



MIDDLE AND  
HIGH SCHOOL  
VOICES

2008

**PLYMOUTH**  
*Writing*  
**PROJECT**

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**The Plymouth Writing Project**

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*Writing by New Hampshire High School and Middle School Students*

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# A Dream

Michaela K. Horvath

*“What happens to a dream deferred?*

*Does it dry up*

*like a raisin in the sun?”*

*(“Harlem”\*\*\*)*

or just disappear

and then be done?

Does it fly way above each cloud?

or is it sitting next to me - -

like a person who's oh so proud?

Is it ever thought of again

after it just dies off?

Or is it locked up in a pen?

Is it floating around in the air

as if it has been cremated?

Does anyone even still care?

Maybe it just leaves

without the slightest fear.

Does it even shed a tear?

*\*\*\*The first three lines were excerpted from “Harlem” by Langston Hughes.*

# The Lake

*Sarah Cook*

Calm and peaceful, nothing else.

A breeze tickles my cheek.

I shiver, lifting my feet off of the cold slate,

I wrap my plaid blanket tighter around me.

I imagine what my favorite place will be like in a few hours time,

waves crashing up against the faded dock,

the scent of my uncle's famous breakfast sandwiches wafting through the air,

all of my cousins groaning about being awoken before 11:30 am,

and the roars of passing boats all combined into a wonderful chaos.

I sigh,

as I glance across the sparkling water to the presently deserted beach.

Finally, the sun is coming over the horizon in bright pink rays,

this is what I have been waiting for.

Realizing that I only have a few minutes of peace left,

I let the sun soak into my skin,

cherishing it.

I love my family's everyday fun.

But right now I am content with nothing between me and the

calm

peaceful

water.

# The Room was Empty

*Deanna MacNaughton*

She stood in the doorway of her tiny apartment after completing her dead-end-nine-to-five job. At only 18, she wondered how her life could be headed down such a horrible path.

The door stuck; the only way to open it was to throw herself against it. Normally, she had her bag of Yang Ewe's Chinese Food from downstairs, but today she just stood at the door. Her circumstances were dire. A lone light stood in the corner to her right, between the cold, white wall and the grey, metal bed frame sloppily covered with faded white sheets. The refrigerator, as she remembered it, had only a carton of four eggs and a half gallon of milk. An empty desk graced the wall just to her left, one picture hovering silently and bleakly above it. She remembered the day she had gotten that tacky bowl-of-fruit painting. She and one of her friends were at a small flea market looking for things to decorate her (then new) apartment. She found the cheapest painting and forked over her last bit of cash.

The clunking noise of the heater in the apartment brought her back to reality. The heater was virtually useless, making the apartment unbearably hot in the summer, and in the winter it worked as well as a flashlight without batteries. She walked through the door, dropped her keys and purse on the desk, plopped herself on the bed and sobbed herself to sleep, dreaming of the better life she had always wanted but never could have.

Not having eaten, her growling stomach woke her up. She rolled over and curled up even tighter, now aware of the bitter cold surrounding her. She tried as hard as she could to go back to sleep, but her stomach was impossible to ignore. Her legs dangled over the edge of the bed as she put on her tattered slippers and sleepily wobbled her way over to the refrigerator. She opened the creaky door, and hoped to find some leftovers, but to no avail.

“Great,” she mumbled to herself. “Another mid-night crisis.”

The screeching alarm woke her up at 7am the next morning for her job. She took her time showering, dressing, and making herself an omelet thinking she had time to spare. Frantically, she remembered that she was supposed to set her clocks ahead an hour the night before.

“I can’t take it anymore!” she cried to no one in particular. “I quit!”

It was at that moment she decided not to go to work, but instead, went to the Downtown Sector Employment Agency or DSEA for short.

# What Makes Life?

*Katherine Lydia Gingrich*

The human formula goes like this- a pinch of love, a tad of spirit.

Those are your thoughts and feelings

zooming in your mind,

love, spirit and just about everything else you can think of.

Rushing water, our arms and legs, always moving,

tripping,

making mistakes

and always being energetic.

A swarm of bumblebees moving up and down,

your heart

controlling your entire body.

Your eyes are cameras,

taking pictures,

zooming in and out.

It can look back and still remember.

The brain is our father,

canceling,

adding

everything together

making things just right.

# Fire

*Jack Schrupp*

Burning fumes sting my eyes as I thrash through the underbrush.

Billows of smoke seep from flaming trees filling my nostrils with an acrid stench.

Scarlet embers lay strewn across the forest floor igniting the dry vegetation.

Blazing branches sear my skin as I rush toward the welcoming foamy black water.

I weakly stumble toward the water, my limbs aching for the cool sensation.

I'm surrounded by smoldering trees that seem to have closed in like a vice.

The raging fire creeps closer like a cat ready to pounce.

The blistering heat drives me on all fours.

My heart pounds in my chest like a hammer.

My weary exhausted arms drag my exasperated body forward.

Splash!! The freezing cascades over my head. My arms are filled with a new burst of energy.

Frothy spray swirls around my face.

I gasp for breath as I blunder through a wet maze of chaos.

My lungs scream for air as I desperately try to surface.

The icy cold stare of death crushes my chest forcing the air out of me.

I manage one last bedraggled scream before I'm swept away.

I jerk out of bed, beads of sweat trickle down my face and a chill slithers down my spine.

!!Nightmares!!

# Ode to my Flip Flops

*Kelly Nix*

Who says two dollars can't buy happiness?

The Gap sold them!

Pretty blue flip flops,

With beaded flowers.

My Polly Pockets

Have the same pair,

In pink.

So my best friend and I picked the same ones

To wear everywhere

In the summer,

But mostly to Gilford Beach.

With my bright, red toenails

That match my bright blue flip flops,

Chatting on the sand

With Kayla

About the water flip girl's club

That we made up.

We will be best friends 4-ever

With our matching blue flip flops.

# A Well Remembered Friend

*Cole Lieberman*

I truly didn't realize how amazing it could be to watch a giraffe eat! Just Poppy and I. I didn't have to share this moment with anyone else! A few minutes earlier I was told we were going to see the giraffes. Boy, how amazing they were.

I stuck out my neck in an attempt to mimic them. How silly I looked. The giraffes were way more appealing in person than on TV. Their necks extended up and..... POW, they were eating before you knew it! This truly was a "magical" moment. I asked to go see the hippos.

I watched in astonishment as the hippos barreled over each other, making cries as one became dominant over the other. A quieter hippo came from eating to help its weaker companion. As Poppy noticed I was enjoying what I saw, he sat down, allowing me to take in this moment. How interesting these creatures could be.

I brought myself up to the task of seeing the snakes. They were cramped in what I would say were minuscule tanks. Poppy swung me over his shoulders to see the snakes at the top. Immediately, I stuck out my tongue before they had gotten the chance to do it first. "Poppy! I beat the snake with my tongue!"

"Ha ha. I see," said Poppy, still holding me.

"YEAH! Now let's go see the birds," I blurted out excitedly.

I truly will never forget the exotic birds! They discouraged me from buying one as a pet. It's poop 24-7 with those things, though I really liked the toucan. Poppy watched me "ooh" and "ahh" at the birds. That was an exhibit I could have stayed at forever. The zoo was filled with merriment for everyone. "Thank you, Poppy, for bringing me to the zoo!" I said.

"You're very welcome, Cole!" replied Poppy. It was time to go home.

As we left the zoo, I thought of all the really enthralling animals I saw. I hoped we would go back because it was really quite an adventure at the zoo. I had a blast!

My grandfather really had an effect on my life. He loved all of us so much. Now that I have captured these moments, I can look back and never forget my grandfather.

