
CONNECTICUT STUDENT WRITERS

Volume X May 1997



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The Connecticut Writing Project



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FOREWORD

In the following pages, the students of Connecticut write about themselves, their lives, their memories, their hopes and dreams. They write too, of their difficulties. They write to examine their world. They write with humor. They write to understand and discover. Their writing is genuine and honest.

As they write about their world, they help us to understand. They help us to see into their lives and, perhaps, understand our own a little better. In his poem, *Threnody*, the poet B. Silvernail wrote:

Complexity
Dilemma
Quandary too
Why question life
You can just get through

These Connecticut authors are questioning life. They are questioning their world. As we read their words, we can begin to join with them, begin to build bridges of understanding.

The Connecticut Writing Project congratulates this year's authors. Join with us in celebrating these student writers from across Connecticut. Join us as we enter their worlds, as we read their words.

Editors

John Goekler
Barbara Cohen
Jennifer Shaff



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Knights

Knights are cool.
Knights fight a lot.
Knights fight dragons.
Knights have big swords.
Knights wear armor.
Knights ride horses.
Knights sleep in castles.
Good night, Knight!

Ice Cream

I eat ice cream.
It sure is good to eat.
When I ask the waitress,
She gives me something sweet.

New York City Book

I went to a circus. I went on a train. I stopped at New York. I was at the circus. I saw a trapeze. I saw clowns on motorcycles, one was on the side, one was on the bottom riding in a big circle. I went home and played with my dad.

Marc Mancini
Kindergarten
Wolcott
Elementary School
Wolcott

Lindsay Hillas
Kindergarten
Beecher Road School
Woodbridge

Johnny DiPietro
Kindergarten
Kendall Elementary
School
Norwalk



Celia Elizabeth
Poirier
Kindergarten
North Windham
School
North Windham

Sitting by the Stream

I'm sitting by the stream
On a warm summer night.
The logs block the water
As it swiftly soars by.

I feel the warm object
As it goes all around.
It makes a gentle ripple noise
But mostly not a sound.

Hannah Brassord
Grade 1
A.W. Hanmer
Elementary School
Wethersfield

Me and My Papa

Once there was a girl and her Papa. Her name was Hannah. She loved her Papa. She went to her Papa's house every Easter. Once she went to Florida with him too. And he gave her and her sister Sesame Street books.

They came to Christmas too. She wore her Christmas dress.

He sent cards with five dollar bills every month. They took pictures with him and they hid from the camera.

When they went to Aunt Teresa's, they swam, but Papa didn't because he was too old.

His favorite color was blue. Hers was green.

Every time she went to his house, she ran up to him and hugged him. When she went to his house, there were toys in a basket that they could play with. There were teddy bears and dolls, rattles and trucks, and pretend telephones.

Their cousins came too. There was a big room that they could play school in. Her Papa put on a tape. They danced to it. Every day they came, they stayed for dinner. It was good.

He soon died. She cried on her daddy's shoulders. On the telephone her dad was crying. They went to a funeral in the church. Then they went to the cemetery and they buried him.

He is always with her, deep, deep, in her heart, and he will always be watching her in the sky.



The Bangladesh Poem

The street was calm
but near our street was a busy road
that smelled like rotten eggs.
Garbage was stacked all over.
Even with our car windows up,
Mom put a wet hankie on my nose.

We flew in six planes to Bangladesh
and six planes back.
Dadi was waiting for us
on the side of the wall surrounded by
thousands of people.

People were everywhere
Rickshaws, baby taxis, poor people
all over the place.
It was sad to see these people
without legs or arms hopping.
Try to imagine it.
It makes our world a colder place.

Fish

Swimming so fast
like they are running.
Tails swish, orange and white,
They think they are in a miracle land
Where all the food comes down!

Gabriel Khan
Grade 1
Natchaug School
Willimantic

Katherine Francoeur
Grade 1
Nathan Hale School
Enfield



Charlotte Cipparone
Grade 1
Regional Multicultural
Magnet School
New London

The Birds

I sit in my cozy house looking out the window as I sip my hot chocolate. Dad has just fed the birds. They cluster near the bird feeder, pecking at the fresh sunflower seeds and peanuts. They gather together like we do at Thanksgiving and feast on a delicious meal. They sing with chirps and whistles. They remind me of my grandparents and cousins.

Amanda Kizilski
Grade 1
Plantsville Elementary
School
Plantsville

Swan, Swan

Swan, Swan you swim so smooth
The water doesn't even move.
Swan, Swan you fly so high
you don't even make a peep
in the sky.

Justin Pasha
Grade 2
Mill Hill School
Fairfield

The Glass Box

One day after a fierce snowstorm I walked into nature's gate of winter. I was blinded by the dazzling snow that surrounded me. The snow on the branches had partly melted on and then froze into a magical forest of crystal trees. It was early morning and the white blanket that covered my backyard was still smooth and undisturbed by any sign of life. Well almost! I noticed some tracks at the edge of the woods and decided to investigate. Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! My boots broke through the hard frozen snow and finally I reached my destination. I couldn't really tell much from the tracks because they were not clean prints but smashed in the brittle, crusty snow. I followed them into the glittering maze.

Suddenly a tall man stood in front of me. He had a long, flowing, white beard with dark blue eyes that twinkled like tiny stars in a



midnight sky, and he wore a majestic robe with small rubies and emeralds in the thick soft snowy fur that framed it. The robe itself and the dress was white and shimmering like everything around us. At first I felt startled, but then I saw the warm, friendly smile that was almost hidden by his beard. He reached with both his arms and handed me a small glass box that appeared to be empty. I had many questions, but before I could ask he spoke first.

"It is not really empty. The box contains a magical wish which I am giving you," he said.

"Why me?" I asked.

"Why not you?" he replied.

I had no answers, just more questions.

Then he said. "Use your wish wisely. Be careful not to cause harm to others with it. This is all I ask in return. Also, do not open the box before sunrise or your wish will not come true. Most important of all, enjoy it."

I gazed down at the box. When I looked up, I gasped in amazement. He was gone! I tucked the box tightly under my jacket and dashed home excitedly. I ran up to my room and gently placed the box on my night table. I noticed a faint glow inside of it that I hadn't seen before. I knew that this was going to be the longest day of my life. I couldn't wait till night came, but finally it did. You probably won't believe it, but I went out like a light.

Ring-a-ling, ring-a-ling. . . . my alarm clock woke me up just before sunrise. I went downstairs for breakfast. I noticed the sky becoming lighter. My mom was shocked to find me up that early. She asked me what I wanted for breakfast.

"The glass box," I shouted.

"What?" mom asked.

"I'll be right back, there is something I have to do RIGHT NOW." I ran upstairs and the box was glowing very brightly now, and I knew there wasn't much time. I held the box in my hands and opened the lid slowly as I made my wish.

About a minute later, I was flying in the air. I knew my wish came true. My flying experiences are for another story. Now I have a question for you. What would you wish for?



Jennifer Pauline
Sevilla
Grade 2
South Side
School
Bristol

A Day at the Beach

One day my first grade teacher, Mrs. Shorette, told us that our class was going on a field trip. I was very excited. We were going to the beach in the Rocky Neck State Park. And some of our parents would be coming too.

But she said we were not going to swim. We are going to have a picnic, play on the beach, and look for seashells. It sure sounded like fun, and every one of my classmates looked forward to it.

The date for the field trip finally came. We rode a yellow school bus. It was a bright, sunny day. We sang many camping songs. We made funny noises. We made jokes with each other. Even the teachers and parents that were with us joined in the fun. After one hour we reached the Rocky Neck State Park. Everyone got off the bus. It was time to go to the beach at last!

We hurried to the picnic area, laid down our lunch boxes, and off we went to look for seashells. I found pretty seashells right away, and I also found a dried baby crab. I placed all that I found in my red bucket and I showed them to my teachers and classmates.

Then I noticed the water. I could smell the seawater. As the waves reached the sand, they made tiny ripples. On the other end of the beach, the water made big splashes as they hit the big rocks. I wished we got the chance to play in the water, even just in the shallow part. Splashing around in the water was fun. Then it was time for lunch. All of us ate in a hurry because we all wanted to go back and look for more seashells. I found more with different shapes. Some were cone-shaped, some were rounded, and some were long. I also found a starfish.

We played games after. We did Tug-o-War and relay races. We really had great fun, and when it was time to go back to school, we felt a little sad. We wished we could stay longer. But there is always a next time. So, now I am looking forward to another trip to another beautiful beach. It will be soon, I know.

Kevin
Dobrindt
Grade 2
Myrtle H.
Stevens El-
ementary School
Rocky Hill

It's Snowing, It's Snowing

Snow fluttering from the bluish sky
Ice skates flashing across the thick layers
of frozen waters

Sleds gliding across mounds and blankets of snow
covering freezing ground
Sparkling snow drifting from heaven.



Moon Rain

I glance out the window
It's raining yet;
The moon is out.
Crescent moon.

Rain slowly dropping.
Moonlight shines so bright
That rain can be seen.
Rain slowing,
Slowing,
Slowing,
Silent.

When the Stars Come Out

Yesterday I visited a litter of puppies. They lay at my feet. One peered up at me, licked my fingers, whimpering, nudging at me gently. I wanted that one. I got to hold her. I could feel her heart panting against my gentle fingers. I could feel her silky fur. She felt like a handful of strength and life. She was ruby, ruby-gold, ruby-hearted, ruby-red as the sun. I knew she'd be like her prize-winning mother. I knew she'd be right for me. I don't know, she might have been born for me.

Right out of the blue, Dad said, "No." No, I can't have an English Cocker puppy. I don't think that's right. He doesn't know anything about English Cocker dogs. He hasn't been doing this research—I have.

I have a dream. Dad comes back from canoeing and walks into my bedroom and hears a woof. That would be terrific. It's my dream, my dream. I run outside to meet the new snow. I watch my puppy snuffling the snowy trail of a mouse. I laugh. He snuffles at me as if to say, "Oopsey." But it is just a dream.

Now I look at my snow prints in the snow and hope that some day there'll be another pair right beside mine. Maybe some day my dog and I will make an angel in the snow.

And when it begins to get dark, and it's time to come in, we'll go up to bed and watch the night. When the stars come out and the pink clouds leave and my lights are long past out, my dog and I will be fast asleep.

Kathryn Koch
Grade 2
Wooster School
Danbury

Evan Skorpen
Grade 2
Wooster School
Danbury



The Climb

I shivered as freezing air came in from a gap in the tent. My two companions, Tom Wiser and Jack Moore, were just as cold as I. We all were faced with the biggest challenge of our lives: to climb Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world. Ten days into the trip, twenty thousand miles up, we were all huddled up in our tent trying to keep warm. I watched as our tiny fire flickered with bright orange flames, and slowly disappeared as it sunk into the wood.

"Well, we better be going now," said our guide, Jared.

We gathered up the food and firewood and then walked out of the tent. Once again we were stricken with the shivering cold. We got in line and Joe handed us the two-hundred-foot nylon rope that linked us together in case one of us should slip. It was strong, and it needed to be, for our lives depended on it.

Soon, we came to a huge snowy slope. Our boots' spikes bit like claws into a steep ridge of ice to give us a safe foothold. We climbed with the fierce wind howling in our faces, realizing that, if we worked like a team, we could reach the top today.

"Oh dear!" said our guide Jared. "I see a gigantic glacier up ahead. We can't climb around it. We would run out of oxygen before we reached the summit. If we climb over it, we have a chance. If we don't, it means we give up." All of us stood there as frozen as the snow.

