occasion, such as your anniversary or the prom, don't act like you were even aware of these things. When she reminds you, tell her you have something better to do (relative birthday, job). Girls expect you to be too busy for them.

Sometimes, for variety, make the plans with her and then break them at the last minute. Give her minimal notice, saying it almost as an afterthought. If you even think of feeling bad about it, she will know and dump you on the spot. After a couple of times, don't tell her at all until you see her and she asks you. Be sure to use stupid excuses as this is what will please her.

If you have any skeletons in your closet (drug use, police record, bigoted attitudes), make sure she is aware of them. Girls love guys who lead dangerous double lives. Imply that she has only seen the tip of your rotten-to-the-core iceberg. If she really doesn't care about you, she will try to break you of your habits, but a good girlfriend should accept you as you are.

Make sure the physical part of your relationship fails. Girls hate romance, they really just like to flirt. Don't be alone with her, or if you are, be sure to be twiddling your thumbs or something, so that nothing happens. In public, walk around the opposite side of obstacles, and (unless you want a slap) never try to even hold her hand. If you see some people you know, run away from her to go see them even if they're just standing around. Also, if anything physical should happen, belittle it when she brings it up. Make sure it doesn't happen again.

Girls don't expect relationships to be exclusive, at least on your end. Tell her and her friends that you don't like to be "tied down" to one girl. Then ask another girl out while you're still going out with her. Don't tell her about this: your life is none of her business, as she will agree. Let her find out through the rumor mill.

Once she finds out, talk all the time about what a wonderful person the other girl is. This also gives you an excuse not to do things with her. Of course, she shouldn't be seeing other guys; if she does, tell her off and beat him up, even if that isn't the kind of person you are. Tell her you'll kill them both if it ever happens again. Girls like for you to exhibit such extreme forms of jealousy.

She will expect you to show no interest in the important things in her life. Ignore her friends, unless you are talking to one of them for the purpose of ignoring her. If she is artistic, be sure she is aware you don't care for her type of art. On rare occasions when you are together, if she talks to you about something she likes or that happened, show disinterest and boredom (look around, play with your hands, hum). She will be inwardly ecstatic even if she acts furious.

She will love it if you tell her people are coming out of the woodwork to tell you that you shouldn't be going out with her and/or telling you that the other girl is good for you. Girls like for their guys to seem angry with them. Be sure to include in your list of advisers people whom you know she doesn't like or even know. She'll be glad your friends care.

Also, say that these people are angry at her for things she's done to them, but never name any of them unless they're people she doesn't know. She will appreciate your honesty even if you are making them up. Girls like macho, indifferent bluntness in guys. Act like you believe what these people are saying over her denials, especially if the people concerned are known liars. She doesn't expect you'd have good judgement.

Chris Boucher
Grade 11
Enrico Fermi
Enfield

If the girl ever for some insane reason (it may be a test, so watch yourself) complains about the way she's treated, you may be caught off guard and apologize. Avoid doing this at all costs; she will see it as a sign of weakness. To appease her, blame all of the supposed problem in your relationship on her and her shortcomings.

Also say that she is being misled by her friends (who are constantly telling her what a jerk you are) and what if she would just listen to you, everything would be fine. This is exactly what she wants to hear, and once it's said, she'll love you forever. She may even fall into your arms.

Make sure she hits the ground hard when you step back and drop her.



Lifer

Nobody who's going anywhere works in a grocery store. Well, some might be on their way to success. The large population of the work force at this supermarket consisted of teenagers looking for some spending money or saving up for college. But people like Arthur, who worked there to survive, were all doomed to be there forever, unless they won the lottery or a rich uncle died or some other stroke of luck. Arthur had worked there for two years as a cashier. He was what the teens who worked there called a "lifer," someone who would be there ringing up groceries long after they had moved on to bigger and better things. Arthur knew the others who worked there called him this, and it bothered him, although no one really meant anything malicious by using the term. He often wondered what he did to deserve his life, why the world had been so cruel to him. He thought he was unlucky, until the day he met Eddie.