*Ending note: I would like to thank Poppy, who is no longer here with us, for taking me on all of these adventures. Thanks to him, I could write this memoir.*

# **My Bucket of Beads**

*Giullia Mcdonald*

As I sit here watching  
My bucket of beads  
I can swear that I hear  
The beads whispering to me  
Encouraging me  
Calling out my name  
Telling me  
To make a beautiful and characteristic  
Piece of jewelry  
As I go to the floor  
I am already thinking  
About all the exotic colors I can chose from  
And which would go well  
With my bff's personality  
Once I finish my colorful and - as I wished - exotic bracelet  
I think to myself  
What a perfect and appropriate gift  
To show my appreciation  
To my worthy and caring friend and to think it all started  
With a bucket of beads!

# Ode to My Drum Set

*Harrison Evans*

My drum set

The color: sparkly dark purple

It's a door to a different world

A world of music

It sits in a corner of a bedroom

Enclosed

No other sound but music comes in

No other sound but music goes out

I cannot live without this

I am part of it

It is part of me

# Swish

*Kelsey Buckley*

There are two minutes before the biggest game of the year begins and Coach is picking the starters. She assigns three girls their positions. One to right forward, one to guard, and one to center, but still hasn't assigned my position, left forward. She assigns a fourth girl to point guard leaving me with one more chance to be a starter in the game. She slowly turns around looking at each girl on the team thinking of their strengths and weaknesses, wondering if they would be the right person to go in. When coach turns to where I am standing, she only gives me a quick glance then goes onto the next girl. I figure I will be starting our last game on the bench, but before I have time to go and sit down my coach turns back to me. She gives me a pat on the shoulder and says, "It's your turn to start today."

I try not to look too happy, but it is hard to contain my excitement. This is a big game. Not only is it our last game of the season, but it against a team that we've lost to twice and both of them were only by a point or two. Both teams want to win this badly. The Stingers want to win because they want to stay the dominant team and we want to win because we want to prove that our team is just as strong as theirs, if not stronger.

I jog out onto the middle of the court where our tall center is getting ready to take the jump ball. The rest of my team matches up with an opposing player outside the circle. The referee walked over to us with a wide smile spread across his face. "Are you ready to play some ball?" We all nod anxiously. "Well then let's get started."

The referee tosses the ball high up in the air. Both teams' centers jump up trying to get their fingertips on the ball. Our center has a clear advantage. She's at least a foot taller than the Stinger's center. Our center's fingers get contact with the ball and she tips it over to me. I throw a long pass over to our point guard who dribbles up to the hoop and bounces off the back board into the net. The crowd is cheering as we hustle back to defend our net. The other team brings the ball up fast which catches us off guard. They find a hole in our

defense and drive right up to the hoop and slip the leather ball in. This woke us up and told us that this game was not going to be a piece of cake. We were going to have to work for it.

During the first and second quarters each team would not let the other team pull ahead for anything. We would score one then the Stingers would go and sink the ball in the hoop right after, or they would score and we would tie it back up. The half ended with a score of eighteen to sixteen. We were winning by two.

Coach brought us to a corner during halftime, away from all the commotion. I was exhausted from running up and down the court. The four other starters and I were all dripping with sweat and breathing heavily. We were glad the half was over so we could get something to drink and take a quick rest.

Although I was a big part of the team's success in the first half, I still had not managed to get the ball in the hoop. The coach gave us some tips on how to improve our playing then told us the news I was dreading. All five girls were going to get taken out. She wanted to put a fresh group of girls out on the court for the second half. I needed the rest badly but I wanted to stay in, so I could get to score. Although it is a great feeling to know that you stopped the other team from scoring, nothing beats putting one in the basket yourself and adding two more points up on the score board for your team.

The whistle blew and the second half began. The new players were doing a great job but they were definitely the weaker players on our team. They managed to keep the score pretty close for most of the quarter, but the Stingers were pulling ahead. The third quarter ended leaving my whole team on the edge of our seats. The score was now twenty-two to thirty-three. Our coach turned to the bench and said, "I'd like the five girls that started to go back in. We have a lot of catching up to do." The five of us smiled. We were all up to the challenge.

We walked out onto the court, determined to get the score back to a tie. We set up our offense. Our point guard dribbled the ball up the court. Two girls in yellow Stingers jerseys charged her and tried to grab the ball. This play worked for them before, but not this time. We were ready for it. The point guard passed it to our center. She cut into the paint,

shot it, and sunk it with a triumphant thump. We kept our defense tight and didn't let the Stingers score at all during the last quarter. Working together we scored ten points enough to make us trailing only by one. All of us were feeling like the game was in the bag. Then our point guard noticed the time left in the game. "Look," she said in a worried voice. When the rest of us saw the score board our faces fell. There was only fifteen seconds left in the game.

It was our turn to bring the ball up the court. Our point guard sped up the court as fast as she could. The ball was bouncing all over the place and her limbs were flailing wildly. I was worried that she was going to lose control of the ball and have it bounce out of bounds or into a one of the Stinger's hands. I was so worried that I was hardly paying attention. The point guard threw a wild pass straight at my head. I barley had enough time to get my hands in front of my face to catch it. Without thinking I drove to the hoop and shot the ball. The referee blew his whistle indicating that I had been fouled when I shot. I would have to go and shoot from the foul line. This was not good. I hadn't made a foul shot during a single game this season! How was I going to be able to make it in this time?

I stood nervously at the foul line waiting for the referee to pass me the ball. I had two shots. I needed to make one for us to tie, two for us to win. I got the ball and bounced three times, hands shaking all the while. Then I lifted the ball up and shot it at the net. I looked at the floor hoping with all my might that the ball would go in. I slowly lifted my head just in time to see the ball fall off the rim and into the net. I was ecstatic. All my teammates came over and gave me a high five. We had secured a tie game with the Stingers but now the pressure was really on. If I made this we shot we would surely beat the stingers.

This time I stood at the foul line with confidence. I wouldn't let any nervousness get into my head. When I got the ball I thought about all the things my coach had told me to do. Bend your knees then let the ball flick off your fingertips. I repeated this five times to myself before I was ready to shoot. The second the ball left my finger tips I knew it was going in. I didn't even have to look. The ball soared above all the girls' heads toward the basket and fell in with a swish. It was shot perfectly. It didn't even hit the rim. It was all net.

# Highway

*Audrey Budington*

Twisting through the woods

like a giant river

Like a serpent slithering

across the states

Only a long, paved highway

seems to know the route

# Ode to Pooh Bear Hat

*Kate Robinson*

My yellow bonnet  
My blonde head stays warm  
Shadows of memories  
In the volume of my baby book  
Pooh stories from my parents  
Dreams of the honey pot  
Perching my head  
I transform into Pooh  
Kind, thoughtful, friendly and sensitive  
I learn from the Pooh  
My hunger for sweets knows no end  
My head grows as I age  
No longer needed  
Pooh hat is lost  
in memories of my childhood  
Until I am reunited  
It appears in my green treasure box  
I put in on my head hoping  
To visit old friends  
In the Hundred Acre Woods  
Reunite with Pooh  
and an earlier time

# Younger Years

*Emily Fay*

I look in the book and  
remember my life.

That reddish maroon  
front with the December  
vine in gold.

That cool leather book  
all bound together.

Open it up  
look, a picture of me.

The book beholds  
from when

I was bald

to when

I had short hair.

From brown haired years to blonde,  
from potty training to the first crawl,  
to my dish washing years  
at New Hampton, to my first

trip to Chuck e' Cheese.

The first dance recital,  
in that itchy pink tutu  
my first crib.

Everything's in that little cool  
Maroon book all bound  
together.