"I'll do it," I suddenly spoke up.

"Me, too," everybody joined in.

Jared chopped his ax into the glacier and started to climb. Clinging to the long rope, we took our steps with great care, as if each step gave us another chance at life. Suddenly, I heard a scream of terror. I turned around to see Tom sliding down the rope out of control. Jack and Joe, who were behind him, jumped to the side leaving Tom dangling down the cliff, holding his ax for dear life.

"Tom!" I shouted, "Hold on!"

"Careful!" Jared called to me.

I made my way toward Tom. He was struggling to get his feet onto something firm.

"Relax," I told Tom. "Get hold of my hand."

With all his strength, Tom gave me his hand, and I lifted him up on his feet once again. "Thank you!" was all Tom could manage. He might have said more, but the air was thin, and we couldn't breathe well.

We continued climbing the glacier with more fear in us. We were still recovering when suddenly Jared stopped. This meant, of course, that all of us stopped. We peered up to see a barrier. This was the end, we thought.



A tower of rock, fifty feet high, rose straight from the ridge. A vast overhang of steep frozen snow was plastered against its right side. A mass of snow had shrunk away from the left side of the rock tower, leaving a crack several feet wide. I suggested that we should try climbing through the crack, and so we planted our bodies into the rock so that we could stay as secure as possible. We were exhausted; our bones were sore and stiff as ice, but we had no time to rest. I closed my eyes and thought of my family and how much they wanted to see me. Whether I made it to the top or not, they would still be proud of me. That thought made me feel warm.

Before I knew it, we found ourselves over that wall. The wind was so thick, I could see it! Our lips were turning blue, and our teeth couldn't help chattering. Suddenly, I peered up to see the summit, just one hundred yards away! We climbed as fast as we could, which of course, was not that fast. Finally it happened! Jared jumped for joy as he stepped onto the top. We took pictures of each other as we all stood on the top of the world. My heart pumped with joy, and I wanted to yell what had just happened! We had worked as a team to keep going when times were rough! Many others, had they been as cold as we were, would have turned back. We were proud and knew that we had fought the biggest battle of our lives. And we had won it!

Fishing at the Lake

If I only had one wish,
I'd spend my time catching fish.

I sit upon my favorite wall,
I listen to the waterfall.

Patience and concentration is the key
To having a successful fishing spree.

Onto my hook I put my bait;
I cast my line and sit and wait.

I look around at the blue sky and the green grass;
I feel a tug. I caught a BASS!

In the water the reflection I see is my own smiling face;
My wish came true. I'm in my favorite place.

Brett Christensen
Grade 3
Davenport Ridge
School
Stamford



Randy Siddell
Grade 3
Natchaug School
Willimantic

Basketball Raptor

Velociraptor

He runs.
He catches him.
He throws him up.
He shoots.
He scores.
Right down through the throat
and into the gizzard.
Now that's what I call
a basketball dino.
Wouldn't you?

David
Claybourne Hare
Grade 3
Hebron Avenue
School
Glastonbury

How the Elephant Got Its Big Ears

In the year of 1664 BC, no animal in the jungle had discovered the most peculiar elephant with the stubbiest little nubs of ears.

The elephant charged into his burrow next to the waterfall like a rhinoceros! He charged out the back door, down the big hill, to the stream where the waterfall stopped and the water gets calmer. He went all the way there to get a drink. But there was a sign that said, "Please ask an animal before you drink."

He walked into the forest to find an animal. First, he found a leopard. He asked, "Do you know if I can take a drink?"

The leopard replied, "No, ask the dove."

So the elephant ran to the dove. He yelled, "Dove, dove."

The dove replied, "Yes, what do you want?"

"Can I get a drink?" said the elephant.

"That I cannot tell you. Ask the pelicans, but be careful," said the dove.

"What did you say?" replied the elephant.

The dove said again, but louder, "Go to the pelicans!"

So the elephant went on his journey to find the pelicans.

The elephant searched all through the jungle until he came to a cliff. He peered down and sure enough he saw two pelicans swimming around in a big lake. He yelled down, "Pelicans, pelicans." All that he could hear back was a high pitched "baaalk."

The elephant ran back from the cliff and then charged off of it. He started to fall, faster and faster, until he hit the water with a smack. The



started to fall, faster and faster, until he hit the water with a smack. The pelicans did not move. The elephant charged out of the water. After a while, the pelicans came out of the water, too.

The elephant asked the pelicans, "Can I take a drink?" But all that the pelicans said was "baaalk, baaalk".

The elephant came closer and said again, "Can I take a drink from your lake?"

The weirdest thing happened. The pelicans grabbed onto the elephant's ears with their beaks. The elephant started to scream as the pelicans flew in different directions with grasp of his ears.

The elephant heard a loud pop; he started to fall. Half of the way down in his fall, he could not see a thing. He felt around. He had hummungus ears which had covered his eyes. He fell on top of a giraffe with the stubbiest little nub of a neck. (But that is a different story).

So after the elephant got out of the hospital from his fall, he said that he would never go near a bird again.

Winter

It's fun to go out sledding
Down our steep backyard hill,
But to get back to the top again,
It takes up all my will.

I dug a winding tunnel
With a shovel and my hand.
It's only big enough for one,
You can only sit, not stand.

We made a choir of snow angels
By laying in the snow.
Then a strong wind sweeps them up
And off their spirits go.

I tried to build a snowman
As strong as he could be,
But when I think he's steady,
He collapses down on me.

Even though it is cold in winter,
I still think all in all,
It's certainly much better
Than summer, spring, or fall.

Tracy Seigle
Grade 4
Center Road
School
Vernon



The Never-To-Be-Forgotten Storm

I awoke on my boat to a lapping of water on the hull and a bit of dew on my pillow. As I walked out toward the stern, I could hear the gulls crying and the fog horn was whistling. There was a gentle breeze that allowed me to feel the boat swinging on the anchor and the smell of coffee in the air.

As I sat at the table eating my breakfast, my dad was getting his bright yellow swimsuit on. After he ate his breakfast, he told my mom that he was going to help a friend pull his boat off a sandbar. It seemed like it was going to be a beautiful day out, with the crystal clear sky. But far off in the distance, the sky grew dark. The clouds came closer and closer until they covered the whole sky.

As my dad rowed back to our boat, it started to sprinkle lightly. Within minutes the sprinkle turned into rain as hard as pebbles. My dad started the motors because the winds started to pick up and we kept rocking around. The anchor line was pulling tight like a rubber band being stretched.

I sat in the cabin on the dinette seat with my life jacket on, holding the portable TV to keep it from falling off of the shelf. I saw my mother through the cabin window soaking wet, with her glasses in her mouth and a knife in her hand. As the boat jerked from side to side, zigzagging like a roller coaster, she had to hang on for dear life. She tried to cut the anchor line to free the boat and cut her hand. Then she tried again and cut the anchor line. She threw the knife overboard and ran back to the cabin.

You could barely see anything with the big waves and strong gusts of wind. The waves were bashing into the side of the boat. The black clouds started to rumble. We were driving everywhere, left, right, frontwards, backwards, and all around. We could see a glimpse of a raft of boats still tied together coming at us, so my dad went full speed ahead. There were a group of sailboats with their masts broken bouncing by us. We went into a barren part of the bay to get away from all of the other boats. We stayed there until the winds calmed down and it stopped raining.

We drove around to see what had happened. Everything was a disaster. Three boats were up on shore with people's things scattered on the beach. A raft of boats were stuck together, one of them was leaking. We found a clear place to throw our extra anchor. My father and I took the dinghy and went to look for our other anchor. We checked every spot that we were in, except for a spot where a raft of boats tangled together. My father found our anchor under the keel of a sailboat that was dug into the mud.

After everything had settled down, my family relaxed and went out to dinner. At dinner we were all very tired. My mom was sore and my dad was too. I was fine. I said to my dad that what we had gone through today would be a memory forever, and it was something that would never be forgotten by anyone who was there that day.



New England Is

New England is islands, rivers, and lakes,
Ice and snowflakes;
It's waves, beaches, and rocky shores,
In Vermont there are maple syrup stores.

New England is thick clouds, mists, and fogs,
There are also cranberry bogs;
There are mountains, hills, and Thanksgiving,
And the highest standard of living.

New England is lighthouses and,
Once in a while, a storm,
And in the old houses
There are fires to keep people warm.

New England is beautiful!

The Ghost of Battleship Cove

"Hooray! Today's the big day!" shouted nine-year-old Matthew as he climbed out of bed.

Matthew's six-year-old sister Katie walked into his room completely dressed. "You'd better get dressed," she said. "We're leaving in one hour."

It was a beautiful winter day. White snowflakes had nestled on the trees. Matthew's and Katie's dad was taking them to Battleship Cove today where they would learn about some famous battleships and sleep on the U.S.S. Massachusetts.

Soon it was time to go. Matthew, Katie, and their dad piled into the car for the three hour drive to Fall River, Massachusetts.

Everyone had fun that day. They saw some real battleships and watched a movie. They did not go to bed until midnight.

"I'm tired!" yawned Katie as she climbed into her bunk. They were sleeping in bunk beds, just like the crew. Everyone fell asleep immediately.

SUDDENLY. . . , a strange moaning awoke Matthew. He checked his watch. It was three o'clock. What was moaning this early? All of a

Evan Miller
Grade 4
East Haddam
Elementary
School
Moodus

Matthew Purple
Grade 4
Roaring Brook
School
Avon



sudden, the moaning got much louder. Matthew awoke Katie. "Do you hear that?" he asked.

Katie listened. Then she sat upright. "Yes. I do hear it. I wonder what it is?"

"Let's go find out," Matthew said.

They hopped out of their bunks and tiptoed toward the moaning noise. They followed the noise out of the bunk room through the exhibit room and into the galley. There they saw something terrifying.

"A GHOST! AHHHHH!" screamed Matthew and Katie.

Matthew gave the ghost a good whack and noticed that it was really just a tablecloth! He grabbed Katie.

"It's not real," he comforted. "It's just a tablecloth."

"It is?" she inquired, totally bewildered.

"Yup," answered Matthew. He tore it off the ceiling from which it was hanging.

When Katie saw this, she turned red. "Someone tried to scare the daylights out of us!"

"It must have been the last person who went to bed," said Matthew thoughtfully. "He must have wanted to scare everyone." Then he yawned. "We'll investigate in the morning."

The pair stalked back to the bunk room where many of the bunks that were empty had been filled with other people doing the sleepover program the previous night. As Katie and her big brother walked toward their bunks, she noticed a slip of paper on one of the other bunks. It read:

"Dear Joey,

This place is too scary for me. I left at one o'clock.

Sincerely,

Frank"

"Joey is the sleepover manager," thought Katie. "Frank must have seen the ghost and was scared off." Then she caught up with Matthew at their bunks. They climbed in and fell asleep.

The next morning only one thing was on their minds, the ghost. After breakfast, Matthew and Katie began wandering around the ship. They asked thirteen crewmen about the tablecloths, inquiring where they were kept when they weren't being used. The answer to this question was the same each time. "The cook keeps them in a locked closet. Nobody knows where he keeps the key."

"So," said Matthew, "if the cook keeps the tablecloths in his locked closet, and nobody knows where the key is, then he'd be the only one able to get to them after he put them away last night. So the cook did it!"

An angry look appeared on Katie's face. "Let's go tell the manager then. After all the cook will probably get fired and we'll be heroes."

