

KNIGHT WRITERS



2022

MGA PRODUCTION

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FOREWORD

DR. LORRAINE DUBUISSON

In 2022, Knight Writers was once again held on the Cochran campus following 2021's virtual event due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. MGA students Nicholas Kirkpatrick and Desmond Schletty led more than thirty Bleckley County High School Honors English students in discussing and writing about a variety of poems. Ann Williams—Assistant Director of Library Services for the Cochran, Dublin and Eastman campuses—presented on library services the BCHS students could expect to encounter at the institutions of higher learning they will attend after graduation. MGA students Jessica Lawhorn, Karen Collins, Iliya Williams, and Carly Cordry were involved in the creation of this digital anthology of BCHS student writing under the direction of Dr. Mary Christian. Knight Writers provides exciting experiential learning opportunities for MGA English and Professional Writing students and is the highlight of my academic year. I am so pleased to lead such a valuable and rewarding project, and I hope you enjoy reading this collection of pieces from talented, college-bound high school writers.

POETRY

A SEED WITHOUT WATER WILL DIE

HOLLY WRIGHT

A seed without water will die.
It can get plenty of sun,
or the perfect temperature year-round.
You can think about doing it,
or say, "I'll do it tomorrow."
But if you forget to water it,
Whether on purpose or not,
A seed without water will die.

TACO

MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ

Taco meat, taco shells
The sauce dripping from my mouth
Warm, soft feeling of taco in my hand
I do sure hope it doesn't taste bland
Eat that taco, I hand it to you
Respect, so you taste it too
Taco in your mouth, drippy too
Eating taco, and so do you

WATER

SAMARIA HALL

Water

Makes up the 71% of the globe

And 60% of our body

Water

Holds secrets it'll never tell

Water

Such a beauty

Water

Is deadly

Water

Makes hurricanes that can take out a whole state

Water

Makes tsunamis the size of a skyscraper

Water

Responsible for the Johnstown flood

Water

Home of the world's deadliest creatures and diseases

Water

Causes almost 4 million deaths a year

Water

It's the very thing that gives us life

But can take it all away



SOPHIE LUCAS

I don't love you as one loves the beauty of another,
being able to stare at their features in admiration for a lifetime:
I love you as one loves a breath of the morning air,
with freshly fallen dew upon the grass.

I love you as one loves a song,
melody making its own tune without need.
Tempo paving a way as to replay each note
even as the rhythm is absent still.

I love you as one loves the comfort of their own bed,
blankets as plentiful as dreams of sleep.
For one is not able to nod away
as the moments of a new day begin to arise.

I love you as one loves the night sky,
whose stars may construct only the most divine works of art.
Dancing upon a black canvas
leaving behind only a piece of what they once were.

I love you as one loves the first rays of the spring sun,
radiating a glow over the world in magnificent ways.
Beautiful shades of pink and yellow arise as flowers,
blossoming into a new life, shine for all to see.

I love you as one loves car rides in the dead of night,
darkness enveloping all thoughts.
The glow of the moon seeming as to wash away life
as a blank slate of mind begins to take effect.

I don't love you as one loves another,
expressing hidden emotions and unspoken works through shorthanded glances:
I love you as one loves themselves,
not knowing why or any other way as to love, still loving, nonetheless.



ASCEND

IAN ARNOLD

What would it mean to defer on a dream?

Would it depart from you slowly

Like a ball down the gutters in bowling?

Would it leave you cold and poor

Wishing for more, begging for more;

More chances to shed your skin

And try it again?

...

What could it have been if you had bet on a dream?

Would it suddenly split, astray

Like the middle of an archway?

Would it have simply become a chore—

Wishing for less, only for more;

Wanting to be dearly departed

To back where you started?

Maybe it just drifts away, like a lost soul in the wind

Wishing no more, craving the end.

Or does it ascend?

ENDURING SLEEP

REAGAN SCOTT

Trapped in the deep
Filled with such daunting frights
Chained to the bottom
At the start of this starless night

All I want to do is depart
As there is only an eternal void
Within this spiritless heart

The continuous cycles never cease
I just want to be let free
And hope for a quiet peace
All in this endless captivity

FORBIDDEN DREAM

ABIGAIL RANGEL

A dream I know I cannot chase.
One I mustn't long for.
But my heart undeniably knows,
That it's the one I couldn't want more.

