Blazing the Real: Writing by Indiana Children

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blazing the real
I got my first camera when I was in third grade—a Brownie Hawkeye flash model with a snazzy little camera case. The instruction manual provided six simple steps for taking successful pictures.

Hold the camera steady, supporting it underneath. Then, with the sun behind your back or over your shoulder, locate the subject in the finder. At the instant of exposure, hold your breath and press the shutter release with a gentle squeezing action (Brownie Hawkeye Instruction Manual).

The camera came with two rolls of film, each with 16 frames. I eagerly used them up and sent the exposed film off for developing and printing. Maybe because I didn’t hold my breath or squeeze the shutter release quite gently enough—I don’t know—but when the prints came back, I had (according to the manual) “fumbles”: double-exposures, complete blurs, specks on the images, a few close-ups of my finger or the camera strap, and plenty of shots where the subject was cut-off. I did have pictures, but not one that was good.

Cameras now are nothing like my Brownie Hawkeye, but if you still point and shoot like I do, you have surely noticed that the beautiful sunset you see with your own eyes is nothing like the digital image you end up with. That’s because creating breathtaking photography is up to the photographers who are, in the words of Ansel Adams, blazing the poetry of the real (1930) – using shadow and light, focus, compositional elements, perspective, texture, and tone to illuminate what we see (and sometimes don’t see).

For the longest time, we have used a point and shoot mentality in writing, too. You remember… follow the directions for writing a paper, hold your breath when you turn it in, then get it back in a few days with your “fumbles” clearly marked in red pen. Think about it. How much better would your writing have been if you had known how to create the illusion of motion or sound, manipulate the volume or inflection in a reader’s voice, make the reader your accomplice, or persuade her to think like you? That is the work of writing after all—to hold its own in the absence of the author, blazing the real of time and space.

Knowing how to write well is not just the province of published authors anymore. It can’t be—too much is at stake. Workshop teachers take seriously this call to action, teaching the qualities of good writing every single day. In Blazing the Real, their students demonstrate that good writing comes from a deeper understanding of craft, of what writers know and do. These young writers understand that very specific, tangible details help them effectively express big, sometimes abstract concepts. They understand the power of creating intimacy with a reader by using second-person address. They understand that reflecting on topics immediately relevant to their own lives, stirs emotions that resonate broadly. And, they even understand how to manipulate the conventions of writing to provoke their audiences to respond in particular, intended ways.

Breathe in the beauty of Blazing the Real—the splendor of meticulously crafted photographs inspired by the writing in each of four chapters, the artistry of language both written and drawn that is influenced by the work of real writers. And know, we are a very long way from point and shoot.
a single leaf glides down
Kevin Gliva

In my summer
I go to Florida. At the beach I make sand castles. And go swimming. And walk and collect seashells.

Sometimes my aunt comes with us. It takes two days to get there. We stay at a hotel. One time we got free watermelons.

In Georgia we stop at my Aunt Pam's and Uncle Colin's house. They have a garden of fruit and vegetables. The end. P.S. I really like Florida.

Emma Petrache

My heart was pounding, and I was nervous. Am I doing my back-tuck? I asked myself. But I didn't know the answer.

I listened to the crowd roar and my coach saying, "Come on, Em!" My mom wasn't there, and I wanted to surprise her and tell her that I did my back-tuck. Everything that I needed to do in my routine just went through my head in a ZAP. The judge raised her hand. I stepped up on the floor, and again I heard the crowd shout. I came forth and began my routine.

The routine was flawless until my back-tuck. I stood there as my heart felt like it was going to explode out of my chest. I ran, hurdled, did a round-off, sprung into a back-handspring, and did a BIG jump. I turned in the air! I finally landed on both of my feet, did my last pose, and presented. I did a back-tuck! When I got off the floor, my coach gave me a high-five and a punch in the stomach. Then she said, "I knew you could do it!" After that I felt ecstatic, overjoyed, gratified and a bit lucky. When I told my mom, she was as proud of me as I was of myself.

Beatrice Phillips

I grabbed a handful of mane and pulled myself onto his familiar, warm back. I let my legs dangle down his sides and rested my hands in the tangle of his mane. I reached forward to stroke his neck, and he turned his head and gently nuzzled me. I tapped my heels to his sides, and he moved forward into a comfortable, strolling walk. I sat into his deep stride, and I swayed with the rhythm. I looked around at the newly budding trees and at the new, lush spring grass. We both sighed contentedly. This was our favorite place to be together. Walking up a grassy lane, without a worry in the world. His ears were pricked, and I was smiling. Nothing could be better than this. Strolling along together. Just us.

A CIRCLE OF STARS

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MY SUMMER

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In Georgia we stop at my Aunt Pam's and Uncle Colin's house. They have a garden of fruit and vegetables. The end. P.S. I really like Florida.
BUTTERFLIES
Claudia Logan
I like when butterflies land on my finger.

THE WATERFALL
Soria Stancoiu
A sparkling torrent of liquid starshine crashes down upon an expanse of glittering rocks. Its rumbling melody sings to the sky in ecstasy…

A song without words, a tune without notes. As the pounding waterfall merges into the flawless silence of the creek, a single leaf glides down upon the shining reflection of the stars.

FAMILY FUN!
Christian Murphy
Hey, like family fun time? My family has the most fun. We play…

I was playing yesterday with my dad. We were playing Ultimate Alliance 2. My dad said, “We could play two rounds.”

I said, “Yes!”

I was Wolverine. Dad was Iron Man. I had fun, but Dad was tired. I defeated a hundred bad guys and two tanks. I was happy. Dad launched a missile. I hit a stack of missiles. If you hit a missile, it will launch.

I was having a hard time with the enemy. Dad blasted the enemy, but it was not over. An enemy jumped out of the window. We blew him up and three others. We had fun.

The game was hard when the tanks came. I was bustling things up. I was happy. We finished the first round. Dad and I tried another. When we were done with that, Dad said, “It is time to put the game up.”

I said, “All right.”

I went to play with my sister. We had fun. I played with my army guys. Ashlynn said, “I will play cars.”

I have fun with my mom too. We go to the library. We read on the porch in the summer. We have fun with my sister. We play together.

I have fun with my Pap. We plant a garden each year. We eat as a family. I spend the night too.

I have fun with my Aunt K. We watch movies. We play with her dog, Forest.

I visit my grandma too. I have fun. We visit Bass Pro. I love Bass Pro.

I have so much fun with my family. We watch movies. We play games. My family has an awesome time.
I can see fences and gravel, cars, people, horses, jumps, everything you could see at a horse show, you’d seen before…

But never felt.

Six in morning, waiting to get on, it’s dark, cold, the sun is coming up, the world is spinning around me.

I can hear the loudspeaker over the horses, the wind blowing, people yelling, dogs barking, but really all I can hear is my heart beating, the sound of horses’ feet hitting the ground, feels like it’s in slow motion.

Will I fall off? Will I get last place? Yet, I know people I love will be proud of me anyway.

As I enter the ring I feel my heart beating faster and faster. I’m scared, and lost in my thoughts… But once I get out there I know I’ll do well.

It’s over, I walk into the barn and wait for the results… I hear the loudspeaker come on.

“First place goes to 198, Beatrice Bowlby on Lots a Dots!”

I walk to the open floor, I hit the first position, my feet start to slide across the floor, I whirl and spin a lot, I lift up Grace, set her back down, and then the stage is still.

In the dark you can play. You can run, hide, and play ball in the night.

You can do things you can’t do during the day, like lighting up the night with a couple of flashlights and slide through the grass without being seen. It is fun to play in the night.

There is a world, In that world is another city, In that city there is a sidewalk, On that sidewalk is a bike, On that bike is a boy, On that boy are ears, In those ears are headphones, Connected to a CD player, In that CD player is “Us,” In that song are lyrics, In those lyrics is his life.

There is a world, In that world is a different city, In that city is a theater, In that theater is a stage, On that stage is a piano and a piano bench, On that piano bench is Regina Spektor, She is singing “Us.”
Evie sits alone, shivering on her bed, her room bathed in darkness. She twiddles her thumbs, her palms clammy. She can feel her heart racing. “I think my heart may pound its way directly out of my chest,” she says aloud to no one but the endless stream of frozen faces on her walls. She is home alone; no one to bother her in her silent anguish. She turns on her lamp, blinking rapidly as the room is filled with light. “How do I tell him?” she asks a random photograph.

She turns her phone over in her hands, over and over again. “Why hasn’t he called yet?” She flops down onto her back, her hair forming a halo of black against the soft white of her pillowcase. She lays her phone on the pillow beside her, staring at it as if the power of her gaze will encourage the phone to ring and flash, as his name and face—his adorable smile, the dimples in his cheeks, the swoosh of bangs in his face, those gorgeous green eyes—appear on the caller ID. “I can’t tell him,” she says to the ceiling. So, she sits; she waits.

Just as she thinks the silence is too much to bear, she hears her parents’ car in the driveway. She sits up quickly, grabs her history book and pretends to read. Downstairs, the front door opens and closes. Evie can hear her stepfather’s deep laugh and her mother’s girlish giggle as they start ascending the stairs. She listens intently as her mother whispers to her stepfather, more footsteps, and then a barely audible knock on her door.

“Yes?” Evie yells.

“May I come in?” her mother asks quietly, slowly opening the door.

“Of course you can Mom. How was the anniversary party?” Evie asks, patting the bed beside her, indicating for her mother to sit.

Instead, her mother leans against the wall. “It was amazing,” her mother says quietly, “Dinner and dancing. The most fun I’ve had in ages. But, alas, now I am exhausted.”

Evie watches as her mother thinks back and imagines the time she spent with the man of her dreams, Evie’s stepfather. Evie’s eyes flicker to her phone and then back to her mother. Then, her mother looks at her, “I’m going to go to bed sweetheart, I’m so tired. Goodnight. I love you.”

Evie watches her mother’s back as she retreats out the door, leaving Evie alone again to dwell in her emotional agony. “I want a love like theirs,” Evie thinks to herself.

Suddenly, the door opens again, “By the way Evie, your book was upside down,” her mother says before shutting the door again. Evie looks down at the book and sees the text upside down. She blushes deeply and tosses the book on the floor as her phone begins to ring.

She doesn’t look at it, too nervous that it may not be him. She hesitantly reaches toward her phone, grabbing it from her pillow; she presses “Talk” and puts the phone to her ear.

“Hello?” she says quietly, her voice coming out a mere whisper.

“Hey, what’s up?” says the deep familiar voice she’d been longing to hear.

Her heart pounds and rises to her throat. She coughs quietly and says, “I have something to tell you.”

She hears him chuckle, “By the tone of your voice, I’m thinking you’re about to tell me zombies have invaded the city. Since I haven’t seen any zombies, I’m assuming that’s not the case though. What is it you want to tell me?”

She closes her eyes and quietly whispers, “I love you.”

One morning in spring I woke up, and my mom said we were getting a cat. I asked what kind, and she said a Bengal. When the cat came, we decided to name it Mojo. He didn’t like Liam, my older brother. And he didn’t like Audrey, my babysitter.

When we let Mojo in the house, he ran under Liam’s dresser. Next Mojo ran under my bed.

When Mojo got older, he liked Liam and Audrey. Now he hides in the laundry room. There are three holes in there. He goes in all of the holes. When Mojo was a baby, he couldn’t climb up there. He was too small. He was so small my dad could hold Mojo in one hand.

Mojo is a house cat. He got outside once, but we caught him. Audrey let him outside. Mojo ran under the deck. There were a lot of spiders under there.

My cat doesn’t bite. He kills mice. My cat doesn’t like visitors. My cat likes to come out at night.
OPENING NIGHT
Grace DeBrota

It’s dark.
It’s quiet.
Stillness is around.
A thousand worries race through my mind as I think about what might happen.
What if someone forgets?
What if they don’t like us?
Or the worst thought
What if I mess up?
Suddenly, music begins to float and bubble over our heads.
We have heard it before and know it by heart.
Last wishes of good luck are given to friends.
Stomachs churn, blood pumps, and heads spin.
No going back.
The music builds, and we are seconds away from being revealed.
The pressure is too much to bear.
People scramble to get to the right places.
Then light.
Warm light, that floods over us.
A million faces stare us down.
A million pairs of eyes watch us, and as they do,
Every tense feeling,
Every worried thought,
And every doubt
Races away.
I know what to do.
We move, sing, and speak.
We come alive.
They watch every move.
They come alive with us.
When we are through, they begin to clap.
Loud.
Then one stands and another and another.
Finally, the whole house is on their feet.
Happiness.
A wave of immense relief, joy and pride washes over us.
We did it.
They will remember how they cried, laughed, felt, and cheered.
We walk off and share hugs and words of congratulations.
We made it.
They liked us.
But it is not over yet.
We have to perform again tomorrow.
And the next day.
Because that one night of terror,
Of fear.
Of joy.
And of worries
Is just the beginning.

RUN AWAY
Sally Jane Pohlman

When I run
all of my troubles leave me
They stay where I started
And I run
Away from them
The only thing
I think about
Is taking
the next step.
The tap, tap, tap
of my feet
on the sidewalk
is calming
Take a deep
breath and
start running
Again
As far as
I can

THE GUINEA PIG
Kevin Estrada

The Guinea Pig
by Kevin Estrada
Dedicated to My Family.

One day I was in Kindergarten, my mom picked me up from school. My mom said we’re going to get a guinea pig for a pet.

I got a golden guinea pig with a mohawk. When I took it home I put the cage on my bed and I put the guinea pig in his ball.

He kept running into the walls and under tables. Then I wanted to put him back in his cage but he... BIT ME!

Subsequently, we took him back to PetSmart and I bought a new one.

I kept him in his cage. Sometimes I take him out of his cage and I put him in his other cage to clean his cage.

My new guinea pig does not bite. He is my favorite pet in the whole world.
HOW TO SAVE A LIFE
Keegan Stein

This summer I went to Lake Michigan. It was a lot of fun. We stayed for about a week. We were still in Indiana, but we were at the edge of the state. We were in a city called Michigan City. We went with my dad and my stepmother’s side of the family. I shared a room with my cousin Anna.

Down the street, about three blocks away, was Lake Michigan. We arrived, and all the kids raced in. It was the perfect temperature and seemed like a perfect day. My step-uncle, step-grandmother, step-aunt, dad and stepmom built this big sand dragon. A few minutes later, Anna and I were helping them. My baby sister, Sadie, was playing in the shallow water. I went back to what I was doing. But then I looked back, just randomly. And I was looking around like, “Where’s Sadie?” But then I found her, and I was horrified. I saw a little foot come up from the water, and I ran over as quickly as I could and saw my sister’s face. Her eyes were open, and so was her mouth. Babies don’t know how to blow bubbles, which made her nose flood. I reached out and grabbed her as quickly as possible.

I saved her life. If no one had noticed, then, I wouldn’t have a little sister anymore. It made me so happy that I noticed Sadie. She clenched onto my arm and coughed up a little water. My heart skipped two beats. Everyone was so relieved and proud of me. “Wow,” I thought to myself. “They’re proud of me.”

IGLOO
Trinity Edwards

Igloo
White
Cold
Made out of ice
It is cold

PIANO TEACHER
Claire Young

I
GLOO
Trinity Edwards

Igloo
White
Cold
Made out of ice
It is cold
MY MESSY ROOM
Alejandro Navarro

My room is messy. When I get up for school, I don’t do my bed. I like to throw my clothes on the floor when I get home from school. Then, my mom comes downstairs and says, “Clean your room!”

I clean my room, but did you know that I don’t really clean my room? I put the things under my bed, and the next day it’s all messy again. Sometimes my sister comes and makes a disaster in my room, and I say, “You’re going to clean my room!” Actually, the only time my room is clean is when I’m not home.

My friend Anthony keeps his room messy too. When I went to his house, his room was unbelievable! There were clothes everywhere and Legos all over the floor. Anthony and I are messy with our rooms, but we’re still normal.

Did you know that I may be the only person in my family that has a messy room? The rest of my family keeps their rooms clean. Hey, my room is messy! But I like it like that!

CASTING THE LINE
Drew Skelton

The worm wiggled on my fingers trying to free itself. I finally was able to get the hook onto the worm. I was looking at the water and trying to find a spot to cast my worm. The wait began.

I was thinking about how long I might be standing on the dock when all of a sudden I felt a tug on my line. I was shocked!

As I pulled the fish from the murky water, it flipped and flopped in the water struggling to free itself. I tugged the hook out of the slimy fish’s mouth. It was a wet and squishy feeling.

At the end of the day, I ended up with a total of seven fish. I always throw the fish back after I catch them. I was really excited to go fishing. I was trying to catch a big one that day, but he got away. Maybe next time.

THE RIVER HOUSE
Maggie Boncosky

I am sleeping. It is really night. I am driving. I have gone about two miles. Now it is morning. I am awake. My brother Sam is still asleep.

Now Sam is awake. Now we have gone six miles. Now we have stopped for breakfast.

Now we are watching a movie.

Finally, we arrived at the river house. We are in the house.

“I am glad to see you,” said my grandma.

My grandma gave me a desk.
I said, “Thank you, Grandma.”

We are putting the crab pots down to get some crabs to eat.
We had to put some fish in the crab pots.

Now Grandma gave Sam and me a couple of bunny marshmallows that were colorful.

It is our naptime.
When I (get up) I am going to go see my grandpa’s tree house.
LEAVING HOME
Khadijah Doumbia
Swollen eyes, and tears roll down Lena’s cheeks as she cries.
But calm and quiet she listens
Knowing she will be traveling a great distance. Brand new faces, all in one place
The sun is shining down on Lena as her Chicago feet touch the scorching Arizona sand.

CREEK
Andrew Bessler
There, there is the creek flowing silently Rush, rush it seems to say like a small boy wanting to play That, that is the creek.

MY SUMMER
Peyton Sparks
It’s the last day of school
The clock is ticking
I spend time saying goodbye to my friends
I hear the bell ring and now I know
It’s time for summer to begin
The first day of summer I could not wait to spend time with family and friends I spent many days swimming riding my bike playing basketball finished baseball season with a win I enjoyed cookouts And a family reunion Spent time with my grandma who is also my friend The days became hot The weeks became short The first day of school was about to begin
**THE NEW KID**  
*Chris Johnson*

He is the new kid; no one understands his “awkwardness.” He never talks to people, and he seems “stupid.” The teacher calls on him in class. She wants to know the answer to a question. It’s obvious: he doesn’t know the answer. He clenches his fists; they begin to sweat. He is panicking, thinking to himself, “Don’t embarrass yourself.” He’s at a loss for words. His classmates begin to wonder what is the problem. Some begin to snicker, some to lose focus and talk with friends. He looks around and mumbles, “I don’t know.” Some of his peers laugh softly. “Oh no,” he thinks. “I’ve blown it! I just can’t blend in!” He slumps in his chair. He doesn’t understand why he was created the way he was, or why he just can’t be normal. He feels lost. Dumb. Alone. No matter where he is, he’s always the new kid.

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**THE BEACH**  
*Keegan Leous*

There was a black crab. There were two starfish. It was hard to get past the waves. I made a sand castle. A very big wave was so strong. I was running for shore. I got knocked down. I got water in my nose. I got on shore.

