

KALEIDOSCOPE

A Celebration of Michigan's Student Authors

2021

Michigan Reading Association

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A Celebration of Michigan's Student Authors

Edited by

*The Michigan Reading Association
Kaleidoscope Committee*



2021

Editor's Note: Manuscripts were selected by building-level staff in the student's district. Manuscripts have been edited for conventions including spelling, grammar, format, content, word count, length, and space considerations. Care was taken to be accurate, although errors may have inadvertently occurred.

Please keep in mind that this publication contains writing from all age groups.

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March 8, 2021

Dear K-12 Michigan Authors,

CONGRATULATIONS!



You are officially a published writer! I hope that you have an understanding of what an admirable accomplishment this truly is. You have shown a passion for writing. Author Kate DiCamillo believes that 'Stories connect us'. During a time where so many of us are having to spend time away from each other, your words will connect us.

The Michigan Reading Association would like to extend sincere praise and enthusiasm for your writing submission. Keep going! Keep putting words on the page. The world needs your writing.

I look forward to reading more from you in the future. Who knows? Maybe one day you'll have a whole bunch of published books.

Sincerely,
Colby Sharp
2021-2022 Michigan Reading Association President

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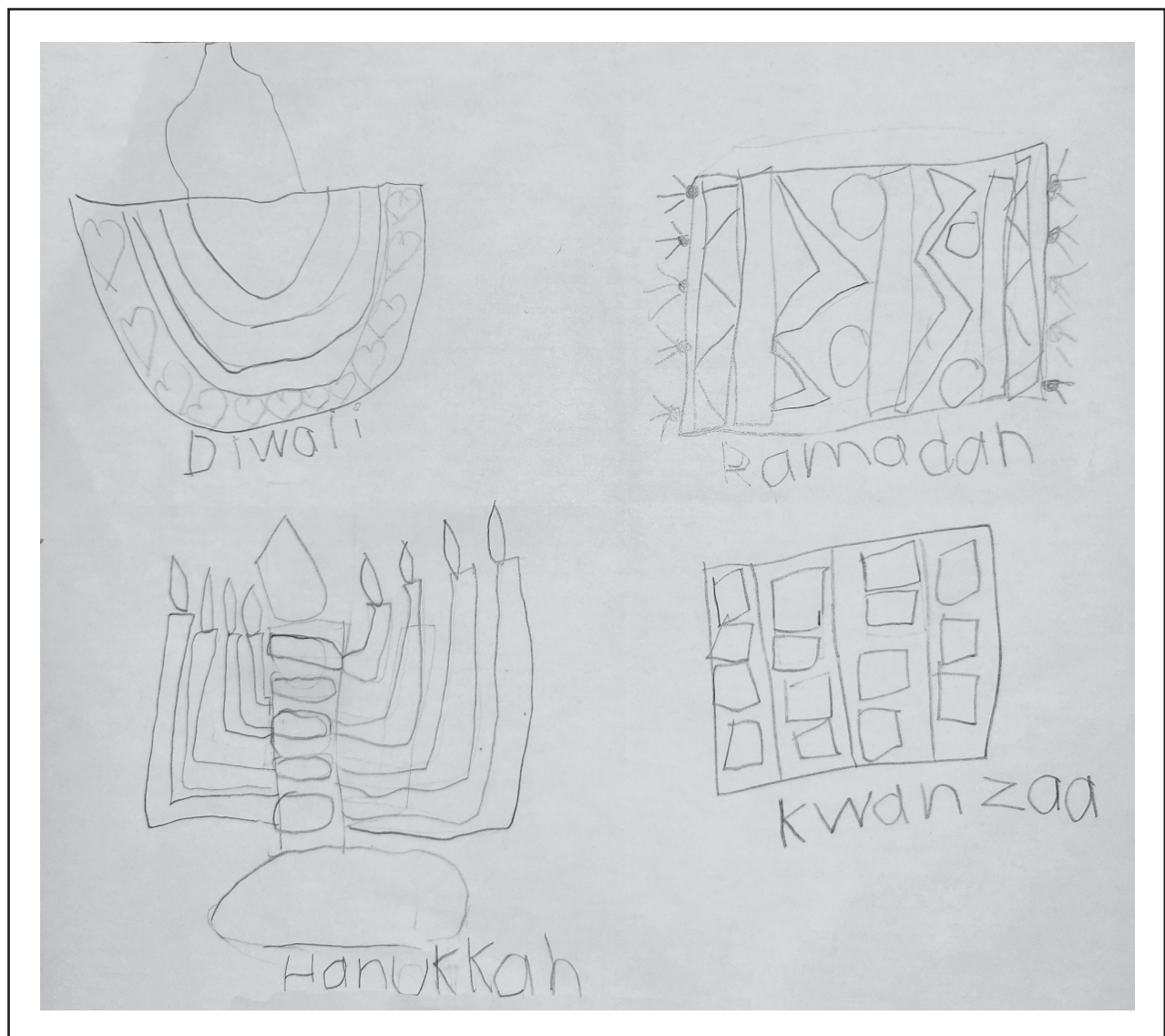
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Holidays Around the World

I love learning about holidays around the world. I learned about Diwali and a Diya. It is made of clay. I learned Hanukkah is the festival of lights. Ramadan is a moon holiday. It lasts for 30 days. Kwanzaa is celebrated for 7 days. They light one candle every night.

Yasmin Osborne, Kindergarten

Roberts Elementary
Shelby Charter Twp, MI



The Big Wave

It was a sunny day outside in Georgia when my family and I packed up our gear to go to the beach. I ran to the beach with excitement. The blue water felt so good, like as warm as the inside of an oven. Quickly, a humongous wave came in and I was disappointed that I didn't catch it while I was on my big orange tube with black handles. I was determined to ride a wave as big as the one I had just seen, so as soon as there was a break in the waves we quickly ran further into the warm ocean. We went so far out we could barely see the glistening sand on the beach. There was a ginormous wave coming in and I was holding the handles like my life depended on it. But as soon as I caught the wave it lifted me up so high that I felt like a superhero flying high above everything else. As it slowly came down, my tube went on its side and it started rolling. I felt like I was rolling down a rocky hill. I was so nervous that I was going to get lost since the wave took me so far, but luckily my family followed me. I felt like almost everybody on the beach was watching, especially my family. After my tube and I came to a rest, my family cheered loudly for me.