I can't tell what scares me most,
Taking the chance or giving up.
It's like a ticking time bomb
Should I cut the cord or let it blow up?

Will I ever know?
What choice will I make?
For now, I suppose
I'll just have to leave it up to fate.

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

ABIGAIL RANGEL

The spring water is cold as ice,
But warms me either way.
I go ahead and dip a toe in,
When I should reel away.

It comforts me, so clear and blue,
In a way I can't quite describe.
It's almost as if, for just a split second,
My problems say "Goodbye."

I lay there, on my back
Staring at the sun,
And marvel that summer
has only just begun.

The sands of time beneath my feet.
The ticking sun above my head.
But the fountain of youth around me,
Ensures no tears of mine will be shed.

HOW I LOVE YOU

LILLIAN BARLOW

I don't love you as if you were a
Diamond or a handful of gold, which can make
Yet break so many people:
I love you as one would love the sunshine,
Bright, never hidden, and beautiful.

I love you without knowing how, why,
Or when, or from where.

I don't love you as one would love expensive dinners
And nice cars:
I love you as someone would love the smell of new
Books, that pure and subtle kind of love that one can
Look forward to.

My love for you is one that gives you a shoulder to cry on
And a hand to hold.
I love you selflessly and completely.
I love you like this because I don't know how else
To express how much you mean to me, except in this way,
So, my love for you shines just as the day does.

IF ONLY SHE KNEW

JETT FORDHAM

Your eyes are like the brightest stars,
And your hair flows like a river.
Every time I see you,
My body starts to shiver.

You make my day better and better.
You're what keeps me going.
You may not know who you are,
But you keep my life flowing.

Your personality is the greatest,
And your voice is like an angel.
You may not know who you are,
But without you it would be too painful.

You get me out of bed in the morning,
Someone I couldn't live without.
You may not know who you are,
But to you I am devout.

You know how to make me laugh,
And your giggles are the best.
You may not know who you are,
But when I think of you, I feel my heartbeat in my chest.

You are what describes the greatest treasures,
And even they can't compare to you.
You may not know who you are,
But I always wonder, *if only she knew.*



LOVE CHANGES WITH YOU

MIA ANDERSON

Love is different when I'm around you.
Problems disappear when you're in sight,
My worries cease at the moment I face you,
And the cloud in my mind drifts away.
Love changes with you.

I love you like the sun after night.
Every moment we share seems brand new.
I love you as if your dark times were mine.
Through the rough moments, our love will never fail.

Love changes with you.

I love you like the rainbow after a storm.
You're my breath of fresh air through the world's smog.
I love you as if you were made just for me,
Our hearts connect like pieces in a puzzle.

Love changes with you.

The love I share with you is different,
No dispute will diminish our bond.
Through trials and tribulations,
Our love will only grow stronger.

I change when I'm with you.

LOVE THAT CAN'T

NATALY TINOCO

I fight my hardest for what I love,
But your love I cannot win.
We fit together like a glove,
But my love has to stay within.

How I feel about you I cannot recall.
If I say it, I would hurt many,
Because I would rather lose one than all,
And I've already lost plenty.

The one it would hurt the most,
Loves me more than ever.
My love is like a ghost,
But he's with me no matter the weather.

And you don't realize my love for you,
And maybe it's better that way,
My love for him will never be true,
In my mind you constantly replay.

MEANING OF FREE

BRAEGAN CRAVEY

People are best when not caged but are best when free.

Being free, to me, means doing as you please.

No one to tell you how to live.

No one can tell you how much effort to give.

Being free in life is essential

It means filling an empty page with the stroke of a pencil

There are things that we can't live without.

We all feel happiness, sadness, anger, and doubt.

Emotions are part of the way life goes.

As humans, we need to not be scared to let them show.

If people are caged or trapped.

There will be no reason for humans to adapt.

We can't live life in a cage.

We can't be afraid to move on and turn the page

Make goals and start today, not tomorrow.

We cannot sit back and drown in our own sorrow.

