

# TAMARAC

# I M E S



FROM THE CLASS OF

2023



**First Edition  
Tamarac Times  
Class of 2023**

**Acknowledgements:**

The front cover was designed by Katelyn Yerdon. This was one of 3 that was submitted and presented for a class vote. Runners-up: Rylee Grugan and Kylie Purello's entries have also been included in this publication. All 3 works of art are outstanding!

**Editorial Consultants:**

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**Authors, Artists, Athletes & Dreamers:**

Participation in this project was on a voluntary basis. The diverse and creative pieces in this collection represent the students' learning and interests in the confines of the traditional brick and mortar school as well as the school of life– in the context of their real-world experiences.

**Teacher, English 10:**

Ms. Lisa R. Michaels

“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass.  
It's learning about how to dance in the rain.”

*Vivian Greene*

March 2020. Life as we knew it was brought to an abrupt halt when an unknown and unforgiving virus swept through the world, nation, and local communities as swift as a tsunami. This storm, one like we have never seen before, without any clear end in sight, caused us to be suspended in a lengthy and continuous cycle of redefining and revisioning how to safely and productively live during these uncertain times. Our patience and hope for a quick return to what is familiar, to be with the people we love, and participate in the events which bring us great joy, has at times been stretched beyond our greatest disappointment. And yet, with all of the chaos and loss the storm showered upon us, we ALL learned how to dance in the rain.

Learning how to dance in the rain, for many of you, meant taking the time to reflect on and evaluate what is important, as well as trying something new and in that experience discovering a hidden talent, sport or vocation to explore. Time spent in reflection moved you to think about how to prepare for your future, post high school. And in the confines of your being quarantined, many of you grew closer to your immediate families, spending quality time together, and creating lasting memories over dinners, taking hikes, and movie nights. Participating in this dance has been liberating- reigniting a sense of well-being and peace amidst the external elements of which we have no control. I feel incredibly blessed to have been your teacher during this unprecedented time. And I’m so proud of what you have all accomplished both in and outside of school.

Dear readers, this literary and arts journal is a true testament to, and evidence of an inner strength and resilience that dwells within each author - a result of learning how to dance in the rain. May the art, photographs, and messages within the reflective & creative writing entries inspire you to join this dance as well.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michaels



Kaleidoscope 1 by Joey Poulin

## Soaring with the Cardinals

*Taylor Smith*

Unexpected treasures are found everywhere throughout our lives. Unexpected treasures are special because they can be a happy memory that will last forever. My unexpected treasures are the notes and signs my grandfather leaves behind for my family to remember him after he had passed.

In January of 2019, I had lost my grandfather to cancer. My grandfather and I were very close, I saw him almost every day because he would bring me or pick me up from school ever since I was in pre- k. My grandfather and my grandmother would always be my babysitter if my mom and dad were working or busy. I had a really close relationship with my grandfather ever since I was born. He would never miss a family vacation, and would always be there at my sports games. He loved to come and support me with anything I had going on. My grandfather is very special to me, he fought in the Vietnam war and he was very smart and good at drawing.

When I was in elementary school, my grandfather worked as a night security guard at Tamarac. He would always go into my classroom and find my desk, and leave a handwritten encouraging note for me to find the next day. He did this every night he worked at the school. I still have some of these handwritten notes today that I have saved. That is one of my favorite hidden treasures I still have of him. I put them in a picture frame in my room so I can see them everyday and have them forever.

My grandfather had fought cancer for about 1 year before he passed. He never gave up and always tried to have a smile on his face for the family. After he passed, it was a very sad time for my entire family, since we are all very close with each other. I was able to speak about him at his funeral, since I was his oldest grandchild. That meant a lot to me, and I knew he would have been proud of me for acknowledging every special thing about him during the tough time. We knew he was in a happier place and wasn't in pain.

My most important treasure that I see almost every day is a Cardinal. Cardinals represent a soul or spirit of someone who has passed. My first encounter with a Cardinal came after a few days he passed. I was sitting in my room and a Cardinal flew up to my bedroom window and sat in the birdfeeder that was there. Ever since he passed there has always been a Cardinal that flies outside my family's houses, which we believe is my grandfather coming to say hi. I have been able to take some pictures of the Cardinal landing outside of my window throughout the past years. It is a happy sign to me and my family knowing he's coming to check on us. I know he is always there supporting me still at my sports games or even this year, when I am home doing school, and he flies by my window. This is a really special treasure because it brings back happy memories to reflect on all the fun times we had with him. The Cardinal is always a reminder to me to try my best and to never give up. These special unexpected treasures are something that will be with me forever and something that I will never forget.