The fifty pages represent my younger years,  
the years of  
happiness  
and when I  
could get away  
with everything.

The greatness of being young  
makes me cry  
when ever  
I open  
this cool maroon  
cover  
and gaze at the inside.

# Ode to Opposites

*Michael Xiao*

Without one there can't be another, opposites are melted together no matter what it is.

Without boredom we can't have happiness and the same the other way. So if you love one then you like the other. You like being happy you like being bored you like sports you like being lazy. It's the yang and the yang the

bing and the

Boom they go together.

The weird thing is if there opposites why if one doesn't survive then o the other doesn't even exist. Do opposites actually attract then repel dose starvation feed, dose sight make you blind? It might all seem that we're all blind would it?

Us wandering all around the world what are we doing?

Without one there can't be another.

# Ode to Eagle Claw Wushu

*Michael Xiao*

Flying soaring and

Arial attacks

Punches going so fast

They're blurry

Run then

Jump punch while doing a back flip 360

Dive roll

Jump

Do a split

Jump up backward kick

Back flip

Do a split jump back up

Kick so high your leg hurts stop

Bow

Breathe and feel calm

# All Things Whisper

*Raianna Krahn-Burke*

On that cliff that I hike every day, it seemed like everything changed. No chocolate brown rabbits for deer came out searching around the stream looking for the best plants. The trees were still, not whispering to each other. The grass, sharp and stiff, not soft and free. I looked up to see no birds flying about singing their songs. This scared me somehow.

I walked further. I came to a big, old looking tree, separate from all the others. I walked around it and on one side, in the trees shadow sat a little birch tree that couldn't grow. This made me sad and it reminded me of how I'm all alone in this world, except for Mom. I decided to make this tree my special tree, since we have so much in common.

I wandered back to the stream and saw nothing. In grief, I walked back to my tree and climbed to the highest branch I could get to. I stayed there a while going over in my mind all the things that happened today. Slowly, I started to fall asleep.

The sound of a branch falling down woke me and I sat up straight. Quickly, I glanced at my watch. 3:45. It was getting late and I had to go back home. As I was walking, I heard a noise behind me and I turned. Next to my special tree, eyes big as the sun, stood a deer.

# Forever Gone

*Michaela K. Horvath*

I wish you were here with me today.  
I wish you could see I've changed,  
How I've grown.  
But God swept you away,  
Like a pile of dirt  
Building a home on the floor of his kitchen.  
He knew that truck would T-bone you,  
And that your mini-van would roll four times.  
He knew you wouldn't have your seatbelt on,  
And that you would drop out through the windshield,  
Just to hit your head on the tar.  
He knew your head would crack open,  
And you would die with in a matter of seconds.  
He knew I'd be left here all alone,  
And yet, he took you anyway.

# HIGH SCHOOL VOICES

# Glory

*Molly Harper*

They tell me to stand tall  
Stand proud and true  
And pay tribute to a scrap of cloth  
Hung carelessly in some unused corner  
With the dust and spiders  
And other forgotten things  
A molding tribute  
To a world we wished we lived in.

They tell me to place my hand  
Over the pulsing life of me;  
So that my blood can beat in  
Unified memory with that spilled  
In the glory, and grace  
Of war  
But since when is death a good thing?

They say that this is the land  
Of the free and brave;  
Where no-one must do anything

Unless they want to.  
Where they are free to be limitless.  
Why then must I promise myself  
To something that stands  
For freedom?

They silence my questions?  
Maybe because they don't know  
The answers.  
Maybe because they don't want to.  
So they insist that I stand  
And recite like all the others  
Fall quietly into line.  
*This is the way it's supposed to be.*  
This is the way they want it to be

# Henry the Eighth

*Molly Harper*

You waltz right into the classroom

And it doesn't even matter

That you're ten minutes late

Teach would never dream

Of punishing a star

You own the place

You're kind

With your varsity cloak

Thrown casually

Over one perfectly toned arm

And curly brown crown

Framing the face

That gets you everything you ever wanted

You've got a castle on cloud nine

Your sapphire eyes scan the masses  
For your latest modeled maid  
Latest admirer  
And amused by the furtive glances  
Of the envious  
You gaze back  
Until the green orbs  
Quietly look away

They'll never be like you

All eyes diverted  
The crown turns back  
To the papers and pens  
Of the real world  
All eyes turn back  
To their miserable lives

Mere peasants in a kingdom  
Where only splendor rules

# Waiting

*Andrew Pike*

The family stares at the ceiling in the night,  
counting the cracks yet again.  
They exhibit a false mask  
of assurance in front of the children  
whose mother can only watch and wait.  
It's hard to accept, at thirty-six  
being unable to move or talk  
with her son busting through the front door every day  
exclaiming how great school was;  
no answer,  
just a blank stare.

A once beautiful form  
cages and chains and silences  
the most alive emotions  
as the disease mutilates  
her functions of expression.  
The embrace of her son and daughter  
no longer registers,  
a funny joke cannot be laughed at,  
the heat of the sun, a refreshing breeze—

all of her senses disappear.  
She exists to watch the world  
crumble, to watch those close  
wither, and to lose touch  
with the world.

The doctors remain steadfast.  
They say she is fighting  
behind an impervious wall.

# Frozen

*Andrew Pike*

He is suspended with arms slightly raised,  
Mouth half open and eyes still strained  
While fish creep from behind rocks where they hid  
From the thunderous cracks echoing above

As frozen lake water attacked gasping lungs,  
Under a ceiling of ice that casts a grey shadow  
Delineating the features of a young man living  
In the fastest time of his life,

Yet motionless now and hanging on to thoughts,  
Remembering moments ago the adrenaline  
Rush while gripping the throttle, white knuckles,  
Grooved ice, vision distortion, neck strain,

Momentum, ice pellets, a blur,  
Floating in a snapshot of time  
After speeding blindly  
Into uncertain  
Darkness.

# Extraction

*Lucas Doyle*

Out of all the thing you could be doing,  
You're here, sitting.  
Waiting.

You have places to see, people to meet—  
there's no time for this.  
You're eighteen. The world is your oyster,  
and you are it's pearl.

But now  
You've been yanked  
from reality into the dentist's office,  
Right into his hands.

Being motioned toward a chair,  
foreign hands appear in your mouth.  
The inquisitive tongue inspects, when  
Doc's needle suddenly pricks you.  
The bottom half of your face melts off.

Now an audience of cuspids, bicuspid, and molars  
watch as their most senior members are removed.  
The old and wise are eliminated out once they become useless,  
They merely occupy space, however  
They do not leave without a struggle  
of pain and blood.

The tongue waves goodbye, and  
the pain says hello  
as hours pass. Left with an empty feeling,  
the rest of the mouth relishes it's pearls.

# Dilapidated Cars

*Karl LeClair*

My father and I fix cars  
Straining and swearing to make the repair  
In turn the cars fix us

In an old rundown garage  
On a long bumpy road  
My father and I fix cars

We find ourselves diagnosing  
Beaters and rust buckets  
In turn the cars fix us

While my mother spends time  
In her own world of baking and cleaning  
My father and I fix cars

We have mended leaking fuel lines  
And restored numerous burned out engines  
In turn the cars fix us

Aside from the problems  
We get the job done  
My father and I fix cars  
In turn the cars fix us

## **Fenton Ave.**

*Abbey Kay Ritter*

A mop of blonde comes,  
dashing across the floor.  
The change of a lens,  
Watching what is now  
a newly obscured view.  
But I know what happens next.

My mind flashes back,  
seeing a house of brown,  
tattered furniture,  
some red carpeting.