Getting to freedom may not be in sight

Even if getting there means starting a fight.

Doing nothing to be free is a waste

When we're all free we'll become a paste.

We stick together as the human race.

We all have to live free and find our happy place.

SEA OF CONFUSION

REESE BRYANT

Cold winter winds that harden the heart,
ice like knives with a piercing strike.
Where was that warmth you felt in the start,
instead, now it's just a spike.

Billowing waves, pressing storms,
jagged rocks, who reach to shred.
In the middle hearts are torn,
warm blue waters now icy and red.

It's a cold world out there they say,
echoes of loss, and what could have been.
In the distance cries of dismay,
harden your heart, don't let them in.

Careful caution you ensure,
no risks will you take.
Words unspoken, hearts unsure,
never anything at stake.

Dreams that seem within your grasp,
the opportunities, tempting as they are.
Voices inside your head rasp,
convincing you to let desires drift afar.

Spinning on an axis,
round and round the emotions go.
Tossed into the sea of choices,
dazed and confused you do not know.

THE FREEDOMLESS CAGE

LOGAN CAMP

I walk a couple steps and Bang!
I walk a couple more steps and Bang!
I begin to panic
My heart is beating, beating
I can feel my heavy breathing, breathing

This place is a trap
That's all that I can tell
This place feels very strange
Where am I? What am I doing here? How did I get here?
These thoughts clouded my mind and again my heart was beating, beating

I rush forward and Bang!
I back up slowly and Bang!
I reach out but feel nothing
I cry out but there's no answer

I don't know what's going on
Am I dreaming, or am I dead?
Is this reality, or is this fantasy?
I don't know what to do
But there's nothing I can do

So, I curl up and listen to my heart still beating, beating
Close my eyes and slow my breathing, breathing.

THE WASP

PARKER BLAIR

I sit in a field full of flowers
Around me buzz joyful bees
Dusting the area with a yellow powder
Not a single concern I sit carefree

In comes the wasp with ill in its heart
I won't notice it among the drones
He offers more speed for this art
Although a deal is known

The wasp whispers in my ear
For my work I need your government
I need those other bees out of here
I, in hesitation, finally take the covenant

The wasp flies away and makes haste
It takes over the field
The bees are being fearful and under chase
The wasp is doing work, but makes no yield

I sit alone in a field, empty
Around laying dying brown flowers
The fruit of my labors, without me
I have nothing left and cower

UNWRITTEN STORY

ELLEN ARNOLD

As soon as he thought it, he could have begun,
But the inspired man never started his tale:
Abandoned ideas left battles unwon,
In which the heroes would never prevail.

Through cold, dark nights, a boy sat by a fire,
Enveloped in blankets and scenes of a book.
One story in form never would him inspire:
The kindling of thoughts the "writer" forsook.

Inside the classroom, the students were learning,
But not of the literature he never shared.
Pupils for poems and novels were yearning,
But for unreal stories, they could not have cared.

How would all be different, if he had just tried
To harness his feelings of life to the pages?
Aspiring writers, to them he denied
A source of ideas for books of new ages.

* * *

Once on a new dawn, a girl set to work
Writing ideas that came to her head.
Imperfect, but trying, she plunged through the murk
Down trails to new stories yet unheard, unread.

Now, don't you recall that magnificent novel—

The one we so fervently spoke of with teachers?
How well she placed humor, despair, then resolve
Into something so simple as uncanny creatures!

Who knows how the man would have thus been affected?
But for the true writer, her story is real,
Off a shelf, in one's hands to the heart, well protected.
And by it, she passes on infectious zeal.



WHITE WALLS

CARTER WILLINGHAM

Here I was stuck
In this room so bare
Where the feeling was here
Yet nothing was there.

The walls seemed so white
Yet vibrant in color
The doors seemed so close
Yet none were there

A claustrophobic feeling was all I could muster
As I would sit back and wonder
Was I stuck here? Was this forever?
Yet the feeling was bare

Here I was stuck
In the room where
The walls seemed so white
Yet vibrant in color
And the doors seemed so close
Yet none were there

Here I was stuck
In this room so bare
Where the feeling was here
Yet nothing was there.