## Discovering Unexpected Treasures Across the Globe

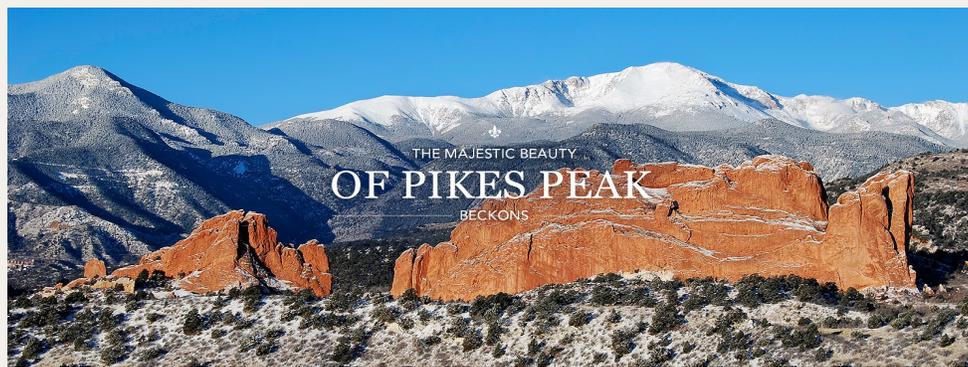
*Alex Ednie*

“Life has a sense of humor -it hides its best treasures in unexpected places.” The world is full of countless, beautiful sights and scenes. From one edge of the world to the other, there are magnificent things waiting to be discovered, you just have to find them. Unexpected treasures aren’t just pretty pictures, these treasures can be heartwarming moments between friends, or happiness in times of despair. The only way to find these treasures is to go exploring, treasures won’t come to you, you have to go out and find them. My explorations have brought me across the world, through many different countries and states; in all of these places I have found unexpected treasures that have changed my life forever.

One of my most memorable destinations is Colorado. My adventure took me all around the beautiful state. The first place we visited was Manitou Springs. I remember my mom saying that we were going to be taking a train ride up Pikes Peak, its distinguishing factors being its height and beauty. I recall being skeptical about this because I had been up many mountains before, and they all seemed the same. This mountain was different, this mountain was the most pretty mountain I had ever been on. The scenery was constantly changing as the train wound its way slowly up the mountain, from luscious green forest, to beds of green grass that I could easily fall asleep on. Roaming all throughout the fields were all sorts of untouched wildlife, the likes of which I had never seen before. As we were nearing the peak I was itching to get out for some fresh air and some food. When everyone was exiting the train there was a rush of people heading towards the lodge. All over the building were signs advertising for the best donuts in the world, I had to have some. I ran into the building along with the rest of the crowd, and got my share of the best, most robust donuts of my life. Pikes Peak is one of the most magical places I have ever been to, it has no analogues. I didn’t think anything about going up the grand mountain, but in fact, Pikes Peak was an unexpected treasure.

Among the many countries that I have visited, Belgium stood out to me the most. When I first arrived at the train station in Brussels, I thought we were in the wrong place. The train station looked rundown, and the surrounding areas looked very raggedy. We walked to our hotel for what seemed like 2 hours, pulling our suitcases over cobblestone sidewalks, that killed the legs and ankles. As we passed by more and more rundown buildings, my hope for the city continued to fall. This all started to change when we got closer to the hotel, the buildings started to get nicer, and there were many more people roaming the streets. The hotel lobby surprised me greatly because it was extremely nice. While we were walking around the city the next day, we noticed a large procession of people. As we got closer, we noticed that it was a parade. There were floats, marching bands, and many vendors. Although I couldn’t understand a single word they were saying, it was still a compelling display of their culture. The parade made its way around the city, and entered one of the most beautiful squares I have ever seen. It was made of all stone, and everything was covered in gold. At first I thought that Brussels was going to be a terrible city, but then I experienced an awesome, unexpected parade and magnificent architecture. Brussels contained an unexpected treasure.

Life may be tough sometimes, but hidden treasures are ubiquitous, and will always be able to be found. Unexpected treasures come in all shapes and sizes, and can be found wherever you go. I found an unexpected treasure in Colorado with Pike's Peak. I also found one in Brussels, when I took part in a parade through the city. These unexpected treasures gave me a new outlook on the world. My explorations have brought me across the world, through many different countries and states; in all of these places I have found unexpected treasures that have changed my life forever.



## Put in the Work and Have Fun

*Joey Poulin*

If you could do something fun, but you had to put in the work, would you? Sometimes you have to experience something difficult or different to make a memory or people happy. Would you let one "bump in the road" ruin or affect your overall experience? A memory, such as a trip, usually comes with decisions on different activities that the family has to agree on, but there can be unexpected treasures with anything you do.