Hearing noises, little voices,  
masked by the pop of a can.  
What used to seem silent,  
is pronounced,  
is deafening, today.

Now the image clears,  
four small children running about.  
But I can't see the children.  
My eyes are caught on the problem,  
the gleam of that bottle.

# Quiet Struggle

*Josh McCutcheon*

The warble of a lonely loon  
makes us both look up from quiet intensity  
Ripples mark the passage of an invisible line  
that is the subject of such silent reflection

Guiding that string past the pads,  
weeds, rocks, and other unseen dangers  
takes noiseless concentration that may seem  
absurd to those not familiar with the smooth,  
gentle handling of rod and reel.

With thrashing leap  
Silence shatters.  
Everything

Jerks

In the dance  
Of death

The scaled beast

Dives

Wheels

Snaps

The line of captivity

Silence ensues

No words need be spoken.

It is only a brief interruption  
on the smooth glassy surface.

Silence continues

# Secret Story

Jay Gilbert

*“Every day I wonder what I’m doing here and I wonder if everyone feels the same way that I do.”  
~Unknown.*

“BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.” I lean over and press the button to turn my alarm clock off. Another few hours of sleep have again come to a close. I open the shade and the sunrise blinds my eyes. A new blanket of snow lay on the ground from the late night’s flurry. I fight with my covers until I finally win and make it out of bed. My knees and ankles are stiff from not walking on them for so long, but I manage through the pain and make it to the kitchen. The thought of a good morning’s meal is a comforting thought to me right now. As I open the cupboards I see nothing appetizing but a couple of cobwebs and a few mouse dropping on one of the shelves. I see that mom had better things to spend her money on than to buy some food for Kyle and I.

“Morning Dede!” Kyle says as he walks through the door of the kitchen. I see that I am going to have to pick another outfit for him because that red shirt with those fluorescent green pants will not work.

“Hey Ky, why don’t you come with me and I can pick out something else for you to wear. I know that’s your favorite shirt but you can’t wear it every day. Let me pick something that all the girls in school will think is the cutest thing ever,” I said trying to convince him.

“I don’t want any girls thinking I’m cuts. Girls are icky! They got things like cooties!”

“Now come on, do you really think that girls have cooties? You talk find with me and I’m a girl. See, cooties won’t kill you,” I try saying but as usual he gives me a look like the little second grader that he is. “Fine, don’t change. She what I care.” I pick up my school bag and head for the door. On days like today I could care less about that little twerp.

The walk to school does not take me long at all these days. I leave a little before seven and I get there with plenty of time before the bell rings. As I approach the courtyard I can hear all of the radios blaring of all the jocks in the parking lot. That is where all of the cool people hang out before school. I then walk by all of the stoners. Every day it is the same people smoking out in the dirt parking lot. They offered me a drag one day and it was not as fun as they made it look, so that was the last time I talked to any of them.

I finally get to the line of everyone who is waiting to get into school. It always takes forever to get to the front of it. Schools are always way too secure. But I finally get to the front after like ten minutes of waiting. The policeman makes me walk through a metal detector which luckily does not go off. Then he searches through my bag and to my surprise does not find anything that I am not supposed to have. It's just a waste of my time.

I push through the crowd of sophomores and juniors and make it to the wooden table that has my name etched on the bottom of it. It is where I sit every morning facing the whole crowd of students. I just like to sit back and see how people react to each other. I say a prayer thanking God that I am not one of those ditsy, full-of-myself-slutbags. I couldn't imagine living in one of their shoes one day. Always laughing and smiling and being all nice all of the time. Just watching them makes me throw up in my mouth.

The bell finally rings and the normal day begins. We all push and cram our way up the narrow stairs and throw our crap into our lockers. I never put a lock on mine because no one would want to steal my grubby winter jacket anyway.

First and second blocks go by like usual. The teacher lectures to us about some shit that I am never going to need and then I put my head down and doze off to sleep. I awake to the sound of the bell and I know it is time for lunch. The only thing I like about lunch is that I actually get a good meal.

I take my tray and go to the same table I was sitting at in the morning. By what I hear it sounds like Troy cheated on Joan with Joyce. That's about all I can get out of what people are saying around me. Once my tray is done I relax and put my leg up on the chair across

from me. I could take a nap like this is lunch was not so short. I look around and see Mr. Alexander coming over.

“Take your feel off of the chair. What do you think this is, your house?” he says.

“Well, if this was my house I wouldn’t be having a sit down meal,” I mutter under my breath.

“What was that?” he asks.

“Nothing” I lie.

This is about all of the recognition I get for the rest of the day. In fourth block someone asked me to pick up their pencil because it fell under my desk but that was it. Then finally the bell rings and it is time to go home. I grab my bag and walk the same way home that I tool this morning except for one street. It is the shortcut to get home but I have not taken it in a few months. I decided today was the day to take it again.

I step over the curb to cross the street I see Ky drive by with his friend Sam. His mom must have picked them up when they got out of school. Almost every day Kyle goes to their house and stays with them most of the night, sometimes all night. Mrs. Wesley takes care of Ky like he’s one of her own. At least he has one motherly figure in his life.

As I reach one of the curves ahead I can see the flowers and the sign. My eyes start to tear up but I force myself to keep walking. As I approach I can start to make out the letters engraved on the wooden sign. They look a little distorted from the water in my eyes. I finally make it close enough to see them clearly through my squinted eyes.

*Robert Miller*

*Father of Denise and Kyle Miller*

*January 23, 1971-September 4, 2007*

*A Car Accident Took His Life.*

# Mudding

*Dan Clark*

In New England most kids have big friggen trucks  
Which are usually brought in the woods where they get stuck  
They soup up their motors and put big tires on  
It seems at time you could drive through a pond  
They climb over rocks and logs and bumps  
And all kinds of other aggressive lumps  
They don't wash them often cuz it makes them look good  
When they have mud caked up three inches thick on the hood

## December 23

*Ben Roy*

Picture this

2 days to x-mas

and we walk into Dunkin' Donuts

It's night but I'd still enjoy a cup of coffee

As we stand in line we see the child come first,

"Santa doesn't exist," she says to him.

No big deal, so this kid just stopped believing,

Then in he comes, greasy hair, beady black eyes.

We watch him shove her further into the store.

I hear him say,

"I AM FUCKING SANTA"

His eyes never leave mine as I watch him

strike her upside the head and continue pushing

her around as we exit the store into the parking lot;

I wonder if he somehow knew how

well I knew the irritation of having

a drunken ass of a father on x-mas,

or how much I would have loved

to go back into that Dunkin' Donuts

and help that piece of shit

swallow a shotgun

Merry Fuckin' Christmas

# Errol That Is

*Jessica Bourassa*

A small forest  
Surrounded by houses  
The sound you hear when you  
Wake up, cutting down of trees  
Brrrrrcrunch, Brrrrrcrunch  
Errol that is.

The town where everything knows  
Everyone to the point  
Where you walk  
In two stores that we have  
And the loopy cashier knows you.  
“Hi, how’s your brother doing,” is the questions you  
Every time you walk in because they down mind  
Damn business.

The times where you can go snowshoeing out your  
Door till it gets pitch black  
Just to look at those twinkling stars up above you.

Waking up at three in the morning to find trash in  
your yard and  
the massive bear standing by your door.  
Errol that is.

Errol, where the fun is to 4-wheel, snow machine,  
Boat not knowing if you fly off of anything it won't  
Matter because no one is watching.  
Errol that is.

Parties in the woods,  
Where it doesn't matter if you freeze your ass off  
The fact of partying with the whole town makes it  
Just like a dream.

Errol that is.