Sylas Barbour, 3rd Grade
*Browning Elementary School
Sterling Heights, MI*

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
you can write in about just a few minutes of time and make it very interesting.

A Gift That Was Special Is...

A gift that was so special was my birthday money because I could save up for my sister and family, or even help poor people. Money can sometimes be helpful for people who really need it. Well, let me tell you a story about money!

First, I was going to the mall. Next, I was running to the mall. Then, I saw a shiny dollar! I was so happy. I burst with happiness! I screamed so loud that everyone in the mall heard me. "Wow. This is my lucky day. Eeeeeek!!" I went home to my piggy bank. Then, I counted my money. I had enough!

I went to the store. Then, I saw a shiny lava lamp. I chose the blue one. Then, I surprised my sister with it. The money was special to me, and the lava lamp was special to my sister.

Leyna Nguyen, 3rd Grade
Plumbrook Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI

Fun at Michigan Adventures

There I was, a four-year-old about to enter this massive amusement park! I was going to Michigan Adventures with my family, aunts, uncles, and grandpa. Me and my grandpa went over to the carnival game and he played it. He won the game and picked out a pink teddy bear for me. I also went on a few rides. My favorite ride was the Ferris-wheel. Then, me and my brother Thomas went on a frog ride! It went so high in the air. I was scared at first, but I realized it was not. Later, when it was dark, me and my family went on the Ferris-wheel just one more time. After that, we went back to our campground, ate dinner, ate s'mores, played card games, and sat by the fire. Lastly, I thought about all the fun stuff I did that day and hugged my new, now old, pink teddy bear. I am looking forward to when I get to go to Michigan Adventures again.

Claire Peacock, 3rd Grade
Lighthouse Elementary School
New Baltimore, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
that it is always the most fun when you are with family making memories
and I hope that readers notice this through my writing.

In the Gulf of Mexico

In the Gulf of Mexico near Florida, the captain shouted, "Welcome aboard!" The wind blew through my hair and the water splashed as the boat took my family and I on our fishing trip. Just then the *brrrrrrrrmmmm* of the engine filled my heart with excitement! On board, the boat captain's name was Captain John. My twin sisters, mom, dad, and I were all together.

As we headed out, I could taste the salt water in the air. The next thing I knew, we were on our way to the fishing reef. It was early in the morning and a little cold. It took a half an hour to get to the reef, and we started fishing. The bait we used was live shrimp! It was fun getting the shrimp out of the live well and putting them on the hook.

The captain said, "Tyler, is this your first time fishing in the Gulf?"

I replied, "Yes, exactly!"

In the end, we caught many different types of fish. Some of the fish we caught were sheepshead, pufferfish, Spanish mackerel, and baby goliath grouper. After a while we headed back in. Back at the dock we unloaded the boat. The captain cleaned our fish, and when he was done we fed the scraps to the pelicans. It was interesting watching the pelicans go after the scraps. Back at home we cooked the fish on the grill and it tasted GREAT! I will remember this trip for the rest of my life!

Tyler Raymond, 3rd Grade

*Dean A. Naldrett Elementary
New Baltimore, MI*

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
how exciting my trip was with my family and that I used my senses to develop
my ideas when writing this story!

My First Roller Coaster

When I stepped into the line of the Iron Dragon at Cedar Point, I was really nervous. My mom was saying, "It's okay, there is nothing to worry about." Even though she kept saying it, I was still a little afraid. We started climbing the stairs to get to the ride. My palms were sweating, but I tried to be brave.

My mom and I got to the seat, buckled up, and then placed the bar down. My mom was holding my hand to comfort me. The ride started, and I was very excited as my nervous feeling started to go away. My mom kept saying, "No worries!" We went up the hill with the loud clickety clack!

We started to go down. I yelled, "Woohoo!" It was awesome! As the roller coaster dove down towards the water, I thought that was the best part of the ride.

The ride was over, and I wanted to go on it again. My mom was laughing, "I told you it would be fun."

I smiled. "You are so right!" I kept yelling, "Iron Dragon is the best!" From that day on, I was a roller coaster maniac!

Charles Robertson, 3rd Grade
*Burr Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI*

Whispering Woods

I was doing my morning walk on a sunny Monday morning. I found this old, abandoned house in the woods. I did my walks every day and yet never saw this. Goosebumps instantly covered my legs like moss. I heard a voice. The wind said, "Go, rush. Go, rush. Don't come back!" I bolted to school like a cheetah in the savannah. I could not think straight at school that day. My mind raced with thoughts about this house. I had to go back. After school I ran to it and I opened the door. The door swung open with a creak. "Go away," the voice said. When I turned on my phone light, I saw no one. I asked, "Who are you?"

"You'll find out soon, Kyra," it said.

"How do you know my name?" I spoke.

The goosebumps came back. I ran out of the abandoned house. I ran to my own house and then slammed the door. "Kyra, no slamming doors!" Mom screamed. "Just because Dad is gone, doesn't mean you get to break the rules!" The next day I went to the house again, opened the door, and a huge gust of wind hit my face. "I thought I said don't come back!" I heard the voice in the wind again. It sounded oddly familiar, almost like Dad's voice. I had not heard his voice in so long. It was hard to tell. Was it Dad?

Lilly Adame, 4th Grade
Flickinger Elementary
Utica, MI

Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall

Snow falls. Snowmen appear. Elves arrive.
And plants try to survive.

Snow melts. Snowmen disappear. Here comes rain!
And plants bloom in many colors like red and blue.

Summer starts. The heat begins. No shoes!
And ~~SPLOOSH!!~~ We go in the pool.

Fall chills. Leaves fall. Halloween time.
And a little snow starts to fall.

And it all starts again.