Matthew shrugged, "Who'd believe us? They'd think we were liars. Let's give him a taste of his own medicine instead."



He sneaked into the galley and grabbed a tablecloth. With a black marker, he drew large, mean eyes and a mouth filled with sharp teeth. Then Matthew ran back to Katie, clutching the tablecloth which now looked remarkably like a ghost.

"I'll just put this in one of the cook's cupboards. When he opens it, he'll get the scare of his life." The pair sneaked back into the galley and stuffed the ghost into the cook's vegetable cupboard. Then they tiptoed out.

Later that day it was announced that the cook had quit. He said he was going to get a new job and wouldn't return to Battleship Cove. Matthew and Katie winked at each other and giggled.

The next day Matthew, Katie, and their dad left for home. That night the kids thought about what they had learned at Battleship Cove: about battleships and their crews, and how to use clues to solve a case.

Freedom Wings

Early one hot, summer morning, I awoke to the sound of a bird chirping in the most delightful way. He sounded as happy as I was. By the way, my name is Christian. I was happy because school was just let out, and I actually had time to sleep. Thinking of this, I closed my eyes, drifted back into sleep and dreamed of birds and pools full of water. I just couldn't wait until the public pool opened the following week. I awoke this time not to a happy chirping, but to a sad squeak that seemed to be crying for help.

I crawled out of bed and opened my window so not to frighten anything that happened to be outside. My jaw dropped at what I observed. There was a bird perched on a small branch. Now you may not think much of this, but this bird was hurt very badly. It had a slash across its stubby, yet firm body, and one of its wings was broken. I just had to take it in. I stopped and thought a second. My mother told me never to bring animals inside, but this was an emergency. If I got into trouble, it would be worth it to save this creature's life.

Without further ado, I reached outside carefully, so as not to harm the poor thing, and took it inside. I was so worried for its life I didn't even stop to close my window. After placing it on a piece of paper, I ran to the bathroom. I looked through the medicine cabinet for some bandages. When I had grabbed something, I ran back to the bedroom. I started to say things to the bird like "it will be okay," or "don't worry, I'm going to take care of you." Looking in my hand, I saw that I had grabbed my mom's perfume by accident, not the bandages!

Christian
Staudacher
Grade 5
Canton Intermediate School
Collinsville



I sprinted down the hallway murmuring how stupid I was to myself. After placing the perfume down, I grabbed the bandages. I jogged nervously to my room and sat down on my bed. I picked up the bird, wiped off the blood, and placed a bandage over the bird's cut. Then I wrapped up its wing and put the bird on my bed. I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw the bird looking over his wing, saying "thank you". I smiled and started to talk to him.

"Since we're going to be staying here a while I guess I should give you a name. How about Herbert?" He gave me a low squeak saying "no". I continued on. "Maybe Tolbert?" He gave me a look of absolute horror followed by a loud squeal. "I know. Your name will be... George!" At this, he gave a clear chirp and a very nice song. "George it is! My name is Christian." I smiled and gave the bird a little pat on the back.

After officially making his acquaintance, I sneaked outside and got three worms and a branch. Quietly, I tiptoed up the stairs and into my room where I saw the strangest thing. George was staring at the family picture I had sitting on my dresser. "You miss your family, don't you?" George gave a sad moan. "You'll see them soon, in one week. I promise." George sighed and fell asleep before I could feed him.

While he was sleeping, I ate breakfast. I bolted down my food, wanting to get back up to my room. After eating my last piece of orange, I ran to my room as fast as I could. There, I saw that George was awake and had eaten the worms I had left him. "I would prefer you not to drop half a worm on my floor," I said with a deep tone in my voice.

I was interpreting his chirps as my mom walked by my room. George gave a large squeal. I told him to be quiet when my mom peeked into my room with a puzzled look on her face. I quickly sat in front of George to hide him. I gave a fake grin to my mom. She gave a small smile, and I could tell she was thinking I was crazy. She walked off, and I gave a sigh of relief. I stood up to see George asleep. I don't know how that happened, but it did. I smiled and put a blanket over his body.

The next week went by very quickly. George and I became best of friends, and I stayed in my room the whole time. The only time I wasn't talking to George was when I was working on my universe project for the following school year. It was to keep us thinking about school over the summer. I personally thought it was pointless.

I came up from eating dinner to see George flying around the room and realized that it was time for him to return to his world of outdoors. He would soon learn the same thing. "George, I don't know how to tell you this but... you have to go home now." George stopped flying and looked sad. "I'm sorry," I said, "but it has to happen."

I opened the window, took off his bandages, and gave him a pat on the back. He exchanged a look that I will never forget. It was a look of love and disappointment.



love and disappointment.

George took off into the red and yellow horizon. One tear rolled down my cheek, and my heart pounded with love. George looked back, and I waved. He gave me a clear chip and a good-bye song. Then, he flew away, back where he belonged. I closed the window and wiped my tear away. I smiled to myself realizing that George was going to a better place. I gave a large grin. George would be free!

Ice Wonder

Rink's floor covered with ice
Smooth ice, shimmering from the glow
Of the hanging light bulbs above.

People rushing to the door
Pulling out crumpled green paper
And gleaming silver coins
Handing it to the collector
Bunch by bunch.

Filling in seats in a broad ring
Encircling the crystallized water
Unaware of what is going to be seen
Spectators talk among themselves
In a quiet, deep rumble.

Lights dim, the crowd is hushed
Seats occupied with silent commoners
All able to hear a pin drop on the dazzling ice.

Doorway to ice opens gradually, so carefully,
Revealing the ice-dancer in her elaborate costume

Her heart pounding like colossal boulders striking the earth
Her knees trembling like an earthquake.

Her courage finally builds up enough for her to place her skates on
the ice
And take a step, and glide into the center of the rink.

Music commences, motions come naturally
Her legs glide along the ice with ease
While the audience brightens at her gracefulness.

Cheers rise from the bleachers
Her performance is a success!!

Melissa Bucher
Grade 5
Ridgebury
Elementary School
Ridgefield



Josh Atwood
Grade 5
Tashua Elementary
School
Trumbull

My Solar System

Grandma, my Sun,
Her beaming smile
brings joy to my heart.
Her sweet words
make an argument soundless.

Grandpa, Mercury,
Always close to my Sun.
He moves around to help others.
Meals-on-wheels for the elderly,
car trips to South Hampton for me,
and visiting Southbury to cheer my retarded uncle.

Dad, Jupiter,
A man full of mystery.
He seems to exist
as part of his own world,
Partially covered with misty smoke
and drawn by the love of the sea.

Mom, the North Star.
Always guiding me
through bike accidents
and disagreements with friends
her eyes shine
as she protects the family around her.
She's the one
I look up to.

My sister, a meteor.
The part of our family
who keeps us smiling.
Her fiery personality
and outgoing ideas
show in all she does.

Me, a telescope
Wide-eyed at Jupiter
mesmerized by the Sun,
inspired by Mercury,
guided by the North Star,
and dazzled by the meteor.



This is my solar system,
I admire their beauty,
long to learn more,
and love them all.

The Best Thing

This was not a good night. Kate's mother had said it was, but it wasn't. No full moon. In fact, no moon! Only blackness.

John was supposed to be there when the moon was full. Everyone in the cramped house on 643 Ingrell Lane was waiting. These were bad times for the Jewish people. Nazis were everywhere, waiting to pounce on the Jews and take them to concentration camps. That was why John had to come. Kate's huge family was hiding, and starving. There was Kate, who was eleven, and her older twin brothers, Brian and David, who were sixteen. Then there was Ingrid, who was six, and Gertrude, who was three. And now there was baby James, who was only seven months old. Plus Kate's mother was pregnant again, and they couldn't find or afford a doctor.

"John has to come soon!" Kate thought over and over. It had now been a month since John had last come. However, he could only come by full moon. It was too dangerous to bring a flashlight, but he needed light to bring the pack of supplies. Everyone thought that he looked like Santa as he walked into the small five room house. It seemed like he was too, because there was always food for a little while after he came. Though the whole Kache family ate meager amounts, they were just on the brink of surviving.

"Oh, dear me, the baby must be coming!" Kate's mother exclaimed.

Everyone immediately rushed to the bed. Even baby James crawled over.

Kate came just in time to see her mother's face turn dead white. Then a little red head came into view. Next, little arms and a body. Finally, tiny kicking legs. And that was all. Except for that, Kate's mother wasn't well for the next two weeks.

Another mouth to feed! John must come, or the Kache family would starve to death.

The next night, a sliver of the moon showed. Then more the next night. Every time Kate woke up, she saw more of the moon. Finally, after

Erin Fleming
Grade 5
Haddam El-
ementary School
Higganum



six long days of waiting, there was a full moon. John would be there if all went well!

The family waited and waited. Just as they were giving up, they heard a familiar voice saying, "Hi, everyone!"

It was John! The family rushed through the door. There was John, though unshaven, unwashed, and bruised. But where was the pack?

"Where's the pack?" everyone asked at once.

John's face smiled. "There is no pack," he stated. "But there are pockets." And with that he pulled eight small packages out of his pockets. He gave one to each person in the Kache family, even James. However, soon he saw the newborn.

"Oh, what's its name? Is it a girl or a boy?" he nearly shouted.

Kate's mother replied, "It's a girl, and her name is Ashley."

John looked worried now. "How will you feed it?" he asked.

Kate's mother answered, "We'll manage. We always have."

John still looked worried. "I'll have to come here again by a sliver of the moon. We can't have a baby starving. However, I'll need a helper for this mission, to guide me."

Kate knew that her parents would pick Brian or David. No wait! Her mother was saying, "Take Kate. She's the best helper here."

Kate was astounded. Her parents had picked her!

John looked at Kate's parents and said, "I'll manage very well with Kate to help me."

And with that, they left together.

Kate was scared and excited. She, along with John, soon got to John's living quarters, a small, smelly hovel. But supplies were plenty there, so Kate got a good supper. Still, she was already homesick. The moon would be big enough tomorrow for them to go, so she wouldn't have to wait long.

The next day dragged by. Hour after hour Kate tried to keep herself busy by reading and talking to John. Still it seemed like years before 10:00 came. They could finally go! As they walked out, Kate's arms felt nearly as heavy as the package they were carrying. But she was going back to her family with provisions, so she was satisfied.

Kate's house finally came into sight. John slowly opened the creaky door. Kate's whole family was there waiting expectantly. Then, Kate was captured by her family, and she now knew that home, with your family, was the best place that anyone could be.



A Tribute to Randy Eli Deglin

Dusk was setting in. You could only see a few hundred feet in the overcast weather. My dad and I were stuck behind a slow car, praying that it would turn so we could pick up my sister at our piano teacher's house on time. It turned left before Washington Street, probably heading for the high school (N.F.A). Just as we were speeding up, we hit a pocket of slow and parked cars in the middle of the road. Then we picked up a crowd in our headlights. As we rolled past, we saw someone lying on the ground, paper and books all over. People surrounded the body. "Looks serious," my father said and dialed 911 on his cellular phone.

"Yes, I'm in Norwich on Washington Street, and it looks like somebody is hurt, maybe dead" I heard as we passed a parked car with its lights out. It was a few hundred feet away from the first body. I caught a glimpse of the driver talking to another man. "I hope those people are okay," I said and looked at my watch. It was 4:54.