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**GONE**  
*Samantha Jones*

With one hand she took out the braid of deep red hair. Her misty eyes following the approaching storm with hatred. Her other hand was clutching the bed sheet, tightening with each stroke of lightning.

The power was out, the storm leaving a glow of light on her face. The wind blowing hard, out of nowhere a twister appeared on the horizon. A scream had formed inside Rose but she held it in.

She ran to the door with her hair half braided, blue dress flying everywhere. Rose was out of the door in the hall. She tripped over her dress and looked back. Rose could see out the window but she could not see what was to bring her doom.
AT THE ZOO
Sadie Schmitt

At the zoo we see a kangaroo.

At the zoo we see a zebra.

At the zoo we see a giraffe.

At the zoo we see birds.

THE ANNUAL MATHYUS FAMILY CAMP-OUT!
Morgan Osman

Once a year for a weekend in August usually nine different families come to the camp-out, so I have lots of aunts, uncles and cousins there. And one year we all slept in campers! Everyone slept in campers. It was so cool!

Our camper looked awesome! There were even two bunk beds on each side of the bedroom! I jumped on the top bed and looked out the window and saw my aunts, uncles and my cousins!

The camper was so cool in the kitchen! And there was a huge bed there that had a huge curtain so when it was light the person who slept there would not see the light. So they could sleep late!

The camper is not so big. I’m just glad I can fit my stuff in there. Then it got dark!

In the morning I put my clothes on and ran outside and got some lemonade (because) I was so thirsty!
CAPS FOR CHEMO
Morgan Watkins

Do you think that people who have received chemotherapy would rather wear a soft and warm hat or stay bald and have a cold head? I believe they would choose to wear a hat, of course!

People can become bald when they take chemotherapy. Chemotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that uses drugs to destroy cancer cells. Chemotherapy stops or slows the growth of cancer cells. Cancer cells grow and divide quickly. Chemotherapy can also harm healthy cells (non-cancerous cells) that also divide quickly, like hair cells. (Think how fast your hair grows.)

Chemotherapy is used to:
- Control cancer. Chemotherapy can keep the cancer from spreading, slowing the growth or destroying cancer cells that have started spreading.
- Provide palliative care. Palliative care means to treat and control the cancer and its symptoms.
- Chemotherapy can shrink the tumors that cause pain and/or pressure.
- Cure cancer. Chemotherapy destroys cancer cells so that you can't find/detect them and where they will not grow back.

Chemotherapy can be given during a hospital stay, at home, at a doctor’s office, at a clinic or through an outpatient unit in a hospital (where you don’t stay overnight).

Chemotherapy can be given:
- Topically through a cream that is rubbed on the skin.
- Orally through pills, capsules or liquid that you swallow.
- By injections or shots in the muscle, arm, hip, leg or belly.
- Intravenously (IV), which is when a tube is placed directly into the vein and the drug is given over a period of time. IVs can be given through catheters or ports, sometimes with the help of a pump.
- Intra-arterially (IA), which means directly into an artery.
- Intra-peritoneally (IP) or directly into the peritoneal cavity (an area of the body containing organs).
- Orally through pills, capsules or liquid that you swallow.

When a person goes through chemotherapy, it can make them feel embarrassed, devastated, anxious, frustrated, helpless, afraid, lonely and angry. Losing their hair through chemotherapy can add to these feelings. Patients can feel embarrassed, insecure, and frustrated when they go through the process of hair loss. There are some ways to cope with your feelings like relaxing, exercising, talking with others, and joining a support group.

Chemotherapy can cause side effects. Side effects are problems caused by the cancer treatment, the chemotherapy, rather than the cancer itself. The chemotherapy kills the bad cancer cells. But it also kills some healthy cells as well. Chemotherapy patients may have lots of side effects, a few or none at all. Sometimes side effects can be long-term and won’t go away. Other times the side effects go away once the chemo is done. But it can take months or years for some side effects to go away.

Some side effects of chemotherapy are: anemia, loss of appetite, constipation, diarrhea, bleeding, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, pain, flu-like symptoms, vision changes, headache, fever, chills, muscle and joint aches, and hair loss.

Hair loss is one of the most common side effects and it is the problem that I want to help make a difference. Hair loss is also called alopecia (al-oh-PEE-shuh). Hair loss can be when all or just some of your hair falls out. You can lose the hair on your head, eyelashes, eyebrows, facial hair (like beards or mustaches), arm and leg hair, and even underarm and pubic hair.

When you have lost your hair on your head, it is important to wear something on your head since your head can be exposed to cold weather and sunshine. In the cold weather you will probably want something warm on your head since you can lose body heat from your head. In the sunshine, your head can get sunburned easily with no hair to protect it. Chemotherapy makes sunburns more likely.

Wearing a hat during hair loss would help chemotherapy patients go out and live their lives without feeling bothered about how they look and how people stare at them.

Hats can be a more comfortable option than a hot, itchy wig and other forms of head wear. Hats are truly easy to wear, they are stylish and could add confidence to the person that wears them. With the right choice and right fit of a hat, you can make hair loss a lot easier says http://giftsforcancerpatients.net/hats-for-cancer-patients.

To help with the problem of hair loss, I went to two different cancer centers and delivered crocheted and knitted hats that I made myself and asked others to make to help. In all, I collected 78 hats! The cancer centers I went to were: the Little Red Door and the Central Indiana Cancer Center.

I delivered 65 hats to the Central Indiana Cancer Center. The charge nurse there, Lesley, told me that the hats would be put to good use. And now that I gave them some new colorful hats, the patients will be flocking over to the rack that holds the hats every day!

I learned at the Central Indiana Cancer Center that usually older women wear wigs to cover their heads, but young adults want to have fun with hats and scarves. The kids don’t usually care about showing off their bald heads.

I took the remaining 13 hats to the Little Red Door cancer agency. The Little Red Door helps patients who don’t have insurance find a doctor and transportation to get to their appointments. It is a support and information center, rather than a treatment center. They have a “boutique” which has wigs, hats and scarves for their clients.

Many chemotherapy patients who have lost their hair enjoy wearing a comfortable, stylish, soft and warm hat. People who can crochet, knit, or even sew should keep chemotherapy patients in mind when they have the desire to do something helpful for others. I am glad I was able to provide 78 hats for chemotherapy patients.
THE HUGE SNOWMAN AND CAVE
Noe Lobatos

I remember one winter morning when I was 7 years old. It was a snowy day and my uncles and I decided to go outside. We asked my abuela if we could play outside. She said, “Yes!” Moi, Juan, Eddy and I changed into our snow clothes.

I was thrilled to go outside. Next we decided to make a big snowman and a big cave. We made the snowman first. So we made three big snowballs and put them on top of each other. The snowman had a Christmas hat. The eyes were two limes. The nose was a carrot and the buttons were two small rocks. The snowman took us about one hour.

Now we could make the big cave. We got a lot of snow and made it into a mountain of snow. Next we dug a hole in the cave... It was BIG! Half of the cave was my uncles’ and half was mine. It took us one hour.

We were tired but not too tired to play snowball fight! It was fun. We drank some hot cocoa. It was sensational!

MY DOG ZEPHIE!
Kate Mills

Hi. I have a dog. Her name is Zephie!

I like to take her on walks. Mostly to the Butler Field.

Then we go back home and I usually give her dinner.

Then I play with a tennis ball with her and rub her tummy.

Then we cuddle up and go to sleep.

All About Zephie
Zephie is a black Lab. She loves to play with tennis balls and she likes people (to) rub her tummy. She is also a black Lab.
MY MOM HAS A NEW JOB
Ashley Garcia

My mom has a new job. I see nice clothes and my dad found my mom first. I gave my mom a candy and my mom liked it. I saw my mom’s work. I saw (many) people. The people were buying clothes.

We bought a pack with balloons. My dad knows how to blow balloons. (With) the balloons my dad said I could make a rabbit and a horse. I am excited.

Me and my brothers are having fun. I was too excited!

My dad told my mom to “drive safe.” I gave my mom a hug. My mom gave me a hug.

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Littmus Lozenge
Victor Gomez, Jr.

I have been reading Because of Winn-Dixie, and it has been a great book so far. In the story the author, Kate DiCamillo, mentioned a candy called the Littmus Lozenge. My teacher, Mr. Clark, said that Littmus Lozenges are real. So I did some research on the computer.

A Littmus Lozenge is a small flavored tablet made from sugar or syrup. It is often formed in the original diamond shape. The original recipe is: Frozen honey and it is said... Tears.

The Littmus Lozenge was sold world-wide:
   USA
   Middle England
   France
   Germany

The Littmus Lozenge factory is still standing today in Naomi, Florida.

Customer response in Puckett Oaks:

- 37% of customers spit it out and never come back again.
- 63% of customers start to cry.

In the past five years, slowly, Littmus Lozenges have begun to increase again and spread to Georgia. All thanks to Kate DiCamillo and her book Because of Winn-Dixie.
Anna Marcou

I was running as fast as I possibly could through the blazing hot sun of Florida’s Clearwater Beach. It was Spring Break and I was carefree, except for the fact that my brother, Andrew, was chasing me with a giant green bucket of icy cold ocean water.

I ran and ran, and it felt like I was running for an eternity on that hot sand and all of a sudden, SPLOOSH! I plunged into the cold water of the ocean. I started running again. This time, I was slowed down just a bit because of all the water.

After I thought I was far enough in the water, I turned around. There was Andrew, standing at the shore, not wanting to go into the big crashing waves. I gave him a look that laughed, “Ha ha… you can’t get me!” He answered me with a look that said, “Oh, I’m gonna get you so good when you get out of there! You can’t stay in there forever.” I soon found out that he was right. The water was really cold and soon I was running out of it.

As I was nearing the shore, another huge frigid wave slammed hard against my back, knocking me over. As I staggered to my feet, I felt that all too familiar icy cold ocean water splash right against my already wet face. As I opened my burning eyes, I saw Andrew standing there with the big, green bucket under his arms…a huge smirk on his face. It was on.

I went up to our beach bag to pretend to dry off my soaking and still burning eyes, but I really grabbed a red bucket and hid it in our shell bucket. It looked like I was looking for shells, just like Andrew. As soon as I got in the water, I scooped up some of that same icy cold ocean water in my red bucket. I quietly snuck over, right behind Andrew, and dumped every drop of that icy, cold ocean water over his sandy head. I remember that wet smile on his face. After that, I thought this one word: VICTORY!

Oscar Lopez

One day in the summer my dad said, “Help me.” He said, “If you help me, I will give you money.” My brother Edgar had to help my dad, too. I saw my brother whimper because he wanted to go to his friend’s house.

First, I took out the trash and my dad said, “Awesome job.” Next he said, “Cut the grass,” and I said, “OK.” I picked up the grass after I cut it.

After I cut the grass he said to stop and clean my room. I cleaned my room and I was going to clean the bathroom next. I cleaned the bathroom and then my mom and dad called me and said to feed the fish.

Subsequently, my dad called me again and he said, “Feed the dog,” and I said, “OK.” I went to feed my dog Rambo. He was in the garage. I opened the door to the garage and it smelled like rotten eggs. I gave Rambo dog food and water. I sprayed air freshener and it smelled better.

My dad called me again and I went back and he said, “Here is your money,” and I said, “YES!” It was exciting but I was tired and I went to sleep.

But first I put my money in a safe place.
When I went to Florida
we took the car and I
played my DSi. And I liked it
a lot. It was before I got my DSi XL.

We pass houses and trees.

We can feel the
breeze in our hairs.

We are close. I see palm
trees. I hear ocean waves.

I smell salt in the river.

We are at Florida.

Now we can celebrate my
granddad’s birthday. He was 51!
I had a good time.

WHEN I WAS GETTING TO FLORIDA

Link Dooley

When I went to Florida
we took the car and I
played my DSi. And I liked it
a lot. It was before I got my DSi XL.

We pass houses and trees.

We can feel the
breeze in our hairs.

We are close. I see palm
trees. I hear ocean waves.

I smell salt in the river.

We are at Florida.

Now we can celebrate my
granddad’s birthday. He was 51!
I had a good time.
THE SPECIAL DAY
Luqman Abdullahkim

Last night I saw my grandmother that lives in Germany. My mom has not seen her in 12 years. I was so excited to see her, it almost made me cry. I was happy because she even gave me a gift, a watch. It was shiny blue with white, black and grey outlines. It is my favorite watch, I mean it really! She made dinner. It was pancakes. They were not sweet. We could have mango jam. I got meat sauce. They were good! I hated the mushrooms in it, but I ate them anyway. Then my mom went to drop off my big sister at her apartment with her brother. When she left, I made my grandma a paper fox. I carefully made the fold and gave her the paper fox. She said, “Me,” in an accent. I understood her. I then made her a paper crane. I loved spending time with my grandma.
One Saturday night, Jamie and her twin brother John were at their new big house. John and Jamie are identical twins. They both have blonde hair and blue eyes. Their mom thinks they are very outgoing and kind. They were playing ping pong in their basement.

“Hey kids, come up here please!” yelled their mother kindly. Their mother has blonde hair and blue eyes, too. She loves their children a lot and helps out everyone she meets.

“Okay,” they yelled back. They raced each other up the stairs and standing there was their little cousin Emma.

“I was wondering if you two could watch Emma. I was supposed to watch her, but I need to get a few things from the store. I will be back at 8:00,” their mother said.

Emma is a toddler. She has blonde hair and blue eyes. Everyone she meets thinks she is adorable. Emma was at the house because her parents went out to dinner. Emma loves to chase around cats. She thinks their tails are toys.

John and Jamie kept arguing about who was going to watch her. “Enough,” yelled their mother, “You will each watch her for an hour and a half.”

First, it was Jamie’s turn. The baby didn’t want to play with her own toys, so Jamie let her use her little brown teddy bear. All Emma did was sit by the big TV and chew on the teddy bear’s ears. Jamie hated the shows for toddlers but watched them anyway. The hour and a half went by fast and it was John’s turn before she knew it.

John ran into the family room flaming. “I don’t want to watch some stupid baby!” he yelled.

“Well,” Jamie began, “I watched her, so now it is your turn.”

“Whatever,” he mumbled under his breath. John didn’t want to watch some stupid baby show, so he flipped though the channels until he found his favorite show. When he turned around the baby was gone! John began to panic. He ran and told Jamie.

“What! How could you lose a baby?” she yelled. “The only way you could lose a baby is if you weren’t watching her. Most likely you were watching TV.” John stood there quietly.

On the table there was a basket of Emma’s toys and a list of things that she liked to eat. Jamie ran over to it and quickly examined it. “I’ve got it!” exclaimed Jamie, “We can use these things to try to get her to come to us. I’ll make grilled cheese because that is her favorite and you go get something that makes noise and grab a walkie-talkie.”

John ran to the basket of toys while Jamie cooked grilled cheese. John picked out five toys that rattled. He ran all around the big house. There was furniture in the house, which was bad for them because Emma could hide underneath or in it.

Jamie said through the walkie-talkie, “Hey John did you find her yet?”

“No,” he replied.

“The grilled cheese is done. I’m going to leave one here on the counter and take one with me.”

“Okay,” replied John. They ran all around the house. Meanwhile Emma walked into the kitchen and took the grilled cheese. She ate half of it and then quietly walked back up the stairs. John and Jamie ran down the stairs to the kitchen and saw the grilled cheese was half gone! “Where did it go?” asked John.

“I don’t know,” replied Jamie. They both looked at each other. Then John looked at the clock.

“Oh no,” he said, “It’s 7:20! Mom will be home in forty minutes. That is not enough time to find a small kid in a big house.”

They both ran around the house finding no sign of Emma, but then they heard something. It was mom’s car. “But it is only 7:30!” exclaimed Jamie, “John you stay here and I’ll try to find Emma.”

“Oh, John,” said Jamie and ran and ran.

Meanwhile mom grabbed the groceries and was closing her car door. SLAM, went her car door as she shut it. Jamie heard a meow. She ran to the extra bedroom. There were her two cats lying on the bed and to Jamie’s amazement and relief, Emma was with them sound asleep. Jamie quickly, but gently grabbed Emma and went down stairs.

“Hey kids,” she said, “Where are you?”

“I’m in the family room,” he yelled back. Jamie set Emma down on the couch in the family room and changed the channel. Just then their mom walked in. “Hey kids,” she said.

“That’s a relief,” mom said, “I’m going to need you to watch Emma again tomorrow.”

They both look at each other and thought, oh no, not again.
I glance around me
I try to take in the wonders that lay
Before my eyes
I skip down the cobblestone road
Hundreds of people
Most hurrying all having somewhere to go
All making a sound
Some talking to their friends, some humming
The ones with things to sell
Shouting their melodious rhythms
Trying desperately
To attract customers
"Red Roses
Sweet
Red Roses"
What do I need?
"Chick Peas
Buy your fresh
Chick peas"
What do I need?
"Red Roses
Sweet
Red Roses"
What do I need?
I am in a state of bliss
As I make my way through the crowd
I spot my friend
Suddenly
I hear a bell
It is like a bubble of silence has made its way over us
No one moves the girls who were once dancing on the cobblestone road
Are frozen
I listen it rings 21 times
Who died?
The Market is not such a happy place
Anymore
I make my way home with sorrow lapping at my heart

Once upon a time I was in Indiana. I was six years old. I wanted to go to Mexico with my family. So we went to buy a ticket to Mexico. The ticket cost one hundred dollars, but we did not care. Soon my mom, dad, brother Jason and I went to the bus station. We handed the bus driver the ticket. We got on. The bus went BRRRRRRR! The other people got on the bus, and the bus went to Mexico. It took days to get to Mexico. Certainly we got to Mexico but it was dark. We went to bed, and I felt delighted because we made it to Mexico.

Then I woke up, and it was still dark. I saw a robber! I was alarmed! I called my parents. We went back downstairs. My dad had a gigantic stick. Subsequently my dad got behind the robber and...Crack! My dad hit him with the stick. The stick was broken, and we called the police. The robber was lying down on the floor, and he was unconscious. The police came and took the robber to jail.

Next the sun came out. We ate Frosted Flakes. They tasted scrumptious. Then we went outside to plant chiles so Grandpa could pick them later. We ate chiles for lunch. The chiles weren’t that hot but to my brother they were.

A week later we left. My grandma and grandpa came with us. We got on the bus. My grandma took some chiles with her. While we were on the bus, a deer jumped in front of the bus. Everyone screamed, “AHHHH!” The deer ran away. On the way back to Indiana we saw wonderful stuff like rainbows, deer, farms and singing birds. We took pictures of all those things. I saw a sign that said, “Welcome to Indiana.” Thirty minutes later...we got to our house. I was happy, because we made it. That was the wildest trip ever!
WHEN MY MONKEY GOT STUCK IN THE TREE

Kody Wiseman

When my monkey got stuck in the tree,
I was sad. My brother threw it in the tree.

My monkey did not come down for a long time. It got rained on.

I tried to throw a football at it. It did not work. I could not climb the tree because it wasn’t mine.

When I was asleep my monkey fell out of the tree.
When I woke up I went outside. I was happy. I was happy to see my monkey on the ground!