# Being Seen

*Sarah Rouhan*

Most times, people see everything:

The man who believes the inside of his car is invisible, chatting on his cell phone with a finger shoved up his nose,

or the amorous couple who foolishly forget to shut their blinds during a night of romance.

Submersed in their own world,

they think they are the only ones,

the only ones who matter.

Isn't it peculiar,

how it's the times that really need to be seen

that never are?

Four young boys push a smaller one toward the brook.

Confused,

Frightened,

He dumbly stumbles, following their every order.

Insults and fists

soar through the air toward his face.

They laugh at his slow reflexes,

his inability to defend himself.

The boys pummel his body

until the life fades out of his slanted eyes,

and only a spark remains;

a flicker of hope.  
Terrified of what they've done,  
the four boys shove rocks down his throat.  
They roll him into the river,  
masking their fear of the different,  
Not realizing they aren't as different as they thought;  
Not knowing the real stupidity lies in themselves.  
As the small boy floats down the slow stream,  
The stupid boys run away.  
And this time nobody sees a thing.

# Buried

*Nate Weeks*

The deep rumble fills  
The cold mountain air.  
You turn your head, snapped  
Out of your hypnotic rhythm.  
It only takes a second  
For you to see what's happening.  
As you try to go faster,  
Faster, faster, it only seems  
Like you're going slower, slower, slower.  
It finally swallows you;  
You're swept away by its raw power.  
Panic sets in as you lose track  
Of where you are.  
Finally— the mayhem is over.  
Everything is just as it was.  
You dig frantically, struggling  
To get your bearings.  
And then you see blue;  
Was it up? Was it down?  
Left? Right?  
And you keep digging.

## Staring hard at the motionless planes ...

*Morgan Lawrence*

Staring hard at the motionless planes through the thick plate glass window, I cannot imagine how much slower time could possibly be moving. I swallow hard against the welling knot in my throat and walk down the row of seats to my silent family. No one knows quite what to say right now, because there aren't really words for this kind of waiting. We all pace and feign interest in the various displays around the airport, but this place is unfamiliar, and we are here for a reason. I watch everything and I see nothing, as my thoughts flutter around in my head, crashing into the wall of my impatience. The Veterans mingle quietly, exchanging names and ranks like party favors. Unsure of what to do with myself, I walk into the tiny convenience store next to the escalator and breathe in the musky scent of last week's newspapers, still draped on the rack. I open and close my fists, feeling my fingernails scrape along my palms, wondering what I will say to him. What I could possibly say to him that would be of any significance at all. What do you say to someone who has seen death? Someone who has been shot? How can you compare the menial life of high school to that kind of purpose? Silently I decided not to say anything at all, because I figure everyone else will have enough to say to mask my uncertainty.

A lifetime later, word spreads like a flood that the plane is coming in, that in just a few minutes my life will change again. His life will change again. Suddenly, with an urgency I cannot understand, I rip through the crowd of strangers and immerse myself in my family. I cannot handle this alone. Anticipation pumps through me, charging me with adrenaline and rattling my false composure. It's not like I'm ready for this, how can you ever be? We wait for another million years, and by now I am positive I will explode if we don't get this over with. I want to see him, of course I do, but everything leading up to this moment threatens to drop me to my knees. All the waiting and all the plans, the four hour drive and the sleepless night; it all looms over my head, pushing on me, pushing me forward.

Then, like the sun breaking over the edge of the ocean first thing in the morning, the first tall, muscular suit of camouflage tramps down the inclined hallway, and suddenly I cannot breathe. The uniform multiplies into tens, maybe hundreds of uniforms, with heads and hands that shake those of the veterans who came to welcome them back to the United States. I forget myself; I push to the back and stand on my toes, scanning every face with feverish intent. I study every stranger, unblinking. From a million miles away I hear the cries of loved ones who grab a uniform and hug like they've never hugged before. A sea of grayish green swims in front of my eyes, but I have radar; I do not lose focus. Finally, after I've grown up and died of excitement and anticipation, I see a familiar face. I spot his buddy Jared Cate before I see him, and I squeak a shred of recognition, a feeble attempt at telling my family that he is here, I feel him near me. And then his face comes into focus, and suddenly I have tunnel vision, and the wide smile and anticipation I feel, I see reflected on the face I've been dying for, the one I've been studying in pictures and searching for on the news. My mother sees him, reaches him first, making a noise that causes others to move out of her way. She wraps Adam in her arms and he swallows her up in camo. She cries and smiles and talks and laughs all at the same time, never letting go. As I watch them my face gets hot and the happiness and the relief I feel overwhelms me; tears streak down my face and for the first time in my life, I cry because I cannot contain the happiness inside me. Then his eyes lock onto mine, the deep blue eyes of someone with a story to tell, the eyes of a soldier, the eyes of my brother.

# Wych

*Christine Cote*

I was going to die.

If I did not remain hidden, I was as good as dead.

I crouched lower in the low ditch, praying to God to keep the alder bushes still; their leaves were the only things shielding me from the horsemen. Sweat filled the crisscrossing lines on my palms and I risked rubbing them on my frayed skirt, the sole tiny movement I allowed myself since I had rolled into this brambly embankment on the side of the road.

“ . . . seen the other?”

“ . . . must . . . ” crrriiish, “ . . . far . . . ”

They are talking about me, I thought, mouth dry. At one time where I would have killed for an adventure to spice up my life, once a time where I fantasized about being thrown into a plot of risk and thrill. Those were innocent daydreams of a girl wanting more than what she had been given, more than skirts and chores and subservient behavior. And since I could read as well as a chicken, I only had Old Toby’s tall tales of knights and dragons to rely on for my ideas. Tales of love. Of danger. These were all far more interesting than my boring life, each more painstakingly unrealistic than the next. I did not mind. They all helped lighten the burden of reality.

Was I a fool.

“Just a dream, let it be just a dream. . . .”

My mind side slipped to when I caught the sole glance from Samuell yesterday morning. It had been brief, a careless over-the-shoulder toss of the eyes, but an odd disquiet coiled in my stomach in the moment I walked away. When I confided to my older sister Anne about it, she told me I was probably overreacting; she even went so far as to

joke about me catching his fancy, which was pure madness: Samuell did not have one affectionate bone in his body, and if he did, I had never witnessed it.

So having gone through Anne, the most level-headed and logical of us all, I decided against pursuing the matter.

What a horrible mistake.

A clatter of iron horseshoes across rocks pulled me away from my fervent pleas and to the steed prancing in place just a few feet from my head. The stink of horse and the choking smell of dirt clogged my nose. The creature whuffed through its flared nostrils, then stilled, liquid molasses eye blinking drowsily at me.

There was the crunch of running footsteps. “Minister—!”

“Did you find her? Where’s the witch?”

A breeze rustled the alder bushes enough to steal the answer out of the man’s mouth. My heart churned to the point where it made me sick; I watched, terrified, as the sprigs shifted and I knew that if either man looked into the ditch, they would find me staring up at them.

“I want . . .” rrsrtlts, “. . . found!”

The horse wheeled on its heels and cantered off, the three-beat tempo of its gait stimulating my desire to get as far away as possible. My nerves sizzled like pig’s fat on a skillet; I had to get out of here. Run, hide, something. To stay here spelled eventual capture, a capture I wouldn’t dream of allowing. I have heard enough stories of burning stakes, irons, and bleeding pins to know my fate if captured.

To think I brushed the witch trial stories away the moment I heard them; it had been other people who suffered, not me, so why should I care? Now, I wonder, what would people do if they heard mine?

I counted the seconds it took the Minister and the man to leave before I made my move. I knew by nightfall this place would be teeming with the townspeople—men who

tipped their hats at me when clearing their top fields, boys I've played tag with on lazy summer days, the girls I've giggled with as we milked the cows. The community gatherings, the games, the laughter . . . had they all forgotten? What made them turn so quickly on me and my sisters?