Later that night, around 9:00, my mom got a call from a woman named Sue Aberbach. She didn't sound happy, but I couldn't really tell because she had the door to her room closed. She hung up and talked to my father for awhile. Then she called me into her room and told me that my friend, Randy Deglin, and his sister, Samantha Deglin, had been killed in a car accident on Washington Street. I went to bed crying, shaking, and in a state of shock.

Randy was my best friend. He was like a light and could brighten up anyone's day with his jubilant laughter or one of his jokes or sayings. He had many good qualities, including being kind, funny, generous, loyal, and talented. He was also a natural leader and was fair to everyone. I wish he was still here in flesh and blood.

First of all, Randy was very amiable. He would stand up for other people if they were falsely accused of a wrong doing. He was good-natured and agreeable, almost never talked back, and was seldom hateful toward anyone. People rarely insulted him. Many times I saw people ask him for assistance, and he would drop everything to help them. If somebody didn't have anything to do for recess, he would let them join his activity.

One of Randy's trademarks was telling jokes to somebody who was sad or upset. It always brightened their mood. He also had many funny sayings, some of which made absolutely no sense, but had an interesting ring or sound. He was like a light in the darkness.

Randy was extremely generous with real things, as well as with his time. He would often bring extra snacks to give out to people who were hungry. Many times he went without a snack himself. He would always bring back gifts for the class whenever he went on a trip, like seeds from Costa Rica or postcards from London.

The word "loyal" fit perfectly with Randy. If you did something

Brian Love
Grade 6
John M.
Moriarty School
Norwich



The word "loyal" fit perfectly with Randy. If you did something humane for him, he would promise to do something nice for you and would keep that promise. He never told me a lie or broke a promise. You could tell Randy any secret and his lips would automatically be sealed without him being told.

Randy had more talents than I can name. He was an excellent editor, exceptional in geography and spelling, had a vocabulary as wide as Eurasia, and had a knack for drawing. He worked diligently as a beginning guitarist and learned to dance, sing, act, and "skank". He had just won the school Geography Bee on the day he died, and had won the Spelling Bee two years earlier. Basketball was his favorite sport and he was good at it. He did almost all of his work perfectly, executing assignments extremely accurately.

I had many enjoyable experiences with Randy. One time we were on a day hike at Goodwin State Forest for my birthday. The scenery was beautiful and we had brought along binoculars. We were crossing a bridge over a stream formed by a beaver dam and my mother was saying, "Don't drop your binoculars in the water," just as Randy's fell into the stream. By the time we had recovered them, we were all drenched and laughing.

Another enjoyable time was when we were playing a four-man basketball game at recess. Someone shot a lay-up and the ball bounced off the bottom of the rim, striking Randy, who was waiting for a rebound, on the head. He fell to the ground with his eyes closed as though he was unconscious. We were all standing over him when he yelled and jumped up, scaring us all. We all laughed after that, too.

It took Randy's death to tell me the meaning of life. I used to get angry when my parents wouldn't let me shoot a gun without supervision or go on an overnight hike alone. Now, I realize that I could have died just as easily as he did and that life can be lost in a split second.

There are many things that I've been putting off for a long time, and I'm going to do them now because Randy proved that life can be so short. I agree with what the rabbi at Randy's synagogue said, "Life should not be measured by its length, but by its depth."

Many people miss Randy and are mad about his death (me included), but we must remember our good times with him. If we cherish and hold on to our memories of Randy, he will live on in all of us for the rest of our lives.



Fireflies

Night is our parchment
Light is the ink we use at night
We're fireflies, fireflies flitting
Fireflies, glimmering, glowing
Insect calligraphers practicing penmanship
Six-legged scribblers
Of vanishing messages
Flickering, flashing, fireflies gleaming
Copying sentences, one by one
Six-legged scribblers, fleeting graffiti
Fine artists in flight overhead
Adding dabs of light, signing June nights
As if they were paintings
Flickering fireflies, fine artists in flight
Bright brush strokes overhead
Signing the June nights
As if they were paintings
We're fireflies, flickering fireflies.

Winter Wonderment

I often wonder at my young age
As I stare out of my window on a
Cold winter day, at foot tracks
In the snow, as in wonderment
If they were mine from another
Day of play....

I watch as the wind swirls the
Snow around the tracks,
Disappearing the paths that were left
Behind from my day of play, as if
Nature was mocking my youth
Going by....

Meghan McManus
Grade 6
Latimer Lane
School
Simsbury

Samantha
Mastrianni
Grade 6
Joseph A.
DePaolo Middle
School
Southington



I watch as the day turns to night
And the stars shine so bright upon
The wind-blown snow, casting magical
Characters upon the stage of a winter
Night

The stage is set for the winter
Wonderment. I watch as a winged warrior
Flies by, an owl in disguise. I see
Arms reaching across the snow as if
In applause for the owl. Oh, just
Shadows of bare branches. . . .

As the curtain of another winter night
Closes, I sleep with thoughts of
Tomorrow, of making longer tracks
In the snow, of mocking nature with
My youth, and waiting yet for another
Night of winter's stage of wonderment
And the cast of character's that will
Play .

Erin Jewett
Grade 7
Rochambeau
Middle School
Southbury

She Sits

She sits, locked in her room.
Her heart was broken so long ago, but she remains dejected.
She is excluded from the outside world.
He led her into this woeful life,
A life not worth living.
She sits, as though nothing could be worse.
Nothing could be worse than going on without him.
She's dying inside.
How could such pain exist?
Why try to endure without him?
She asks herself.
She creeps out of her room, squinting her eyes as if she'd never seen
light before.



She pulls herself toward the kitchen.

There is not a doubt in her mind that this is the right thing to do.

She sits, rocking back and forth, cradling a knife the size of her own arm.

In a moment, she lies motionless.

A pool of blood embraces her.

Depression pours out of her body.

And she sits not more.

Lessons

"Hurry up," I urged my 97-year-old great-grandmother, Meme. She had promised to take me to see the swans by the lake, and as far as my nine-year-old mind was concerned, she was not moving fast enough.

"I'm hurrying, I'm hurrying! My old legs can't go that fast," she replied. I stopped and turned around, waiting for her to catch up. The sweet summer breeze smelled of honeysuckle and Maine's evergreens. The sun was shining in a clear, smog-free, blue sky. As far as the weather, it was a perfect day. As she jogged towards me, I noticed she looked a little pale, but thought nothing of it.

She was next to me in five seconds and took my hand. As we walked the last quarter of a mile, I rattled on and on about school, friends, everything. Suddenly she stopped. I turned to look ahead of us and saw the pond, which was covered with a flock of beautiful white swans.

"See those swans, Liz? If anything is bothering you or something is making you sad, just come and tell it to the swans. They'll make everything better and take all your troubles away."

I just stood there speechless watching the snow-covered water birds. I don't know how long I stood there but Meme finally said, "Come on. I have to get supper started before Pepe comes home."

"Well, okay," I said reluctantly, not wanting to leave the beautiful, white swans.

Later that night when I was helping Meme clean up she said, "Liz, I'm going to leave you my recipe box when I die. It's going to be soon and I have decided to make my will."

"Oh, Meme, thank you, but you won't die for a long time," I cried.

"I'm not so sure about that," she said quietly.

"Well, I am!"

"Quit all that talk about death and get to making that berry pie you promised me at dinner! And, Liz, it's late," we heard Pepe say from the living room.

Elizabeth Chase
Grade 7
Granby Memorial
Middle School
Granby



"He's right, *mon petite sheau sheau*. You should get to bed," Meme said.

"Okay," I said. I went off to bed after kissing Meme and Pepe goodnight. I jumped into bed and snuggled under the quilt Meme and I made when I was seven. I fell asleep with warm thoughts of the next day and the sweet smell of Meme's berry pie.

The next morning I awoke to the sounds of conversation in the kitchen. I jumped out of the bed and ran down to the kitchen. Just as I reached the kitchen door I suddenly stopped. I heard daddy say something.

"We'll have to find a way to tell her about Meme passing away. It'll be hard on her. She loved her so much."

"Noooooooooooo!" I screamed and ran out of the house, blindly toward the woods thinking, "No! Not yet! It can't happen so soon." I ran as if something was chasing me. Tripping on a branch, I fell on the soft dew-covered grass and cried. I had no more tears to cry. As I looked up, I saw the pond. I remembered what Meme had said and started to talk through my empty sobs.

"She can't be dead! It's impossible! I'm not ready for her to be gone! She left me and I hate her! I really, really hate her!" I yelled at the white angels of the water. All of a sudden I started to cry again. I threw my head to the ground and covered my eyes with my arm.

"Liz." I heard my name. It was my mom. "Liz!" she repeated, "Liz, I'm sorry you had to find out that way. We were going to tell you when you were sitting down. There was nothing we could do. She died of natural causes and it was her time to go."

"I don't care!" I shouted. "I need her!"

"No one can stop God's will. He wanted her with Him and it's the best thing. She is happier than you can imagine right now, but she is probably lonesome for you."

"Well," I said finally calming down, "You're probably right."

"Of course, I am. I'm the mother. Come on, let's go have some pie."

"Okay," I said as mom and I walked back to the house.

A few days later at Meme's funeral, I gave the eulogy because I was the closest to her.

"I was going to write a speech but everything I wrote didn't seem right. She was a very spontaneous person who did things on the spur of the moment. She didn't like prepared and carefully-planned-out things. It was always instantaneous with her. She taught me the greatest lesson when she died. I may be only nine but I know what it is. She showed me that even though people who you love die, they are always with you. You still have the memories of the happy times, sad times, laughter, and tears. I will always miss her, but I will still have the memories."



Beauty Is Only Skin Deep

I was twelve years old and considered the class geek. I had thick horn-rimmed glasses, buck teeth, and a very serious case of acne. I still hadn't lost my baby fat. Every day seemed to be a bad hair day. I couldn't decide if my hair looked good up or down, with barrettes or with a scrunchie.

I had one or two special friends who stuck by me even when everyone else was laughing. I guess they must have liked me for my personality, even though low self-esteem had been taking over lately.

It was the week before my thirteenth birthday. My godmother wanted to give me a gift so special that I would never forget it, or her. It only took me a minute to come up with the perfect gift. A complete make-over!

The following day my godmother took me to the most famous New York hair and beauty salon which specializes in make-overs. I walked in with my head down and my shoulders slumped; I walked out with my nose high in the air. Next we went on a shopping spree at Macy's. With the help of a fashion expert, I left with a whole new wardrobe.

On Monday, I woke up feeling great. I jumped out of bed and got dressed. I put on my new hipster bell-bottom jeans and a red and white striped, short shirt. I snuck into my mom's bedroom and secretly used some of her most expensive make-up and her best smelling perfume. It caused me a bit of trouble since I've never put make-up on before. I put my shiny blonde hair into a ponytail. I left two strands of hair hanging down the sides of my face. This is how the popular girls at school wore their hair.

I was finally finished getting ready! It took me a lot longer than usual, which was a sign that I now cared more about myself than I did before I had the make-over. I had become a very lovely girl.

I hurriedly rushed to the bus stop. As the bus neared my stop, I started becoming a little nervous that people on the bus and at school would make fun of me for trying to be cool. I imagined them saying, "No matter what you do, it will never work. You're a geek; just face it." I pictured the worst, but hoped for the best.

When I climbed onto the bus, some kids didn't recognize me. All I could hear around me were kids whispering things like, "Who's that new girl over there? She looks like she could be cool."

Practically no one at school knew who I was until my homeroom teacher called my name for attendance. I slowly raised my hand. All the kids were amazed. They ran up to me and started asking questions about the make-over. I felt like I was becoming the most popular girl in my grade.