Madilyn Lupo, 4th Grade
Ebeling Elementary
Macomb, MI



The Owl Family:

A Haiku Story About Great Horned Owls

Looking for a nest
Abandoned hawk nest will do
Perfect place for home

Lay eggs one, two, three
All tiny and white circles
Soon there will be chicks

Take turns guarding nest
About thirty-five days pass
Chicks hatch one, two, three

The tiny owlets
Look at mommy and daddy
"Hoo h'hoo hoo hoo"

Protects the babies
The dark of night is now here
Find food for her chicks

Flies on silent wings
Seeing in the dark of night
Swoops down from above

Flies into her tree
One, two, three chicks are waiting
Feeds her family

Hungry chicks, "hoo, hoo"
Flies out into the dark night
Time for chicks to eat

Chicks getting tired
She covers them with her wing
She and her chicks sleep

The next morning, wake
Babies are starting to fledge
Getting their feathers

Flying day today
Owlets are getting ready
Start flapping their wings

Jump! Falling? Falling?
Flapping their wings harder, "hoo"
No, flying! Flying!

Flying all around
They could be flying all day
Fly back to the nest

Time to leave the nest
Goodbye home with woods, trees, nest
Goodbye mom and dad

Sad parents, "hoo, hoo"
Then away their babies fly
Off into the sky

Parents are still sad
But now they fly off to eat
They will return soon

A year passes by
Mom lays her eggs, one, two, three
Now new family

Katie Khaznehkatbi, 4th Grade
Isaac Monfort Elementary
Shelby Charter Twp, MI

The First Hug!

My parents told me I can see my Auntie! I was so happy because of COVID-19 I had not seen her in months! In the car I began to feel scared. I was thinking, what if I get her sick?

Then the next thing I knew we were at her house! I bolted up to her front door! But Van, my brother, beat me! It was okay because I got to hug her next. I began to sob. Her hug was so tight and **AWESOME!!** She exclaimed over and over, "I love you so much!" It felt so good! She wrapped me up like a warm blanket. Auntie's mask was as wet as a lake! As she was crying, she told me, "I am sorry that I am crying so much." I was planning this day for a long time! As I was bawling my eyes out, I kept on saying, "I miss this!"

There could not be a better feeling! That night my parents went out to dinner and left us alone with Auntie. We ate Tubby's for dinner and had the ultimate snuggles! Then the worst thing happened, **MY MOM AND DAD CAME!!!!** I was so sad. Then we had to leave. As we drove away, I thought of how happy I was to see her and get the best hug ever!

Harper O'Brien, 4th Grade

Dresden Elementary

Sterling Heights, MI



My First Day of Flag Football

"Oh no," I thought. My heart was beating as fast as a cheetah! I was worried this would happen. It was my first year of flag football. Tryouts were done, and I landed on the Spartans- my worst nightmare!

I was frustrated. My favorite football team is the Michigan Wolverines. And here I am, on the Spartans. At least it is not the Buckeyes. Sadly, I walked up to say hello to my team. I stared. My coaches were so jolly. My friend Ethan was joking around with them, taking their hats, and running away. But the coaches weren't mad. They were playing along.

"Hello," I announced.

Coach Matthew said, "Why, hello there! Are you ready to have some fun?"

"Yes!" I said excitedly.

We gathered around the coaches. They talked to us about being good teammates and how we were there to have fun. "Winning isn't everything," they explained. My teammates were friendly, too. We raced each other, played tag, and goofed around with the coaches.

Meanwhile, on the other team, kids were taking things too seriously. At the water break, my friend told me one kid was even yelling at the coaches. There was bad sportsmanship.

Then I realized, this team was not so bad. Throughout the season, I became grateful. I loved my team and the friends I made. I should not have judged this book by its cover. Playing for the Spartans was the best experience, and I hope to play for them again next year.

Ferris Shaina, 4th Grade
West Utica Elementary School
Utica, MI

The Bike

Something was not right. I was going so fast when suddenly I heard the sound of metal falling to the ground underneath me. That was the sound of a screw coming loose in my bike's training wheel, causing the wheel to fall off! In a hurry, I took my foot off the pedal and on to the driveway as quickly as I could. I thought, "Wow! I am glad I did not fall!"

Was this the moment I was going to learn how to ride my bike with no training wheels? I was outside with my stepdad and siblings. First, my stepdad suggested to take off the other training wheel or put the other one back on. Next, I told him to take off the other one. Then, I was ready to ride my bike with no training wheels.

It was a hot summer day in August. It was August 2, 2013, to be exact, and I was six years old. There were beautiful purple flowers in the front yard. There was a gentle breeze in my face that made my hair blow in my face. Neighbors were outside enjoying the weather too. It was a perfect day to learn how to ride my bike and enjoy the day.