It was a blustery Tuesday afternoon in January. The wind blew angrily, and there was a light snow falling. Weekday afternoons were slow anyway, but the weather conditions caused the store to be even more deserted. There was your usual mix of people. Mothers with their screaming babies and an endless mountain of groceries. An old woman was arguing with the manager over the price of a jar of prune juice. Others, who looked like they were in a hurry darted through the store like zebras running from a pride of lions. Then he saw Eddie. He was the town bum. Arthur had seen him before, riding his bike around town, picking up discarded cans and bottles to get the refunds, probably his main source of income. But he had never seen Eddie up close. As he entered the store, the first thing Arthur noticed about him was his clothes. Eddie was dressed in an old, grey overcoat that had a huge tear under one arm. Under the coat was a seemingly endless sea of tee-shirts, judging by how thick his upper body appeared and how thin his legs were. He had on one sneaker and one boot, both were torn at the seams. Arthur watched him trod through the store. Eddie went to the back and took a few things off the damaged

goods rack. He then proceeded to the front of the store to pay for his groceries. Arthur secretly hoped that he wouldn't come to his line, but he did. He noticed that Eddie had no gloves on. His hands were chapped all over, and he had open sores and calluses on his fingers. Eddie reached into his pocket and pulled out a satchel of change to pay. Arthur could see Eddie didn't have enough money to pay for all of it, so he purposely undercharged him. Arthur knew this could get him fired, but he did it anyway. He felt that his job was less important than taking a man's dignity away by telling him he didn't have enough money, while other people in the store chuckled to themselves. Arthur bagged his groceries and watched as Eddie left. He then noticed that Eddie had left his satchel on the counter. Eddie must have realized it too, because he was coming back into the store to get it. Nonchalantly, before Eddie could see him, Arthur slipped two twenty dollar bills in the satchel. That was all the money he had for the rest of the week, but it was probably the only money Eddie would have for months. He took his satchel, oblivious to what Arthur had done, and left the store.



Untitled

Nightfall

when the sky looks like a bowl
of cream of moon soup
stirred by the restless ladle of the wind
the skeleton tree
taps garrulously on my window.
Its branches scrape the air
and its shadows
graze my face.
Knife point stars pierce my eyelids
humming
some distant cosmic tune.
The moon sucks up my hair
like strands of proton spaghetti
between pursed crater lips
and you
clang on my mind
a xylophone without any
mallets.



Tanya Erzen
Grade 12
Darien High School
Darien

Lisa Dennis-Valvo
Grade 12
Masuk High School
Monroe

"Go Home," Said The Man On The Moon, "Go Home."

"We are gathered here today to witness the joining of these two..."

I cannot park here; there is no room for me in the long driveway of the house which my father built for my mother, twenty-one years ago. Yuppie cars, with Michigan license plates, deep shades of navy and grey--conspicuous lumps that clog the driveway. The house is tan with rust shutters, and stands out from the lush surrounding greenery. Shades of green, soft like new leaves, was the house when I lived here. The new color still surprises me, though years have passed since its painting. My house, the only one I can truly call "my home"--thank God, it still smells same.

As she walks down the aisle, my father turns from the others and grasps my shoulder, then holds me a moment before turning back. So many years ago, he stopped saying that he loved me; don't tell me he needs me now.

The kitchen is filled with strangers, relatives of the bride. Down the hall and to the left, my bedroom is the sacred storage-place of memory. How dare she dump all this furniture in here, scatter my pictures and animals about the room? The room had been as bare as a cell, with the exception of a twin bed and low dresser with a mirror, clean-cold and all mine. Now there is dirt on the floor from frost-bitten plants, rescued too late from the world outside.

Joan Elaine Winston appears nervous. Why not? She has never done this before, but my father and I are old hands at this game. I have been to four weddings, three of which were my parents.

"Marriage is a sacred covenant..."

"Are you Lisa?" The tall, dark-haired woman hailed me as I attempted to escape down the driveway. "You must be Lisa, and my, we've heard so much about you! Your father is very proud of you, you know. He says you're a lovely child, just lovely. I'm Jane's sister, so I'm going to be your aunt. How lucky we are that Janey has such a nice stepdaughter, and you are lucky to have a nice stepmother, too..."