Jessica Fryc
Grade 7
Dodd Middle
School
Cheshire



That day I had made many new friends, but I realized that I hadn't talked to my old friends once. I felt really bad. After all, they were the only true friends I had. The friends I made today only liked me because of my cool clothes and looks, not because of my personality.

The next day I hung with all my new friends. As I saw one of my old friends walk by, I became very mad at myself. How could I do this to anyone, especially my best friend? I walked over to her. I asked her why she hadn't called me. She replied, "Well, you have become a bit conceited lately, and you think you are too good for me and all your other old friends."

Later that night I decided being cool and popular wasn't all that great. I still would like to have some popular friends, as long as I didn't have to change who I really was to be their friend. This would mean that they were really my true friends. They would stick by me no matter what the situation was.

The next day I went back to school as the everyday me, without make-up or cool clothes. Sure enough, none of the popular kids paid attention to me. Instead, they started making fun again. I didn't care anymore, just as long as I had my real true friends.

This was a great learning experience. I realized that it's not looks that count, it's the personality on the inside. It's a nice feeling just to be me!

Jennifer Caval
Grade 7
Martin Kellogg
Middle School
Newington

Silvielocks and the Three Bears

There once was a little girl name Silvielocks who lived in the forest with her grandmother Brunhilda. Silvielocks admired her long, curly, silver hair. She made sure she brushed it, at least, two to three times a day and shampooed it, at least, once a day.

One day, Brunhilda shouted to Silvielocks, "Silvielocks! It's time to wash your hair!"

"Yes, Grandma, I know."

"Oh, and while you're at it, wash the dishes!"

"I will!" Silvielocks shouted. She knew she would have to do the dishes first anyway, because she couldn't wash her hair in the sink with dishes in there.

After she finished all 753 dishes, she went to the refrigerator to get her shampoo. She opened the door and grabbed the bottle of shampoo. It felt lighter than usual, but Silvielocks thought she'd have enough for now.

Silvielocks walked over to the sink and wet her hair. She lifted the small bottle over her head. Nothing came out. She shook the bottle. Nothing. She hit the bottom and still nothing. She took the cap off and looked in with it over her eye about two inches away.

Suddenly, a tiny drop of clear liquid dropped into Silvielocks' eye.



"Ahhhh!" Silvielocks screamed in frustration and threw the bottle to the ground. Silvielocks grabbed a towel and dried her hair.

"GRANDMA!" Silvielocks shouted. "I have to go to the store to buy more shampoo!"

"Okay, dear. Just be careful. Here's \$0.10."

So Silvielocks set off for the store. As she passed a straw house, she heard a deep voice saying, "I'm gonna huff and puff and blow your house down!"

Later she passed a girl in a red hood walking and picking flowers with a wolf. Finally Silvielocks reached the store. Silvielocks walked in and saw the shampoo almost immediately. She ran over and grabbed the first bottle she saw without looking at the label. Silvielocks ran up to the counter, dropped the ten cents into the hand of Papa-bear. She ran toward the door thinking it was automatic and slammed right into it.

"Uh, it might help if you PULL!" said the voice of Papa-bear.

"Thanks!" Silvielocks replied as she ran out the door. Silvielocks ran home within a tenth of a second.

"Silvielocks!" Brunhilda shouted. "Clean your room!"

"MY HAIR!" shouted Silvielocks. *I have to wash my hair!*"

Silvielocks rushed over to the sink and squeezed a glob of the shampoo in her hand and scrubbed her hair. The shampoo made her scalp tingle, but it felt good and clean.

After she had rinsed her hair and dried it, Silvielocks looked in the mirror and saw that all her hair had fallen out!

"NOOOOO!" screamed Silvielocks in horror.

She rushed out the door before Brunhilda could even ask what the problem was.

When Silvielocks reached the store, she saw Mama-bear behind the counter.

"I want my money back!" screamed the bald girl.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked Mama-bear soothingly.

"This shampoo made all my hair fall out!"

"Let me see the bottle," replied Mama-bear. "Hmmm. Well, it did what it says it does, but it's not shampoo. It's chicken de-feathering lotion."

"Well, I want shampoo that will regrow my hair."

So Silvielocks got the shampoo to regrow her hair and ran back home.

Silvielocks went over to the sink and poured almost half the bottle on her skin head and started to scrub. Little by little she could feel her hair starting to pop out. She rinsed her hair and dried it.

"Grandma, come look at my beautiful hair!" exclaimed Silvielocks.

"Silvielocks! Your hair!"

"I know, Grandma," Silvielocks replied. "Isn't it wonderful?"

"Well, it's a lovely shade of violet."



"What?" Silvielocks screamed as she looked in the mirror. She ran out the door with the bottle of shampoo in her hand.

This time Baby-bear was behind the counter.

"Can I help you?" asked Baby-bear.

"Yes. This shampoo grew me purple hair!" exclaimed Silvielocks. "I demand my money back!"

"Well, can I see the bottle, please?" Baby-bear asked. He inspected the bottle and started to laugh.

"What?" Silvielocks asked in curiosity.

"Oh, the bottle says that it turns your hair purple which it did," Baby-bear replied.

"Well, I want my curly, silver hair back!" Silvielocks demanded.

"Well," Baby-bear began, "we don't have silver. We do have gold though."

So, Silvielocks took the gold shampoo. It turned her hair gold when she got it, so she had her name changed to "Goldilocks." But that's another story.

Scott Guild
Grade 8
Silas Deane
Middle School
Wethersfield

White Dove

White dove's wings
Came over my house, during the storm
A small pale hole
In the angry charcoal sky

Though the pastures rippled and shuddered
And the red barn flapped open its mouth,
Trying to yell
The dove looked down on me
As my glassy eyes looked up
And soon the screaming wind whispered
With the overturned canoe

The tall pines stopped swaying
As if in their own private dance
And the lake stopped playing tug-of-war

The clouds silently retreated
Like a black curtain
Slowly opened
To illuminate the sky



And the sun moved across our fields
Turning darkness to light
Like a painter smoothly stroking a canvas
With shades of green

The sun pasted light over dark
Like the dove pasted joy over our fear
Momma said, "God was watching over us"
For once I didn't laugh.

Drowning

The dark of the sea surrounds like an evil hand seizing me,
spinning and whirling around with the motion of the water,
the white foam is scooped up by the waves above me,
as I see the seaweed that has entangled my panicking body.
I look up to see the distorted sun shining above the water
and thrash to see the bright signs of life on the shore where I belong.
I hear the bubbles all around me, floating up to the surface,
as the steady, rapid pounding of people splashing around
and the monotonous drone of voices above
are smothered by the swift beat of my heart,
gasping for the last remains of life.

The wet has besieged my body and tries to enter,
as a pressure forms in my chest that restrains my steady flow of life.
Fear encircles me making my heart shutter in terror.
Death, being my fear, has its cold, bony hand creeping up my spine,
as I strike the rough, sandy bottom, knowing this may be where I lie
for eternity.

My nose is filled by the ocean water
and I know that I may never again smell another dry earthy scent.
The wetness moistens my tongue, but dries all my hopes.

Aimee Todd
Grade 8
Hall Memorial
School
Willington



Rachael Abed
Grade 8
King Phillip
Middle School
West Hartford

Rainy Day

I sit on the sagging bus seat, my heavy backpack threatening to crush my thighs. I'm sleepy despite the relatively easygoing day at school. I'm not exhausted, or even tired, just sleepy. The reason is probably the weather. The sky is pale gray, and the sun is making no attempt at breaking through this dreary barrier. The foliage, usually so bright and cheerful, has been forced from reds and yellows to a dull brick color. The chilly air seeps through the cracks in the misty bus window, and the rain makes a monotonous drumbeat on the metal roof. Inside the bus is flooded with a weak, yellow, glow from its interior lights, and it smells like vinyl, air fresheners, and wet raincoats.

As the bus goes on its rounds, the crowd of restless students grows smaller. Every few minutes the bus screeches to a halt, and I watch groups of wet kids clamber to be out of the door first. After awhile I turn my attention to the foggy window. The mist distorts the shapes of everything outside, like mirrors at an amusement park. I'm trying to decide whether the tall pine trees look like lines of toy soldiers or lots of giant pears, when the rubber tires shriek on the wet cement, and we turn onto my street. Soon we're at my stop. I reluctantly leave the dry bus and walk through the door into the downpour.

Slowly I make my way up the hill to my house. As I reach the driveway, the rain increases steadily. I'm completely soaked, looking and feeling like some homeless animal. As if to taunt me, the rain starts coming in sheets, and I have to grope for the door handle. Finally, I get the key to turn in the lock, and I stumble into the kitchen. An unwanted visitor, the dampness, follows me through the door. I peel off my layer of soaking wet outerwear, then hurry to the thermostat. Shivering, I turn the white metal dial. The heating starts with a cozy hum. I drag my feet all the way up the stairs to my room and collapse on the bed. I'm too exhausted to do homework, and it's too early to sleep, so I grab a book from the shelf and hurry downstairs again.

Curling up in the huge living room chair, I open my book and slowly slip from a world of bad weather and sleepiness to one of paper, print, and imagination. The rough texture of the upholstery chafes my elbow, and my feet tingle and go numb. The lamp spreads a soft glow over everything, and the chill is replaced with gentle gusts of warm air from the heating vent.

Outside the sky is darkening. The trees are tossed about in ruthless gales of wind that whistle like a panpipe through the chimney. Lightning shoots across the sky, looking like a glowing trident. Forming a percussion section, rain falls on the ground, drips in the gutter, and pours from the down spout. Thunder roars like an angry giant, but I am oblivious to everything. The only part of my surroundings I am aware of is the book in my hands.



House and He-Man

She wanted to get married.
I wanted a battle.
She wanted plastic kitchen knives.
I wanted a sword.
She insisted that we marry,
but I refused,
until I was allowed to don my armor for the occasion.
It was agreed,
and we were married.
It was the only wedding that I've ever heard of between a housewife
and a battle dressed He-Man...
until I saw "Geraldo" yesterday.

Halloween Night

The wind blew through the trees. My friends and I walked down the darkened streets. Leaves had changed color from dark greens to bright reds and yellows, and we kicked the piles heaped along the sidewalks by meticulous house owners.

Our faces were painted and masked; our hair was rainbow colored. We wore the baggiest of clothes, and feathered pillows padded our stomachs. We carried pillowcases to be filled with candied loot collected during this evening's outing.

The rituals were as ancient as the lives of our grandparents. We'd ring the doorbells and wait impatiently for someone to greet us. When the door opened, we screamed "Trick or Treat!" and the host would drop a candy bar into our bags. Throughout the night, our satchels grew heavy until we were forced to sit and sample our newly-acquired treasures. As we sat on the road's curb, we conversed.

Richard King, the oldest member of our group, seemed restless. His eyes wandered the street. Unraveling a Hershey bar, he said, "Hey! This night just don't have the excitement that it used to have."

Brian Thermike, his mouth chomping on chewy Starburst, Milk Duds, and Junior Mints, asked, "What's eating you, Richard?"

"I was just thinkin', maybe we oughta go and steal the punkins sittin' up on Old Mr. Rudy's porch, I heard no one never got 'em before. Just 'magine if we was the first."