Krista Turanik, 4th Grade
Beck Centennial Elementary
Macomb, MI

The Hero of Fantasy Land

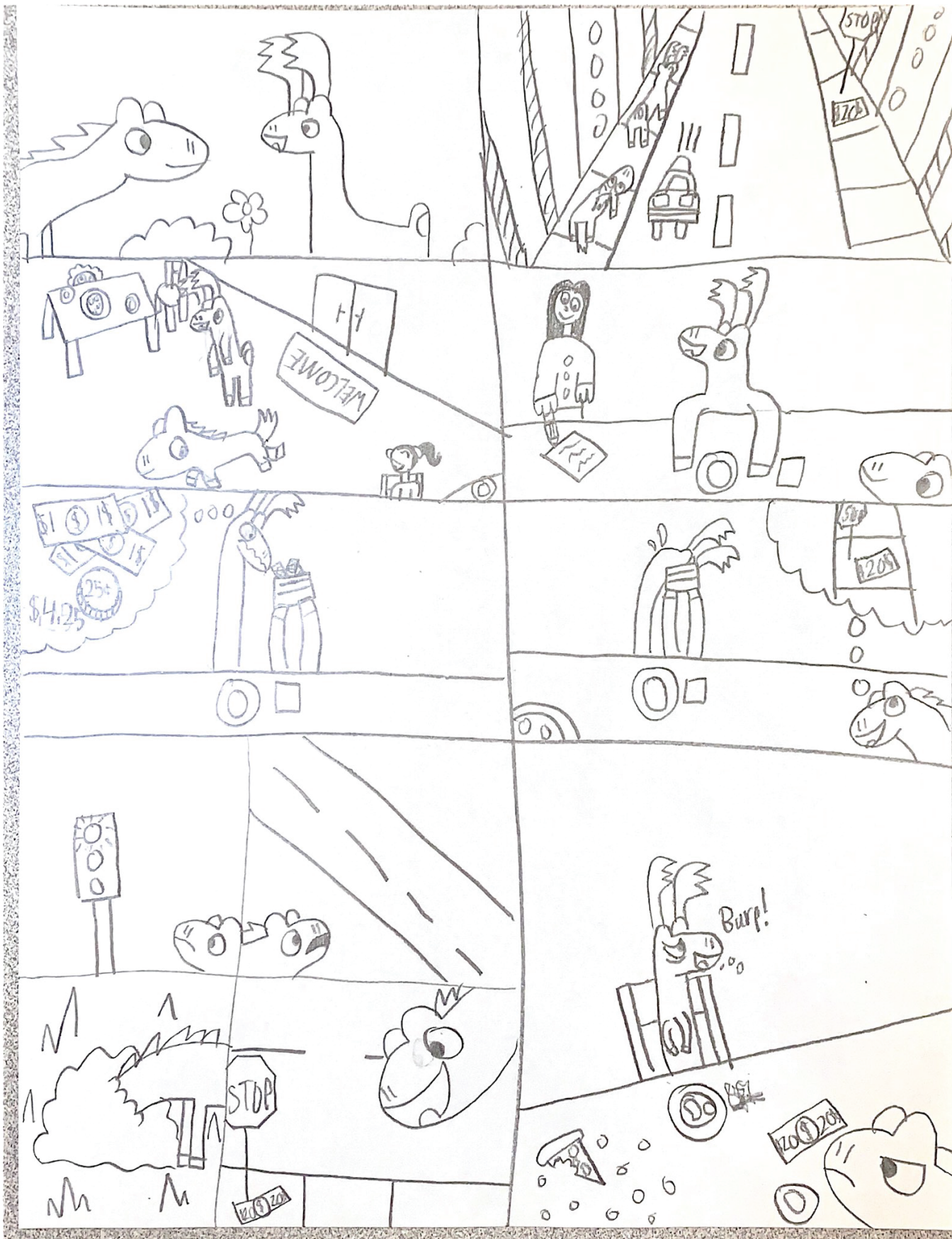
It was a sunny, warm day at Disney World in Florida. While at Magic Kingdom, my parents noticed a huge crowd. It was a contest of some sort, and my family encouraged me to go up and see the action. I was very shy, pushing my way to the front, but I did it anyway.

When I got up to the front of the crowd, I saw a shiny, silver sword and a grey stone. There were two announcers with unusual outfits picking some members from the crowd. The first person chosen was a grown man. He pulled on the sword eagerly, but it did not budge from the stone. Defeated, he walked back into the crowd. Another man with a baby stroller triumphantly pulled on the sword. He, too, had no luck.

My family shouted, "Juliet, raise your hand!" The announcers searched left and right for the next volunteer, when they said, "Little girl with the sparkly pink and blue mouse ear headband, come on up!" That was me! As I shyly walked up, I overheard the announcers whispering to the audience.

This was it. I made sure my grip was tight. I put my foot on the stone and pulled with all my strength. People stared with suspense. The sword moved up from the stone. It looked as if it was being pulled out of quicksand. The look of excitement was on everyone's faces. I left Magic Kingdom that day as, "The Hero of Fantasy Land!"

Juliet Criner-Hicks, 5th Grade
Crissman Elementary
Shelby Charter Twp, MI



The Story of Penny “Pizza Place”

Penny was a white horse who couldn't talk. Her best friend was The Deer, who was asking Penny to go have pizza. They were both very hungry!

Penny wrote “Ok” in her notebook, and off they went to the city.

“What’s your favorite pizza?” The Deer asked.

“Pepperoni,” Penny wrote.

“Mine, too!” said The Deer.

They made it to the city and went to a pizza joint called Pete’s Pizza Place. Penny could tell by everyone’s faces that they were amused to see a horse and a deer walk in.

“What would you like?” the waitress asked.

The Deer replied, “One pepperoni pizza, please.”

“Ok! That would be \$14.99,” the waitress said.

The waitress left and The Deer reached into his wallet. But there was one problem...he didn't have enough money. He only had \$4.25. The waitress was coming back with the pizza, but The Deer was still digging in his wallet. Just then, Penny remembered something. She saw a \$20 bill on the way to the pizza place. Penny ran out the door in search of the \$20 bill. She looked everywhere: the stop light, road, and bushes.

Then, thankfully, she found it by a stop sign. Penny hurried back to Pete’s and hooved over the \$20 to the waitress. She then turned around to find that The Deer ate the whole pizza.

“Oops! Sorry, it was delicious! Burp!” The Deer replied.

“We should go to the movies tomorrow!” The Deer said.

Penny wrote, “Ok, but you’re paying!”

Clara Buchanan, 5th Grade
Ashley Elementary
New Baltimore, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
that this is a story about family and adventure.

I hope you enjoy the amazing story about a horse, a deer, and a trip to Pete's Pizza Place!

Toucan's View

A follow up letter to the story, The Great Kapok Tree

Kaya Gabrel
5th Grade
Schwarzkoﬀ Elementary - UCS

Dear Toothpick Company,

Today I saw one of your men cutting down my favorite tree in the rainforest. I told him to stop, and guess what? He ignored me! That was very rude of him.

I talked about how I lived there, as well as many other birds, snakes, and monkeys. All of my friends, like Patrisha the squirrel, will not have a place to live in the rainforest. I bet you'll never guess what he did. He...rolled....his...eyes at me!

Then I started to say, "Did you know that scientists are using trees for medicine, and that the tree you're cutting might have a cure for cancer or even Covid 19?" At this point, I started to lose my temper.

I continued, "What if you cut down too many trees and don't have fresh air? Do you ever think about the next generation? Imagine wearing a mask for the rest of your life because you cut down a tree in the rainforest." He did not even look at me.