Nobody, and I do mean NOBODY, tells me that I'm someone's "stepdaughter," or that someone is my "stepmother." I'm no waif. I do not need to count strangers as relatives. Michael, my mother's second husband, is considered my stepfather because we have lived with him for most of my life, and he has been very kind to me. I am not, however, his "stepdaughter," a term that implies a second-hand child. Moreover, I do not require or request an extra mother, since the one I have is doing just fine--thank you.

"Will you, Joseph Anthony Val--, take this woman, Joan Elaine Winston, to be your lawfully wedded wife?"

"I will." No hesitation in his voice, his stance. This time it will work, he will make it work. Joan stammers.

There are too many women in my bedroom: Mommy, me, Sunny, and Joan, in that order. Mommy's blood runs deepest, flows through the very timbers of the house. She has not entered this room in body for years, but her spirit calmed me to

sleep many tearful, empty nights. Mommy saved me from Sunny, the wife who chose the red carpet.

It was from Sunny, a woman who took out her frustrations on children that were not her own, that I most often retreated; Sunny hated me because she thought my father loved me too much. Little did she comprehend, a man chooses his wife, but is stuck with his children. "Daddy Joe" noticed nothing strange about a limping, purple-spotted daughter, wailing that she missed her mother; "Daddy Joe" assumed that Marilee was brainwashing his darling Christmas ornament.

"And this is the spare room...," Joan callously announces to a tour group in the midst of my memories. Hardly a "spare room" to me, sniveling wench.

"The ring, please... Repeat after me..."

With the horde gone, I scrutinize a framed picture from the desk, once Grandmother's. An imprint of life nine years ago, one of the few images in existence of the Val-- clan as a whole. Of course, Sunny and her daughters, Tammi and Jeanie are pictured as well.

Humpty Dumpty is stuffed in the corner. I drag him out, dust him off, and tuck my old friend under my arm. Pain. I want to go home--I am home--I have no home but in daydreams.

Alongside the photo stands a small oblong piece of pottery, hand-painted with a little girl clad in a bonnet and sundress and skipping in a patch of daisies. A grey kitten crouches next to her, playing with a big, yellow butterfly. On the back is painted:

"To Daddy 1974
from Marilee,
Lisa and Little One"

(Little One was our cat, and my favorite playmate. She is buried in the sideyard. Leukemia.)

I dance with my father at the reception. He is pensive around me, perhaps thinking of his first wife, my mother. "Look at it this way," I exclaim above the clamor, "How many fathers can dance with their daughters at their own weddings!?"



Infinity

Those days when I had no keys
When my only job was to wake up
My only homework to go out and play

Daniel Pearson
Grade 12
Robert E. Fitch Sr.
Groton

How happy I was with patched knees
To run without a coach
And to throw the ball to myself

If nothing changed
I could live forever
On those Saturdays
My only clock a voice calling my name



Chris Gage
Grade 12
Darien High School
Darien

Aspects Of A Soul

I don't know what it is but I find my brother... interesting. This word may sound kind of sterile and clinical, but it is the only word that comes when my mind's eye forms a picture of him. "Him" is named Mike.

Mike stands about 6 feet when he is not slouching and weighs maybe 165 pounds completely dry. He dresses in such a manner that causes my mother to say she's disappointed with him, my father to tell him to clean up his act, and most other people to get out of his way or at least be wary of him. More often than not, he has on jeans with multiple holes and a t-shirt under a button-down shirt. A brown leather jacket covers this ensemble, leaving him looking only notches above the common criminal. (I have nothing against the common criminal, mind you; it was only an example.) Not shaving very often leaves his round face with what looks like a constant five o'clock shadow. The dark sunglasses, of which he has nine pair, and his hair over his eyes add to the effect of Mike's broodiness. If he were to dress "right", he would look a lot like the late James Douglas Morrison.

It may sound as if he is an evil, ominous person, but this is not true. He has been known to do some not-so-nice things but never anything downright evil. He even smiles a lot, but his smile is wry and crooked, though commonly accepted as sincere. Against his over-all scruffiness, his straight white teeth provide a bizarre sort of contrast.