WONDERFUL WORLD

Kyle Feldkamp

I see the ocean
cold, blue ocean
wavy beach.
There are sand dollars
and seashells.
People swimming
there. Pebbles
wash up on the
shore. What a
wonderful world.
PETALS

About my art
We are individuals, but everything we do is tied to others around us. There are several layers in the image: petals, specks in the sidewalk, shadows of the fence and the tree. All these layers are together, down on the ground. A lot of history combined to allow for a simple photograph. The sun shone, tree grew, the walk was built and I pushed the button on my camera.

Most of my images are of simple subjects with complex interactions. I’m inspired by my two-year-old daughter, who thinks everything around her is amazing. She stops to pick up rocks and pinecones and to stomp in puddles. A photograph captures a point in time, allowing us to later observe the interactions and relationships in all the little pieces in the image.

Andy Chen

About me
I take pictures, which sounds like a simple thing but I’m still trying to figure it all out. I was born in Taiwan and grew up in the Midwestern United States. My exposure to photography began in high school, where I spent countless, clueless hours in the darkroom as part of the yearbook staff. In addition to exhibiting my own work, I’m the gallery director of the StutzArtSpace in downtown Indianapolis.
i think back and ask
MY BIRTHDAY
Juan Daniel Cueva

One beautiful snowy day in the morning at 7:00 am, I asked my mom if we were going to celebrate my 8th birthday by making a snowman or snow fight! My mom said “No, because it is too windy and cold.” I was so sad.

Then suddenly…the door knob TUREND! I woke my sister. She saw the doorknob turned too.

My sister was anxious. She hid at the back of the couch because she was so scared. I said, “Good plan.” So I ran to the back of the couch with my baby sister. We were both very frightened.

The door opened…it was just my dad. My sister and I went to say hello and hug him. We always do that. My uncle woke up. Then my dad said, “We have to go to the store” so I asked if I could come too.

Everyone said, “Nooooo!”

My uncle said, “Go ahead. I’ll take care of your son.” My uncle and I played video games to cheer me up.

When my mom came home, she was smiling. I did have my birthday after all…

THE ZOO
Madalyn Marcum

I see a giraffe at the zoo. My family went with me.

TOUCH DOWN
Eli Bolton

Me and my cousin, we beat my brother in football.

I took the ball from my brother.

Me and my brother were throwing the football and then my cousin came in to help me win. And we won!!!
MOST MORNINGS I WALK TO SCHOOL
Clay Catlin

It’s about a mile walk from my house. In summer it’s freezing in the morning and like the fourth circle of Hell on the way back. In spring it’s gently cold and sometimes it rains. I like walking that way best, in the rain. Maybe it’s because I like the rain, maybe it’s because it makes the prospect of home look better. I like it best in autumn, when it’s windy and the leaves are on the ground. It reminds me of Halloween for some reason; a Colonial witch surrounded by red leaves, sitting beneath a skeletal tree stirring a black iron kettle. I like winter. I like the snow and the white sky but during that time my mom usually drives me to and from school.

MY FIRST SOCCER GOAL
Allan Williams

My mom was signing me up for soccer. My coach was Coach Ted, our neighbor. I was very little at that time, about four. I played as hard as I could. I tried to get a goal.

I tried to get a goal a lot of times. I still didn’t get a goal. But at the end of soccer practice I got a goal. I was surprised I got one. Everyone was cheering for me. Now that’s the story of my first soccer goal.

ALL ABOUT SNAKES
Angel Scheker-Garcia

Contents
What do snakes eat? Page 1
Where do snakes live? Page 2
What do they smell with? Page 3
How do baby snakes come out? Page 4

Chapter 1
What do snakes eat?
Snakes eat frogs.
They eat mice.
They eat fish.
They eat eggs.
They eat lizards.
They eat hummingbirds.

Chapter 2
Where do snakes live?
Snakes can live underground and in South America. They live in city parks. Snakes live in fields. They live in oceans. Snakes live in Mexico.

Chapter 3
What do they smell with?
They smell with their tongues. Snakes smell with their noses.

Chapter 4
How do baby snakes come out?
Some snakes hatch out of eggs. Others are born.
The human mind may be the greatest weapon on the planet. It can be used for creation and the benefit of mankind or enslaved and wasted. It has been enslaved before. In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler became the dictator of Germany and head of the Nazi political party. He controlled the minds of millions into doing his will. Josef Stalin controlled the Soviet Union and manipulated one of the greatest superpowers of his time. Both convinced a whole generation to do their bidding and serve them unconditionally. In the society in the book Anthem by Ayn Rand, individualism has been removed completely. The leaders of this society accomplished this by controlling the citizens’ minds, and thus they gained control of the ultimate weapon. Yet as the global community proved during World War II and as Equality demonstrated in Anthem, the ultimate weapon cannot be constrained forever.

The human mind is the ultimate weapon because it has no boundaries and limitless potential. Any weapon that is created can be sourced to the mind. The same goes for any technologies or remedies. How can the mind’s abilities be controlled and limited? In Anthem’s society the leaders obtained complete dominion over the populace and avoided any and all resistance by eliminating individualism and ego. But how was this accomplished? How could the generations after us surrender control over the things that are most dear to humanity? How could the world hand over the one thing that makes humanity truly great and has made it accomplished? How could the generations after us surrender control over the things that are most dear to the populace and avoided any and all resistance by eliminating individualism and ego. But how was this accomplished? How could the generations after us surrender control over the things that are most dear to humanity? 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The One Who Wears the Mask

Elijah Lopez

Yeah, you can say
I wear a mask
But
I’m not the only
Because
I know someone
Who claims to be my friend
But
Time after time... again and again
When certain people
Come around... he starts to clown
But
Off his case
Because
No one’s perfect
When I wear my mask
People get hurt quick
It’s like I have no control

I just let my emotions go
If I start my day off
With a mask
It’s all down hill
At least that’s how it feels
Then the earth starts to shake
And my mask falls off
Then I think back and ask
What

Was the Cause?

Kickball

Jackson Price

I can’t play kick ball
I don’t know what to do.
I get mad,
My face gets red.
I try to play,
When I catch the ball,
I keep it.
I run with the ball,
I’m desperate I need help.
I want to play.

The Crash

Whitney Richardson

I heard a noise, and I couldn’t believe my eyes! I saw a car coming straight for my driveway. I was worried about my mom because she was pregnant.

She got out of the van and tried to get all of us kids out before the car hit us. When she got out, the car was already in our driveway. I was scared!

Until I actually saw who was in the car, I was wondering if she was mad or if she was trying to hurt us kids or my mom. Then, when she hit our van, I noticed that her eyes were shut.

I wanted to check on my mom, but the door was stuck. When I looked through my window, I saw that everyone on the street was staring at the van. I looked out the side window and saw my mom lying on the driveway with a cut on her stomach. My next-door neighbor helped us get out of the van. We called the police, and my mom and all the kids went to the hospital to be checked for injuries. It turned out that everyone was OK.

When we got back, we asked the police what was wrong with the lady. We were wondering why she did that. The police said that she was driving drunk.

My Mama

Henry Stein

My mama is different from other mamas.
My mama makes us pay for books at the book fair.
She says you should make your own lunch.
She owns two jobs.
That is my mama and I like the way she is.

Max’s Desk

Max Peeples

He shoves his paper in my face
He scratches me with a pencil
I stand all day while he rests
Wet wipes clean away the glue
Soon he leaves for summer break
Who will be my next friend?
DON’T TRY THIS AT HOME

Yovani Navarrete

Previously, I was inside playing [with] my toy NERF gun. I forgot that I left it on top of the roof. My sister told me to get it. Next I got on top of the roof. It felt scary. Subsequently, my sister told me that my mom was coming upstairs. I was scared. Then I said to myself 1,2,3 JUMP!!!

I broke my leg bone. It hurt really bad. Next my dad, José, took me to my uncle’s house. I [lay] on the floor. Then my uncle put something orange on my feet so it wouldn’t hurt. I was thrilled that my leg did not hurt anymore. I went to the house so I could get dressed and go to a party. My family got in the car. We drove and got there. I saw my cousin. He said, “What happened to your leg?” I said, “I jumped off the roof.” The party was fun but it was over. I went home and went to sleep. Then I dreamt that I [would] never jump off of the roof anymore.

I WOKE UP ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE BED

Lea Smith

I throw two pencils. I throw two bouncy balls on the ground. Then my mom told me to calm down. Then I got smoother and smoother.

MICHAEL, MY BROTHER

Latrell Coe

Michael is my first and only best friend. He is my best friend because we are always having fun with each other.

I met Michael at my swimming pool in my apartments and ever since that day we have been best friends. When we go to the swimming pool we always go in the 8 feet and go off the diving board.

We love to play football with each other. When we see each other we start playing or start doing stupid things. We love to drop each other.

Sometimes we get into arguments, but that doesn’t stop us. Sometimes we tell on each other but we suck it up and are still best friends.

When Michael moves to Texas we might visit each other and when he gets his phone we’re going to keep in touch. No matter what happens we will always be friends and we will never stop being friends.
I hadn’t expected to be putting my dog down on Thursday, April 23rd, 2010. I’d always thought of it being much later, when I was older and mature enough to handle it. It was probably one of the saddest days of my life. I felt like I had plunged deep into a frozen pond and just stayed at the bottom, with life going on without me. We had known days earlier that Kicsi had been weak and very sick. She was staying in the garage since my dad kicked her out because she had been pooping in the house. We learned that she had Cushing’s Disease, which caused her liver to have problems. My mom had tried everything to help her.

When I was at school, it was almost as if everything was fine, like my dog wasn’t dying. Being with my friends made me forget about what was happening at home. We laughed and talked and danced around like nothing was wrong, but when I got home, my mom, my sister, and I would sit in the garage petting Kicsi and crying for hours. On that sad day, I came home, and we did the usual thing. We sat down in the garage and petted Kicsi, wondering why we were stuck in this situation. We were talking about putting her down and what time was right. I had said that we had already let this go on for too long and that we didn’t know if we were making her suffer. It was decided then that we would take her that night. My sister started crying almost violently. I had never seen her cry much before, but this was shocking. Heavy sobs released from her throat, and we all stood there thinking about if this was the right thing to do. No one really wanted it to happen, but we shouldn’t have been dragging it out so long.

I grabbed my shoes from up in my room. It was almost as if, when I was safely enveloped back in my room, my house, everything seemed okay. The atmosphere was warm and almost pleasant, but once I got back into the cold, gray garage, I practically broke down and started crying all over again. I could feel my cheeks getting warm as the cold, salty tears ran down my face and dripped off my chin. I looked and felt like a wreck. I wondered why life couldn’t just go on peacefully, without interruptions. I wanted Kicsi to still be well and playing in the backyard when I came home from school. I wanted to see her smile and wag her tail as if she was excited for just being part of our family. I wanted her to be the young, chipper Kicsi who I knew and loved with all my heart. My dad said, “Time to go for a ride, Kicsi.” I quivered as I started shaking and crying again. The thought of her not knowing what was going on, that she wouldn’t come back home, just broke my heart. My dad and mom had to help lift Kicsi into the back of the car. They had a cloth under her stomach and were clutching both sides. Kicsi just lay there helplessly. We all piled into the car, nervous and upset.

The car ride was silent. My mom was lying in the back with Kicsi, just petting her and crying. I wanted the car ride to last longer, but it seemed like just a few seconds. When we got to the vet, my mom and dad went in to notify the workers there. My sister and I climbed in the back and hugged Kicsi several times while we cried. I wanted to remember how it felt to hold her and hug her, how her glossy black fur streaked down her back. I wanted to remember all of it as I ran my fingers through her fur and stroked her soft ears. I could taste the salty tears as I began sobbing again just thinking about it. A nurse came out with a gurney, and they lifted her on. I remember seeing her for the very last time, looking back at us as they wheeled her through the glass doors and into a dark hallway, until I couldn’t see her anymore.

My sister and I climbed back into our seats and started to talk about things that happened at school that day and what was going on. It felt normal and comforting, but it still didn’t mend the huge hole in my heart. I could feel my cheeks all tight from the tears that had dripped. I hugged in my knees and wished this whole thing was just a dream. It seemed like half an hour or so before my parents came back. I was definitely not in the mood to cry again, so when my mom started explaining what happened, I asked her politely to stop.

The car ride back was not short at all. It felt like an hour. I started counting cars that drove by to keep my mind off of it, but then stopped at about seventy. We came home and I climbed into my bed. I could feel that whole numbness in my face as my eyes started to water again. I pulled my soft covers close to my chest and then let them drop. The warm, comforting blankets pulled me to unconsciousness. I went to sleep in an instant, tired, exhausted, and glad that I didn’t cry myself to sleep.

I stayed home from school the next day, watching TV and reading to keep my mind off of it. I don’t even think I cried once that day, but I learned that instead of running away, I should’ve approached it. I didn’t think about it. I didn’t let myself cry or get sad. That was probably at the top of the list of things not to do during grief, but I did it anyway. I also learned to accept it and that it’s okay to cry. I learned the hard way and ended up breaking down every time I thought about it. Hopefully, someday in the far future, when I move out and am not patrolled by my dad, I will get a puppy and love him or her forever.
MY FIRST DAY OF BASEBALL
Alaina Steinkamp-Bartus

Baseball is fun you know and here’s a story about my first day of baseball!

Before we practice for our game we take our pictures. I wasn’t very happy about that.

I couldn’t wait for our game! When it was time for our game it rained! I was nervous about hitting the ball!

“I hit it!” I cried. I ran to the next base.

I ran to the next base when someone hit the ball. When someone else hit the ball, I couldn’t believe it. My team made a home run!

My team won!

THE DIFFERENCE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN HUNTERS AND WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS
Nicholas SerVaas

They’re there. Resting on their gnarled branches…in plain view of two different men who have made their businesses on them. How they go about their work is similar…they creep forward with the caution and skill they have developed over time and in their hands are appendixes, one with a trigger and the other with but a mere button. They aim… and take their shots. It is then that the difference shows itself, although the way they go about their work is similar, the work could not differ more in the end of it all. One will find himself with a photograph, the other with his bloody game. But still, as the time hasn’t come yet… they’re there.

THE WIND
Ethan Elsesser

After school I got on the school bus and I sat down on a chair and the wind blew in my face. I laid my back against the chair. The wind blew on my face harder.

It felt cool and cold on my face. So I kept my face there and it felt even better.
I am almost there, I can see it! I always think that when I see the finish line at one of my cross country meets.

When I was ten years old, my cousin Owen talked me into doing cross country. At first I couldn’t run a quarter of a mile without stopping. But my coaches helped me, and now I can run miles without stopping.

I always get nervous when I’m about to start a race. I get tense and start breathing heavily. But once I hear that horn…I’m off!

When I run, I sometimes get pains, but I always fight through. Sometimes I don’t even feel like running, but I know I can do it.

My first year I didn’t do very well. I didn’t even get in the top 20 once, but my second year I was determined. Each of the four regular meets, I came in the top ten, and in my best meet I came in third! In the city meet I came in fifth overall. I was so proud of myself.

Soon came state. Only seven boys and seven girls from my entire team got chosen to do state, and I was one! In the meet I came in 71st out of 400 runners. This meet was for grades 5-8, and I was only in fifth grade. I couldn’t believe it!

This just shows with hard work and dedication, you can accomplish anything!

WHEN MY GRANDPA DIED IN 2009
Brenna Young

One day I went to see my grandma and grandpa. But when I got there, my grandpa was already very sick. A nurse was helping take care of him. I hardly spoke the entire time I was there. I was too sad to see my mom cry.

The next time I went to see my grandpa, it was in the hospital. I was so sad. The TV that had those zig-zag lines—well, my grandpa’s were very very small.

A couple of weeks later my grandma called. My grandpa had died. My mom was heartbroken. I could not stand seeing so many people that I loved cry. When we were driven to the grave yard, I cried and cried. My cousins helped me calm down. I put a few flowers on his grave.

I felt heartbroken as soon as I saw my grandpa so sick!

THE TURTLE
Morrigan Dunlap-Loomis

Once I was in the car with my cousin and my mom. My mom saw a TURTLE!!! So we all got out of the car and my cousin and I got to carry him to the lake. It was fun, but we did not know if it was a land turtle or a water turtle. Then we headed back to my cousin’s house. It was a fun time.

CATSY
Anya Moore

Catsy is the dog my dad bought for me and my grandma.

I love that dog so much. I will save toys that I don’t play with and give [them] to her.

And she has friends, but I’m her best friend!

ALMOST THERE!
Truman Boggs

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This just shows with hard work and dedication, you can accomplish anything!
Last summer in the afternoon, my dad asked me and my sister if we wanted a puppy. We said, “Yes!” even though my mom was not there. We went in the car to find the house with the puppies.

VRRRMM!

We saw the street. Next we had to find the number. We found it! We knocked, Ding, Dong

A little boy opened the door. He called his dad. His dad came outside with the puppies. We were going to get a girl puppy because the boy puppy didn’t look right to us.

So we grabbed a girl puppy. We put her in the car. VRRRMM! The car went but there was a problem...

The puppy was crying. “She missed her family,” my dad said. We got to the house. We went in the house to get food, but we didn’t have food for the puppy, I told my dad. He said, “Get in the car with the puppy.”

Subsequently, we went to Family Dollar. We went to find edibles and a toy. Then all of us went to the car. Vrrm!

We went back home. When we got back home my mom was there. She said, “The puppy is so little.” “It’s time to go to sleep,” said my mom. My puppy slept on the rug next to my bed. I was so delighted.

Maritsa Navarro

Grandparents

Guadalupe Carmona

My grandparents live in Mexico, so I cannot see them here. When my sister, Ana, was a baby, my grandmother came, but then she left... so I cannot remember.

Grandparents are very old. They sometimes sleep a lot... on the couch or on the bed.

Grandparents are your mom’s and dad’s parents. My dad’s mom died when my dad was a baby. My great grandma once won a competition in Mexico and got a crown on her head. We still have a picture of her.

She came to the United States, but she passed away when my little sister, Brisa, was only three months old. Grandparents can tell us about what happened when we were not even born.

Maritsa Navarro

Writing Reflection

Henry DeRyke

Wow! It’s fun to write. Just putting letters on that piece of paper. It’s a miracle writing was invented. I love to write about my life. When I write I feel like I’m in the land of happiness.
BECAUSE OF MR. WASSEN
Alicia Nygra

It happened so fast. One minute I am putting together a puzzle with my friends, and the next I am in total shock, trying to hold back the storm of tears that threatened to break through. Somehow, I knew in the back of my mind that he wouldn’t make it, that he would go to a better place. But still, when I got the news, something inside of me screamed, “NO!” How could something like this happen?

My friend, Victoria, was so upset that after she got a bite to eat, she came to my house again and slept over. Somehow, it eased the pain and the grief.

Everybody in the class was talking about the tragedy of Mr. Wassen’s death. I don’t think that some people realize he is still here with us. Or that he had a good life that we should be celebrating. Yes, there were bad times, but there were also great times mixed in with those.

I remember when Mr. Wassen first came into our classroom. Some people were a little uneasy around him, when really he was just like every one of us. Throughout the year, we saw him at least once a week, and became close friends with Mr. Wassen. We could all go to him for advice or help. When he was in, we wouldn’t even go to Mrs. Chadd for help. A lot of the time, we would confide in Mr. Wassen. He was like our second teacher. Except, he didn’t teach us math, science and social studies. He taught us about life, about turning tragedy into triumph. He showed us the strength of the human spirit, and to truly love and care about others. Mr. Wassen always found someone less fortunate and helped that person in all the ways that he truly could.