VIGNETTES

A FOOTBALL STORY

BRANDON JONES

I love the sport of football. The coaches screaming in your face, fans yelling at the top of their lungs, the nerves involved, the need to knock the energy out of the man in his stance across from you. It, oddly enough, brings me peace. This story, however, was one involving little peace.

It was a JV game, so the stands weren't packed, it wasn't the spectacle of a Friday night under the lights. As a matter of fact, it was a Thursday afternoon in the sun. We were off to a slow start, we scored nothing in the first half, and were down eight to nothing. In the third quarter, we managed to get eight points on the board thanks to an amazing toe-tap two-point conversion on the side of the endzone.

The rest of the game goes on, we're now tied 8-8, and our offense is just trying to get us back in the endzone. We managed to drive down the field, but our time was running out and we were out of field goal range. Exactly eight seconds on the clock when our coach called a time out.

We're exhausted, it's hot, the only thing you could smell was sweat and grass. It was a rivalry game, we NEEDED to beat these people. Coach called a play and we hit the line. It was a max protection play, seven people blocked, only four people rushed. Our quarterback had time and unloaded the ball.

It's caught. The moment the ref raised his arms up, we cheered, and ran to the guy who caught the game winner. Pure elation, we were ecstatic. It felt like something out of one of those cheesy sports movies. I could imagine the slow-mo. camera as the ball was caught, and humor myself with the idea to this day.

This was my favorite moment from this season, and I hope I have many more like it in the next three seasons I have ahead of me.

BEST FEELING

BRADY BRANNON

The best place on earth is where the smell of freshly cut grass fills up your nose. It is a place where when you slide you will leave the spot with a strawberry on your butt. When I come to this location, I can get better at what I want to do, whether that is catching or hitting white balls. If you have not figured it out it is a baseball field. I like going to the field by myself, because it is me all alone working on something to get better. I feel like in most people's favorite places they are alone. I have been playing baseball since I can remember, and obviously I like it because I keep playing. I am now on the baseball team at my high school. When I am bored, I call up some of my friends, and we go up to the field and take ground balls. When it is the bottom of the seventh with two outs, and the home team is down by one with a runner on third. A hit walks off the game. This feeling is scary but fun. I remember my first home run. I am at the Perry Rec Department. There is a runner on first, it is a 2-1 count. The pitcher was their "flamethrower," and everyone on the team did not want to face him. The first person struck out, and the second person got on first. I am on my way up, and to be honest I am not too confident. On the fourth pitch, he throws me a fastball, and I launch it about 215 feet. It went over a 20-foot wall in center field. I did not even know it went out; I was sprinting to first then my coach told me to slow down. Right before I hit third, the third baseman, Bryce, who I played with one time, gave me a fist bump. I would pay lots of money to see that moment again, because we did not get it on video. Not everything makes a person feel this way, but baseball does. This is why the baseball field is the best place on earth.

COULROPHOBIA

LILLIAN BARLOW

Running was all Eric could do. He knew that if he stopped for even a second, it would catch up to him. Every second, the thud of large, rubber shoes got closer. Occasionally, the squeaking of the red nose sounded through the air, darted into his mind and flooded his thoughts with worry and hopelessness. He started to run faster. As he ran, the sound of the eerie cackling got distant and soon turned into nothing. When Eric realized that all noise except his heavy breathing had stopped, he froze. Silence surrounded him, and he took a chance to turn around. He saw nothing. Not knowing where that *literal* clown could be was worse than being followed, he decided. It had to be somewhere, anywhere, really. It couldn't have just disappeared. Maybe if he could hide while the clown wasn't around, he could manage to find a way out. Turning in a full circle, he looked around the empty amusement park. The Ferris wheel to Eric's left was deserted. The rust that surrounded every nook, bolt, and hole of it would make the wheel a horrible place to hide. The carousel in front of him was an obvious no-go. There was too much visibility and not the kind of place he'd be willing to take his last stand on. A little way off, Eric heard the manic laughing again. Not taking any chances, he rushed into the closest building. He had unknowingly run into The House of Mirrors.