I'm not sure why my brother "interests" me. Maybe I like the fact that he has a kind of... meanness... to him. We both dress in very much the same manner—leather jackets, torn jeans and t-shirts, but he looks mean while I look, well, different. I'm not trying to look like him, mean, that is. But I do like the way he looks. I often say to a friend that if he, my friend, doesn't return one of my records soon I'll get my brother to kill his whole family. It has become a joke now that when any of my friends need dirty work to be done or some scaring to do, we will say we will call on Mike. My mom gets mad and says, "Don't say that about your brother; he's as nice as he can be." This is true, Mom, but we aren't playing with his personality, just his appearance.

This image adds to my non-understanding. Mike is not mean. There have been times when my group of friends has been close to a fight with another group, and Mike just sort of hangs out at the side. Pete or I usually do the verbal name throwing, mostly because I'm quick with a judgmental point of view and Pete is a wise-ass. Mike remains on the edge of things, always letting his presence be known but appearing generally disinterested, if not completely bored. He rarely gets involved for another reason. He really is "nice" and doesn't want to hurt anyone or get hurt. We always tell him to get up and say a few things to ward off our adversaries, like a few death threats to their favorite pets would be nice, but he just laughs to himself.

It's interesting that the person with whom I've spent most time eludes me the most. I've already figured out most of my friends (this too sounds sterile), but my own brother leaves me confused. Is it all a game? Does he want people to think he's tough and then come around and surprise them with the fact that he is really quite smart (when he does the work) and also easy to get along with? This seems kind of odd, thought, because his first chance at a good impression will often get denied by his looks. It would take a while for others to find out what it took me 17 years to see. After all, you don't go up to every construction worker-type and ask him to solve for the cosine of pi over six or ask him if, when he sees a dog in the road, he speeds up or slows down. Mike would answer these in an intelligent and humane way: radical 3 over 2 and slow down.

I don't know where this leaves me or where I started from for that matter. Maybe I'm fascinated with toughness? Maybe I'm fascinated with unusual people? Maybe I'm just fascinated with my brother? I don't know.



Teachers of these Connecticut Student Writers

Carol Anselment
Jennifer Batchelder
Jeanette Beach
Susan Buoniconti
Evelyn Burack
Jane Caddick
Joan Campbell
Agnes Carver
Nancy Cieslukowski
Jane Cohen
Anthony Curulla
Susan R. Erzen
William Evenski
Cynthia Field
Virginia E. Griggs
Esther Heffernan
Frieda Johnson
Linda Kiaffas
Sandra Kretsch
Linda Loretz
Andrea Lutz
Shirley Marry
Geraldine Marshall
Jeanne Martel
Joyce McAloon
Lisa Miller / Sharon Machuga
Paul G. Miller
Maureen C. Overcash
Douglas Paulsen
Arthur Pearson
Sydney S. Pfeifer
Patricia Picchioni
Elizabeth Rainville
Nancy Rawn
Paula Robinson
Katherine Rydelek
Jeffrey Schwartz
Catherine Scinto
Elaine Shaw
Sherlene Skov
Susan Spear
Judith Sullivan
Reuben Teodoro
Angela Thomas
Nancy Thurmond
Mary Ellen Tibbetts
Eulalia Wonneberger

E.O. Smith High School
Spring Glen Elementary School
Saxe Middle School
Nathan Hale School
Coleytown Middle School
Plantsville Elementary School
Noah Wallace School
Kelly Junior High School
Veterans Memorial School
Washington Primary School
Wolcott High School
Saxe Middle School
Wheeler Junior/Senior High School
Timothy Edwards Middle School
Cornwall Consolidated School
Enrico Fermi High School
Ridgebury Elementary School
Burr District Elementary School
Kendall Elementary School
Martin School
Greenwich Academy
Silvermine School
Darien High School
Cloonan Middle School
William H. Hatton School
Beecher Road School
Masuk High School
Natchaug School
Darien High School
Robert E. Fitch Senior High School
Kelly Junior High School
Southington High School
Cornwall Consolidated School
Oak Grove Montessori School
Simsbury High School
Holland Hill School
Greenwich Academy
Kendall Elementary School
Granby Memorial Middle School
East Lyme Jr. High School
John B. Sliney School
West Stafford School
Spring Glen School
Newfield Elementary School
Huckleberry Hill School
Stafford High School
Trumbull High School