Mr. Wassen taught us the true meaning of courage. He never let his situation define how he was going to live the rest of his life. So what if he was in a wheelchair? He could still live like you and me, with a little challenge thrown in there. Maybe he couldn’t walk, but he could still love, care and live his life.

As I have mentioned, Mr. Wassen always found someone less fortunate than him and did all in his power to help. When we started this PupPutt fundraiser, he was not only thinking that the money would go to help him, but that it would go to help other people in wheelchairs as well. I admire him for that.

Some of the money that we raised from PupPutt last year went to Eric Green, a former Brownsburg High School student, who was paralyzed in a dirt bike accident on Memorial Day weekend a year or two ago. Knowing Mr. Wassen, he was glad that some of that money went to Eric, to help him pay for things he needed. I bet Mr. Wassen was glad he could help a young man who was paralyzed before he could really experience life.

There were two things that Mr. Wassen hated: reading and talking about himself. One of the only things that I ever saw him read and like was the book, Walking Papers by Francesco Clark. Francesco Clark was a man who became paralyzed after he dived into the shallow end of a pool on a business vacation. It tells about the struggles that he went through to gain independence.

The other thing that Mr. Wassen hates is talking about himself. When he had to write a letter to Francesco Clark asking him to come to PupPutt, here is how it originally went:

Dear Mr. Clark,
My name is John Wassen. Please come to PupPutt.
Thank you.

When we sent the letter, it said more, obviously, but we all laughed at the fact that he would never talk about himself.

I know that Mr. Wassen is upset with us for being upset, but it is so hard not to be. On Monday, there was a rainbow on Northfield Drive. Everybody in the class thought the same thing; it was from Mr. Wassen. He was telling us that he was all right, he was in a better place. He told us to wipe away our tears, and go kick butt in PupPutt. Which is exactly what we are going to do.

BLIZZARD
Elizabeth Rangel

I sit by the window while a blizzard passes by. Snow falls hard on the ground. The wind blows snow in every direction. Snow covers cars, driveways, houses, streets, and sidewalks.

My dog screeches and runs into his little house. The blizzard is strong, the strongest I’ve seen. You can see nothing but white. Snow twists, swirls, and flies.

The blizzard stops and the sun comes out. It gives you a feeling... a feeling that everything is going to be alright today. I watch the sun until it sets. The blizzard has stopped here but starts somewhere else. Somewhere where that blizzard will blow in every direction. Somewhere where snow covers cars, driveways, houses, streets, and sidewalks. Somewhere where snow will twist, swirl, and fly. Where that blizzard will be strong.

DOGS
Grace Sherill

One mean
One nice
One scratches
One plays
One I stay away from
One jumps
on me
and
says play with me.
**WHEN I WAS SIX**

Sam Tinkle

When I was six my favorite food was watermelon.
Now I am seven my favorite food is steak.
When I was six my favorite author was Dav Pilkey.
Now my favorite is R.L. Stine.
When I was six my friend [was] Ian.
He still is.

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**MY LAST HIT**

Coltin Hall

It was July 3, 2010. I was up next. Jose hit a single and now all of the bases are loaded. The crowd was calling my name, “Coltin! Coltin! Coltin!”

My coach said, “Coltin, go and hit the ball.” I stepped on the plate.


I smile and swing. I close my eyes and say in my mind, “Please a hit!” I open my eyes. Then I look up and the ball is in the air.

I run to first, second, and then third. They tell me to stop, but I run. The outfield gets the ball. Outfield throws it to short stop. Short stop throws it to the pitcher. The pitcher throws it to the catcher. I slide under the catcher.

“SAFE!”

The score is 6 to 5. We win.

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**I GO TO HAWAII WITH MY SISTER TARIN**

Sabina Johnson

I make a sand castle with my sister Tarin.
Me and my sister play in the water.
Me and my sister play in the sand.
We play and play.
Me and my sister put our pajamas on.
When I wake up it is time to go home.
I fly on the plane.
We are here.
We drive the way back home in the car.
We are home.
I love home.
It was a Saturday night when I walked in my dad’s room to ask him a question. He was watching the Colts game. It was warm. When he noticed me he said, “Hi.”

I forgot my question. I said “Hi” back. He seemed really happy because the Colts were winning by a lot. He looked at me again. He told me we were going to go to a Colts game.

“Don’t you think that will be a little much?” I asked.

“No, just me and you,” he said.

My face lit up with joy. “Really?” I said.

“Yeah,” he answered.

The next day I was waiting for my dad to come and pick me up so we could go to the game. Then he called. He asked if I still wanted to go to the game or if I wanted to stay home and watch the game on TV. I told him I still wanted to go to the game. He said OK. Then he said he would be there in a minute. When he drove up I ran outside and jumped in the car. He asked me if I was ready. “Yeah,” I said in an excited voice.

We drove to Lucas Oil Stadium. It took us about two minutes to find a parking space, then we found one. We sat there for about 20 seconds, then we went in. We were probably the only ones without Colts shirts on. The Colts won and we were very happy. We went home, then we went to my aunt’s house for dinner. Then we went home and went to bed.

I had had more fun than you could imagine.

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MY SISTER IS BORN!

Joseph Finnell

I entered happiness when I entered the room to my sister.

“Is this her?” I said. “Could it be?” “Yes,” my mom said. My heart was beating faster than ever.

“What’s her name?” I asked. “We haven’t decided,” my mom said.

“I’m hungry,” I said. “Let’s go to the cafeteria,” Grammy said. “OK. What is there?” I asked.

“I don’t know. This is the first time I’ve been here,” Grammy said.

We went down the hall, in the elevator. Once we got in the basement, I could smell the sweet smell of breakfast.

I had cereal. That was it. After that, we went upstairs. In a couple of hours, we left to go home.

I went to bed at 10:05 p.m. that night. I was ready to see my sweet sister again.

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I WENT WITH MY DADDY

Chancellor Minor

I went to a department (store) with my daddy and lied!

My daddy drove me to a new department (store).

We had fun. But one day I lied to my daddy.

I got sent to the corner where there are spiders that live in webs. I told the truth when I got out of the corner, where there were spiders again!

Spiders creep me out.

I said good things to my daddy. Then I played. I like the new bed.
THE LIFE OF IAN MCCRAE
Isaac McCrae

First Ian was born in 1924 and died in 2011. I went to his memorial service. It was a sad time for me and my mom. We even cried a little bit. Then came Ian’s memorial service. We sang some of Ian’s favorite songs and we talked about Ian. Finally, we had a dinner snack and celebrated the life of Ian McCrae.

MEDICINE
Maxwell Gerard

I have to take medicine
And when I don’t take it…
I get crazy
When I am not on it
I get in trouble
I get made fun of for taking medicine
I hate being made fun
I cannot help it
I am a little bit different
But I am not a freak
Medicine is not bad to take
it helps me

I LIKE SPORTS
Grady Hadar

I like to play basketball because I played basketball in a league with my friends.

I like doing grounders with my dad.

I like football because my dad sometimes plays football with me at night.

I like Frisbee because I’m good at it.

I like golf because I made a hole in one.

I like bocce because I won one hundred times.

But I don’t like playing horse race because my friends cheat at it.
I was just adopted. Staring out the window of my room, waiting to go outside, I think about what this family will be like and look at my birthmarks.

As I put on the jacket I just got, I see people planting and having fun. So I decide to go buy a pack of seeds, and flowers of course.

Everyday I check them and water them. I say to myself, “A family of flowers united.” And they will never be split up again; never, ever, ever again.

Who am I?

THE MOST INTERESTING THING
Adrian Conger

The most interesting thing that I have learned at Wendell Phillips School #63 is division. When I first saw a division problem I said, “This is hard.” I was so confused. “What is the line with two dots? That other thing looks like a check mark. Why is there a number under it?” My mind had so many questions. I am so lucky, I have a teacher who understands my fears.

First, Miss Morgan wrote a problem on the board with both symbols. She explained they meant the same thing. Then she told us that the larger number was going to be broken down into smaller equal parts. She even taught us the names. The larger number this is being broken down is a dividend. The answer is the quotient.

Next we learned that you can check a division problem with multiplication. Just take the quotient and multiply it by the number parts. Your answer, the product will be the same as the dividend you started out with.

I can use division right now to make me a better person at home. Mom brings home Kentucky Fried Chicken. Because I am the oldest, she tells me to give everyone the same amount of chicken. I have one sister, and two brothers. If there are twelve pieces of chicken, I would divide 12 by 6. Mom and dad also want chicken. Each of use would get two pieces of chicken. I can make sure by multiplying 2 x 6 =12.

Knowing division will help me be a better person in the future. If I hire more than one person to work for me and I want to pay them the same amount of money I will use division. I will count how much money there is to be paid to my workers, the dividend and divided it by the number of workers. That is being fair. Being fair to my workers, they will keep working for me.

So far I have learned addition or pluses, subtraction or minus, multiplication or times, and now division or taking apart. I am sure that there are many more things I will learn in math. But so far, division is the most interesting. I know I will use it the rest of my life. Have you used division today?
ZOOOOM!

Alexandria Ruschman

The Real Truth

Can you imagine a world with a happy sun shining down on produce with none of the usual concerns, electric cars driving on the road? That’s right, that’s about as virtuous as we imagine. But this vision is not impossible. Everyday, people could be making a difference in the environment with something as simple as putting the top on their aquariums or using less soap. Everyone could be doing their part.

Take it Seriously

Until I was buying my car, I was clear that my car is one step behind the time. We can start from the small things (such as recycling or picking up trash), or the huge things. I knew that in India, it matters, so I thought that the US is less concerned about the state of our environment. Much later it would be if we all started getting electric cars. Everything must be more efficient and happier. It would not bring any global warming or heat shortage. If you want to do your part, make the change, the change that saves the world.

Benefits

Not only are electric cars good for the environment, but they also reduce the amount of pollutants we release into the air. Electric cars also add a lot of value to our lives. Electric cars can go from 0–60 mph in 5–10 seconds, and they are faster than the average gas-powered car. Electricity is more efficient to convert into energy than gas. It is also cleaner, as the pollutants are not released into the air. Electric cars also help to reduce pollution from the exhaust of gas-powered cars.

More and More Benefits

Electric cars also make no noise at all! They are as silent as a mouse with no motor! That is why regular cars have been replaced by electric cars. Electric cars are also cheaper to operate. I interviewed a representative from a company called Terra Cars, and they claim that the 3% of the electric car for the 20% of the gas cars. Such cars are much better than the hybrid or diesel ones because they save gas and oil. Also, some people choose electric cars because they are more efficient. It is true that electric cars are more expensive initially, but they save you money in the long run because you need to charge them a lot less.

Actually, one change for an electric car can last up to 100 miles. That’s not all, when I had an interview with Ashton Lyle, they told me they, hopefully, in a few years, they would have charging stations in restaurants, hotels, and parking lots. They also said that the government would be supporting them. So using that, everyone will simply not work.

How You Can Help

The way I’ve found was that I informed people by putting up flyers in local businesses and shops and I made a website promoting more information on electric cars. That website is http://electriccarsbyalexa.com. And you can go to it for more information, or you could talk to tomatoes, think city, or any of your other electric car dealers.

As we know, nothing is perfect, so while there are benefits to owning an electric car, there are definitely some downsides. Downes such as electric cars being very expensive, but there’s how much you spend on a regular car. Today, gas prices are almost $4.00 a gallon. The price for electricity is only a few CENTS in a retail. That’s a lot that you could save. Also, even though electric cars use less regular cars use oil and gas, which is really bad for the environment because we get oil from the ground, stripping us from our problems. Electric cars should be much more reasonable now, right? They don’t give us any greenhouse gases or emissions.

Even if they aren’t downsides, it’s better than waiting and letting the world destroy itself in 100 years. We need to make a change and soon. To do that, it’s time to make a change, to help the world, before too late!
A COLD WAR

Damien Corley

I threw my first snowball. It hit something, but it didn’t hit David. David tried to say something, but I prevented him from saying it. I was getting very mad at him licking my hand, so I let him speak. After getting his lips wet, he started talking.

“Wow,” he announced, getting his snowball prepared.

David launched it, and it struck me like a lightning bolt. It hurt really, really bad. It felt like a lightning bolt, too. I got provoked. I threw another snowball, but it was no good.

“Darn!” I whispered while diving behind my fort. He tried to throw another snowball, but it missed me. I thought he was going to hit me, but he didn’t.

I came over to see if he was injured. His hands were crammed with snowballs. David tricked me! I could not believe that my best friend had just tricked me. I felt shocked, surprised, amazed, and crestfallen that David tricked me.

David tricked me! I could not see. I could barely hear what he was saying. It sounded bad, so I tried not to listen. He took all of the snowballs off of me so I could see and hear clearly.

“I win, you lose, I win, you lose!” David bragged, not caring about my feelings.

She JUST solved a problem! I got out of bed and bolted outside. My mom called me a “running rocket,” so I ran even faster. I was ready to thrash David. I got a 7-foot pile of snowballs ready. After a few minutes, it was time. David had finally arrived with a cup of hot chocolate in his hand. He put it down and got ready silently. David acted as if I was not there.

“Are you ready?!” I asked impatiently.

“You bet!” David growled.

“5,4,3,2,1!” we screamed.

I threw snowballs as fast as I could. David hit me a couple of times, but he was no match for my pile of snowballs. I pelted him! He could hardly here me! I never thought that that would happen to David.

“I win!” I screamed, trying not to brag. “Good game!” I shouted to David.

“We learned a lesson that day. It was a pretty good one too. Don’t fight two fights at once. Also, we learned NO bragging. I hope David still remembers. I know I do.

WE AND THE DOG

Aine Loughran

One day I took a walk with my mom and we were walking my friend's dog.

The my friend's dog started pulling me around the block. Then we went home.

Then my friend's dog ate a big dinner and then he had dessert.

Then we went to the dog store.

And we bought him a toy.
I remember going to Florida and rolling in the sand. I had so much fun there. We would have the most delicious breakfasts with my mom, my sisters, and my grandparents. We would have pancakes with chocolate chips and the freshest fruit. It was so much fun. We would jump on the beds and roll around. Then we would drive around for a while. We would laugh and play until we were so tired, we would just fall over asleep. I had the most fun going down for Christmas. We opened presents and played and danced and had so much fun making cookies for Santa.

My grandpa never liked to be called Grandpa, because it made him feel old, so we all called him by his first name, Mike. I remember when Mike got sick, and when my mom first found out her dad did not have much longer to live. I still think back to when I first found out we would no longer be going to Florida for my only grandpa, would not be down there to greet us. I can remember my mom crying and being so upset, so sad and hurt. My sisters were upset, too, but they did not quite understand about losing someone. They just knew that their mom was so upset, so they were upset as well.

I remember when he came to town so he could see his son and daughters. Everyone was so upset. First we all went over to where he was staying, and we all felt bad for we could see the cancer was taking him. He could tell who we were, but he was always tired and did not want to do much like before. Then it got really bad, and he could not remember or do anything. That’s when we stopped going, but my mom still did. We would stay home while my mom went to visit for just an hour at a time. We would wait and play games to pass the time. It was fun until the game was done. Then we would wait until Mom came back.

I remember when she came home in tears, and we all knew it had happened. He had died. We were all so sad. No one said anything. Still to this day, I am sad. I loved him so much, and I still do. He was a great grandpa and even though he is not with me now he will always be in my heart.

Brothers are so great
They always have your back
And you have theirs.
You have your best, best,
Friends but you know your brothers are the best.

People think they are lucky
If they are the only child but
It is better to have brothers.
You think they are mean but
That’s just how they all act.

Brothers are great
I would not like stuff I like now.

Like I would not be so into sports
I would not be as good at sports if
I did not have the three best brothers ever.

No more bottles or formula
I’m all grown up.
Princesses and Superheroes
I’m all grown up.
Play-doh and Sprout
I’m all grown up.
Preschool and elementary
I’m all grown up.
Cell phones and high heels
I don’t wanna grow up!
Homework and finals
I don’t wanna grow up!
Parking tickets and taxes
I don’t wanna grow up!
I wish I were a kid.
Black tux, beautiful white gown
I think I’ll be okay.
A nice house, happy smiling children calling me mommy
Yes, I will be okay.

I remember going to Florida and rolling in the sand. I had so much fun there. We would have the most delicious breakfasts with my mom, my sisters, and my grandparents. We would have pancakes with chocolate chips and the freshest fruit. It was so much fun. We would jump on the beds and roll around. Then we would drive around for a while. We would laugh and play until we were so tired, we would just fall over asleep. I had the most fun going down for Christmas. We opened presents and played and danced and had so much fun making cookies for Santa.

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My brother and I made a Lego set of the world-famous Fab Four: The Beatles. I’ve got to admit, even though he annoys me sometimes, my brother did an awesome job! I made the stage, the guitars, the drum set, the bass, the whole stage, and I ordered a custom-made John Lennon Lego Beatle online. My brother made Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr characters.

In our Legoland, our own Lego characters met the four legends. The Lego Beatles went on tour and performed at the Lego Pepsi Coliseum. We made a huge screaming crowd of Lego people. They played songs that they never played on stage together, like songs from Abbey Road.

It is amazing what you can do with Legos, and this was my favorite experience!
ONE WINDOW IS ALL I NEED...

Ti'Osha Nelson

One window is all I need
To see who’s out there for me
Making sure that harm is out of my way
Keeping my family from falling apart
Keeping my heart from falling into bits of bits of pieces
Keeping my head up for the future
Doing what I need to do
To accomplish and become
What I plan to be
One window is all I need.

THE TIME I WENT TO MY AUNT DAWN’S HOUSE

Zoe Suess

I think it was last summer [when we took] a quick trip to my Aunt Dawn’s house before camp. I went to my Aunt Dawn’s house and here’s the best part about it. Every time I go over to her house she gives me and my brother candy. My brother’s name is Max. He plays a lot with me, although he’s not as nice as he sounds. She has a bounce pool. I got smashed once in that thing and went underwater when I didn’t want to. We had mac and cheese for dinner. Then after that we walked on my uncle’s back. (He lets us walk on his back.) When it’s our bed time at 9:00, my uncle pumps our sleeping bags up.

I think I had a great time at my Aunt Dawn’s house!

WHEN I WAS GOOD WITH MY DAD

Kennedy Lynem

When I was good at my dad’s house we got to do whatever we wanted to do.

When I am good at my dad’s house he lets us go outside to play in the sand and we build a sand castle.

When I am good at my dad’s house he lets us play with our brother and his wife.

When I am good at my dad’s house my granny lets me do her hair.

When I was good at my dad’s house we played the Wii.

When I was good at my dad’s house we went to the store.

When I was good at my dad’s house we went to the library.
When Nicholas was still young, his family went to Target for their supplies. Little Nick would look at toys while his parents shopped. Eventually, Nick found a toy he wanted. Nick begged and pleaded but they just said, “No.”

Suddenly, he had a fun idea. In his mind it was fun at least. When no one was looking, he slipped away.