This was the absolute worst idea he had ever had. If there were a better way to describe his "escape plan" he would have used it. Mirrors lined every inch of the room. They zig-zagged and cut across paths or created new ones. He saw his own desperate expression with every turn he made. Turn left, turn right, go back; every move had a possible consequence. The clown — now following silently behind him — watched Eric's every move. It could stalk him for hours, but patience only lasts so long. Deciding that enough was enough, it started to lurch towards him. It reached out, and the cold hands of the feared creature neared Eric's shoulders. Catching a glimpse of blurred colors of reds, greens, and yellows, Eric started to desperately reach out to the reflective walls and tried to find an exit of any kind. A wall in front, a wall to his left, a wall to his right. It was a dead end. Eric looked up and into the mirror in front of him and watched as his impending doom sprinted towards him.

HAPPY PLACE

KADEN PERKINS

A place that strikes me in the same way that the nature around the author of Song of Myself strikes him, would have to be the football field. Without a doubt it is just one of my happy places, a chance to escape. It just presents a well-known feeling of freedom and a spot to just let go.

The best way that I could describe the time on the football field would have to be serenity in chaos. Whether it be the sheer violence of the sport or the complexity and scrambling to understand the intricate play calls, there is always something going on or moving at high speeds while you are on the field. Although this may seem like it would stress you out more than anything, to me it just comes as an opportunity to forget everything else around me and focus on something I love dearly. The contact of the sport also is a great way to learn to handle your anger, and even when you get the chance on the field, how to take it out in a good way. When you are on the field you really do feel like how the author describes his feeling of the nature around him, "My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air."

Another thing that just makes your time on the field so much fun and such a great place to be would have to be the friends you make. "Retiring back, a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten," as the author states, is another way you can relate to being on the field and being with those people, at times it just makes you feel much more content with life. These people really just start to feel like one huge family, I mean you go out to the field after school and be with these people doing the thing you love for 2-3 hours every day for the next 6-7 months. Even though you don't have in-depth conversations to learn about the people, over time you just get to know them, and everyone mostly gets along and seems to always have your back.

A final reason would have to be that the sport just teaches you so many things that are much more difficult to learn outside of the sport. One of those things is respect. Many times, in parents' lives, they have a stressful time where they have to teach their kids respect, which for stubborn kids, it is very difficult to teach. While you are on the field, you will ultimately learn to respect your coaches and your upperclassmen who try to help you, which ultimately carries over into the rest of your life, causing you to respect the adults and peers around you.

To watch all of these things develop and evolve while I am on the field, just brings me a certain amount of happiness that no other thing in my life can. I truly can feel myself being one with the sport, in the exact same way that the author can feel all of the nature around him. Football is truly my happy place, and will always be an escape, place to learn, and a place to better myself.

LAKE ZYNTHIA

MIA ANDERSON

Here it was. The entrance to Lake Zynthia.

The entrance was a little anticlimactic. The doorway was covered with moss and leafy vines. The door itself was built with dark ashy planks, which were cracked from the many years of use. Not the entrance I was expecting, but I've traveled too far to only worry about the door.

I tried my best to hide my nerves and excitement as I pushed the vines away and shoved through the door.

When I looked up, the magenta lake immediately caught my eye. The water shimmered and glistened as the sun beamed on the smooth surface. It was then broken as critters jumped in to escape from me. The grass was a beautiful shade of green, bright like the color chartreuse.

As I marveled over the abnormal land, the lake still allured me. I quickly skipped to the shore, curious to see any water life. I leaned over the surface, expecting to see a mirror of my face. The reflection wasn't me.

Instead, an unfamiliar face glared at me, its unforgiving eyes boring into mine. It reminded me of a gnome. I splashed the water, hoping to erase the image, but the gnome still glowered. Maybe the creature would mirror my movements. I moved my arms around. It didn't budge.

My mind had to be playing tricks on me. I ran off to grab a leaf from a nearby tree. I crouched near the shore and I hovered the leaf over the water. The leaf's reflection also didn't show.

A green goblin-like creature sobbed as it looked at me. It seemed to mouth the words, "It hurts!"

I quickly dropped the leaf into the striking water and tried to get as far away from the shore as possible. Out of the hundreds of tales I've read about Lake Zynthia, nothing about the different reflections was ever brought up. Lake Zynthia was not what the tales said it would be. Maybe Lake Zynthia was a lot more.