He finally left. Luckily, though, he did not finish cutting down the tree.

This letter is a reminder to STOP CUTTING DOWN TREES and to save our rainforest. Or at least do your research.

PS. If you make more toothpicks, please do not use wood or plastic.

Love,
Tilda the Toucan

Kaya Gabrel, 5th Grade
Schwarzkoﬀ Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI

Camping With My Dad

Anthony! Get packed up. Your dad is going to be here any minute from now," Mom said.

"Ok," I said. I then quickly packed my stuff. I was going camping with my dad.

My dad arrived and said, "Are you ready to camp on the river?"

"Yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeees!" I yelped.

On our drive, we stopped to get some bait before we got to our campsite. The first thing we did when we arrived was to make a campfire, and let me tell you, there was a cloud of smoke. "Anthony, don't breathe in the smoke," Dad said.

"Ok."

Then I went fishing and caught a largemouth bass. It was small, like a baby fish. I almost caught another one but lost it. After a day of fishing, I went to sleep, but we could not get comfortable on the air mattress. I stayed up all night. Finally, we went into the truck, put on the heaters, and fell asleep.

The next morning, we made a campfire and cooked hot chocolate pancakes. They were delicious! Shortly after, we took our boat out to just drive it. We went upriver and caught a small-mouth bass. Five hours later, we found nothing, and it was time to get back. So we paddled and got to where we put our canoe. We went back to our campsite, packed up, and got the heck out of there.

Anthony Hodgkin, 5th Grade

Maconce Elementary

Ira Township, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...

how long it took me to go camping with my Dad.

The details that I put into this narrative represent how much I enjoyed spending time with my Dad.

Elf on the Shelf

I reached out of this tight, dusty box and slowly opened the lid. It felt nice to stretch out my muscles. I wish I didn't have to stay in this box. You see, it's not easy being an elf. You only get 25 days out of each year to spread joy..... or mischief!

As soon as I got upstairs from the dusty basement, I noticed my family had gotten a puppy. I had the perfect plan. I flew over to the food container. I slowly opened the lid and scooped up A LOT of food. This is going to be fun, I thought, as I sprinkled the food all over the couch.

Over in the corner of their living room, I saw the dog crate. The poor little puppy was sitting in it, staring at me. I felt sorry for him, so I opened the crate. The cage rattled as the little puppy ran out. I watched as he leapt onto the couch and started to eat.

While the dog was feasting on the couch, I decided I would hide in the tree. I stuck a note next to me that read, "Merry Christmas!" I hoped the dog didn't get in too much trouble, but I did put food on the couch for a reason. I wanted chaos!

Julia Kanski, 5th Grade
Great Oaks Elementary
New Baltimore, MI

*Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
it is written for entertainment.*

Be You!

Each day I wake up and wonder what to wear. I wonder if I wear this T-shirt and this pair of pants, will they stare? But like my mom always tells me, "Who cares?" But the truth is, I care very much. Sometimes I worry if I care too much. But like I always tell myself, "I am me, and they are they, and today is just a regular day." So, I will stand out proud and say, "Be you, because I would love to see the true you today and every other day." Because you are you and I am me, and there's no other person I would rather be. We will stand out bright and be brave and won't care about what anybody has to say. Because all they want to do is bring us down, and that's why we are going to let them know we are here to stay. If they push us down, we will get back up and tell them we don't care about what they have to say, because we're not bowing down to them anymore. If they have something to say, that's okay, because we know it's not true—and if you want to be yourself, that's okay too.

Vanessa Martinez-Rice, 5th Grade
*Harvey Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI*

Gold

Gold. You see it all around. You are bound to see it someplace at sometime. It looks like the blazing sun on a hot summer's day when you play around in your backyard with no worry in the world. It smells like the freshly-grown honeysuckle you smell when you row down a stream with the joy of peace. It tastes like pure honey dancing on your tongue, made by worker bees, with the gratifying sound of the buzzing they make. It feels like that satisfying touch of golden sand when you are at the beach, with the sand seeping through the gaps of your fingers as the soft touch of your hand grasps onto it. As you can see, gold is like the glue that holds the Earth together, or an element that makes the Earth spin. It is the elastic band that keeps this planet from falling apart.

Kiran Nair, 5th Grade

*Messmore Elementary School
Sterling Heights, MI*

Getting Ready to Go Metal Detecting!

One beautiful, sunny morning, the sun was beaming in my room. Birds chirped softly, and wind blew trees here and there. I got up out of bed and got dressed, brushed my hair, and then went out in the living room to my mom and Robert watching TV.

"Good morning mom!" I blurted out.

"Good morning!" she replied. "We're going metal detecting and you're gonna come with us!"

"Yes!" I screamed in joy as I jumped in the air! The breeze rushed past my face as I went up and came down with a loud STOMP! I ran around for a bit. I tried to calm down, so I went to ask my mom something.

"Mom?" I asked.

"What do you need?" she replied.

"What do you think we will find?"

"Well... I kinda want to find some coins, and let's hope we don't find any bottle caps."

"We're probably gonna," I thought. "I mean, they are really common. It's so easy to find them. Last time someone in my family went metal detecting, they told me they found lots of bottle caps... they even showed me."

"Oh! Get your shoes on, it's time to go!"

"Whoohoo!" I screamed. Then we got in the car and zoomed off. This was going to be the best Saturday EVER!

Angel Saccoia, 5th Grade
Sugarbush Elementary
New Baltimore, MI

*Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
you can create good memories by going on adventures with family.*

The Best Moment

I remember this day like it was yesterday. It all happened a couple of years ago. We got to the hospital around 2:00 p.m. The hospital was not crowded. The walls were white and it felt empty. The couches were brown and in the corner. The ones we sat in were not so comfy. The hospital was quiet, but when we got to the hallways, it was really loud!

We got the number to my mama's room. But while we were going to the room, I thought, "Will Niko like me when he is older?" We had finally gotten to the room. After we opened the door, I saw mama with a baby in her arms. It was Nikola. The fear of him not liking me left and it changed to joy and excitement. He was so light and holding him made me feel happy inside. I could smell the shampoo in his hair and could feel the softness of his skin. We all took a picture after I was done holding Nikola. We had to go home. Niko will be home in two more days, but he came home one day early! I hope I will never forget this day!