Around 6 years ago, my family and I went to Virginia to have fun and take a break for vacation. We drove our car the whole way and it took about 9 hours, plus the stops for bathroom breaks and gas. This was really frustrating for many reasons. My sister was annoying the whole ride, we were getting cramps the whole time, and I kept asking my mom every 5 seconds when we would be there. The car ride was not super long for me when I was sleeping and this also made my family happy because I wasn't continually asking them questions. Eventually we got to the hotel which made the whole car ride worth it!

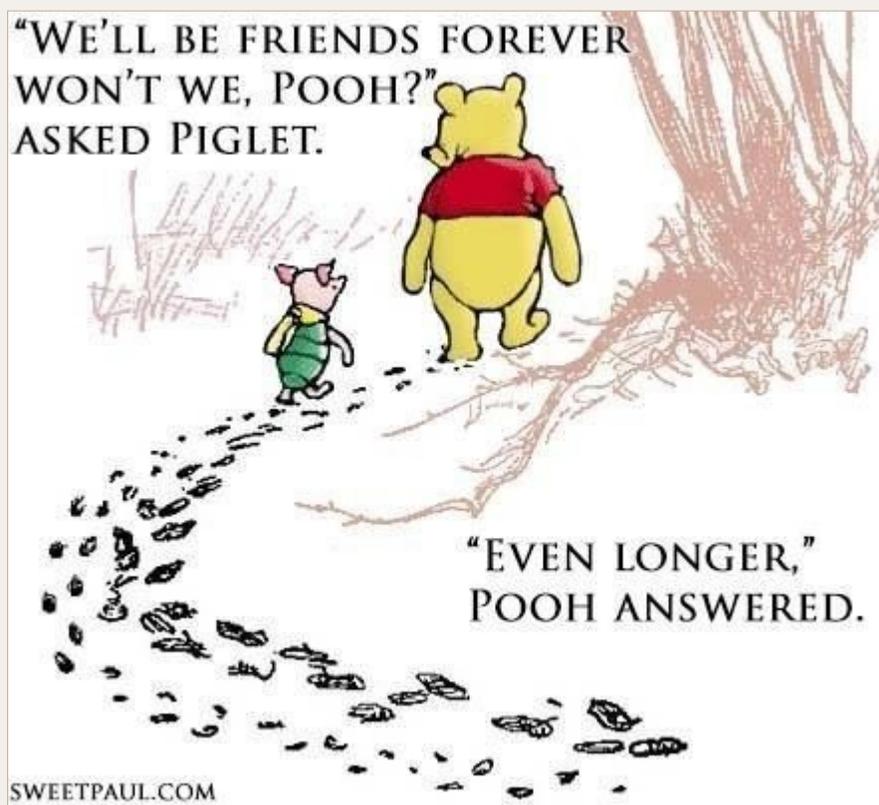
We showed up to our hotel and it looked like the best hotel I have ever been to because there was an arcade and indoor pool with a hot tub. I walked into the room and we had a whole kitchen and 3 beds. The coolest part of the hotel was that you could order room service and there was popcorn that we could make for movie nights. As a younger kid this was cool and made me super excited for the whole vacation!

Early in the morning I was woken up by my dad rushing us to go get the free complimentary breakfast down in the hotel. So after I rushed out of bed, I got dressed and put on my slides to go get some food. I arrived at the main lobby where the food was and I was so happy when I saw the waffle machine. For breakfast I got a waffle of course, some sausages, cereal, and some milk. My sister also enjoyed the waffle machine.

After breakfast, my family went to the beach as it was a beautiful day. I was having a lot of fun with my sister, but I was kind of missing my friends. Then I got a text from my friend Jack that said he was in Virginia too and he was arriving at the hotel in an hour. Getting this text from Jack was an unexpected surprise. I felt so happy that my friend and I were on vacation together because I have never done that before. When Jack arrived at his hotel he told me that we were going to dinner together and that got me excited and happy. For dinner we had pizza that was so good with some wings. As we were eating, me and Jack were laughing and having a great time. After dinner, we went to the beach to play football in the dark. It was cool out but we were walking in the sand. The time we spent was fun and it was very enjoyable.

Do you ever look at a new activity and think it is going to be enjoyable, but it ends up being not what you expected? Out last morning was bright and beautiful and my family chose to rent a four person bike. We thought it was going to be fun. While we were going downhill on the bike and laughing, we didn't think about the return trip up hill. Needless to say, the laughter stopped as we worked hard to get the bike back. My dad was sweating like crazy, due to the hot weather, and he was pedaling the hardest.

In the end, we had a great time. While the whole trip ended up having its ups and downs, we all realized that this is what makes family vacations fun and memorable!