My ribs constricted my heart as I faltered at the last thought, but now was not the time.

The road remained clear as I skittered out of the bramble, their tiny claws snagging at my flaxen skirt and slapping my face with their whippy tails. Welts painted my arms red and the tiny white scratches made the back of my hands itchy as I crossed the dirt path to the other side. Bushes fled past me in green-hued blurs as I ran through the woods, growing less and less conscious of stealth and more and more focused on widening the distance between me and the town and the awful fate of my sisters.

My steps hitched. There, just at the foot of the rising embankment the elders called Long Fork, sat a perfect hiding spot; the trunk of the maple was wide enough to hide a huddled fawn and the bushes tall enough to conceal a tethered horse. It was dappled with sunlight; the Ark itself wouldn't have appeared more heavenly than this little patch of safety at this point. I hiked up my skirt and rushed over, swatting away the protesting leaves with the back of my hand. In no time I was tucked away, huddling low enough in the ground to smell the moist loam and damp maple bark.

Then it started.

Coward. Coward, coward, coward! My heart screamed at me, voice high like the whining of a mosquito. Still-frame images of my two sisters flickered behind my eyes, their mouths caught in mid-laugh. Bile rose to my throat, thick and stinging. I stuffed my teeth on my knuckles.

Old Toby had once said people did not know their true selves till they were thrown in the den of the lions. Only then would they see if they abandoned their friends to escape or found the sharpest rock they could to fight back. And till that day came, their proclamations were nothing but empty words—ringing, but hollow.

How I had scoffed then, how I had taken offense. Of course I would do anything for my family—those were my exact words. I still remember them as if I had said it the moment before.

I would do anything for my family.

How sure I had sounded over my shoulder as I stormed away from Old Toby's porch. My lips quirked by themselves; I had ranted later to my sisters about his senile words for so long Anne cuffed me alongside the head.

I would do anything for my family.

I crouched in the well of the tree's trunk, my two fists clenched at my temples. Agony I had never known scalded my insides and poisoned the fluid in my stomach. For every 'I will not go' I uttered, a little piece of me shattered, cutting my insides like tainted glass that left me aching and bleeding. The truth hurt more than a thousand deaths at the gallows or a hundred branding irons.

I had never known my true self was so selfish.

A jaunty whistle jarred me from my thoughts and froze me where I hid, the blood beneath my face crawling away. My hands became blocks of ice. And as the song grew nearer, the words left me with hot sensations of panic, roiling and wild.

"Ooo-oooh pretty girl, will you not come with me-e-eeeeeee?"

"How you would dance and swing,

You pretty, pretty little thing,

From the old elm tree-e-eeeeeeeeeee!"

My numb mouth twitched.

Samuell.

It was impossible to stifle the sound of panicking breathing; the more I tried, the more my heart threatened to skewer a hole in my throat. I tried taking even, deep breaths,

but that did no more than if I had tried breathing underwater. I did the best I could by sticking my mouth into the crook of my elbow. I only needed a little time to ease my breathing . . . only a little more . . .

The dull thud of hooves snapping sticks and disturbing leafy bushes told me he was nearing my haven, maybe twenty feet away. No, eighteen. Twelve. The cheerful refrain continued over the sound of the horse's champing at the metal bit, growing louder and louder till I knew for certain he was not seven feet away. The squeak of saddle was too loud, the smell of horse too strong, the macabre ditty of Lucifer himself too close. I felt as if I were the pheasant watching the rifleman, torn between flying and hiding, knowing either way I would be shot.

But morbid curiosity weaseled its way in the back of my mind and moved my body on its own accord; before I knew what I was doing I was peeking around the gnarled edges of the trunk of the maple, one eye finding the boy on the bay.

Samuell. Pale, wiry, Samuell. The tanner's boy, in all his blond-haired and casual glory. But for all his good looks, for all his pious attending at church, I could never get over the fact that he was always first to throw rotten vegetables at the people in the stocks, or be the closest one to the scaffold of the gallows' platform. Normal people did not do that.

Bile rose to my throat and I twisted my face in disgust as I looked again at his face; was he so focused on finding me that he did not acknowledge the blood dribbling down his lips? What a sick, twisted...I thought, an ember of anger heating my veins. They come after me with their pins and irons, I thought, seething, yet they let this beast free to hunt? He has blood all over his chin!

"I know you are out he-eeeeere," he said from his saddle, lifting his head to shout, "pretty, pretty, prit-teeeeeeee, so come on out!" Shivers laced up my spine and trickled down the bow of my ribs. His tone was pure glee, the excitement of the predator; his voice trembled with it. "It is no use, witch. Sooner or later I am going to find you. Come on, let us be fair now. Would you not rather comfort your little sister? Last I heard she was crying a storm when they bur— ah, there you are!"

“Monster,” I said, stepping around the maple tree that had been my shield. “You monster.”

The boy slumped in his saddle, French-cocked hat low over one eye. His nosebleed was drying in a tacky runnel.

“Better than a witch.”

My ears were burning. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Pff. Maybe.” He sat straighter in his saddle. “Maybe not. It’s not up to me, but I can take you to some who can tell for sure.”

The little ember in my chest was making it hard for me to breathe. It was a struggle to keep my words even and cool.

“Samuell—” my stomach curdled, “—have you ever seen me doing anything like witchcraft? Anything at all?” I could not believe I was having this conversation; this was beyond ludicrous.

There was a shrug in his voice. “Does it matter if I have seen it? You have your ways, witch. Besides, I am only here to fetch you.”

I stared at him. The ember of anger caught my veins and burst them to flames. So careless, so excited. Was this a game to him? Acting all joyous when my sisters—my sisters—were being tried and accused of witchcraft? Little Abigail could not yet pick up an iron skillet by herself and Anne went to church every Sabbath, and yet here they were, accused of the evil eye and God knows what. The utter morbid hilarity of the situation vomited a bark of laughter through my lips.

The bay sidled, ears swiveling high. Samuell’s eyes narrowed.

“What’s so funny?” he asked, something that had not been there before lacing his voice. “You think this is funny?” Something in his words made me stop. There was a wariness, a demand. Did he . . . ? No, he could not . . . could he be that stupid?

I hoped to God he was, because if he was, I saw my survival in his uncertainty. I threw everything I had left into this one chance.

“Well, you caught me,” I said. I huffed through my nose, my arms akimbo on my hips, all the while hoping he could not smell my fear.

“Come on now; I want no trouble,” he said. He shifted the reins in his hands and the bay beneath him swung its long head toward me. “Just nice and easy.”

“You must be eager to see witchcraft if you put this much effort in finding me. You want witchcraft?” I asked. “I will give you witchcraft!”

With my left hand—the Devil’s hand—splayed to its fullest, I reached down and grabbed the largest handful of dead needles and dry forest loam I could hold. The needles that poked the flesh of my thumb and the cool grittiness of the dirt that dirtied my nails filled me with such anger I thought my eyes would explode. Dirt. That’s what I was to them. Dirt to sow seeds of lies in and grow the fruits of false confessions. Dirt to rip apart with plows of trials and barren with the salt of torture.

“May a plague fester your skin,” I said, my words searing my throat like hot cayenne pepper, “and tear your sleep to tattered nightmares!” I cocked my elbow back and launched the loam and pine needles at the beast in gentleman’s clothes, arm swinging a full arch. Witchcraft? By God, I would give him witchcraft—I would give them all witchcraft. In that moment, I actually wished I had the power to back up my words.