We looked at each other in disbelief. Never had we considered breaking the law. My stomach tightened with excitement. Mr. Rudy,

Justin Good
Grade 9
Farmington
High School
Farmington

David Fulco
Grade 9
Putnam High
School
Putnam



the old widower, picked his pumpkins from his own pumpkin patch. He carved his pumpkins into frightening faces of goblins and dwarfs. He carved multifaceted designs of spiders, witches, and ghosts. *The Town Gazette* awarded him "Best Pumpkin Around" for the past three years. To mess with these works of art was unheard of.

I was not known for my powers to impress my friends. Maybe that's why Richard's statement was so intriguing to me. I got to my feet and walked toward old Mr. Rudy's house. No one asked me where I was going; they just followed close behind me.

Within minutes we reached the driveway of Mr. Rudy's home. The asphalt was still wet from the evening drizzle. The oak tree, which shadowed the driveway, stood silently like a sentry on duty.

The bright orange glow of a Jack-O-Lantern was the only light that illuminated the front porch. I concealed myself in the hedges that grew along the side of the porch. I stealthily stepped onto the boards of the porch. My hand stretched out in front of me. My fingers extended to grasp the object of my desire.

The face of the pumpkin captured my attention. The eyes were round ovals, the mouth, a huge toothy grin. The pumpkin mocked me. A sadness filled my heart as I looked into the glowing globe.

I reached down and lifted the pumpkin from the gray-painted porch. It was heavier than I had anticipated, and I strained my back as I gathered the cumbersome load into my arms. I turned to run. My black Nikes slammed against the boards of the porch and cushioned my feet as I landed on the manicured lawn. The candle had been extinguished and the light I had depended upon to lead my way was gone.

I found the driveway and followed it past the oak tree. I ran into the road. I sprinted past my friends. With the pumpkin cradled in my arms and my heart in my throat, I ran until I collapsed in the corn field at the end of the street. Looking at the pumpkin, I noticed how the smile had become hideous. I stood up and, with a large Nike swish, I kicked in the head, teeth, and eyes of the that grinning ghoul.

I looked down at what I had done. I found myself in tears. I cried for the smashed pumpkin and for Mr. Rudy whose Halloween celebration I had so selfishly ruined. Most of all, though, I cried for myself, for I had ruined the Halloween spirit. A piece of my childhood was taken away from me that night. It was my first act of willful destruction.

I still pass out candy. I carve pumpkins and enjoy the little people who knock on my door. As for myself, I have never again ventured into the dark night known as Halloween.

Writing Block:

A partial look at what goes on in my mind

With a newly sharpened #2 yellow pencil clutched tightly in my hand, I stared blankly down at the white lined-paper. Think! Think! I told myself. You need this! You need to write a story for English by Friday. You need a topic! Come on, I pleaded with myself, come on! You can pull it off! Just write something! If it's terrible, you can fix it up and no one will know. Come on, I know you can do this. I stared at the paper waiting for an idea to come.

Just pop out of the paper, I begged, like one of those 3-D image things. You know what would be really neat? If they had one of those that looked like a dragon. Oh, stop thinking about that!!! I demanded. Think about writing. You put aside an entire study hall to work on this, so just do it.

But I still couldn't concentrate, because my mind kept wandering. Why was I so pressed for time? Because (I remember a long time ago someone telling me not to start sentences with because, but I've always ignored it) two weeks ago, even before the class started working on them, I started the story I'm supposed to hand in, when I was suddenly inspired. I worked on it for a very long time, and so far I had produced thirteen pages of first-draft writing that was the beginning of my introduction. If I shortened it, it wouldn't make any sense, and it would take a lot of time and a lot of paper to finish it. And I have the paper, but not the time. My life is insane! Look at my after-school schedule

NO. The simple word ripped through the endless chatter in my head. STOP!! I told myself. Come on, come on, you need a stupid story. It doesn't even have to make sense. You can just write something and pass it off as science fiction. I've read a couple of English stories where I could swear the person had done just that.

I opened my English binder and stared down at the page labeled List of Possible Topics. It was underlined, too. The entire page was filled with topics. I counted. There were twenty-three topics there, and I didn't like any of them. They didn't click. And meanwhile, all I could think about were dragons popping out of white-lined paper. Would they have the blue lines on them too? Yes, I decided, they would. But what if they got wet? Would they crumple into a soggy mess? The blue lines would disappear. They do when the paper is wet. Maybe

Oh, give me a break, Sarah! Just write something for heaven's sake! Maybe I'll write about the dragons IT DOESN'T MATTER!! Just have something on a piece of paper to give him. Oh! I can't do this. I think I'll go get a drink of water.

Sarah Starr
Grade 9
The Williams
School
New London

One minute and thirty-three seconds later.....

Well, here I am again. Pencil, still reasonably sharp, paper still unreasonably blank. Of course, this isn't the original piece of paper. This is a clean piece of white-lined paper - number sixteen. I know. I've counted. This is ridiculous. I can't write on command! I can't even come up with a topic.

One of my friends suggested, "Just write a couple of poems." Easy for her to say, *she* can write poems. Yes, there's a little jealousy in there. Green dragons. There's two things wrong with that idea - the poem one. I make a list on my paper.

1. I can't write poems.
2. I hate writing poems.

There's probably a connection there somewhere. Seventh graders are trickling by outside. Oh man! I just wasted a whole study hall and I still don't have a topic. I could have been working on my algebra or something. Which reminds me - I have a ton of homework.

Come on-THINK!!! Think harder! Of course, I was not inspired.

"Can we go to our lockers now?" some one asked / whined, breaking my trance.

"All right," Mr. Schofield rumbled. I put away my pencil, picked up my outrageously heavy backpack, and walked out the door, storyless and topicless. I should have written about dragons.

Matthew Thompson
Grade 10
New Fairfield
High School
New Fairfield

Parking Lot Sabbatical

Sitting alone in a car is a good place to think and James Perkins, in no mood to do otherwise, decided to stay behind as his family got out and ambled into the motel where they were staying. Alone, he let his thoughts wander while sitting in stony silence on the black leather seat of the Black Lexus convertible. He considered his job, his family, and finally life in general as one often does when one allows one's thoughts to stray for too long.

He was not happy. Though his job at Pepsi International was in good stead, he did not feel secure. Though he knew his children loved him, he felt alone and empty. Not even his recent record set in the 50 meter dash at the Terrytown Fitness Center Annual Spring Picnic could bolster his



flagging spirits. Indeed, James Andrew Perkins was depressed. Sighing, he pushed a loose black hair back into place on his heavily gelled, moussed, and hair-sprayed scalp. Though seeing nothing, he gazed into the distance and soon his piercing brown eyes glazed over. Squeezing them shut, he sighed again and then let them open when his cheek felt the cold drop of salt water that he had squeezed out of them.

With a pale white hand, he shakily wiped his eyes and then nose. Slowly, he looked up and saw his children, not ones to waste any time, already running barefoot across the hot blacktop of the parking lot to the large inground pool in the center of it. His wife was not with them, so he assumed that she was still changing.

Slowly, a strange realization struck him. He missed her. Though he saw her every day he longed for her, not the woman that matched every angry outburst of his with one just as venomous, but his wife, the woman he fell in love with.

With a resolute air, he smoothed off his navy blue Armani suit and straightened his striped silk tie. After wiping his eyes one final time, he opened the door to their car and got out. Stoically he padded down the walkway to their door where he stopped nervously and took a deep breath. After fumbling for his key, he opened the door and went in.

His wife sat alone on the edge of the bed, a bathing suit tossed carelessly beside her. Red eyes betrayed her facade of calm and control. In a weak treble, she whispered, "I miss you."

Dumbfounded, James Perkins scratched his cheek and realized that he had forgotten to shave. Slowly, a wry smile played across his lips as he realized that an empty motel room is another good place to think. With each passing second, the smile broadened until it illuminated the room with a shine far surpassing the low watt lighting fixtures' glow. Dumbly, he nodded, remembering the woman that he had fallen in love with again through this slightly aged version of her who now stared into his face, unconscious of her wild hair and smeared eyeliner.

He took a breath and decided to savor the moment, delicately tasting the accord they were silently reaching. With a sigh he reluctantly let the moment pass. Then James Andrew Perkins, Pepsi International executive, 50 meter dash winner, and father of three, crossed the threshold of their "family" suite and kissed his wife.



Sarah Kanabay
Grade 10
Edwin O. Smith
High School
Mansfield

The Boy in the Bubble

A foul blast
blister bright sunshine
and swank city squalor
blowing me downtown
where the mean green lions
stand grinning sets of dinner knives
on the gum bubbled, ash trashed
steps of Lake Michigan but mostly
the Art Institute, with its
lazy hazy crowd of
black booted third dimension
you dig my groove art farts
waitin' in communion for the Big One.
I'm a breeze in the sky as
I blow right by thru those
revolving volvin' doors that
glide with a quisinart squeal
and the guard with the gold braid
and his powdered donut guru grin.
I'm in the hallowed holy hall
of hail mary and joseph hundred
dollar plaster poster print museum
replicas and gawdawful bingle bangles
goin' for a buck three eighty
when I see him, hangin' low below
the lighted wall.
It's a cool light, everythin slow down
casting multi glow colors from
the little glass windows nailed to
those opaque walls.
HOLD it, says I, that's the man
with the master plan for these little delicate butterfly for your very
own
pieces of Mr. L.C. Tiffany?
This boy in the bubble of too many twinkies,
hamhocks, herringsnacks, hohosbyhostess,
body by Ben and Jerry's?
He's the bull in the pahdonme madam
bone china store, and I know that
his big butterball butt by lay-z-boy
is sure as hell gonna break SOMETHING.



But,
then I see him, movin' ever
so
slow,
ever
so gentle,
as he cradles the glass bubbles
in his hamfists, and rubs
them as gently as madonna and child,
or an angel with the new dawn.

Hey, I say.
He's not so bad.

The Assassin titled Yourself

You choke down the force-fed food of a world through an inserted
plastic IV needle.
You let them take you.
part of you wants it,
part of you likes it.
Nowadays it seems like all
of you needs it.
Eat quicker.
Memorize faster.
Process better.
You want to work for a petty minimum wage?
Do you want to be serving hamburgers
to fellow classmates?
What, no honor classes?
No perfect SAT scores?
You're pitiful.
What do you want?
What is being forced down your throat?
The "American Dream" with a white house and model kids
like the ones found on tacky Campbell's Soup labels.
Do you want a stupid mate who waits on you hand and foot
with no pre-conceived notion that they're "living".

Garth Stahl
Grade 10
Farmington
High School
Farmington



NO.
You want space, no leader, no fictitious people and
not to be annoyed.
You want your life. One not determined by
a computer or family member.
Sever your computer.
Abort your family.
Don't marry that perfect little copartner.
Turn off your respirator and breathe on your own.
Pull the damn IV needle out of your arm
and take hold.

Chandrika
Rajan
Grade 11
Farmington
High School
Farmington

The Cello Beast July 14

Thankfully, Emily remembered that he kept a key under the door mat. She let herself into Jean-Bruno's house and stood for a moment in the hall. Even in her current state, she realized that he could come home at any moment. She stepped forward into the living room where she saw The Beast. Its case was green and well worn; Jean-Bruno had toured the world with the case. She found and opened the clips, three on the side with the hinge and five on the other side. The Beast was beautiful; even Emily admitted it, but it still deserved to die.