PROVIDENCE CANYON

ALEX JONES

I can think of a place similar to this, such as Providence Canyon here in Georgia, also known as the “Little Grand Canyon.” It has massive cliffs, with a kaleidoscope of different colors, with babbling streams, and orange and red clay. It has cave-like structures that make sounds echo, with beautiful trails up and down it. I like to go to the bottom and sit and listen. You can hear birds chirping, water trickling, and the wind blowing. It feels like absolute peace.

When you start to descend down the hill into the deep canyon, the air begins to feel cooler, and the immersion begins. As you hike down the trail, you see wildlife everywhere, and the canyon floor below. You can look down and see tree roots rising out of the red clay on the trail.

Once you reach the canyon floor, you can look up and see the entire canyon in all of its stunning glory. There are amazing views, with many little nooks and crannies to explore in the cave. When you are there, you are just able to let go of reality, and just relax.

PURITY

ANNSLEY JOHNSON

The open field of flowers was scattered in beautiful colors, such as pink, purple, and yellow. As I walked on the dirt path through the flower field, I could notice a few of my favorite flowers, like yellow and purple Violas, lively Pansies, breathtaking Snapdragons, and divine Tulips. Even with all these beautiful flowers and their heavenly smells, the white Gardenias stuck out the most. I walked over to them and began to take in the smell and look of the flowers that decorated the dark green bush. The white petals of the flower were soft to the touch and contrasted well with the green leaves. The white Gardenias' smell was strong and reminded me of coconuts. When I was younger and frequently traveled to my grandparents' house, the front of the house was always adorned with bushes like these because my grandmother loved growing them. Now whenever I see any Gardenia bush, I am reminded of all the happy memories that I had with my grandma before she passed.

RACQUETS

DREW FLOYD

The ball arcs through the air glinting oddly in the late afternoon light. The dual lines on it spin and capture my eyes, seizing my focus. I begin to predict when and where it will bounce and change my grip to a forehand, shifting my hand on the sweat slicked racquet. I feel my hand find the familiar grove, my knuckle landing right on the bevel. My feet move on their own as I approach where the ball will bounce. I hear Coach in my head telling me to take it early. As I get nearer, I hold my right hand up with my racquet in it and I hold up my left hand as a measuring stick of sorts, still mesmerized by the rotating lines on the tennis ball. I cock back my wrist and lower my racquet along with turning my hips to the side. I load all of my body weight onto my back leg in anticipation and when the ball finally enters my strike zone, I explode off my leg and unload all the built-up energy in my arm and hips. I feel my racquet face brush over the ball, like an artist applying a brush stroke. I can hear the wind as my racquet, light as a feather, zips into the ball striking it in the very middle as the familiar twang rings out that comes from hitting the sweet spot. I punch through the ball putting just enough topspin on it to keep it from landing out and my racquet finally comes to rest on my shoulder.

It feels as if every single nerve in my arm is telling me “nice shot” as I get back to ready position. This is my happy place where I can truly be alone from my problems in the world, where the only thing that really matters is whether or not that last shot went in. The tennis court is a place where I can physically express myself like nowhere else and in that it provides a strange sort of beauty to me. The fresh pine scent, the hard and sunbaked court, the cloudless sky, the feeling of cold water after a heated match, the rare but wonderful breeze that promises a brief respite from the heat, and the rubbery bounces ringing out across the court. It all coalesces into an indescribable rhythm of sights of sounds which entrances both the body and mind.

Whenever I have a problem, something gets me down, or I’m just irritated at something, I find the only thing I want to do at that moment is to go and play tennis. I find it both therapeutic and reinvigorating at the same time and my life wouldn’t be the same without it.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF WRITING

NATE KNOX

Writing is difficult. The worst part of writing is starting. The intimidation of a blank page is only there until you start writing. Just jump into your writing until you find how you want to say what you're trying to say. My ELA teacher, Mr. Young, calls it "word vomit." He tells us that sometimes it takes a page of writing to get to the point. Sometimes you'll be writing a fiction story and it takes a few chapters to get where you're trying to go. When you get there, you go back and read what you wrote and decide what is unnecessary. I couldn't even think of anything to write for this collection of writings, so I sat down and wrote, eventually leading me to this point.