The pleasurable throb of anger carried away my sense and put nonsense words in my mouth. “Hallowed art thee Lucifer, whose name I call down!” Maybe one day I would regret going that far. Maybe not. For now, I would run with them till I fell.

Samuell brought his right arm to shield his face with a bloodless cry. The horse threw up its head, nostrils flaring, eyes ringed white. I rushed at it. I slapped at its hindquarters, the sound of my palm connecting with its hide startling it into a bolt. The tanner’s boy needed no encouragement; he actually goaded the horse on, kicking at its sides as if it to

make the horse grow wings. Clods of last year's leaves and soil kicked up in the air as the horse and rider fled, leaving me soon standing alone and panting between clenched teeth.

Alone. I had given up my last chance to turn back to my sisters and die with them. I knew from the tales down south their fate beforehand, and knew the same would happen to me if I were caught. Loyalty and guilt demanded that I turned back, but fear kept me rooted where I was. Shame hounded my heels as I crawled up Long Fork, digging my toes into the leafy ridge. The need to survive was too strong, the fear of the gallows too prominent. It dominated everything till only the desire to live twisted my stomach.

Was I selfish?

Yes.

Would I hate myself for years to come?

Most likely.

But would I survive for them? Live? Laugh? Cry? Grow old for my sisters?

With all that was left of my sad, selfish soul.

# Shadow City

*Mitch Greene*

Where the forest of green turns to a jungle of grey,  
lies the city.

Clear in day, bright at night

It watches the inhabitants, silently, waiting

There is still time. (the bomb is ticking)

The jungle wonders,

What fate will befall the silent trees

And the treasonous animals (of our sort)

The symbiotic link, severed at the source.

There is still time. (the clock is shrinking)

Ice runs through the city,

a shroud of mist and shadow.

Distorting reality and darkening the conscience

They (of our sort) run on, blackening the rain

There is still time. (the shadow approaches)

Like stone gargoyles perched high

And goliaths of twisted metal and steel.

A metal army, a grey army of buildings.

Sits and waits, arraying for battle.

There is still time. (the battle has begun)

# The Things She Carried

*Olivia Foy*

She carried her head high and proud. She carried herself across the stage and carried the piece of paper that she had put a life of hard work into. There were many things she carried, and wasn't sure if anymore would fit. Eighteen years of memories and souvenirs were piled upon her, yet instead of weighing her down they helped her across the raised platform. The things she had carried for so many years had carried her across that stage and towards the rest of her life.

She carried satisfaction. She had finally done it. She carried her graduation cap with the tassel turned. She also carried the sadness that it was over, that she had just written this chapter's last sentence and it was time to turn the page and begin writing the next one. But was she ready to move on? For this particular fear she carried three very important things. She carried confidence in herself, that little voice inside her head that has faith in her. When she thinks something is impossible it's there in her ear whispering, "I know you can do this." She carried the memories of her friends in a plethora of pictures. The pictures came from different cameras, from different periods of her life and were of different people, but they all held a special memory that she wasn't about to let go. And she carried her phone. She carried it with its list of contacts and pictures so she would be sure never to lose touch with those close to her heart.

She carried the love for all the people that had touched her life, everyone that had helped mold her into the individual she was today. She carried gratitude for those special people, whoever they may have been. She carried love for her hometown and the millions of memories it made. She carried the love for her house, for it had been hers since she was three. She carried the love that she was going to give to the people she met for the rest of her life, and that was an infinite supply of love.

She carried her family. She carried her sisters, her dad, her mom, her dog, cats and the animals that were no longer with her whom she still loved. This was something that she didn't fully carry alone; it was more like a mutual carry. Sometimes she would carry them, but when times were bad she would fall back and be carried by them. She carried a love for them that would never go away. She carried all the times they had shared, whether it had been an amazing time or an agonizing one. She carried the sense of always having at least one place where she could belong. She carried everything she could from her family. This was her largest object, but also one of her most prized.

She carried her boxes out of the car and into the new place she would be living. She carried her clothes, her computer, her school supplies and other odds and ends. She carried what seemed to be an endless amount of things. She carried her dad saying, very pleased with himself, "I told you you bought too much stuff."

She carried the secret denial that you could never have too many things. She carried the excitement of this fresh path she was about to walk down. She carried the fears that she might not be able to find her way, thankfully she still hadn't let go of the confidence in herself. She carried the teary farewell from her friends and family. She carried the promise of, "See you at Thanksgiving!" She carried the love that people gave her in return for hers. She carried everything important to her, everything she needed to succeed. With the numerous things she carried, she began to make room for all the new things she would pick up along the way.

# Hand in a Box

*Olivia Foy*

“Bobby, don’t do that,” said Mrs. Jones.

Bobby was sitting in class, minding his own business. Everyone was always telling him not to do something. He couldn’t help that his hand just wanted to tap his pencil repeatedly on the top of the desk. He was a tall skinny kid, not unlike a string bean. He had straw colored hair and light green eyes. He didn’t necessarily look different from other kids, but somehow he could never behave like them.

Fine, Bobby thought, I’ll stop, it’s only five minutes to the bell anyways. Five minutes and then I can be free. Five minutes until I can go to track practice, when I’m there I can be as hyper as I want and it’s a good thing. Bobby drifted into thought about practice, and wondered why he could never keep still. In his deep thought process he forgot to control his body. Sure enough his hand had gotten its way and was tapping the pencil loud and fast against the table top.

“Bobby, please don’t do that, it’s distracting. Don’t make me ask you again.”

“I’m sorry Mrs. Jones, I won’t do it again,” apologized Bobby. In his head he thought to himself, like that’s going to happen. I don’t mean to, I just have to, my hand just has to. My body just does what it wants sometimes, it just twitches or has little quirks. I wonder if this happens to anyone else... No! Stay focused, concentrate on the hand. Only a minute left, just control it for one minute and you won’t get a detention today. With his pale face scrunched in concentration, distorting his otherwise handsome features, he made it through the minute. The sweet relief of the bell came just in time.

Track practice was the only time of the day where he was able to manage the limbs that were attached to him. Running took his mind off fidgeting. Out there it was just him and the track, no one else, no one telling him not to do that. It was his place, his special

place where he felt most at home. Running just made sense to him and running helped him make sense of himself. But, like all good things, it could never last. It seemed as soon as it had started, track practice had ended. Two hours of full-out, good, solid running couldn't even take the painful need for constant motion off of his mind. No matter how fatigued he got there was always something tapping or shaking or wiggling and he was at a loss for how to control it.

When he got home he was an only child and both his parents had to work and had a long commute so he came home to an empty house. He had to start his homework right away, otherwise he wouldn't have enough time to do it. Two hours was needed for what other people considered a simple assignment. Bobby just couldn't concentrate. A thought would pass through his mind and capture his attention fully and completely. His light green eyes would look at something distant and nonexistent to the naked eye and the muscle on his face relaxed, but the hand, the monstrous hand would keep up the tapping. His brain could go on rants for hours at a time, but through the years he had become a master, if it's even possible, at controlling it. He could cut it into fifteen minutes or less but soon after it was controlled another idea would swell-up in that fidgety brain of his and leave him grappling for domination of himself.

Concentrate Bobby, concentrate. Yes, okay, that plant looks like 'Cousin It,' get over it. It's time for math, think about the plant later. But, hmhhh, when did we get that plant? And why would my mom buy it, why would she want a 'Cousin It' look-a-like in her house? It's a little creepy, what kind of plant looks like that anyways?

By six, after almost an hour and a half math was finished. It was time to take a break. He couldn't burn himself out by doing everything at once; it took a lot of energy to keep himself in check. It was time for sustenance, something to bring up his spirits.