Not that it was a live thing, as Jean-Bruno liked to think. He called it some silly French name which he said meant "Divine" and referred to it as "She" with a capital "S". Emily wiped her sweaty palms on her jeans and took the metal cutters out of her back pocket. She looked below the pouch that held his rosin. The two bows were there, carefully unwound. She picked one up and cut the horse hair across the middle. She stared at it. She stepped away, wondering if that small act could calm her down, but she remembered how very much she hated him. It had once been love, but that had soon soured when she realized the Jean-Bruno was incapable of loving anything but The Beast. She slowly snapped the wooden stick of the bow, wincing as she heard the crack, and stared at The Beast.

Yes, it was the thing that Jean-Bruno loved more than any other. It had the figure of a beautiful French girl, long neck, thin waist. Its pegs, fingerboard and tailpiece were made of pure blackness. The scroll and body were made of a rich dark wood. The cello was only ten or so years old, but so tenderly used and so beautifully made that it looked antique. The endpin had once had a black cap on it, but that had been given to an admiring fan, as had broken strings and bad hairs. Jean-Bruno had been



playing in concerts since he was a child of six, but performing grew to disgust him, and as the days went by, she saw him turning into himself more and more. He loved rehearsals with the symphony, but he often complained about the others there. He was a genius; they were well-trained and talented. It was a big difference.

She was afraid to touch it, but she undid the Velcro around its neck and lifted it out of the case. She felt her hands shaking as she sighed, slowly trying to control her breathing. She placed it on its back on the floor, wanting more than anything to kick the elegant bridge that held up the strings. She couldn't, but she took in a shivering breath and did. The noise was awful as The Beast clattered. Emily turned to leave, but The Beast was still beautiful. She whipped out the metal cutters and cut the strings across the center. She heard a sickening thud as the sound post fell. It was still beautiful. Somewhere in Europe when Jean-Bruno was close to sixteen, someone rich heard Jean-Bruno play and ordered a cello to be made. Emily wasn't sure how much The Beast was worth, but she knew that it was irreplaceable. She picked up her foot and placed it in between the collapsing fingerboard and tailpiece. She slowly transferred her weight to the foot on the cello and heard the snap of The Beast's wood crack. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she wondered why she had done that. The Beast was dead, just like its maker. She knew that he would know that it was she who had killed that Beast, but she didn't want him to catch her in the act.

She threw the metal cutters at it and walked away.

Flight 104, NYC to London, 1996

drunken soberness
white wine-black coffee
ambiguity of image . . .
both bitter, both buzzed

high on grapes and beans
pour me some of each
cancel one another out
neutralizing pH levels of stupidity . . .

crazed senseless dances of lost children
our empty smiles and shot glasses
blowing green to smoke green to become black
arming our defenseless mouths with glowing
nicotine sticks . . .

Marisa J.
Futernick
Grade 11
Hartford Public
High School
Hartford



smashed guitars and mirrors
we destroy to forget
we demolish to rebuild
we fly to escape
our clipped wings are zebra-striped,
black/white parallelism of bound birds
lost in clichés, cultureless, we wave our
frail, bony limbs, swarming through the
oxygenless air.

heavy grey stone shackles of aged archetypes
bind our soot-smear'd bare feet . . .

our rainbow lips part as the revenge spills forth
we scream in ignorance and prophesy,
revealing our ubiquitous lack of knowledge
drowsily piled on top of one another,
we surround our carrot bodies
with shimmering bottles
of our fermented fuel.

can't run on empty,
needy soulless fetuses in personal chains
blood-smear'd, slashed the connection
from our mother's abdomen
cut off from the dust
we ramble, we are maniacs, we wander through
the dry desert of our wide world . . .

enraged, we fling our half-filled Absolut bottles
at the brick barriers
shards of pop-past shoot back at us, jab us, hurt us . . .

we suck our wounds
we watch the dark red scabs form
we wrap ourselves around each other
as if to form human bandages...

we kiss
and heal
and hold
and drink,

we weep
and dream
and rise
and grow,



we spit
and hate.
and loathe
and crush,

we destroy
we demolish
and we fly.

How to Follow Old Men Home

I met an old man eating fried chicken yesterday. He told me that he came from another space, though we were both enjoying nearly the same meal. He moved me with stories of his cats and his birds and his flower garden. I told him that I, too, owned a cat and a bird and at one time kept a rather nice bed of flowers. He continued to eat until he had to leave because he thought that one more bite of fried chicken would kill him.

I followed him home and found that he lived in a small flat with no yard. I saw no flowers, I saw no cats and I heard no birds. I poked about a bit and soon found him sitting in the back in an old lawn chair. I asked him why he had a lawn chair if he had no lawn. He told me that he has seen more beautiful, green lawns than I will ever see. I couldn't argue because I am young and haven't lived long enough to see the things that he has seen. I asked him where his flowers and cats and birds were but he didn't answer. And so I walked into his kitchen and got a bottle of Coca-Cola from the ice box. I took the top off and went back outside.

The old man told me that he used to drink a lot of soda when he was younger and that I had just drunk the last bottle of it he had put away to save when he was just a kid. I looked at the empty bottle and saw the old man in it running around in fields and playing kick the can after school. "It's only soda," I thought.

I looked about a bit more, searching for his flower garden. I had asked him where it was, but he only pointed. He pointed off into the distance at all the buildings and trees. "Those aren't flowers," I told him. And then he began to cry. He told me he was crying because no one else remembered his flowers or his cats or his birds or the joy of Coca-Cola. "You are not so old," I said to him.

Nicholas Brown
Grade 11
Woodstock
Academy
Woodstock



"Yes," he said, "but now my knees crack when I sit and my back aches when I stand and my feet hurt when I walk - - where can I go?" I didn't know. What I do know, though, is that walking backwards certainly doesn't hurt any less than walking forwards. I didn't say this to him. Instead I put the Coke bottle in the recycling bin and went home.

Storey Radziunas
Grade 12
Mercy High School
Middletown

Real Parents

"Do you ever want to search for your real parents?" When people ask me this question, I say, "Real? What do you mean?" Then I tell them a story.

My life began when I was five months old. A stewardess carried me off the plane at Logan Airport in Boston. Within seconds an excited hand grabbed at my infant wrist, peering anxiously at my name tag. "She's mine! I knew it."

Whoosh! I was whisked away into the arms of a dark-haired stranger, who for the rest of my life, I would call my mom. She cuddled me in her arms, as my four-year-old sister jumped up and down, desperately trying to catch a glimpse of her new baby sister. My dad stood by, grinning uncontrollably, at the sight of me. The smile grew as I stretched out my tiny paws towards him. He wrapped me in his big arms and kissed my tiny head. My sister, now squirming worse than if she had to use the bathroom, was begging in her squeaky voice, "Can I please hold my baby sister? I'm the big one now."

Since my sister was only four, my parents forced her to sit down and hold me on her lap. I lay, sprawled out, resembling one of her limp and helpless Cabbage Patch Kid dolls. However, I was a real live baby. I was finally rescued when the photographer, my father, grew tired and hungry.

My new family and I journeyed to none other than the ideological American restaurant, IHOP, International House of Pancakes. My entrance to the United States would not have been complete if we had eaten anywhere else. My parents, the smart folks that they are, knew the importance of this breakfast.

They, however, were not so smart when it came to the foods they ordered. Thinking that I was only five months old and perhaps, airsick, they neglected to get me a breakfast. Well, I showed them. As soon as my sister's steaming stack of pancakes came, I grabbed the spoon out of my mom's hand and dug in. I delivered my first two lessons to my family at this point. Number one: Sisters must share. Number two: I love to



eat.

My arrival day progressed with even more memorable events. Cooing waitresses carried me off into the IHOP kitchen. I met my grandmother for the first time at her hair salon, where she was setting a woman's hair. At the sight of me she abandoned the woman. Ironically, the abandoned lady's son married my grandmother's daughter. Thankfully, by the time of their marriage, she had already forgiven my grandmother for ruining her hair. I also met my grandfather a few hours later. I immediately reached my arms out to him. My gesture of instant warmth caused him to squeeze me close up against his cheek and say, "That will be worth millions to you someday." He meant he would spoil me. And he did so for thirteen years by singing me songs and letting me use his special deck of cards to play solitaire. He died just three years ago and each memorable moment we shared together, beginning with my arrival day, keeps him close in my heart.

This special day marked the beginning of my life and memories of it have become family favorites. Events such as these epitomize the fulfilling life I have. While others may feel that finding their biological parents is essential, I have never felt such a desire. My life is full and complete with the love my family gives me and I do not need anything else. I could never imagine my life without watching the country line-dancing channel with my dad, arguing with my sister about who has bathroom priority, or picking the first mayflowers in my yard to present them to my mom. My parents are the only people who can recount to me the time when I insisted on a proper burial for my first cat, Shadow. On my insistence, the entire family said a prayer for her in cat heaven and I went to visit her nearly every day. What more could I want from a family?

Sometimes we are certainly not a perfect unit. We cry. We scream. We fight. But we share. We share memories, pain, love, and laughter which belong to us alone. Sure, I may always wonder which biological parent I resemble more. I may wonder if somewhere I have another sister or brother who looks like me, but I also wonder what it is like to breathe water or fly like a bird. Yet, I'll never have to wonder about the identity of my real parents. My real parents are the ones who raised me.



Brian Kim
Grade 12
Glastonbury
High School
Glastonbury

Attention People: Beware of Janus

The wind blows outside the apartment as the sun begins to set. The young man moves about his apartment, looking for clothes. He puts on a navy blue turtleneck and khaki slacks and searches for his cashmere sweater. A program from last night's concert rests on the coffee-table next to his sweater. On the front of the program is a picture of the young man's band, which performed at the university's student center. He picks up the program and looks at it. There he is, the poster-boy for J. Crew, standing between four other male college students who are all dressed in ripped jeans, flannel shirts, and dirty baseball hats. He wonders where the guys are now. Probably out drinking again, he thinks. It seems that the only times he hangs out with them are during rehearsals and performances. While he thinks about the band members, he looks out the window and decides to go for a walk before it gets too dark.

As he exits the apartment building, he motions to hail a taxi. The dying sunlight faintly reflects off his Rolex watch as he stands along the curb with his arm raised. A taxi finally pulls in front of him and he gets in.

"Central Park, please," he says as the meter begins to hum softly. The taxi pulls away from the sidewalk. The young man stares out the window and watches the buildings fly by. Just as they pass the bright neon lights of Tower Records near 70th Street, the cab driver breaks the silence and begins a conversation.

"You know what I hate the most about life in the city?"

"What, people who don't tip you?"

The driver chuckles. "No, no, not that. What annoys me is that it's hard to find an honest person you can trust these days."

"How so?"

"About a month ago, I was at home, having a beer with a buddy of mine. We were relaxing, you know, just shooting the breeze. Anyways, he tells me that he's in trouble because his rent is due and he can't pay it for some reason or other, so he asks if he can borrow two hundred bucks. That's a heck of a lot of money, but he agrees to pay me back within a month. A month has passed and he hasn't paid up yet. I call him up and he ignores my messages and when I do reach him, he denies that I ever gave him money. I knew him for three years and I thought he was a true friend. It really hurts, you know?" The cab driver becomes silent as he sadly thinks about his friend.



"Yeah," the young man replies quietly. The taxi slows down outside an entrance to Central Park and he hands the driver a ten. "Here. Keep the change."

"Thanks, buddy. By the way, don't forget that people are hard to trust these days. Take it from me."

The young man exits the taxi and heads toward the entrance. A crowd of little boys runs past him with their tired mothers in tow. He notices that the trees along the path are beginning to show faint traces of orange and yellow. He kicks a pebble and watches it bounce off the path and land in the dark grass. A chilly breeze blows around him.