Maria Stojanovski, 5th Grade

*Lottie M. Schmidt Elementary School
New Baltimore, MI*

*Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
how excited I was when my brother was born.*

Rain is Here

Rain is here. The thing most people dread.
Outside pouring. Better stay under the covers in bed.
Splish, splash, on the window's glass.
With puddles on the ground, there is no one around.
Hard thumps on the roof, coming swiftly from the sky.
Rain is here. Heavy drops, one by one.
Cold and wet. Plip, plop.
But when the sun shows its face, all the worry dissipates.
Just like that, happiness will be restored.

John Pacitto, 5th Grade
Oakbrook Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI

Volcanic Eruption

I am a Kilauea Volcano on the Southeast Coast of Hawaii
Thick, blistering lava bubbling through my "body"
When will it happen? When will it erupt?
Maybe I don't want to.
It is my purpose as a volcano
But maybe I don't want to erupt
Cause chaos, hurt people, separate families
But it is my job, right?

Brooklynn Bourne, 6th Grade
Bruce Collins Elementary School
Sterling Heights, MI

Quarantine

Quarantine
Trapped inside
like a dog kenneled in a cage.
Nothing to do.
No one to see.
Nowhere to go.
Will this ever end?

Quarantine
We wear a mask.
They just cover our faces,
But feel like they cover our souls.
All family and friends out of reach,
Just like the clouds.
Could anything good come out of this?

Quarantine
Like a rainbow after a storm,
We slowly return back to normal.
But we are not the same.
This will forever change us.
We are now so thankful.
Thankful for our friends.
Thankful for our family.
Thankful for our lives.
Quarantine

Brianna Bellhorn, 6th Grade
Anchor Bay Middle School North
New Baltimore, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
that this poem came from my heart.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

An important event that happened to me and is still going on is the Covid-19 pandemic. This affected how I learned at school, got to see family and friends, and my plans to learn piano and continue gymnastics.

My first reason is that I had to start learning virtually. In March, we started learning from home. During this time, I was in the 5th grade. One of my favorite teachers, Mrs. Kramer, started a program called "Schoology." This helped us learn during the pandemic, but it was still hard to be using the computer all day.

Another way this pandemic affected me was having to quarantine. Stores and parks started closing, and everything became online. Not being able to see my family and friends was hard. But one benefit during this time was that me and my intermediate family were able to become much closer.

My final reason is that I had to cancel going to gymnastics and starting piano lessons. I practiced at home to stay sharp. I wasn't able to start piano lessons, so I taught myself. I watched piano tutorials on YouTube and quickly picked up how to play songs with two hands, and now I'm working my way up to harder songs.

The Covid-19 pandemic was one of the most important events to happen in my life. It changed the way I learn new things and how I visit family and friends, but it also gave me new opportunities with my family.

Rosalia DiMercurio, 6th Grade
Havel Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI

Time

I am a single droplet of water
Falling, falling, falling
Touching the ground as though
It was simply meant to be

I am light racing through the atmosphere
Bursting through your window
Filling your world with color
So much color

I am the steady winds
Rippling through the leafless grass
I am the breeze cooling your soul
Inspiring so many, and always keeping motion

I am the moment in between
The little things no one ever seems to notice
I am there, always moving forward
I am time, and you are realizing.

Sara Gutierrez, 6th Grade
Richard Duncan Elementary
Shelby Charter Twp, MI

Riley

Riley was rushing across the entire house like a race car, slowing down to head downstairs to take a nap. Little did I know, this would be his final rest. This was the most tragic day of our lives because we loved that dog like a brother. When Riley was taking a nap, we would've never predicted this to be his final hour.

My parents kept going downstairs to check on him because he was barely moving. They wanted to be sure he was still alive. Riley had always been given many different human foods and drinks, but he had proven to us that he could handle the food. We still had our doubts. That was the problem. While we were getting ready for bed, my dad ran upstairs with Riley in his arms.

"Our little furball is gone, in his sleep." My dad says.

As soon as I heard the news, I started breaking out into tears. My mom tried to calm me down, but it was no use. I ran into my room slamming the door. I ended up punching my fist into a cold, hard, unforgiving wall. This really hurt me because when I was born, the first thing I saw was Riley. I did not think I would ever recover.

After an hour of digging, we made a hole big enough to fit him. Gently, we placed him in the hole, patching all the holes with dirt. Our little furball will never be forgotten.



Maddox Lee, 6th Grade
DeKeyser Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI

The Honor of Being a Godmother

When I got asked to become a godmother, I got super nervous, yet excited. In August, my family and I went to my cousin Madelyn's birthday party. When we arrived, I greeted all my cousins, aunts, and uncles. After, my cousins and I went into the backyard to play. We were all having so much fun.

After playing for a while, I went inside to spend time with my new baby cousin Mason. He was two weeks old and was so cute and tiny. I held Mason for a little while and then I heard my aunt say, "It's time to cut the cake. Everyone come to the kitchen!" Everyone gathered around the dessert-filled kitchen table that included Madelyn's beautiful princess cake.

We sang "Happy Birthday," and then right after Madelyn blew out her candles, my Aunt Vanessa gave me a gift bag and asked me to open it. I was not expecting what was going to happen next. I looked in the bag and there was a small box inside with a silver Alex and Ani bracelet with a godmother charm. I then knew I was going to be Mason's godmother. I was so anxious yet so happy that I almost started tearing up. My aunt also made me a T-shirt that said, "Cassidy, will you be my godmother? Love, Mason!" I put on the shirt and bracelet and took a lot of pictures with Mason and my cousins. That was such a fun and memorable day for me that I will never forget.

It was even more amazing to experience the actual baptism itself. I wore a blue floral dress, and I spoke on Mason's behalf. I promised to help guide his Christianity. It was the greatest honor becoming his godmother.