He began the boiling water for tortellini. He figured he should make the whole box. His parents would be home relatively soon and he would get flack if he had only made food for himself. It was too quiet, Bobby decided. He left the pot on the open flame and went to the TV. He actually hated to be alone but he didn't want to tell either of his parents because they tried their best. They loved him very much, he knew that. But, in some

irrational space in his head he had convinced himself that they would only love him if he was normal. For this reason he kept his hand to himself. He didn't want to lose their love, and he would make sure that he didn't. Bobby knew it was ridiculous that their love would be taken back just because he couldn't stop moving, but he hated that part of him and had convinced himself that they would too. When he was with them he kept his secret in a little tight box (so it couldn't move as much), bolted shut deep inside the back of his mind. He put on his ultimate show of being the perfectly normal kid in their presence, something he had been working on since the age of seven when he noticed something a little off in himself.

Shoot! Thanks to his rant, he over-cooked the tortellini. Not by a minute, but by about 10. It was like chewing rubber. What would his excuse be this time? He wasn't worried; he would have one by the end of this bowl. His hand began to tap his fork, over and over again against the table top. There was something soothing in the motion and the sound. He drifted into thought about how he would make a useable excuse as to why he had done this, yet again, and he practiced it consistently inside his mind so when it poured out of his mouth it would be the right thing. Weirdly enough, after all the times he had lied it hadn't gotten any easier to tell them to his parents. He was an expert liar to everyone but his parents. He concluded it was because of the guilt he felt deceiving the people he loved and who loved him back.

Time to finish up his homework. He would need just about the rest of the night. He went up to his room so he could avoid his parents for as long as possible when they got home. If they couldn't find him they couldn't ask about the tortellini and then he wouldn't have to lie. He was on a roll tonight, sentence after sentence kept coming out of his brain and the hand that usually did its own thing obediently wrote them down on the page. His English homework was done in record breaking time. He heard a car pull up the driveway and the lights illuminated his window. The hand that was, just a second ago, so obediently doing his will was now nervously tapping away and its palm began sweating. He hated this, he didn't want to lie, but he knew he had to. The front door was pulled open and then loudly put back in its place.

“Bobby, sweetie, I’m home! Come say hi.” His mother’s voice clearly reached his ears, but he wished it hadn’t. He built up the courage and settled his voice and yelled back, “Be right there Mom.”

Okay, collect yourself Bobby. Get your acting face on, time for your performance of the day. He wrestled with his secret, pushed it inside the box, slammed the lid shut, bolted it quickly and threw it as far back in his mind as far as humanly possible. He picked himself up and lumbered downstairs, heavily burdened with the guilt and shame that would soon envelope his entire being. But with his expert acting skills he ignored it. He put on a smile and held his head up high.

“Hey Mom, how was work?” he said while in the process of a hello hug.

“Well thanks for asking, it was good. How’s your homework going?” She implored. She always asked how my homework was going; she knew I usually had trouble finishing it all. My teachers had sent their concerns.

“It’s good, it’s actually almost done.”

“That’s great honey. Your father should be home a little later tonight. He called me from work and he’s running late.”

Great, I loved my mother but the last thing I needed after a long day was to be alone with her. Without a distraction for her the focus was on me and I had to work extremely hard to keep myself in line. I just wasn’t sure if I had the strength and concentration left to do it, but I was not about to let my secret out of its tight little box.

“Alright, I just have to go upstairs and finish the rest of my homework.”

“Okay, come back down when you’ve finished, we can spend some time together.”

“Sure thing Mom.” I rushed upstairs. That had gone semi-successfully, the tortellini hadn’t even been brought up. Ah, even homework, as agonizing as it could be sometimes, was nothing compared to the toll hiding myself to my parents took on me. Homework was like heaven, and I relished the time I had to do it. It let me recoup and I took as much time

as possible. I did my English one sentence at a time, and let my mind wander. I didn't want to control it, and the hand, the monstrous hand thanked me. But

strangely enough my homework was still done quickly, more quickly than normal and I was out of excuses. I collected my tired mind and carried it downstairs.

My mom was sitting on the couch just about to start a movie.

"Hey Honey, your homework all done? You want to watch this movie with me?" she looked at me hopefully.

"Course I will Mom. Should I make popcorn?"

"I'll eat it if you do, make it kettle corn though, I don't feel like a lot of butter."

I went into the kitchen and put the packet of kettle corn into the microwave, set the timer and shut the appliance's door. I closed my soft green eyes and my head leaned back against the outside of the lighted chamber and tried to relax every muscle I knew. Be strong, I thought, don't let it slip. Thank God for a movie. No talking, but don't twitch, just don't move. The first pop of the popcorn interrupted these thoughts and I started abruptly.

"Everything okay in there?"

"Yeah, everything's fine Mom." He attempted to sound reassuring, but knew everything was far from okay. He popped open the microwave door and carefully took out the steaming kettle corn. He opened the top of the bag and the sweet and salty smell wafted throughout the room. There was something comforting about the smell. He was glad his mom had asked for kettle corn, she was right, it wasn't the time for butter, it only made things messier. He poured the kettle corn into the light blue plastic bowl and carried it into the living room.

He handed the popcorn over to his mom. It wasn't smart to get between her and kettle corn. He plopped down on the couch next to her and pushed the play button on the remote. Sit still, sit still Bobby, we can't have her find out, it wouldn't be good if she found out, his hand whispered up through his arm and into his ear. I know, I know, he whispered back.

Bobby sat there and looked as if he was watching the movie intently. However he was having a full-on battle inside his head. The hand, in contrary to its previous statement, was trying to tap, was trying to get him found out. It had tricked him, but he wasn't about to let that hand, that monstrous hand be the reason his secret was revealed. His face remained calm and collected but his green eyes looked blankly ahead. You could have never guessed that underneath his straw-blond hair that there a was a struggle so big that most would crumble.

But Bobby was strong, this was his life. His would parents would never know, he would make sure of that. He couldn't lose their love, he wouldn't lose their love. So he sat there through the movie and controlled himself. He sat there through his entire life, on his own, fighting and battling to keep his body his own. He kept the secret of his monstrous hand locked tight in the box hidden deep inside his mind.

# Nightmare

*Amelia Moorhead*

Nightmare

Angels scare

Roses are bleeding

Life has no meaning

Wings torn tears have spent

The only light is far lent

My halo has turned to barbed wire

Robes of light now smoke and ash desire

Eyes cold as stone heart of sorrow rain storms

Full of pain scars patched up by long black thorns

No one knows where the road does go nor the riddle

Where tis heaven or hell does the devil really play the fiddle

I was left behind I fell from the sky allies slain me soon

World is lost as myself has no cause for alarm for dreams crying moon

Wandering listening philosopher none wants to hear gray maze of mechanical clocks of  
metal time

Falling won't let in dishonor not even worth it I'm on 18th story waiting to rhyme

Song speech signs works together will they all wish nor pray you're lost stabbed soul

Drip drop spite sin nervous calm pawsteps footsteps staircase leading down sideways no-  
ways to drink blood from bowl

The blind are the only ones who see who can't put a foot down still raise a fist people stare

Run vain fright instead fight sew needle in heart not play part world nothing but stage is this  
nightmare

# Spring Triolet Poem

*Riley Patry*

Crispy snow melts into a dirty pool,  
We walk on sidewalks newly revealed.  
The hanging sun sparkles like a bright jewel,  
Crispy snow melts into a dirty pool.  
The breeze blows through my hair steady and cool.  
Butterflies dance in a green grassy field.  
Crispy snow melts into a dirty pool,  
We walk on sidewalks newly revealed.



# CONTRIBUTORS

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