THE FIGHT

CARSON POWELL

Hanging out with my friends, we always had a great time, but this time was different. We all went to Caden's house one day, Brady, Clayton, Braegan, Clayton and me.

We started off the day all watching tv in the living room with Caden's parents. It seemed like a normal day, sunny and warm. "How about we go outside?" Clayton asked.

"Yeah, let's just ride the golf carts or something," Caden said.

"Sounds good," said Brady.

We were outside playing for hours playing various games like basketball, football, and just hanging out in the yard with his parents. It was a great day, no school, a day filled with fun outdoor activities.

The sun set so we decided to play hide and seek around the neighborhood, we set boundaries and then we started. Caden was the first one seeking so we all separated. I started by running into Clayton's yard, there was a big tree I could climb to get onto the roof of the house. Once I got there, I got a good spot where I could jump onto the trampoline to get away or see the door of Caden's house to see when he could come back. Caden came out and started searching around his own yard. Guess he couldn't see anyone.

My spine got chills as I heard something hit the roof.

"Hey, can I hide with you?" Jett asked.

"Yeah, that's fine," I said.

Caden started going around everyone's yard and with Brady after he found him. Then they start sprinting out of mine looking back. It seemed like someone was chasing them, so I jumped down along with Clayton and met them in Caden's driveway. Then Braegan and Jett showed up soon after. Then a thing like nothing else I had ever seen stepped out from behind a tree. Big, green, a number of eyes I couldn't count, with the body of an alienized gorilla. It had a screech like nothing I had ever heard.

"Guys what do we do?" Jett asked.

"I don't know, everyone go grab a weapon out of the garage." Caden said.

We all ran and got weapons, Clayton, Brady, Jett and Braegan had bats, Caden had a sharp stick you would use on a fire, and I had a pitchfork.

We circled around it. It was looking at me until Clayton hit it with a bat, then it looked at him and Jett hit it with a bat. Then the cycle just kept happening until someone hit

it and it let out that sickening screech again. Then I noticed something, it had a weak point, right under his neck, there was a spot that was a bright orange and when someone hit it with the bat that hurt it the most.

After it's back was turned, I got the pitchfork and stabbed it in the weak spot. It started to freak out running away down the road so we chased it on the golf cart, we couldn't let it escape. We got beside it and Brady went to take a swing at it with the bat and it grabbed him off the golf cart and threw him on the ground, he stomped on him over and over killing him right in front of us. We stopped and got off the golf cart to see if there was any life left, but there wasn't, he was gone.

A story popped up on the news as I looked up from my journal. It says, "Alien-like creature seen on the loose, running rampant in Westlake, if you see it run and call for help."



THE FORGOTTEN TREE HOUSE

WYN HERRINGTON

The wet touch of a gentle mist covers the wood. The leaves shake the water off as a gust of wind blows by. The sound of old footsteps climbing the ladder up to the tree house. The shared memories of what feels like yesterday. This tree house has much sentimental value to everyone who has been in it over the years. Owners change, and kids grow up. This tree house has been through it all. Thunderstorms to hurricanes. The now shaky tree house has been worn down. Most of the planks rotted or were eaten by bugs. The spider webs now infest the corners of the roof and wasp nests hang from the bottom. The tree house now left alone will one day find adventure again.

THE MAJESTIC SEA

DEACON FARRELL

Feet planted, the fresh smell of the ocean's air flowing through my nose. Watching all of those seagulls fly by and the dolphins swim through brings such a magical feeling to me. The beach's water puts a salty taste in my mouth and a rough sensation up my nose which allows all of the memories once made to pass through my body. All of the different aspects of the scene come together to form this beautiful place. The seaweed and the seashells under my feet as I walk and drift off with a clear mind. The sunset easing me, allowing me to forget all of the different stresses and pressures being put on me back home. Seeing the moon rise and the sun set gives me the chance to close my eyes. All I can hear is the crashing of the waves and the birds swooping into the water. No people, only nature, just how things like this should be. All distractions are blocked out, so the immense beauty of the scenery can be admired. Covered in sand, I walk to the cool water to rinse. Finally, able to feel what the ocean has to offer. Relaxing as night soon comes to fall, I think about how quickly an open mind can make time pass. Driving home I realize how amazing the world can be when unaffected by humans. Slowly I start to think about the many responsibilities I have to go back home too, and it makes me wish life was more peaceful, less advanced as everything once was.