Eventually, Nick’s parents noticed Nick was gone, and they freaked. [His] name echoed throughout the store in search. Thinking [he] might have been kidnapped, security was placed at all entries and exits. The gates to the other parts of the mall were closed.

While everyone in the store searched frantically in hope, Nick continued to run and hide. Nick looked for a place to hide. Nick chose a circular clothes rack to hide in. People would walk by looking for him.

Nick was hiding when a woman in high black heels stopped in front of the rack. She bent down and caught Nick, who had been laughing. She brought Nick back to his parents.

Nick was reunited with his family and able to leave. The ride home was a little awkward.

Nick will never forget that day. And neither will his parents.
The last time I went to Incredible Pizza my family and I had a blast! I rode a roller coaster, won prizes, played glow-in-the-dark putt-putt and rode the bumper cars.

In order to play the games and ride the rides you need a pizza credit card. I had twenty dollars on my card. The adults only got seventeen dollars on their cards. I had so much fun at Incredible Pizza.

The games are one of my favorite things! My sister played a game and won 1,000 tickets! I could not believe that she won so many tickets. I won a lot of tickets playing all of the different games too. My dad also won a lot of tickets. He played battle ship game that he thought was awesome. We were the first people in line for that game.

After we played games, we rode the go-carts. They go really fast! If you are driving the go-carts and crash you have to start the race over again. We then rode the bumper cars. When the bumper cars start you better watch out, I am the best! I won bumper cars. I crashed into everyone I could find!

I got a prize when I turned in my tickets. I got a really fun Nerf toy. I was so happy that it really worked!

Soon after that, we left Incredible Pizza. I had so much fun. I hope we get to go again very soon!

FLYING
Will Johnson

The wind rustling through my hair, the cool whip of the wind on my face, and the big smile spread across my face. I dreamed of doing it all my life and now I can fly. The feeling is great. I feel like I don’t have to listen to anyone or do anything. I can just be. I’m soaring through the clouds not being able to see anything except the white that encircles me. Then I take a dive. I just let go and fall straight through the cloud and free-fall for fifteen seconds before pulling up. And then I’m flying over a forest that surrounds a clear blue lake. Then a Peregrine Falcon comes racing up next to me. He does loops and twists as he flies next to me. The feeling is great and I wish I could capture that moment forever; then my mom calls me from the back door, and I stop. And I remember that I’m just a little seven-year-old boy, flapping his arms around in the backyard, pretending to be a bird on a hot summer day.

THE BIG TREE MISHAP
Damion Shafer

“No be careful, Damion! Don’t take the chair out to the tree! You know it can tip over and I don’t want you to get hurt,” hollered my grandpa sternly.

It was the fall of 2005, and I was 5 years old. As a 5 year old, I was very adventurous and I loved to climb. I climbed on cars, rocks, stairs, ladders, boxes, filing cabinets, and refrigerators. I also liked to find bugs, especially butterflies. I really wanted to climb the enormous tulip tree in our backyard, but I was too short to reach the main bough of the tree. So, I used a chair to reach the branch that towered over me.

Every day I inched toward the tree carrying a chair from the back porch. I placed the chair under the strongest branch that was closest to the ground. Slowly and carefully, I climbed onto the chair and leaned forward to reach for the lowest part of the branch. I grabbed the lowest part of the branch and walked my hands backward until my arms were directly above my head. Then, I positioned my legs straight out in front of me with my feet touching the trunk of the tree. I quickly walked up the trunk and wrapped my right leg around the branch. Next, I used my small leg muscles to pull my body close the branch until I was hugging it. I used my left leg which was dangling below me to kick at the tree’s trunk until my body was turned. Finally, I was on top of the branch.

I continued to conquer that tree many times during that summer and fall. Until one day… I walked out to the back porch to pick up my usual chair. To my surprise, the chair would not budge… not even an inch! Frustrated, I walked to the next chair and tried to lift it. No luck! There were 2 more chairs, but they wouldn’t move either. I felt like Goldilocks in the three bears’ house. I couldn’t locate the chair that was “just right.” So, I went to the garage to find a bucket, but they had all been put up too high for me to reach. When almost all hope was lost I spotted a note that read, “Keep trying, don’t give up!” I assumed it was from my grandpa. So I darted to the huge tulip tree, and leaped at least two feet in the air! I wrapped my little arms around the branch, and kicked my feet up and around the main bough. I had a secret audience that applauded me, I ran and leaped into my grandpa’s arms and hugged him.

The lesson that I learned was: You never know until you try! I never tried to climb it. But when I tried I did it!
About me

I was born in the town of Trenton, Ontario, located in the southeastern portion of Canada to Chinese and British immigrant parents. After graduating from St. Paul Catholic Secondary School in 2003, I briefly enrolled in Purdue University’s Athletic Training program before deciding to take a three-year academic hiatus to work and travel throughout North America and Europe. In 2007, I returned to the academic world, enrolling as a photography student at Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis. At Herron, my interests diverged to include the discussion of human interaction within cultural, social, and political settings. Having recently received my Bachelor of Fine Arts, I am now pursuing a Master of Art in International Studies at Durham University in Durham, England.

About my art

Consistently through life we experience events, which shape our imagination and thought processes, and these in turn create lasting memories. After reading the stories provided to me through this project, I became fascinated with the memory-making process and what the mind captures and visualizes over time – subtle details encapsulated in light and movement; ambiguity soaring through colors and shapes; symbols laying out subtle hints toward a dream-like state. In Rooted Memories, I responded to the children’s writings by looking through the pages of my own memories and experiences; glimpsing into a scene of atmospheric ambiguity and curiosity.

I was very much inspired by the sincerity and vulnerability that came across in the students’ writings. Taking into account the innocence behind the words being expressed by the children, I wanted my representation of - or rather my response to – their work to reflect my experiences of their thoughts and stories. I typically like my photographic work to be as untouched as possible, and so for this project I played only with lighting, exposures, and atmospheric qualities. In the end, this intimate image was accomplished by photographing small bonsai trees through a small, broken keyhole. Because I have always been inspired by Asian culture and symbolism – the bonsai trees represent the delicacy of a life’s process, and the lighting aesthetics captured by my lens express the timeline of such process.
when I hear your name
The DAY I TURNED TEN

Mikayla Gallagher

It’s almost here. The day I am dreading most. This isn’t a day that a nine-year-old boy should be worried about. What is the day I am dreading so much? My tenth birthday.

It’s 1940. I live in Germany. Can you guess what’s going on in my life right now? You guessed it. World War II. No matter what happens in this war, I will never—well, never truly—be on the Nazis’ side. Which brings me to my tenth birthday. Things haven’t been going well for Mr. Hitler. On the first day of 1940 he made an announcement. An announcement that not only changed the lives of ten-year-old kids all around Germany, but is about to change mine as well.

A new rule was put in place. Once children of Germany turn ten, they are required to participate in Hitler Youth. Many families have fled the country. Many also got caught and were sentenced to death. But some made it, and that’s what truly matters. My mom, for one thing, never blamed her. I’m not sure that she has she’s been aware of the world around her lately. She’s been that way for a little over a year now. The day my dad was rejoined to the Nazis was the day my mom snapped. Now she has pretty much given up. Sometimes I wonder what will happen to my one-year-old sister Lily. I’ve been the one carrying this family along. What will my mother do without me?

Hitler might not be nice or fair or even sane, but no one can deny that he is smart. He played this Hitler Youth thing perfectly. He needed more troops so he took kids starting at the age of ten. The kids can’t leave even if they want to. The number of guards on patrol make it nearly impossible. Where would they go anyway? I mean, Germany is their home. All their families live here. So even if anyone does escape, they have nowhere to go. So whether I like it or not, I am going to join the Hitler Youth.

My birthday is in two days. That’s all I have left. I sit curled up in a tree, with Lily in my arms. I don’t know what I am going to do without her. She is one of the things that make me happy. Maybe I could bring her with… I immediately push the thought out of my head. If I am afraid, then I can’t imagine how she might feel.

desperately try to find something else to think about but, I can’t. I am really trying to enjoy myself for these last few days. But everything I do just leads me back to this, so I sit here cradling Lily in my arms. When I think about it, this is truly the best thing I can do.

An hour or so later I drift off to sleep. I dream of a day two years ago. Nothing special was happening. All of our family was curled up together on the couch. Dad was there too. Mom was laughing. She seemed to be her normal self again. I wish every day could be like this. Then I remember, before the war started, every day was like that.

I must have rolled on top of Lily in my sleep, because her squeal wakes me up. I quickly scoop her up and gently place her on my stomach. She curls up into a ball and puts her head on my chest. I smile. That’s all I can do. A single tear dips down my cheek. I feel like I am saying goodbye to her, but that all goes away the second I let go.

I return to the living room where my mom and Lily are waiting. The man instructs me to say goodbye and meet him in the car.

HONK! HONK! I sit up with a start. I quickly jump out of bed and throw on a clean pair of clothes and boots. Then I run out of my room to a window. Waiting for me outside is a camouflage car I have never seen before.

Everything happens so fast after that it is a blur. A man in a Nazi uniform comes in and hands me a much smaller uniform. I bring it to my room and change into it. The fact that they have uniforms this small scares me. I picture Lily in one of these but that thought scares me too, so I examine the uniform. The pants and shirt are connected so it’s sort of like a jumpsuit. The whole thing is an ugly shade of khaki. There is a red armband on the left arm that has the Nazi symbol on it. And to top it all off, a brand new pair of black shiny boots.

I return to the living room where my mom and Lily are waiting. The man instructs me to say goodbye and meet him in the car.

I hug Lily tightly. I don’t want to ever let go, but I know I have to. “I love you, Lily,” that’s all I can manage to say so that I don’t burst out crying. I rub my eyes and walk over to my mom. As I hug her, I feel all the love and happy memories coming back to me. But Lily doesn’t go away the second I let go.

I finish it. “The puzzle.”

Oh my gosh, she finished one. I smile, that’s all I can do. A single tear dips down my cheek. I feel like I am saying goodbye forever. I have been trying so hard to push this thought out of my mind all week. It is the same telling when Dad left.

I know I have to leave, so I wave goodbye and walk out the door for the final time. As I do, another tear dips down and falls on my new boots. When I pull myself in the car, I feel the mood change from emotional to serious in a heartbeat. As this happens, I realize something. If I am going to fight in this war, it might as well make it count. Even though I may hate Hitler, I am going to fight for my country and my family no matter what.
PENGUINS
Elizabeth Perkins

I form in the ocean
Folding bigger and bigger
As I reach the shore
I slap the shore
Painfully
As I reach for the shore
I touch the shore with my
White fingertips
Soaking my surroundings
Splashing, Crashing
Against the sand
All day
All night
I glow in the moonlight
I crash, smash, splash
Painfully
Against the shore

THE LOST ONE
Katherine Smith

What if you saw someone one day
What if the next day you did not
What if lost signs went up all over
What if you were the lost one
Would you run
Or would you hide
Would you report yourself
or be unheard of
What if I was the lost one...
I wandered down the hall and looked around hopefully. I was searching for someone, but I still wasn’t sure who it was that I had told about my plan. The halls were dark, cold, and the school. The halls smelled of chemicals, and the blackboard was a dull gray. I exited service. The note I had received earlier in the day told me to come to classroom E7 at 7 o’clock after school hours. School had let out about three hours ago now, and it was 6:45, which only gave me minute to get to my rendezvous point. I suddenly heard heavy footsteps down the hall, and I stopped to listen. It was an old man leaning against a wall, and his eyes were closing. I glanced up and saw the old man walking away. I continued walking down the hall, and I entered the classroom with a heavy heart. I was not sure what to aptly set with a flitting at a “whore” like myself, but it honestly did not faze me in the smallest way as a man.

"I am Zander of the third order of the royal heads of Edian.” Zander smiled with pleasure as he spoke, and his eyes seemed to be sparkling a blinding white that had a bright sparkle to them as well. As he spoke, his voice was strong but also smooth like satin cloth made from the finest silk to where it almost felt like butter melting in your hands. I nodded my head in approval of his words.

"Yes, I am sorry I have not politely introduced myself to you, and I do apologize for that. My name is simple yet unique to man. His eyes sparkled an amber color, and his hair seemed to glow in the dim lighting. His hair was spiked up, and it was a silver-grey color that looked most irregular. He smiled, and his teeth were a blinding white that had a bright sparkle to them as well. As he smiled, his eyes sparkled a blinding white that had a bright sparkle to them as well.

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"I will not leave you, my love, and I will never look back.” I hugged Zander tightly, and he hugged me back. From then on, we were inseparable, and I kept my promise to never look back or ever regret it.

"Well, it strikes me with happiness to see that a small and delicate flower such as yourself can have the vast knowledge of an onlooker. I believe you have many talents and have something that many may refer to as a sarcastic wit, which means you are new to any type of gaming situation.” Zander smiled with pleasure, and I could see that he clearly had done his reading before meeting with me on this cold night inside the school. I nodded and swiftly turned on my heels and started walking in the other direction away from him.

"It if strikes your fancy, you may follow me, and, if you care to see where I may lead you, then that will be of your own brave heart.” I smiled to myself and quickly paced to a lighter hearted pace and soon could hear Zander’s footsteps following swiftly behind me. "I know you barely know me, Elizabeth, and I wish I could have known you longer before I asked you this question. But, I feel not want to harm me.

"Yes, that’s my name, and I found your note sitting in the bottom of my locker. I read it over and over again trying to decide if I should show up, and I decided to come after all. My only problem is that you still have yet to tell me your name, and, quite frankly, I do not find that to be helping out your situation here with me.” I looked up in the stranger’s eyes, and I tried to make my voice sound easy and care free, but I found myself to be shaking with fear. I tried to calm myself down, but I was obviously failing to have any courage about what I had just done. I felt Zander’s eyes burning a hole deep into my soul as he looked down on me as if I was only a frightened child. He could have laughed if he honestly found my fear and bravery to be a funny matter, but he didn’t. Instead, I felt his warm hands gently hold my shoulders, and he knelt down and looked into my eyes. I could not believe I could so quickly develop feelings for a stranger. I could feel him shaking slightly, and his eyes were hiding just as much as mine were showing. “I listened to you, but I am also worried that you might be over-thinking the situation,” I said. I found myself wishing that I really had honestly gotten to know Zander better before this night.

I wandered down the hall and looked around hopefully. I was searching for someone, but I still wasn’t sure what to aptly set with a flitting at a “whore” like myself, but it honestly did not faze me in the smallest way as a funny joke.

"I will respect that your name may be Zander, but I highly doubt you are the third generation of the royal heads of Edian since most people do not realize that the royal heads of Edian are nothing but a mythological state of mind. They are a dream in which one can find true happiness and usually can only be reached through death.” I smiled proudly as I saw most people would have the common sense to realize that the royal heads of Edian are nothing but a mythological state of mind.

I was obviously failing to have any courage about what I had just done. I felt Zander’s eyes burning a hole deep into my soul as he looked down on me as if I was only a frightened child. He could have laughed if he honestly found my fear and bravery to be a funny matter, but he didn’t. Instead, I felt his warm hands gently hold my shoulders, and he knelt down and looked into my eyes. I could not believe I could so quickly develop feelings for a stranger. I could feel him shaking slightly, and his eyes were hiding just as much as mine were showing. “I listened to you, but I am also worried that you might be over-thinking the situation,” I said. I found myself wishing that I really had honestly gotten to know Zander better before this night.

"I know you barley know me, Elizabeth, and I wish I could have known you longer before I asked you this question. But, I feel not want to harm me.

"Well, it strikes me with happiness to see that a small and delicate flower such as yourself can have the vast knowledge of an onlooker. I believe you have many talents and have something that many may refer to as a sarcastic wit, which means you are new to any type of gaming situation.” Zander smiled with pleasure, and I could see that he clearly had done his reading before meeting with me on this cold night inside the school. I nodded and swiftly turned on my heels and started walking in the other direction away from him.

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I found myself daydreaming of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. I quickly snapped out of my little fantasy as we came to a stop. I could hear police sirens wailing in the distance. Zander gently set me back on the ground, and I straightened myself out and looked around hopelessly. I was searching for someone, but I still wasn’t sure who it was that had sent the note.

I almost found myself wanting to scream, but I also enjoyed the feeling of being carried off by a strapping young man. I found myself daydreaming of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. I quickly snapped out of my little fantasy as we came to a stop. I could hear police sirens wailing in the distance. Zander gently set me back on the ground, and I straightened myself out and looked around hopelessly. I was searching for someone, but I still wasn’t sure who it was that had sent the note.
1. Go to your bed.
2. Take the pillow off your bed.
3. Take your blanket off your bed if you have one.
4. Take your stuffed animals off your bed.
5. Put both hands on the two top corners of your sheet.
6. Pull the sheet to the top of your bed.
7. Pull the blanket to the top of your bed.
8. Pull the comforter to the top of your bed.
9. Get the comforter really, really flat.
10. Put your pillow on the top of your bed.
11. Put your fancy pillow on your bed.
12. Put all your stuffed animals on your bed.
13. Flatten your blanket onto your bed.

Now you know how!

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TIME
Shellae Young

My mom always asks me to spend mother and daughter time with her. I’m busy sometimes, but I check some arrangements and clear my schedule, because that’s my mom and I love her. Mothers want to spend time with their daughters.

The only reason they want to spend mother and daughter time with you is because they love you. And they feel guilty for not spend time with you, so they try to make it up to you. They take you to get ice cream and buy you coffee and do some shopping.

My auntie took my cousin for granted. One day my cousin asked if her mom wanted to spend mother-daughter time together so they could get closer. But her mom said, “Maybe later, honey.” But that same day my cousin Nikka was walking, and a car lost control. She got hit by a car. My auntie found out about it on the news 30 minutes later. It turned out that the driver was drunk, and the driver went to jail for 15 years.

You shouldn’t take your daughters for granted, because it might be the last time you see them. Right now my cousin is 15 years old, and my auntie is 36 years old.

HE
Rachel Snow

He gives you happiness.
He tells you he loves you a million times a day.
He looks into your eyes, and you think it really, truly is love.
Every morning, he embraces you in a warm hug, and calls you just to say goodnight.
But then you hear everyone saying they saw him, last night with that girl from math class, and suddenly all those good night phone calls are a waste of your time, all those I Love Yous and hugs are turning into tears.
But he tells you he loves you one last time and your heart has no control over your feelings, and you’re confused, and you don’t believe anything, but he asks for your friendship, and then you realize that it was everything but what you wanted, it was just a stupid high school crush.

HOW-TO MAKE A BED!
Mara Foley

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2. Take the pillow off your bed.
3. Take your blanket off your bed if you have one.
4. Take your stuffed animals off your bed.
5. Put both hands on the two top corners of your sheet.
6. Pull the sheet to the top of your bed.
7. Pull the blanket to the top
WHY POLLUTION?

Jessica Patterson

Why Pollution?

WHY POLLUTION?

BY: JESSICA PATTISON

Why clean water?

Why do we have clean water? All living things must have clean water. "Water is our most valuable resource," says Eric Vond, program director at Cundown.