Cassidy Ory, 6th Grade
Schuchard Elementary School
Sterling Heights, MI

Look Before You Leap

It began on a Sunday. It was a perfect day to do something outside. My dad suggested, "Let's go sailing!" We all agreed.

We arrived at Markley Marina and boarded our sailboat, Conundrum. We motored out of the marina and I thought, "Wow, today's going to be a wonderful day."

We arrived and jumped in Lake St. Clair. I felt a rush of joy as I touched the water.

My Dad has a barbecue that connects to the boat near the ladder. My idea was to bring the tube close to the ladder, jump off, and land on the tube. I leapt into the air, and time stopped.

I bashed my head on the barbecue right in front of my face. "How didn't I see that?" I thought. I knew this was going to end badly. I luckily landed on the tube. I could feel the gushing blood drip down my face. Everything went blank. My ears were ringing. My head was spinning. I heard myself gasping for breath.

Natalie yelled, "Hannah's nose is bleeding!" My Dad rushed to pull the tube closer, and I got on the boat. I had a bruise on my forehead and a cut-open nose.

A day later, I saw my aunt, who is a Physician's Assistant. She said that she could glue the cut. She glued it, and I was fine. The incident had scarred me physically...and mentally, but I learned a valuable lesson. Always look before you leap.

Hannah Perzanowski, 6th Grade
Switzer Elementary
Shelby Charter Twp, MI

Life of a Cookie

Hi there!! I'm cookie number 981,463,581,648 here from the Chewy Chips Ahoy. Currently, I'm with my mother, and she is the softest person ever. She's usually really nervous, and when that happens, the chocolate on her body melts. My dad is from the regular Chips Ahoy, and I barely get to see him. Same for my aunt and uncle who are in the Chunky Chips Ahoy area. Well, enough about my family.

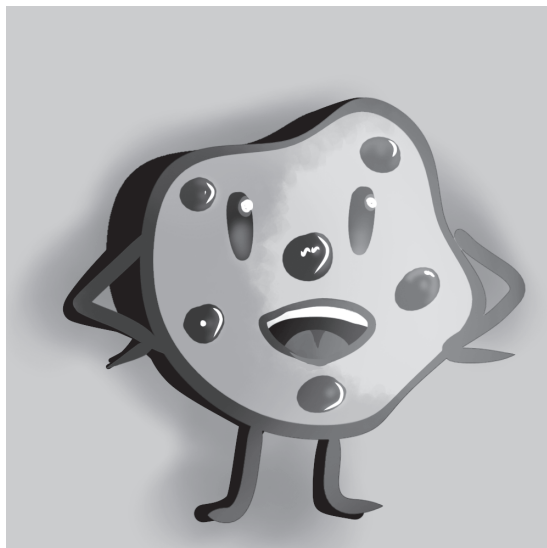
Today I felt bumping, and I heard it meant that you could leave for good. I was excited. Well, I finally can get out of this place. When I got up, feeling fresh, new air for the first time, I didn't see my mom, so I called for her. "Mom! Where are you? We can finally leave now!" I heard no reply, so I called again.

Then, I heard a scream. It sounded like my mother. I ran to look for her and saw the murderers who killed my grandparents and everyone before that. Mom was screaming, and she was covered in her own chocolate. I tried to call for her, but I couldn't. Here I was, being absolutely useless, while my mom screamed for help and was about to die. Then I realized: I'm going to die here, too.

Something grabbed me. I looked and saw it. The one who killed my family and friends. I was going to die. I was going to die. These thoughts raced across my head, until... I had no head to think.

Sanjida Zaman, 6th Grade
Davison Elementary Middle School
Detroit, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
I hope readers realize that cookies lives matter. #cookie livesmatter



Red and Grey

He never got his homework done.
He always talked back.
He was more focused on having fun
And falls asleep during class.

But he stuck right by me,
Although I didn't think we'd be friends.
And getting along wasn't easy,
But I promised to be friends until the end.

I remember when everyone said
That "He wasn't a good friend."
"He only cared for himself."
"He doesn't trust anyone else."

And at the start of winter, she threw his sweater
Up on the school roof.
But we couldn't get it 'cuz of the weather.
I promised but I'd lacked any proof.

He was talented
And very passionate.
He didn't deserve to be deserted,
So I tried keeping rumors moderate.

But over the months, rumors got around.
Even the teachers didn't see what I thought was profound.
They said that he was no good.
I protested, "He's just misunderstood."

I promised I'd help him turn it around.
I'd help him with homework.
I helped with his self-confidence, which was way underground.
And I'd give him advice, and soon it'd work.

He changed a lot, and so did I.
Remembering the roof, and his lost sweater,
Over the months our friend group grew and multiplied.
So all of us got it back by working together.

The sweater he wore every day.
His sweater that was Red and Grey.
His life, he said was once "black and white,"
So with newfound friends, we tried our best to make it right.

Annicka Tarr, 6th Grade
Graebner Elementary
Sterling Heights, MI

Halloween

I never liked Halloween. The haunted houses, people jumping out at you, the scary movies. I was scared of it all, and I was not excited to trick or treat this year. So, I asked my mom if I could stay home and pass out candy. After she thought about it, she said yes, and took Ellie and Michael trick or treating while I stayed home.

It was fine; the doorbell rang, I passed out candy, rinse and repeat. It was getting close to midnight, and there were less and less trick-or-treaters, so I decided to call it a night. I headed to my room and opened the door to my room. But then I heard something.

A shriek. A loud, piercing shriek that ran down my spine. I quickly turned around, but I didn't see anyone. I ran into my room, and thought about calling my mom, but in the end I didn't. It was probably just the neighbors, a cat, a tree, or really anything that would explain the noise.

I tried to convince myself everything was okay. I tried to convince myself that the noise wasn't coming from inside the house. But I don't think I did a very good job doing so.

I stayed up the rest of the night, waiting for my mom to come home. It felt like forever. But eventually I heard the front door open. I got up quickly, ready to see my mom and tell her about the noise. But as I reached for the door, something in me clicked; what if it wasn't my mom?

Had I left the door unlocked downstairs? No, I remember locking it. I stayed quiet, waiting to hear my mom call my name. But she didn't.