THE SURPRISING LOVE

TAYLOR WATFORD

Such a young flame burning, burning brighter than the sun. Bringing joy and smiles to every room you walk in. To think I didn't want you to be here. I was too young. Too young to realize I would love you as if you were my own. Wanting to be with you any and every second possible. Going from playing with babies and make-up, to kicking the ball around the yard. The pure happiness on your face is indescribable. The smile, the hugs, reading you bedtime stories 'till you're asleep. Hearing you say, "I miss you sissy," or "Snuggle with me sissy." My favorite out of all is when you look me in the eyes and tell me that I'm your best friend. I will always be here to hold your hand as you cross the road or hide you from anything that brings you fear. I will always and forever love you past the stars and far beyond, more than myself or anyone else could've imagined.

TRIP TO MEXICO

AXEL BRIONES

In Mexico, there is this small village on top of a mountain with a famous cave. We crossed the gate, and followed the road, which lasted forever. While driving on the road, we encountered cows, horses, and donkeys. Sometimes they would get in the way, or just watch us as we passed by. We arrived at our destination and all got out and stretched. We were surrounded by trees, and a shallow, rocky river. We could faintly hear the water rushing down the mountain.

We finally entered the entrance of the cave, and it was cold and dark. When I walked further inside, it was magnificent. There were these low dim lights that highlighted the art on the walls, and depicted Mary, mother of Jesus, sculpted over time by nature. We walked further down, and the guide mentioned there are human bones. I asked, "Can we go see the bones?" and he said sure. So, he climbed over the railing and we followed. We hopped down, walked through a narrow passage, crossed a gap, and climbed up a ledge. When we reached our destination, the bones were there, with the skull stacked on top of the other bones. We returned the same way we came and climbed back up over the railing. We went back to the top, recorded a few videos of the scenery, and left with a different view of nature. I left with a thought about how amazing the world is, and how all these captivating places are created by nature all over the world.

WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

ANDREW ITSON

The caged bird is a metaphor for people who aren't free in a free world. Such as African Americans during the civil rights movement. And the free bird is a metaphor for the free people looking in on the less privileged. Such as white people during the civil rights movement.

The poem states that the bird's wings were clipped, and its feet were tied. In This it shows that even if the door to the cage was left open the bird still couldn't escape its captivity. This is kind of like America and African Americans when slavery was abolished which is sort of like the door being opened to the cage, but Jim Crowe laws were like the clipped wings and the tied feet.

But even though this the bird still sings to keep his hopes high. He sings to alert others to his troubles. He sings to have something to do. He sings to have fun. He sings to get away from his troubles and escape in his head.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION



BY: CLAYTON BECK

Ever since I was a kid, I have loved baseball. The pop of a glove, or the sound of a wood bat bring happiness to my heart. I love watching and playing baseball and have hopes to someday play in the MLB. As a kid I fell in love with watching the braves, and I would check the TV every day so I could watch a game. Although in high school playing has gotten tougher, I still love the game, and can't wait to see where it takes me.

It started when I was young. I couldn't even catch a ball, but I loved playing it, and watching it. My grandma would let me come over to her house, so we could watch the game together. She had loved the braves for her whole life, and she was ecstatic to see that her grandson loved them as much as she does. When I was around 7 years old, I watched a game in 2013 that would 100% confirm that I love baseball. The Braves were one game away from clinching the national league east championship for the first time in my life. I watched the whole game. Going into the top of the 8th The Braves were down 4-3 with a runner on second. Andrelton Simmons stepped to the plate and hit a homerun to take the lead. I went crazy and started running around the house. Craig Kimbrel came in to close out the game in the 9th and finished the game. At that point all I could do was smile. I couldn't believe that watching a sport could bring this much joy to somebody. I realized at this moment that I would love baseball for my whole life.

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