We cannot pollute our precious water. Throwing trash chemcials, and any other harmful material can hurt our water, earth, and ourselves. Water pollution effects the Earth and even our bodies. According to an article "Water Pollution: Exposalisation happens because of water pollution. Eutrophication is when oxygen levels in the water drop. Oxygen levels drop because consumers use oxygen to get rid of the dead animals. The dead animals caused some of water pollution. All animals deserve clean safe water.

Mercury in the Water

There are many effects of water pollution on the environment and human life. Mercury is the most common pollutants in the water. Mercury pollutes both fresh and ground water. When mercury contaminants are in the water the plants get the smallest particles. Then a fish eats the plant (which has mercury in it). Now that fish has mercury in it. As the chain continues the mercury particles add up in the fish. The process ends when we eat the fish. We could have up to 100 times of mercury in our bodies. Although that is not a lot, but an abundance of mercury can be toxic or deadly.

Picture of mercury in water

Taking Action

How can I help prevent water pollution? There are many ways to help prevent water pollution. I did only one thing. I took action, with Ayanna Johnson. We went to Fall Creek to clean up around it. It was cold outside, but nuclear reactors to over heat and one caught on fire. How the radiation from the reactors effects the water. The Japanese people don’t know if their water has radiation or not. The Japanese people are not the only ones who don’t have clean water. From www.unwater.org an estimated 2 billion don’t have access to clean, safe water. We are privileged to have the resources and equipment to have clean, safe water.

Japan’s Water Polluted Because of Nuclear Radiation

Take a moment to think about saving your own city’s water. Well, people in Japan are living that nightmare. An earthquake and tsunami hit Japan on March 11th and 10th, 2011. That caused their nuclear reactors to over heat and one caught on fire. How the radiation from the reactors effects the water. The Japanese people don’t know if their water has radiation or not. The Japanese people are not the only ones who don’t have clean water.

www.unwater.org an estimated 2 billion don’t have access to clean, safe water. We are privileged to have the resources and equipment to have clean, safe water.

Saving energy helps too. "The power plants giving off the water," says Eric Vond. Saving energy would let the plants burn less, so that there will be less pollution. Those chemicals can get into the water from the sewer.

You Can Help

Picture of nuclear reactor in Japan

We found a Styrofoam case. There were also beer bottles and plastic bags. These objects could have gone into the ocean and caused the animals to choke or be harmed. Why couldn’t they just recycle? Keep the water clean!

The ocean is a factory. Some industries go into the ocean and cause the animals to choke or be harmed. Why couldn’t they just recycle? Keep the water clean!

You can do lots of things to prevent water pollution. Dispose of chemicals or household chemicals properly. That means don’t dump it down the sink. The same goes for the trash. Those chemicals can get into the water from the sewer.

Picture of nuclear reactor in Japan

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There I was, a simple egg sitting in my carton with the rest of my egg siblings, when some rough, dirty, prickly hand touched my nice clean ivory-colored shell. Oh how that got my yellows turning! Now I looked more like a brown egg than a white one. I wasn’t worried, just angry. I am tough (though good looking), a tough egg.

He carried me to the worst death of all egg deaths, the frying pan. The pan was hissing like a snake, sizzling like steak or bacon. The red stamp that marked what farm my mom had laid me at was running down my sides. He, that is, the man that grabbed me, was just about to hit my glistening shell on the edge of the frying pan when…the ruler of the house, that is, the wife, called his name.

James was his name actually, and he sat me down between the salt and pepper shakers. As soon as James was out of sight, the salt and pepper shakers started in, “Hey, you know the rules, Shorty. This is our land, move it or lose it kid.” Then all of a sudden I started to roll on a marble counter top. It was smooth (with a few knife scratches), but still smooth. I was scared to see the end of the glorious counter top!

Now usually this would be the part where I fall off and go splat then bye-bye, but I had a plan. As I rolled to a stop at the end of the counter, I did what any egg would do: I broke the shell that warmed my feet and started flapping my wings. Yes sir, I was a soaring eagle, a fierce raven, a peaceful dove. (Well maybe I would skip that last part). I was fast, free, fierce and cool, oh that’s right, cool, awesome, and fantastic. Well, at least I thought I was a soaring eagle or any of those things I mentioned. To a person I probably looked like a deformed duck hopping up and down on my feet.

I sat thinking under a shiny blue dog dish when I felt the floor boards shake. James’s voice was as loud as thunder as he called out to his wife Kristy, “Would you also like an egg?”

She answered with a mellow tone, “Yes please.”

I was soaked in sweat immediately! How would I warn the others? Dripping gallons of sweat by the minute, my brain was tossing and turning trying to find a way to help my family. All of a sudden it came to me! I could use the egg call. “CALLING ALL EGGS, CALLING ALL EGGS you are under attack!” I screamed into the last bit of shell I had left. I sobbed for what seemed like a millennium. I would rather be fried with my siblings than alone. Then I felt a rage of courage shoot through my body. I felt strong and confident. I lifted the dog bowl up, practically knocking it over. As a little baby chick I dashed to the fridge, threw open the door, and climbed up the shelves. As I reached the carton where my family lived, there were screams of rage and terror. They had no idea what was happening.

While I was opening the box, the fridge opened again and there before me was a giant, James. I climbed into the box with shock and horror. He carried our home, the carton, to those marble counter tops. But when James opened the carton and saw me, he screamed. I couldn’t believe it. He was afraid of me. He took the carton and threw it outside. So for now I am with my brothers and sisters and mom.
If you were in Japan you could visit 4,000 islands! If you were in Japan you would not have a long border. The south islands can have snow while the north islands can have snow white winter islands.

If you were in Japan there would be lots of mountains and volcanoes. Mount Fuji is the highest mountain in Japan. It is in the volcanoes. The north islands can have snow white winter islands.

The Flag
If you were in Japan the flag would have a red circle on a white background. This symbol is called rising sun.

Food!
If you were in Japan you would eat lotus roots, rice and wasabi. These are foods typical of Japan.

Celebrations
If you were in Japan in February you could go to a butterfly festival and see thousands of butterflies. If you were in Japan in November you could go to a pumpkin festival and see many pumpkins. If you were in Japan in November you could go to a white silent festival and see many people wearing white clothes.

Where is it?
If you were in Japan you would be in Asia. If you were in Japan you would be in Asia. If you were in Japan you would be in Asia. If you were in Japan you would be in Asia.

The people!
If you were in Japan you would know that the people of Japan are very polite.

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Ruby Scott

I walk up to the house door. Struggling to open the door, I can't wait to get inside because it is freezing. I finally get the door open and stomp my feet off.

"Mom, I am home. Hello?" I walk over to the key table and put my keys there. "Mom?" I yell again.

"Yes," she replies. She runs down the stairs and says, "Hi, did you just get home?"

"Yeah," I walk over to the living room and sit down to do my homework. It takes me about 45 minutes to finish it all. After I am done, I ask my mom, "Can I go over Jay's house?"

"Do you have all of your homework done?"

"Yes Mom, so can I go?"

"Yes, but you need to be home by 7:30."

"Okay, okay."

I put on my coat and head out the door. I walk down the street and see a strange man walking everywhere. He is behind me, and when I stop, he stops. I start to get scared, so I kind of speed-walk the rest of the way. I ring the doorbell and Jay finally answers the door. "Come in, Alice."

"Thank you." I say.

"What do you want to do?"

"I don't know, watch TV?"

"Okay."

We watch TV for about a half-hour then we decide to draw. I draw a blue dress with flowers on it, and before I know it, it is 7:25. I say, "I'm sorry. It is time for me to go home now."

"I will see you tomorrow." She walks me to the door, and I leave.

I walk down the sidewalk. I look at the sky and notice a black van about halfway up the street. I look at it closely, and there in the van is the same man that was following me to Jay's house earlier. It is dark and cold outside, and I am scared. I try to stay calm, but when I look back, the van is getting closer and closer. I hear a car door slam, and I look back again. The man is running right at me!

I run as fast as I can, but he can run faster. Before I know it, I am inside the van and tied up. In my head I am thinking of ways to get away and get out of the van. I know that I still have my phone because I can feel it in my pocket, but that is no use to me as long as I am tied up. I start to cry. Then I feel the car stop, the man unties me and opens the car door. I run.

I run as fast as I can. "Help, help, someone help me, help, help!" I look back, and he is right behind me. I start to scream, "HELP, HELP!" Nothing happens. Then I trip on the sidewalk, falling down with a bloody knee and a scraped elbow. Before I even realize how much I hurt, I open my eyes and see the man standing above me. I notice that he has an earring on, so I get up and snatch the earring. He screams, and I know he is in pain

I see a light, a red light, and a beeping sound, then I wake up. It was all a dream but so real and scary. I get up and see it is only my alarm clock—the red lights, the beeping. I get back in bed and just leave it all in the past.

Ruby Wright

Snow is coming!
I am going to play in the snow and build a snowman, and build snowballs, and snow tunnels, and snow hills.

You have to get your snow boots, and your snow pants, and your snow gloves, and a hat. Pile all of these snow clothes by the back door.

You get your shovel and your snow blower. Then you get ice melt to put on the sidewalk. All of this stuff will be ready by the garage door.

Snow is forecast!

You get out your sleds. To build a snowman you get a carrot, some rocks and sticks. You put a red cowboy hat on the pile of stuff by the front door.

Snow is forecast!

You can play tic-tac-toe in the snow with sticks and rocks. Gather sticks and rocks and put them on the patio.

Snow is forecast!

Snow is coming!

SNOW!
“Delilah, are you ready to go?” asked Mr. Colenbrook in a hopeful voice. “Yes,” said Delilah. “I suppose I am.” With one last look at her home of Plymouth, she turned and walked slowly to meet her mother and the twins, Lawrence and Charlotte. They walked slowly toward the ship that was going to take them across the Atlantic to America. The ship’s name was the S.S. Titanic.

Delilah’s father, Mr. Colenbrook, was a successful banker. His bank was opening an office in America, and he was offered the job of director. He had chosen to sail with his family on the Titanic because it was supposed to be the safest. It was supposed to be unsinkable.

Once the family had boarded, Delilah fell fast asleep. She was caught between conflicting feelings of excitement and homesickness. The next morning she woke up bright and early only to find that the rest of the family was already up. They ate a fine breakfast together.

“Delilah,” Mr. Colenbrook began. “I have books for you children to study, and I expect you to tutor your brother and sister.” Delilah promised to do so and then asked permission to explore the ship. She took Lawrence with her and promised to keep an eye on him. Lawrence was her closest friend, even though she was fourteen, four years older than he was. They got along splendidly. He was indeed smart, hard working and, most of all, never scared.

Later that night, Delilah awoke to find panic aboard the ship. The Titanic had hit an iceberg, and it was sinking!

Delilah was lost in the moment. Everything felt like it was in slow motion. Someone grabbed her arm and shook her. She snapped back to reality. Mother was pulling her toward the cabin door, along with Charlotte. They fought their way through the crowd, up the stairway and onto the deck in the cold night air. Father was there helping women and children into life boats. Mother and Charlotte climbed into a boat, and Delilah started to follow. Suddenly, she stopped.

“Where is Lawrence?” she cried.

Mr. Colenbrook looked at her as he said, “We can’t find Lawrence, and so we have to hope that he got on another life boat.”

“I’m going to find him!” cried Delilah over the sound of the wind.

“Wait!” was the last word Delilah heard before running back the other way. Suddenly someone grabbed her arm, but it wasn’t Mother or Lawrence. It was Charlotte.

“I want to go with you.”

Without another word, Charlotte and Delilah ran to find their brother. They couldn’t find him anywhere, and time was running out. Finally they ran up to the decks, and there was Lawrence. He was starting to climb into a small wooden boat when he saw his sisters and beckoned them over.

“Climb in,” he instructed.

They did, and without another word, they found themselves floating. There was no one in boats around them. They were alone, and for the first time in Delilah’s life, she saw fear in Lawrence’s eyes.
RACISM

Chase Lovely

Stop
Stop
Stop
I can’t take it
Thousands of people suffer,
On the streets
In their homes
Even in school
Does anyone care?
That I am in a pool of darkness?
Do they care
About how their ignorance affects me?
Treating me like an animal
You try to bring me down,
Separating,
Excluding,
Teased
And bullied
Just because of
My skin color
Just at first sight,
Accused of doing something that I didn’t do,
I ask myself,
“Is this just because of my skin color?”

THE OCEAN

Amarynary Castillo

The ocean is soft.
The fish swim to make a pretty color.
Feeling like you want to stay forever
Feeling the air in your face, floating in your hair.
The ocean is blue and light blue.
Your feet touch the warm sand
Hearing the birds fly away.
Sit down and close your eyes
And think about the ocean
And when you are done, stand up
And open your arms
And think about flying away

MY SECRET LIFE AS BRIANNA

Lilia Flores

I had just gotten out of school and was forced to walk home (my brother took my car). Winter had just started, and there was already three feet of snow on the ground. Winters are hard in my family. We run out of money, and it’s too cold for my dad to work, which means he drinks more. My mom and dad are both alcoholics; my dad is the worst though. When he gets drunk, he throws things and starts yelling.

I arrived at my house hoping that my dad hadn’t been drinking when I was at school. “Ughhh, where did I leave those house keys?” I murmured. I shoved my hand in my back pocket, digging for the key that was hidden under folded paper. There they are, I thought, as I wiped my feet and stumbled upon the doorway. Right when I walked in, I heard a loud crash in the kitchen. “Dad!” I yelled. There he was, staring my mom dead in the face, my mother crying.

I looked around not knowing what to do. I saw my mother’s phone on the floor in pieces. I stood there as my dad turned around and got closer. “Go to your room, this is none of your business. It’s between me and your mother!” he yelled.

I turned around and walked up the steps, quietly. I knew what would happen if I disobeyed him, it had happened to me before. He had told me to be home at 10:00 pm, and I came home at 12:00 am. I came in the house, he yelled at me and threw my mom’s vase at the wall. Then he came up to me and smacked me in the face.

I sat there on my bed listening to them in the kitchen. Clearly, my father was mad—and drunk. “Who is this Brad guy you’ve been talking to?” he yelled.

“He is my manager; we were talking about the new plan for the business.” she yelled back.

I sat there waiting for my dad to answer back, nothing. I heard nothing! After about three minutes of waiting for an answer, I heard banging in the kitchen. The only thing I could think of was to get my brother.

I ran to his room. “Andrew!” I yelled. I looked around not knowing what to do. I saw my mother’s phone on the floor in pieces. I stood there as my dad turned around and got closer. “Go to your room, this is none of your business. It’s between me and your mother!” he yelled.

I ran downstairs and stumbled in the kitchen. My mom was on the floor now. Pots and pans were everywhere. My mom just got slapped, I thought to myself. “You don’t touch her!” I screamed.

Dad turned around and bolted his hand towards me. I flinched and tried to back away, but I wasn’t quick enough. Slap! I fell against the wall, and within seconds I was on the floor.

He walked through the front door. I sat there thinking, He’s gone. I scooted forward and touched the back of my head. I looked down, I was bleeding! There was blood all over my hand; it slowly dripped onto my school skirt. I looked away in disgust, moving my head back and forth, trying to relieve the sharp pain he had caused. “Mom, are you okay?” I choked.

“She, I’m fine.” She replied. “I never want you to yell at him like that ever again! You could really get hurt!” She quivered.

I ran upstairs, I thought, as I wiped my feet and stumbled upon the doorway. Right when I walked in, I heard a loud crash in the kitchen. The only thing I could think of was to get my brother.

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“Yeah, I’m fine.” She replied. “I never want you to yell at him like that ever again! You could really get hurt!” She quivered.

“Don’t touch her!” I screamed.

“Okay,” she yelled. “But I never want anything to happen to you!”

“Okay.” I said.

“Now go call Andrew and tell him to come home before your dad gets back,” she said as she headed for the bathroom.

“My mom, could you have gotten really hurt?” I said as I got up slowly.

“And don’t touch her!” she yelled. “But I never want anything to happen to you!”

“Okay,” I said.

“New go call Andrew and tell him to come home before your dad gets back,” she said as she headed for the bathroom.

“Ughhh, there’s nothing on!” I said as I flipped through channels trying to find something good. Andrew had just gotten back. My mom was in the kitchen, cooking dinner. I sat there, thinking about what had happened earlier. Why would he hurt me and my mom? Even if he was drunk. What would possess him to hurt us like that? I asked myself.

I remembered when Andrew and I were little. We used to always play and joke around together. But then my dad started acting weird and different. He really started being mean when his mother died. He wouldn’t say a word to anybody about it for a week. At that time I was six and Andrew was eight.
I looked through the peephole to see who it was. It was my dad. I took a deep breath and opened the door slowly. He walked through and sat on the couch. "What are we having for dinner?" he asked.

"Steak with mashed potatoes," Mom answered. She was setting the table. "In fact, dinner's done. Brianna, go tell your brother that dinner's done."

I walked up the stairs and wandered through the hallway. I opened Andrew's bedroom door and walked in. Andrew, who was watching TV, looked up. "What?" he asked.

"Dinner's ready," I said, walking back out.

"Okay. I'll be there in a minute," he turned back to the TV.

I ran down the stairs and sat down, right next to my mother. I looked up as Andrew came walking in. He grabbed a plate, got his food and started back up the stairs.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I'm eating upstairs," he said. He was almost halfway up the steps by the time he answered.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I'm leaving," Dad said. "When I come back, I want all the laundry to be done!"

I walked through and sat on the couch. "What are we having for dinner?" he asked.

"Steak with mashed potatoes," Mom answered. She was setting the table. "In fact, dinner's done. Brianna, go tell your brother that dinner's done."

I got up, curious to see what the noise was. I pushed the swing to make noise so that whatever I had heard would think I was still swinging. I walked passed a big Oak tree. The original noise got louder and louder as I came closer. I realized now that it was a girl crying. She was sitting against an apple tree, her face in her lap, hiding her identity.

"Face to face, ohh ahh chi-uah-uah!" sang the girl in the blue. Why can't I have nice loving parents like those girls do? I asked myself. I couldn't stand to watch them anymore, so I kept walking.

Listening to all the dogs barking, kids screaming with joy and laughter, and rusted swings moving slowly, I walked into the park. I found an open swing and sat down, feeling weak. I swung back and forth, barely moving away from the ground. It was really quiet, except for this one noise I heard deep in the distance.

I got up, curious to see what the noise was. I pushed the swing to make noise so that whatever I had heard would think I was still swinging. I walked passed a big Oak tree. The original noise got louder and louder as I came closer. I realized now that it was a girl crying. She was sitting against an apple tree, her face in her lap, hiding her identity.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"My mom just beat me," she said. She looked up at me, and I could see the shame on her face.

"What could I say? Should I talk to her about it, tell her about my similar stories? I hesitated and sat there hoping to think of something to say. But then I looked more closely, noticed her scars and bruises, even bloody spots on her face. Oh my God! Her mom did that!"

"Why would she do this to you?" I asked, mumbling so that nobody could hear us.

"You just don't get it! You don't know what I go through!" she said fiercely, like she was arguing with me.

"Why do I do this now? I wondered. I thought about telling her about my parents. "I do get it," I said at last. "My dad abuses me, and both of my parents are alcoholics." I was more scared than I had ever been before. I looked up at her, afraid of what she was going to say, my heart pounding. She was the first person I had ever told about my secret life at home.