As he nears the bridge overpass, he thinks of how cool it would be to have a small party at his apartment tonight with some of his friends. He thinks of inviting his band members over as well, because they are always complaining about their cramped on-campus dormitories and are always looking for a reason to get out of their rooms. A party would definitely be fun. He walks under the bridge when something hits him on his head. He cries out in pain and falls to the pavement. Something else hits him again, this time in the stomach. He looks up and sees four men surrounding him. One of them pulls out a baseball bat while the others hold him down. Before the man with the baseball bat hits him, the young man looks up at him and gasps. The young man's last thought is of the cab driver's sad voice.

Hours later on the same day, the lights in the young man's apartment are on and his stereo is on full volume. Inside the apartment are four young men dressed in flannel shirts, jeans, and sporting baseball caps. One of the men sits in the armchair, looking at his new Rolex and admiring his new apartment. Another looks down at his shirt and curses. His favorite shirt is torn.

Across town, at the 18th Precinct, the report on the latest homicide in Central Park states:

Young man, early-twenties, blonde hair, blue eyes, found dead under a bridge overpass. Probable cause of death—repeated blows to the head with a club-like instrument. No current suspects or motives at this time. Most likely a random homicide. Victim was found clutching a piece of torn, red plaid flannel in right hand.



Malu Govindan
Grade 12
Amity Senior High
School
Woodbridge

Brown Head Held High

Dawdling in the Pulaski Academy girls' locker room, I tried to stall the inevitable. I tied up my hair, pulling out strands and redoing the bun. I double knotted my sneakers. Two girls were laughing in front of the long mirrors, their shiny blond hair dancing in ponytails, their light eyes accentuated with mascara, freckles dotting their noses and cheeks. I felt a twinge of envy; how I wished to be like them, to be pretty, to blend in. When the locker room was empty I stood up in front of the mirror. My hair looked dull and boring, my skin brown and ugly. With an inward sigh I pushed open the heavy double doors and left the locker room.

I shuffled across the scuffed butterscotch paneling of the gymnasium. My class was huddled in the middle of the gym, their banter echoing mockingly. I wished to be able to join them, to be included, but I knew that I wasn't good enough. I couldn't play like them, and this was my first year in Arkansas. After moving around in England and the U.S., being the new girl was nothing new, sixth grade no easier. Head down, I walked to the farthest corner of the gym, praying for a catastrophe to interrupt class.

Coach Smith clomped into the gym, a silver whistle dangling from his mustached mouth. After a glance that served as roll call, he nodded at two boys. With wide grins, the new captains strode to opposite sides of the gym. The larger, a freckled kid whose stature dwarfed his twelve years, began choosing his team.

My stomach tightened, and I steeled myself for the next five minutes. With practiced nonchalance, I shrank into myself. As name after name was called, kids left the team pool, crossed the yellow line, and joined their teammates; shouts and laughs punctuated by enthusiastic high-five's. I forced myself to accept reality: today's class would be like all the others. When the two teams were formed, I would be left behind the yellow line, twenty-five stares boring into my skin, my eyes cast down to avoid the disgusted faces. The realization didn't startle me; I was different, and here different wasn't acceptable.

"We want Scott!"

"Peter."

"Jane."

The stream of names died. Without looking up, I knew that I was alone. I clamped my jaw and forced the hurt to lump in my throat. My face flushed as I tried to stop the stinging tears. Picking at an imaginary piece of lint on my shorts, I waited. And waited. By now the coach should have "encouraged" one of the captains to pick me. I turned, silently begging him to end my humiliation. He was gone. Stranded, I shrank away from my classmates, their white faces standing out in relief



against the tan walls. Their eyes had hardened, oozing hostility; a few snickered with contempt.

"Come on, Chuck, you pick her. I had to be on her team last time."

"No way, man. We don't want no dumb, brown apes on our team."

His words took my breath away. I recoiled as if he had punched me. I had heard stories about that word, *prejudice*. Those three syllables do nothing to convey the true sense of the word. It is much more than a word. It is a weapon, the coldest and most powerful. No armor can reflect it, nothing can cushion its impact. I saw that my unpopularity had nothing to do with my athleticism, nothing to do with my recent arrival at Pulaski. It was the color of my skin that left me behind the yellow line. I almost laughed; I could have been athlete of the year and still spent as much time behind the yellow line. As shame died, rage smoldered. I raised my head for the first time all year, pulling myself to full height. My classmates no longer looked bigger than me; their contemptuous faces lost all power. That day the twinges of envy were extinguished forever. I saw myself, not through their eyes, but through mine. Fingernails carving angry red welts into my palms, I stood there, finally understanding. I took one step forward and turned, my brown legs carrying me proudly out of the gym, my brown head held high, my brown heart weeping.

We Often Fail the Second Time Around As Well

After admiring the scenery for 180 years,
I get out of the car
with a full heart,
and a long elastic band stretch
of my legs and arms into the glittering day.
My father stands in front of Waterloo
in his loafers.
It is a place we passed by chance twenty miles out of Bruxelles.
We saw the hill and the lion
looming above the highway for miles.
At the front door of the blue July sky
is the visitor information center.
Our map doesn't mention the historical tourist office
pasted so obscenely over history,
it interrupted Gebhard's ghost.

Rebecca Shea
Grade 12
Simsbury High
School
Simsbury



The lady we pay for museum passes
is yelling in Dutch at her ex-husband
on the telephone
She doesn't mind ignoring us
because we are Americans.
We have been driving since Amsterdam
where the hotel was overbooked,
and wary, fair skinned Europeans my age
tried to sell me heroin on the sidewalk.
In a foreign world,
defeat comes at you with bayonets.
My father cradles the new Nikon,
to catch the fate of Europe two centuries too late.
I stagger up 226 steps in the heat,
and see the defeat is colossal.
Below the monument,
my father is the iron duke
who lets us register the mountains
history makes of defeat.
On the memorial hill top,
I imagine Napoleon
limping off to Elba
like a frightened dog.
His return to France must have
knocked Vienna off its feet.
They should have known at least,
how he would try to undo defeat.
I am fifteen years old. Defeat is familiar.
It is hard to avoid at this age.
I turn to my father in the sunshine.
"But what did Napoleon do
after Waterloo?" I ask.
His sigh is a reply beneath the memorial lion;
"He had no choice left
but to abdicate a second time."



Honorable Mention

Chyquaan Adams.....	Clinton Avenue School
Shannon Andrews.....	Trumbull High School
Chelsea Bardot.....	Cornwall Consolidated School
Nick Baxter.....	Cheshire High School
Ashley Bellman.....	Woodstock Academy
Joshua Beranis.....	East Lyme Middle School
Remy Bourget.....	Roaring Brook Elementary
Joel Bullock-Vigdor.....	Kendall Elementary
Kerry Burke.....	Kathleen E. Goodwin Elementary
Raymond Clark III.....	West Middle School
Greg Daley.....	Warren Harding High School
Gianpatrick Dennies.....	Davenport Ridge School
Greg Dunford.....	Mary P. Hinsdale Elementary
Erin Dussault.....	Timothy Edwards
Kate Eburg.....	The Morgan School
Kevin Forsa.....	Plantsville Elementary
Kimberly Gilbert.....	Memorial Boulevard School
Marisely Gonzalez.....	Natchaug School
Alison Hamon.....	Joel Barlow High School
Aubrey Hayes.....	Killingly High School
Tara Honyotski.....	The Writers' Den
Jamie Janus.....	Tashua Elementary
Michael Jensen.....	Gales Ferry School
Heather Jones.....	East Hartford High School
Gregory Judson.....	Memorial Middle School
Rhonda Kauffman.....	E.O. Smith High School
Kevin Keating.....	RHAM High School
Kerri Kundra.....	Great Oak Middle School
Lavinia Lasko.....	Joel Barlow High School
Bobby Marino.....	Danbury High School
William Mathews.....	Hall Memorial School
Laura Mattaliano.....	Chalk Hill Middle School
Lauren McGowen.....	East Lyme High School
Caitlin McKay.....	Mary R. Tisko School
Lae Phongsavanh.....	Killingly High School
Timothy Rezendes.....	Kelly Middle School
Emily Rosenberg.....	Eastbury Elementary
Keli Rulf.....	Farmington High School
Sarah Roberti.....	Melissa Jones School
Nicholas Santucci.....	Beecher Road School
Daniel Simonich.....	Eastbury School



Jordan Skeens.....Dean's Mill School
Jason Sklar.....Beecher Road Elementary
Nina Sotaski.....Alma E. Pagels School
Laurie Tamis.....Amity Regional Sr. High School
Harry Tokarz.....Mary T. Murphy Elementary
Rebecca Vest.....Eastbury Elementary
Michael Weingarth.....Beecher Road School
Alexis Wright.....Annie Fisher School
John Yates.....Redding Elementary
Peter Zmigrodzki.....Hebron Elementary

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Teachers of Published Authors

Denise Abercrombie.....	E. O. Smith High School
Robert Archibald.....	Simsbury High School
Dea Paoletta Auray.....	Mill Hill School
John Basnight.....	Putnam High School
Stacey Bennett.....	New Fairfield High School
Bess Berger.....	Kendall Elementary
Beth Bonney.....	A. W. Hanmer Elementary
Catherine Buchholz.....	Silas Deane Middle School
Susan Buoniconti.....	Nathan Hale Elementary
Nancy Carlin.....	Mill Hill School
Barbara Cohen.....	Granby Memorial Middle
Joanne Deegan.....	East Haddam Elementary
Sharon DeFillippi.....	South Side School
Marion Devokaitis.....	Canton Intermediate School
Linda Edwards.....	Tashua Elementary
Shira Flowers-Eckert.....	Farmington High School
Judith Gardner.....	Hebron Avenue Elementary
Sylvia Garland.....	Amity Senior High School
Cathy Grimes.....	Wooster School
Patti Guignino.....	Farmington High School
Thomas Hart.....	King Phillip Middle School
Carol Hayes.....	Beecher Road School
Shiala Higgs.....	Regional Multicultural Magnet
James Howson.....	Rochambeau Middle School
Cheryl Incandella.....	Natchaug School
Frieda Johnson.....	Ridgebury Elementary
Renana Kadden.....	Farmington High School
Patricia Kenifick.....	Joseph A. DePaolo Middle
Lesley Kirschenbaum.....	North Windham School
Sharon Lehr.....	Academy Elementary
Joanne Lombardi.....	Davenport Ridge
Adrienne Lovell.....	Mercy High School
Carole Lutes.....	Dodd Middle School
Judy Mahar.....	Roaring Brook School
Stephen M. McCue.....	The Williams School
Frances Merante.....	Ridgebury Elementary
Sheila Murphy.....	Glastonbury High School
Susan Powers.....	Woodstock Academy
Myrna Rabin.....	Center Road School
Margeen Reynolds.....	Latimer Lane School
Jodi Rosenblatt.....	Ridgebury Elementary
Jayne Sardella.....	Kendall Elementary School
Beverly Skinnon.....	Plantsville Elementary School
Deborah Szajnberg.....	Wolcott Elementary School



Stephanie Szymonik.....Myrtle H. Stevens
Richard Telford.....Hall Memorial School
Alva Torre.....Hartford Public High School
Gail Wagner.....Haddam Elementary School
Molly Weaver.....John M. Moriarty School
Susan Weber.....Martin Kellogg Middle
Sandra Wojick.....Natchaug School

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