I could hear footsteps. I could hear rattling on locked doors. I could hear cabinets being opened. I could hear the footsteps getting louder and louder. I could hear the creak of the stairs. I could hear the footsteps stop. They've stopped for a while now. They're waiting for me to give in and open the door.

I can't call for help, or they'll hear me talking. So, I'm writing this instead. Mom, I love you. Ellie, Michael, I'll miss you a lot. Give my stuff to the Maitland kids down the street. I've always hated Halloween, and this is exactly why. Couldn't they just have opened the door like they did with the front door by now?

Sophie Perry, 7th Grade
Heritage Junior High
Sterling Heights, MI

Forever Falling

I can feel myself falling, but I don't hit the ground,
I can feel myself falling, but I can't look around.
The pieces and parts to memories lost, recollect and regroup deep in my thoughts.
They're planting themselves quicker than time.
My vision is blurring; I'm losing my mind.
My heartbeat is rising more with each second.
I don't know how much longer I can regret it.
The moments I've wasted all in my head,
The time I could've spent with you instead.
I'm slowly sinking and losing control.
All of this thinking is taking its toll.
Now I see myself starting to unravel; this road I'm taking is better untraveled.
Am I the only one falling alone? Is it just me in this danger zone?

Lilianna Stover, 8th Grade
Davis Junior High School
Sterling Heights, MI

The World Rings True

We live in the strangest time since the birth of humanity. The world surprises us every day, and nothing is certain. Nobody knows what's at stake in this war; the battlefield groups of hushed people whispering rumors and quiet, seemingly lifeless streets that once bustled with the essence of the chaotic human footprint. Doors shut, no one is really safe. For one time the world is bound together by one universal thing: fear.

It starts as a disruption, before long completely taking over. It spreads through you, pulsing through your veins. I know, as does every other middle schooler in this room. Kids blast music on their phones and run through the hallways, a thick blanket of fear suffocating the room. We're saying goodbye, wondering how long it will be before we say hello again. Around me the modern world rings unbroken and true: the sound of overrated TikTok music and vicious rapping sounds from iPhones, pulsing around me. The world remains standing. Whether you could say it is cracked or molded like clay, that depends on where you stand.

I'm not sure what to make of the world around me. I feel numb and without feeling as my pencil drags across this lined paper. The world is quiet here in this notebook where I confide in. Sounds can't intrude through the walls of the impenetrable fortress of serenity and raw human imagination. On the whiteboard the day's agenda is posted, just as if today was a normal day: a plan that would never happen.

The coronavirus has taken whole days from others. For some it has been weeks, others months. Some have even had whole lives taken from them.

Sometimes I imagine it, like now for instance, the lives of all of the people who have died because of the coronavirus. Some of them were probably kids. Kids with whole lives to live that had been cut short.

The virus poses a definite change of lifestyle, but it also poses a change of heart. All of the unlive memories of others makes me want to do everything I've put off for so long. COVID may take many memories from us, but there are some things, some memories, that can never be taken away.

The world rings true around me. In the pages of this (note)book and these words in my mind and in the minds of those around me, words race tirelessly, fueling our ever-constant thirst to know. To know what can never be known, to remember what we thought we knew. The words that bind us all, that dwell in every mind: I am scared.

Elizabeth King, 8th Grade
Aspen Ridge Middle School
Ishpeming, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
the difference between the lives of the narrator and the lives of the people around them.
I hope they notice that even though they like to do different things and they handle their stress
in different ways they all share the same thought of being scared.

Les Gaufres

If you are reading this...I probably am already dead.
I don't have much paper, so I'll make this quick.

I fought for the Americans in the third World War.

My lawyer told me I shouldn't be saying that to many people, but what can I say. I am proud to be American.

I'm confined to a petit jail cell in La Ferte-Gacher in France. It's eighty-four kilometers (or 59.19 miles to my trusted Americans) from Paris. That is where Alexander Oswald sat in prison. The former dictator of the United States of America.

America wasn't always a dictatorship. In fact, Alexander was the only dictator they had. America was once a beautiful democracy where any dream you could think of could come alive overnight. You just had to believe. Alexander believed really hard, and one day his dream came true. He wanted to rule the world and came pretty close. What can I say to that?

Absolutely nothing.

The history books won't speak kindly of him, but at least he will get a true canvas of notice. I won't even get the slightest stroke of paint on that canvas. I'll just be tallied as another fellow he got under his belt and manipulated by his deadly charm and wit.

Alexander graduated from Harvard University and was top of his class. I barely graduated secondary school. He was a hard worker, and I was a defunct slacker. He was fun-loving, and I was as dry as outdoor kindling. Yet we both ended up in the same position. In exile. What a funny world.

Sadly, I wasn't an ordinary minuteman for the Americans. I was approved into Alexander's elite guard. His very own "S.S." He earned it.

And I'm such an idiot.

As one of the proud elites, I was in Alexander's bunker when it was raided by German forces. His bunker was located fifty-six miles away from Washington D.C. (or 89.123 kilometers to my trusted Europeans). It was supposed to be impossible to find. The Germans found it thirty-two minutes after raiding the capitol.

The bunker wasn't much bigger than my palace of a cell I had in Ferte-Gacher. Alexander; his wife; their two ugly, dim children; my best friend, Axel Schwarz; Mr. Carl Smith and I all sat, wondering how it would end. Carl Smith is who I suspected to be a German spy. He must have given away our location to the Germans. Good for him. He's probably a war hero now.

Alexander told me to fetch him his last supper from the freezer. He wanted cold waffles. We didn't have a toaster, so that's what he and his family ate as dignified freelancers before the greedy Germans barged in.

We stood in silence before that. Rethinking our entire lives. It was beautiful. What a mistake my whole life had been.

My trial is tomorrow, and I'm starved. I asked the French guard if he had any food. He said they only had les gaufres.

Cold les gaufres.

Anthony Nagle, 10th Grade
Utica Academy for International Studies
Sterling Heights, MI

Something I hope readers notice about my piece of writing is...
that writing is individual interpretation for the writer and the reader.

Autographs



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