"Oh. Maybe we're living completely the same lives, except it's my mom that beats me," she said.

We sat there for more than four hours, talking about our parents. We told each other stories, showed each other scars. "So why did your mom beat you again?" I asked, curious of what had happened before I came along.

"I didn't do my chores. You know, cook dinner, clean my room, do the laundry," she answered. "I forgot the laundry that Dad told me to do! I've got to get it! I said, getting up quickly. "Same spot tomorrow?"

"Yes, please!" she said.

I turned around and ran to my house. I thought about all the stories we had told each other. I stopped running and stared up at my door, scared of what my dad might do to me. I stood there on the sidewalk thinking. Melissa my new friend and I will get help someday. But for right now, I'm just glad I've got a friend who understands me and sees me as a person.
Have you ever wondered why toddlers are so energetic? Sometimes you are too busy to deal with them, or you might want some peace and quiet, or maybe you want to go somewhere with them, but they’re too jumpy and you are worried they might wander off. That’s what inspired me to write this question. I think toddlers are very energetic because they have to get all of their energy out to get a good night’s sleep.

They just feel like it’s a good time to run around, jump, yell, and have fun. For example, I went to see my baby cousin about 4 weeks ago. She was so energetic. She ran back and forth between the window and the door saying, “Tuti!” and “Daddy’s outside with juicy,” for 23 minutes.

This connects with the time I was 4 years old. My mom, cousin, brother and I were playing tag. I was having so much fun, and no one could catch me because I was so full of energy.

This is different from babies, kids, and teens because they don’t find ordinary things so interesting like toddlers do.

People should care about this because if toddlers are too energetic, will they ever learn how to be calm, quiet, and not to be so energetic all the time?

**STORM**
Joshua Roach

Don’t go outside
Look out for lightning
BOOM BOOM
Thunder is near, run away, don’t go under trees

**DEATH TOLL**

Every year, 4-5 million cats and dogs are put in shelters. Of that number, 4.5 million are put down annually. These animals all for one sad reason: nobody loves them. This is a horrible fact, but we can all help to avoid it by having to do the following simple things. If we work together, we can make the death toll smaller.

**WHAT TO DO**

Lots of people want to help animals, they just don’t know how. These are just some of the ways they can help:

- Contact local law enforcement if you witness animal abuse. They will rescue the animal and try to give it a good home.
- Think about adopting a pet. You will be giving a home to an animal that really needs one, not some fancy pet shop. Purr. It is more urgent for shelter animals because they will be put to sleep if they don’t get a home.
- If you can’t adopt, try to volunteer. It’s always fun to spend time with your pets and help out. For example, a dog can be a fun playmate.
- If you can’t do either of the above, you can donate money, food, medicine, toys, and anything the animals need to a local shelter. Every bit helps.

| Cats and dogs don’t want to be homeless. It just happens that way sometimes. They don’t want to be cold, wet, and hungry, running the streets trying to stay alive. All they want is a warm, loving home and a master to please. If we all work together, we can help realize this dream of happiness and reality. We all need to help! As Sandy Kopp, manager of RefTails abolition center says, “Stay cool (and neuter) your pets, adopt rescued pets instead of purchasing from pet stores, and educate your friends and neighbors.” |

And now, when you see that stray cat or dog walking down the sidewalk, what will you do?

RefTails: Located at the Washington Square Mall: 317-252-6370
“Ginny, c’mon, I have asked a million times,” Ian said to me.

“And that’s making it annoying,” I spat back at him. “I don’t know if I want to go to my grandma’s funeral. I mean, I was so close to my grandma, and well, you know how religious my family is. It’s not every day your grandma dies.”

“Well, tell me soon,” he yelled at me as he stomped out the door.

“I’ll tell you tomorrow,” I yelled back at him, “at school.”

Light bulb! I thought the next day at school. I knew Ian would not like my idea, but if he doesn’t agree to it, he will have to face the consequences. (Me not going with him at all). When I told him, of course, he did not agree at first, but after a little persuading, he gave in so…while I sat on the swing at recess pretending to be innocent, he went to tell his friends that he needed to change the time of the trip. The only thing I was worried about in this plan was Ian’s mom. I didn’t know how she would feel about changing their trip to Disneyland.

Waiting on the swing, my hopes weren’t getting any higher because I timed how long it took for Ian to persuade his friends, and it took 8 minutes and 27 seconds for them to give in. So I realized I might have to wait 3 hours at the window for Ian’s signal after he talked to his mom. (But I figured I’d play my DSi with the window open.)

When Ian finally appeared at the window after school, I got bad news and good news. Actually mostly bad. The goodish bad news was that his mom was thinking about it, so she didn’t say no right off the bat. But the very bad thing was that she wanted to talk to Ian’s dad about it, and it took 8 minutes and 27 seconds for them to give in. So I realized I might have to wait 3 hours at the window for Ian’s signal after he talked to his mom. (But I figured I’d play my DSi with the window open.)

When Ian finally appeared at the window after school, I got bad news and good news. Actually mostly bad. The goodish bad news was that his mom was thinking about it, so she didn’t say no right off the bat. But the very bad thing was that she wanted to talk to Ian’s dad about it, and he is picky (or pickier than she is). So I knew he’d want to think about it, too. Who knew how long that could take!

Dinner, as never, was spaghetti. My mom usually cooked something fancy like sautéed mushrooms or homemade pickled beets (which I think are really gross, but she’d never asked my opinion). Even though I really like spaghetti, I only ate half of it. Dad made me eat my 3-year-old brother’s veggies, which I gave to the cats, and then I departed for my room. There I discovered the best news: Ian’s mom said yes! I’d be able to go to Disneyland and still make my grandma’s funeral.

The big day finally arrived. On the ride to Disneyland, I thought about the plan again. Would my sister be able to hold off the funeral ‘til I get there? I hoped so.

SCREECH! The car jolted to a stop. As I looked up, I grinned. The rides loomed over the prize booths.

The rides were awesome! I almost puked on one of them. In the middle of one really long and fun ride, I looked at my watch and almost screamed! It was 4:10, only 20 minutes until my grandma’s funeral, and I was supposed to make the big speech.

I looked down. If you’re going to jump, just don’t look down, I thought. I looked down anyway.

But mid-jump, I felt something change inside me. You’re going to make it, I told myself…

EMPATHY, NOT APATHY

Hungry people are out there dying of starvation
While we toss our food in the trash.

Animals are being slaughtered and abused
While we eat meat without even thinking what had to happen
to create this plate of food in front of us.

Wars are going on because of hate and greed
While we create enemies and take more than we need.

Our environment is being destroyed because of all of the
pollution that humanity creates.
While we use cars more than necessary.

Some people don’t have a home
While we want a nicer or bigger house.

Some people are being beaten, bullied and abused
While we don’t always stand up for our friends.

Forests are disappearing all over the world, causing animals to
lose their homes and us to have dirtier air
While we get greedy with products like paper or wood.

It’s time to realize what’s going on in the world and make a
change. And that change starts with you and me!

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EXCLUDING PEOPLE

Excluding People
Tim Jolliff
Get him off the team!
Yeah, leave!
Loser!
Get out of here!
Go!
Me.
I am weak.
Slow.
Be nice.
Don’t be mean.
Well, what did we say?
Fists
Mad and steaming faces
Gritting teeth.
Leave us alone
Wimp!
Don’t be afraid.
What they say
Is not true.
Do not go back.
Show them.
You’re awesome
Don’t be afraid.
Stand up.
Friends.
We’re all friends.
No!
Shoo!
Now!
Leave.
Get an adult.
They’ll fix it.
Yes.
Yes.
No more.
Done.
We’re done.
The world is done.
Excluding people.
Done.
Mmm... Food! If you were a spider you would eat other bugs and insects. Spiders eat millions of mosquitoes each year. Birds find you tasty.

I look like that?! If you were a spider you would have 8 legs and 8 eyes. Spiders can jump, walk or swim.

What do they eat? ................1
What do they look like? ..........2
What are they? ..................3
Where do they live? ...........4
Fun Facts! .......................5
Author..........................6

Mom, Dad

If you were a spider you would eat millions of mosquitoes each year. Spiders can jump, walk or swim.

If you were a spider you would eat other bugs and insects. Spiders eat millions of mosquitoes each year. Birds find you tasty.

Where in the world? If you were a spider you could live in every country of the world. You would like a dark, dry home. Some live in webs.

Fun facts! If you were a spider you would make silk. You could use the silk to make a web to live in or to trap insects. Some spiders are venomous.

What in the world? If you were a spider you would be called an arachnid. You would only have two parts to your body, thorax and abdomen.

All About the Author My name is Lucy. I am in first grade. I chose to research bugs because I like spiders. I am 7 years old and from room 115.
Once a very long time ago, there lived a girl. A servant girl, Zara. Every morning when Zara woke up, the first thing she did was brush her curly, cinnamon hair that came down to her waist. She used a wire comb that many servant girls shared. Then she dressed in green like all of the other personal servants of Queen Vashti.

Normally, Zara would go straight to the Queen’s bedroom to quickly check for wrinkles or stains on the Queen’s clothes, fluff her pillows and serve her breakfast. But today was different, because the Queen was holding a feast. There would be many princesses and queens at Shushan Palace.

When Zara skipped upstairs, one of her friends rushed up to her with a list of flowers that she was to pick from the Queen’s private garden. Some of the flowers were for the Queen’s room, and some were for the Queen’s hair. Pink roses, tulips, violets and lilies would decorate the Queen’s room. For the Queen’s hair, Zara would pick Persian buttercups, her favorite.

Zara ran straight for the garden; she was in a hurry to get back in time to serve the Queen’s breakfast. When she reached the garden, she saw Philo, the gardener, already trimming the roses.

“Good morning, Little Zara!” Philo said. “How may I help you this morning?”

“Good morning, Philo,” said Zara. “I have my flower list.”

Philo looked over the list, and said, “I picked most of these flowers this morning. You will have to pick the Persian buttercups quickly before you return to the Queen.”

Then Philo went into the very back of the garden, into the little garden shed. He gathered the flowers that he had picked that morning, and put them into a basket for Zara to carry.

Zara started over to the little pond where a few croaking bullfrogs and a slow, grumpy old turtle lived. Then she saw the Persian buttercups. Oh, how much she loved the buttercups, especially the white ones with pink tips. They looked like ruffles dipped in pink paint. The petals were like tissue paper. She picked many blooms, a few pink ones, but mostly white ones. The Queen only requested Persian buttercups for special occasions.

Philo was scurrying toward Zara with the basket of flowers. Quickly, they put the Persian buttercups into the basket. Zara said, “Farewell!” She darted back into the Palace.

Zara quickly ran up to the Queen’s quarters. She placed the Persian buttercups into a silver vase to keep them fresh until the Queen’s hair was dressed. Then she gave the basket of other flowers to another servant who would arrange them for the Queen’s rooms.

Zara rushed off to see what the Queen wanted to meal on to break-the-fast. The Queen wanted bread, cheese, fruit and some wine. Zara arranged the meal on a silver platter with golden Persian buttercups around the edges. Then she balanced the heavy platter on her head and walked carefully to the Queen’s rooms.

After the Queen was finished, she gave her butler permission to enter. He bowed low and then updated her on how banquet preparations were coming along.

“Persian buttercups should be added to every flower arrangement, because I am the Queen of Persia,” said Queen Vashti. “And everything should match me.”

Queen Vashti decided on other changes also. She wanted silver and gold dishes instead of just gold. She switched out the clear goblets for ruby goblets to match her jewels.

“These are my final choices,” said Queen Vashti.

“As you wish, my Queen,” said the butler with a bow.

Zara was sent to go and help serve food samples for the feast to the Queen. There were fresh grapes, many different kinds of olives, giant juicy pomegranates, dates, salty pistachios, enormous lemons, limes and oranges, and many other fruits. Then the Queen was served a bite of stew made of goat and roasted lamb. There were also freshly baked breads, spicy rices, cool yogurts, sweet pastries and many wines. One pink Persian buttercup decorated each platter. The Queen approved. Since the Queen approved, preparations were completed for the feast.

Some guests began arriving. Zara gracefully walked to her place in the corner where she was to wait until the Queen had need of her. Zara silently watched as each princess and queen were announced. Each one presented themselves to Queen Vashti, they bowed low before her. Then they were escorted to their seat.

Zara observed the beautiful room, she smelled the heavenly food and slid her hand carefully down the linen curtains behind her. Zara wondered what would happen during the week-long banquet. No one could have predicted that the lovely Vashti, would no longer be Queen.
Call the doctor! I shut my finger in the car door! It's a finger injury! It's black and bloody! Help! Help! I'm in pain! Call the doctor NOW!
About me
I am a self-taught documentary photographer, digital artist, and teaching artist. My work has been on exhibit in galleries near – in shows at the Richmond Museum of Art, Evan Lurie Gallery, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Eijteljorg Museum, and University of Indianapolis. And far – in shows in Cape Town, South Africa; Fortezza da Basso, Italy; and Havana, Cuba.

Since 1998, I have been involved in an intercultural program called, My City, My World, developed to encourage urban youth to use photography to look beyond the boundaries of their neighborhoods to establish a sense of “belonging” to a larger community. In 2008 My City, My World launched a three year initiative that partnered students in Indianapolis with their peers in Cape Town, South Africa in a collaborative, synergistic program utilizing digital and new media technology.

The image seen here comes from my project, Faces from the Rainbow (the photographic study of life in post-Apartheid South Africa). While working on it, I also co-illustrated a new computer graphics textbook for the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts in Havana, Cuba; published by Designio Publishing, Mexico.
knock u down
NO WAY OF KNOWING
Carly Ringlespaugh

Emma, my grandma, Emma. When I was younger, I didn’t know how to say grandma so I called her Emma. The name stuck, like glue does to a kindergartner’s finger. She lived in Georgia. We would all go to the beach together. My grandparents lived within walking distance. Then, when things got bad, they moved. They moved to a village that was about an hour away from the beach.

“Hey, mom, home from school!” I yelled to the kitchen where I saw my mom sitting at the kitchen table with a phone by her arm and tears in her eyes.

“Oh, hello,” she said with a sad, breathless voice. I was worried. Did someone die? Who was hurt? Mixed thoughts whirled around in my mind.

“Is everything ok?” I asked.


“Emma?” I finally spit out the word from the tongue that was twisted in the back of my throat.

“She has emphysema,” my mom replied, “a disease where she won’t live much longer. Her lungs will give out one day.”

A couple months passed, and time began to heal the hurt in our hearts. We went to visit and thought we would never see her again. She wasn’t herself. She was coughing and she acted like she didn’t even know who I was. She called me things, bad things. That’s when I knew things were bad. Worse than bad.

I called her on the phone and talked to her. She said how sorry she was and started to cry. I knew it wasn’t good for her so I cried, too. She loved me so much, and I could never lose the kind of connection there was between us.

“Have you talked to Emma recently?” I asked my mom, hoping that she had.

“She’s going into hospice.” My heart sank when my mom told me this. A bottomless pit of emptiness grew my chest.

“How long do you think she has?” I asked.

“No way of knowing,” my mom sadly replied

We went down to visit as soon as possible. My uncle had been down the weekend before and told us she had fallen out of bed. I had called their house to have my grandpa pick us up. He was already at the airport, so my grandma answered with cries of help. She couldn’t breathe. I thought she was doomed. My mom was comforting. She said I probably saved her life. I felt better after that. My mom went into the room, and I followed. I thought I would find a lifeless body lying on the bed.

“Hi, honey!” She was ok. She lay there with her arms wide open to give me a hug. “Hi,” Emma! I knew everything was going to be all right.

Two days later we left on the plane. When we came back, I knew I would never see her loving, caring, and hopeful face again. A few weeks passed, and I was at a softball game. I asked my dad if he had heard anything about my grandma, and he said he hadn’t. I knew better. The look of sorrow on his face was different than what he said. When I came home, I asked my mom how Emma was...

“She’s gone.”

COLORADO
Jacob Messaglia

Denver Colorado is good skiing and good sledding. You have to wear heavy gear like a snow suit.

I got to go tubing. It was terrific and fun. The ride up is s,l,o,w.

WHAT IS ART?
Pranathi Srirangam

Art is a formal way of expressing yourself. Your way of putting stuff that is on your mind or in your heart on anything. Art is rhythm and life. Art is a pretty thing to draw. Art is very helpful to express yourself. Art is an adventure of colors. Art is fascinating to many people.

TOOTH LOSER
Lela Boys-Sibley

wiggle, wiggle, wiggle
won’t come out
wiggle, wiggle, wiggle
ask myself...
PULL IT OUT?
Yes! Will It be worth it?
Yes!
wiggle, wiggle, wiggle
POP!
It’s out
Tell everyone Being crowded by people and friends come home excited out tooth under my pillow... in the morning there is... MONEY!
Yes! Totally worth it!
A guy kicked a ball so high!
And [the] sun fired [it]
singe, singe, singe!

(Speech bubble, read bottom to top):
Hey, the soccer ball gave me a black eye.

SUNDBAY
Jack Truitt

Suddenly, I woke up, the birds were chirping their beautiful songs, I peered out the window at a nice spring day, “why can’t it just be Sunday?” I checked my alarm clock, 8:45, I was going to be late for school! I got worried, but stopped, it was silent …except for one little noise, it sounded like a giggle trying to be held back or… a baby waking up, a Gracie to be exact. I jumped from my top bunk and quickly but quietly went to my parents’ bedroom. I picked Gracie up and indeed the cry turned to a giggle. Soon she started screaming, “Jak! Ack!” trying to say my name, Jack.

I half-ran, half-stumbled to the living room, “Hey,” I said in a hushed voice, “It’s Sunday.”

Soon she ran to my room, probably to wake Gavin up, and indeed, she was hollering up over and over again. “Go away,” he groaned.

Grace didn’t know what it meant, but she hollered, “It under!” Gavin knew she meant Sunday. His eyes widened, he looked at me. I nodded. He ran to play Legos.

Once my parents were both up, it was already 12:00, time for my soccer game! We played, the icy wind tried to bother me, so I ignored it. We won! L.A. Galaxy – 2 other team (I didn’t know their name) – 1!

We went to my grandmother’s house for dinner, not much to do. Soon we went home, I climbed into bed. Mom and Dad said good night and I slowly drifted to a sweet sleep.

DAD
Megan Commons

I don’t have a dad and it sucks.
Every time my mom picks me up after school, people ask me why doesn’t your dad pick you up from school?
It sometimes makes me cry.
My dad ran away when me and my brother were babies.
I wish I could see my dad again.

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STRESS AND DEPRESSION
Cole Rains

both serious matters
parents separating
changing schools
name-calling
even school work
can cause stress or depression
parents dying
your best friend moving
you moving
offer a hand
and say, “Are you ok?”
or “Is something bothering you?”
tell someone
anyone that will care
stress is like a sickness
it makes you feel bad
even horrible
at one point in your life
it gets better
Just hold on
What a difference a year can make

BOOK OF SOCCER
Alexander Minch

A guy kicked the ball so high!
And [the] sun fired [it]
singe, singe, singe!

(Speech bubble, read bottom to top):
Hey, the soccer ball gave me a black eye.

A guy kicked the ball into the goal.
The score is 2 to 1.

A guy kicked the ball, but I kicked it in the goal before he blocked it.

(Speech bubbles):
Are you okay?
Yeah


THE “SEARS” TOWER

Anthony Chrzan

When my family went to Chicago, we started by roaming around downtown. My brothers and I were looking for the Sears Tower. When we got to the tallest building that we could find, it said “Willis Tower” on the sign. My mom went inside and asked, “Where is the Sears Tower?”

The person said, “The Sears Tower doesn’t exist anymore. Someone bought it and renamed it ‘The Willis Tower,’ and you’re in it!”

“Say what? And how much does it cost to get to the top of the building?”

“Fifty dollars per family. Go around the other side of the building to get in.”

“OK gang – to the other side we go.”

When we got to the metal detector, Philip, my mom’s friend, did not take off his belt, which had metal on it. (Good going, Philip.) When we finally got to the elevator, we were so excited to be going to the top of one of the world’s tallest buildings. 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, finally we made it! We got off the elevator and took five steps more onto a platform with a floor made out of glass.

I wasn’t thinking, “Wow!”
I wasn’t thinking, “What a great view!”
I wasn’t thinking, “It’s too big.”

I was thinking, “I need to get off this thing! I’m afraid of heights!”

After twelve scary minutes, I had enough. Does this story have an emergency exit? After one miserable hour, I said, “Please call for help!” Finally, we had all had enough. Zip, Bing, Bang, before I knew it, we were downstairs. It might be one of the coolest, tallest, buildings in the world, but I never want to go near that building again.
I woke up that morning. “I… I… I’m so excited!” I ran up the stairs as fast as my feet could carry me. I woke my mom up and gave my dad a kiss.

I wanted Mom to get up so she could get my dresses in my room. Oh yes, I forgot to tell you why I’m so excited. Why? Because today, yeah, that’s right, T-O-D-A-Y is my… my… my DANCE RECITAL!

My mom stumbled up the stairs with my clothes and dresses. She motioned me to come to the bathroom. It seemed like she was getting ready for going on a date! I really don’t like to say this word… the dreaded “m” word… I don’t really mean to say it… makeup.

My worst enemy. How could anyone ever like that stuff? Huh?! Who here in this room likes it? But, that’s just my opinion. I don’t like it very much I should say, but as I was saying, I, Audrey Grace Osburn, hate makeup.

Mom patted makeup all over my face. I felt like saying, “Stop it!” But that would just be rude. She combed my hair like I was a doll, and well, then I thought about tonight. All of the pain in my head went away. I thought about the cake, the necklaces (Hawaiian ones) and all of my friends.

All of my thoughts went away when my mom yelled, “It’s time to go!” I looked at myself in the mirror when my mom walked out the door, and I whispered, “I look ridiculous.”

I rushed out the door, and my dad said, “You look beautiful, little girl.” I gave him a hug and said goodbye. I tried to give my brother a hug, but he doesn’t let me.

My mom said we needed to buy some mascara at Walgreens before we arrived at the theater. I got my favorite orange Crocs on, and we left. We stopped by Walgreens and got some mascara. Then, off we went!

When we arrived at the theater, I saw my friend Aubrey there. My teachers get our names mixed up. I was so excited, and my mom was so proud of me. I could tell.

We entered the theater, and a sign said, “Dancers from Curtain Call go this way.” So we followed the sign, opened the doors and all I saw were people. Rows… and rows… more rows… of people.

We sat down, and they called up people with perfect attendance. Two of them were my friends, Gracie and Cadence. In a little while, we headed to the dressing room for the girls 5-10. I thought that it would be different rooms, but it was all one big room. My mom pulled my pink (ughh) dress on, and I got on my tap shoes. My mom patted more makeup on, and I asked her to go out.

We had a couple of minutes to stay and play in the dressing room, but then it was time for the big show.

I followed my dance teacher while my mom rushed out the door to the auditorium. We watched a little bit of the other dance going on. Then that dance was over. It was time for my first ever dance recital dance, so I walked up on the stage and got ready. The music came on, the lights did too. I walked, did all of my steps and I think I did great!

I walked off the stage and back to the dressing room. There I got my leotard on and put on my pants. Halftime! Time for lunch. We had to go to McDonald’s (ughh), but I got a salad to stay in good health. We talked for a while until it was time to go. We got back into the car, and we left.

We arrived at the theater, got my other costume on and my jazz shoes on. Same as always, I stayed and sat with my friend Cadence. Then it was time to go do my second dance recital dance ever.
RUNNING AWAY
Jenna Beagle

I'm running away
Well for how long will you be gone, just in case anyone asks?
Forever
Then you will need a bigger suitcase

I am running away
Do you plan to brush your teeth?
Well I guess so
That's my girl, I already packed them

I am running away
I packed your father's warmest sweater, just in case you get cold
But it's huge
I know, but you will be gone forever

I am running away
That's everything
Where will I go?
You're the one that's running away, you decide.

I am running away
Goodbye, I'll never see you again
(Sound of door closing)
Mother, why did you let her go
Don't worry, I would never let her go, I packed a walkie-talkie in her suitcase.

WHEN MY PARENTS GOT MARRIED
Shane Sclaf

Rehearsal
We had a rehearsal at church.
Instead of vows he said something, something, something words, words, words.
Vows
He said, "Anthony, do you take Brandie to be your wife?"
"I do!"
Then "Brandie, do you take Anthony to be your husband?"
"I do!"
Kiss
He said, "You may kiss the bride."
Fun
We ate cake and dinner. It was good. It was vanilla.
It was at church.

Burp!!!
Yum!
I ran to hug my parents...
I love you!
I ate lots of... chicken!
I was going to my grandpa's house.
It was snowing!
I threw a snowball.
"Look out, honey."
Bye
I said to everyone. I hugged everyone.
I brought some cake for dessert.
THAT CLOCK IS DRIVING ME CRAZY!
Kandys Medina

Tick Tock Tick Tock
Uh THAT Clock!
It’s driving me CRAZY.
It’s 12 o’clock in the Night.
Just be QUIET!
Uh... I’m going to DESTROY YOU!

I AM ONLY A KID
Emily Rose

I have Achondroplasia. That means my bones do not grow like everybody else’s. It does not mean that I can’t be a normal kid and have fun with my friends. It just means that I might need a stool every once in a while. It is sometimes hard for me to understand why all of this had to happen to me. It is very hard for other people to understand why I am so little for my age. So, I normally end up getting made fun of or asked, “How old are you?” “Are you sure you’re 11, you look like you’re 5!”

My parents always tell me never to listen to those people because they don’t know me. My mom knows how hard it is for me and understands my pain. She always tells me that I am a great person and I should always remember that! Normally, that makes me feel better; other times it does not. I ask myself, “Why me, why me, WHY ME?” I feel it is not fair, and I don’t like going through so much stress each day. I am only a kid!

CYBER BULLYING
Maya Voelkel

You need to learn this now,
Before it’s too late.

U r a retard!
Anybody can be on the Internet
Anybody,
Anybody,
Anybody in our world.

U r fat
Just hitting that send button
Anonymous people,
They can do anything on the World Wide Web.

I hate u
Disgusting things,
Stupid things…

U r ugly
Let’s face it,
People make bad choices,
They can taunt you,
They can tease you.

Im gonna tell peeps u like him
They think it’s no big deal,
They think it won’t mean anything,
But they are wrong.

U R SO GAY!
The Internet is a black hole of lies and cruelness,
sadness or emptiness.

U suck
It stays within you,
Until you can’t take it

Everybody hates u!
To me

My dad, mom, brother, and me all went to sign me up for baseball (Little League). I like Little League because it is a kind of baseball and I love baseball.

A couple of months later... BASEBALL STARTED! We have practices and games. I like games the most. At practices, we practice hitting, fielding, pitching, and sometimes all of them. Also we have games. We have lost them all. The scores were 14-5, 19-5, 7-6, I forget this one, 23-7, 14-11.

I think my coach was right about hitting because in the last inning I was up at bat and there were 2 outs, 2 strikes on me. But just then crack! I smacked the ball with a guy on third. I got on base and the runner scored. I had a single RBI. It was the best game ever.

My coach said he thought I did well. I also thought that I did well because I had a single RBI. My dad helps us coach and do the alligator. The alligator is when you have your glove on the ground and your hand in the air. Our other coach tells us that we need to make good throws and catches. He tells us to have fun!!

But one day, Saturday May 6, 2011, we won our first game. We skunked the Reds 14-3. It was the funnest day of the Little League. We were so happy.

About the Author Jay is 7 years old. Jay likes pizza. Jay is a pitcher in Little League. Jay loves baseball. His favorite team is the Yankees.

Things About Little League There are only 6 innings. There is a 6-run rule. The coach pitches 4 innings. Kids pitch 2 innings. 6-run rule means you can only score 6 runs in one inning.

Epilogue RBI means runs batted in. I have won only 1 game. I have four coaches.
PARANOIA
Ila Davis-Eastwick

Some people may think that I am something you like to call “paranoid.”
I am not paranoid, I am just very, very cautious. Yes, I do admit, I have tons and tons of fears, but…Who said that?
What was that?! What do you want from me?! Lots of people
Lock their fears away, up in a metal safe. Yes, I do that sometimes, but the safe won’t last much longer!
I spin around, look up. Look down
Cover my head with my arms, just in case…
No sleep tonight, just images in my head.
Black clouds form in the sky that only I can see.
My view of the world is far different than yours,
You call it Paranoia, I call it smarts!

NATURE IS SO BEAUTIFUL
Adam Jasiak

purple petunias sprouting
wet mud bubbling
birds chirping sweet songs
nature is so beautiful
ponds glittering with light
sun as bright as heaven
days longer then ever
nature is so beautiful
leaves turning brown
cool breeze chilling
sky growing gray
nature is so beautiful
snowflakes lightly falling
air freezing cold
white hares bouncing
nature is so beautiful

LUV
Diamond Johnson

Luv comes around n
Then it knock u down
Just get back up in
Then knock u down
I never been in luv
Cause if I did I made
A mistake n that’s a
Pain I have to take
It wouldn’t be right because
I can’t see myself walking
Into the light, luv, luv, luv
That’s what they think they
In but they don’t know what
They got they self in
Luv causes
Fight, argument, killing, heart
Breaking n taking somebody BFF
From them so that’s why I never
Been in luv.

MEXICO VS. ARGENTINA
David Vallejo

People saw television.
Mexico played soccer with Argentina. The
game started for a while. But
then Mexico made a
goal! So! Argentina tried
their best for the first half but time ran
out. The players took a break for a while.

Then it was the second half. Argentina made a
goal. For a while Mexico
didn’t make a goal. At
the last minute Mexico
made a goal. Mexico
won the world trophy!
Argentina lost. Mexico
won the game!
On May 9th, Monday, we went to the zoo! We went to the Great Plains! We went to the Great Plains entrance. We saw a zebra and an ostrich living together. The zebra was eating grass. The ostrich was picking at insects. We looked at them for a long time.

Then we stopped looking at them. We walked away and looked at the baboons. One was resting on top of a [ginormous] rock. Then we looked at the cheetahs! One was standing on a branch. We looked at the rhinos. One was eating dry grass. Then we looked at the lions. There was a male resting in the grass.

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Rachel Foley

Sydney Foley
de (coming) to my house. Then we played with my toys. Then we played with my dog. Then Sydney (had) to leave.

Sydney is (coming) to my house. Then we played with my toys. Then we played with my dog. Then Sydney (had) to leave.

Cordelia Hepley

The Little Girl

Abigail Miller

One day Sasha was outside playing on the swing sets. While she was swinging, her next-door neighbor came out to play. He jumped on a swing and swung with her. But a couple of hours later, the neighbor’s dad called for him. Sasha and the neighbor said goodbye and went inside.

It was 6:00 p.m. Sasha had to do her homework. Her mom helped her. “Mrs. Seufert gives me some hard stuff!” Sasha said. “She sure does,” Sasha’s mom said with a smile on her face.

By then it was 8:00 p.m., and Sasha had thirty more minutes until she had to go to bed. She sat on her bed and thought. What to do… What to do… Then she got an idea! Sasha decided to look at pictures from when she was a baby. She asked her mom to get down the pictures. Then she looked at them. Her 30 minutes were up.

She got her toothbrush and brushed her teeth. Then her mom tucked her into bed and prayed for her and said, “Good night, sweetie. Love you.”

“Love you too,” Sasha said as her mom left the room smiling.

Five hours later, it was 1:15 a.m. Sasha couldn’t sleep because of her kitty licking her on the arm and doing his dough on her. So she got up, picked up the kitty and put him gently in his bed. Then she went back to bed.

Then she got up. It was 8:30 a.m. She went downstairs and got a pencil and a piece of paper. Then she wrote a story called The Little Girl.
In April I got a new dog. We went to the farm for the first time to meet her. She was a little scared but soon she was running and jumping in the sun. She loved it!

She could be good if we just trained her. She's a big dog but she's very kind. Sometimes she jumps on the sofa and sleeps next to me. She's a great companion.

I think people think that dogs are a burden, but I think they're great friends. They make you happy and they're always there for you. I love my dog, Nippet!
RAINDROPS
Kyle Steiner

When it was my birthday it was at a Roller Cave and I rolled and rolled and rolled...
and I ate pizza and cake...
and we rolled and rolled and rolled and I went to the bouncy house and it was fun...
I played games and I was happy and I saw my daddy and I was happy...
and I opened my presents and I was so excited...
I got all that I want...
and I rolled and rolled and rolled...
and I went home and I took a bath.

WHEN IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY
Jamiyah Ball
There I was
As nervous as I could be
Concentrating on only one thing
The race was here
How could I win
They’re three other people
They’re better than me
Ready, set, GO
The race had begun
Way behind was me
In last place
I ran as fast as I could
There was no chance
Of me winning
People were cheering me on “go, Go, GO”
I was almost dead from all the running
I was way slower than before
I just couldn’t stand it
I tried not to give up
It was too late
I was about to faint
I wanted to forfeit so much
But then…
As fast as I could be
I ran past each and every person
I was in first place
We were almost to the finish line
My heart was pumping so fast
And before I knew it
We were at the finish line
There I was
As happy as I could be
I have won the race
Hooray me!

THE RACE
Sylvie Rasche

There I was
As nervous as I could be
Concentrating on only one thing
The race was here
How could I win
They’re three other people
They’re better than me
Ready, set, GO
The race had begun
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TWINS: A POEM FOR TWO VOICES
Alyssa Shackleford

Me
My Sister
Alyssa
Aubrey
Aubrey, you’re nice!
Alyssa, you’re ugly!
Take that back!
Make me!
Take that back
Or…or…or…or
I’ll tell mom.
Ok. I took it back.
Thank you.
PSYCH!
MOOOOMMM!

DRUMS
Hannah Black

Drums, drums
You are so fun.
beat
bang
tap. All day
long.

MY TRIP TO A HOTEL
Damien Sparks

It was a long time, but I stayed up. When we were there, my step-brother didn’t have a swimming suit. So my
stepdad brought him some swimming suits. Then we went to the inside swimming pool. I went in s-l-o-w-l-y
in the hot tub. I got out and went in the warm pool! It was cold! But I stayed in. Why? Because I was going to
get warm! I was swimming. And I got warm. Then I did a cannonball! I was loud when I said, “Cannonball!”
Splash! went my big fat belly. Then we went back to our room. I swam back to the stairs. It was fun! When we
got there we took a bath. We kept our swimming suits on. It was fun! I tasted the water. It was disgusting. I
got out. I unfolded the couch bed. I went to sleep. One day later I was awake. We had a race. It was fun!
I felt useless like I did before I met Mr. Wassen. He was always so happy to know I was there, and going to give him a hug. He thinks I helped him, but he is wrong. He helped me. He taught me, he showed me what I needed to know and more.

I wish this wasn’t what it took for me to remember to pray. Dear God, please save me from my own, awful thoughts. Please help me to write to him every day, even though he will not write back. Lord let his silent voice be heard. Please help me to understand that this is not the death of Mr. Wassen, but the birth of a new Mr. Wassen, in a place where things are better.

If I learned anything from Mr. Wassen, it was that you never give up, which I know is cheesy, but it’s true. I am a swimmer, so that is important. I remember watching him at a swimming meet, reading. Which was odd because he HATED to read. He was reading Walking Papers, a class book we were reading. I thought my goggles were fogged up, but nope, sure enough, there was his wife, holding the book for him. I will never forget that.

Mr. Wassen’s one and most important goal was not what you would think. Some want a million dollars, he just wanted to be able to hug his daughters, to walk again wouldn’t have been awful, either. But, John Wassen was paralyzed, C4 Quadriplegic. He couldn’t even itch his own nose, eat his own meal, drink his own drink, live his own life.

He came in to help our classroom with everyday things. Math lessons, you know, the whole drill. He thought when we fed him, gave him something to do, when I gave him hugs, massaged his hands, popped his fingers, hoping one day he would feel it. He thought we were helping him, but he was helping us. A lot. He wasn’t just a service project, or even the inspiration for one, he was the life of our day, a best friend. I am a better person now, as is everyone in Brownsburg, because of Mr. Wassen.

All because of Mr. Wassen.
About me
I am an artist, entrepreneur, impresario, and activist. I began my artistic career as a commercial illustrator, but quickly tired of the fact that this requires one to continually say what someone else has to say, and so I moved on to find my own voice and think about what I had to say. I began with Hoosier School landscapes, then moved on to the Abstract-Expressionist, Pop, Minimalist and Found Object movements. My work has come full circle back to Indiana landscape, and currently I like to explore the links between calligraphy and patterns of landscape and human communication.

In addition to being a photographer and practitioner of the fine arts of painting and drawing, I design and produce home lighting, a line of wood boxes, and furniture. All of these are influenced by and reflective of my interest in landscape and a greener earth. I am a member of numerous galleries and arts organizations, and in 2007 I opened my own studio/gallery called wUG LAKU’S STUDIO & gARAGE where I exhibit my own work and the work of other local and regional artists. In 2007, I also joined ArtsWORK Indiana, an organization that assists artists with disabilities in career development and employment. I am always seeking and doing.

About my art
My modus operandi has always been to learn the fundamentals and then ignore them. I was thrilled to learn I would be contributing to a section in this book project where the writers had pushed the boundaries of convention. With my background in painting and drawing, I can certainly appreciate the beauty of a standard landscape photograph that represents the world we see daily. However, I want to convey something beyond that experience with my work, something deeper, unseen but sensed.

Several years ago, in an attempt to see the unseen (and thanks to technology), I began to invert photographs and match them up side-by-side or top-to-bottom, just to see what would happen. I was surprised at the resulting imagery – patterns I never expected to see appeared. At first this seemed to be a random occurrence, but as I worked with the technique, I noticed that these same patterns kept showing up, whether it was a close-up of the ground, a shot of bare tree branches, foliage or clouds. I wondered if others had noticed this, too, and if so, how they made sense of it. This is how I discovered fractals, a field of geometry that attempts to explain how the world is structured. Absorption represents well what I have come to understand about this process. It is my sincerest hope that the young writers in Blazing the Real will continue to push their own boundaries and develop their own voices and perspectives to share with us.

ABSORPTION

Wug Laku

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