## **“It’s Better to Give Than Receive”**

*Evan Franz*

I remember looking at the Toys R Us Toy Book and circling everything I wanted. I circled a lot of things. In my defense, I was little and had not yet experienced the true spirit of the season. My mom told me that she needed my help. My dad’s employer had agreed to adopt needy families for Christmas. I had no idea that my involvement in this annual event would be eye opening and give me a new enduring perspective.

My dad’s coworkers donated money and the owners of his company matched the donations. My mom would get needy families either from her work or from Mrs. Grimmick at school. My mom would contact the families. She would find out the ages of the kids. The lists from the families had things that they needed. Many needed clothing and gave my mom their sizes. I thought it was weird that someone would ask for a coat and winter boots. Didn’t everyone have those? We asked what kinds of toys the kids wanted. My mom didn’t know a lot about toys for boys. I was the youngest child and had two older sisters. My mom was an expert on toys for girls, but was clueless when it came to action figures or monster trucks. My primary role was to pick out cool toys for all of the boys.

My family was responsible for the implementation of this worthwhile project. We did the shopping and wrapping. Every year we would help deliver the presents with people from my dad’s work. We would also get them groceries or something for Christmas dinner if they needed it. The first stop was the Taylor Apartments. A single mother lived there with her three kids. She asked for a Christmas tree and ornaments because her youngest son asked Santa for one. The young mother started crying because she was so grateful. The oldest son helped me carry in some of the presents. He told me that he just wanted his brothers to have a nice Christmas. His brothers were not home when we dropped everything off. He was going to help his mom decorate the tree as a surprise for his brother. The oldest boy was only eight years old. I told him that I picked out stuff for him and his brothers and that they would definitely have a great Christmas. He shook my hand and vehemently thanked me. I was proud that I was able to help.

I had heard the mantra, “It is better to give than to receive” many times. I finally understood what it meant. My parents got us involved at a young age because they wanted to teach us a valuable life lesson. My dad’s company got new owners and they discontinued Adopt A Family. Their decision was poignant for everyone that had been involved. My family was actively involved with this project for ten years. My involvement with this has taught me several things and changed my perspective. As a kid, I initially thought the holiday season was about getting all the toys I wanted. I didn’t realize how lucky I was and I am not referring to material things either. I have a good family that taught me the importance of helping others. My “unexpected treasure” was learning and experiencing the true spirit of the season.

By learning the true spirit of the season it has made me more aware and grateful for all that I have. This season to give and help others means more to me than anything else.

## Great Grandma's Gift: My Unexpected Treasure

*Leah Patterson*

Art has always been a staple in my life. I use art to express myself and to let out my frustrations. I've been drawing and painting for more than a hobby for about a year now, but I have been drawing for around 4 years. This has become a treasure of mine and I still remember the day it started and how I felt about it.

It was Christmas 4 years ago and we were opening presents when it was finally my turn. My great grandmother handed me a package which was nicely wrapped with festive paper. I shook the gift like any child would. After goofing around I opened the package to see a sketch book, I remember at the time I was slightly disappointed because I knew nothing of art and didn't care for it. My great grandmother is an artist and a very good one at that, she wanted me to "take the talent off her shoulders." I eventually did but she doesn't like my cartoonish style as she does realism. She explained to me what the sketchbook was and the kinds of things I would need to create something wonderful. I remember being bored out of my mind but I acted like I knew what she was talking about but now thinking back I wish I paid more attention.

That is how I got my first sketchbook which started my journey into exploring art. I initially put sketchbook it into storage and forgot about it. However, a few months later, I was very bored with nothing to do; I decided to check out what I had in my room and that is when I stumbled upon my great grandmother's gift. Naturally at first I just took a glimpse at it and continued on until the boredom became too much to bear and opened the sketchbook. I just started drawing, with no clue on what I was doing and none of the proper tools, I can vividly remember staring at the book wondering "what do I draw, why do people even like this?"

I have kept all of my sketchbooks. My first drawing was a horribly drawn cheerleading with bad anatomy (which I am still not great at). I finished that drawing in pen and I was so proud of myself; I used to be proud of every single thing I made. Nowadays, I think I am too hard on myself. Looking back through my old sketchbooks I sometimes cringe because of how bad they are compared to what I'm making now. Though I will never throw them out because it shows my crazy amount of progress and my style changes. My first drawings were all me trying to draw realistically, I dropped that a few years back, creating my own style which is more cartoonish.

After creating my first art piece I decided to start drawing animals which is funny because now I can't even draw a cat or dog, granted I wasn't good back then either. Fast forward about 3 years and my progress is amazing; I personally can say I am proud of what I am making. I started my own Instagram account 4 months ago and about 3 days ago I reached 200 followers! I developed my own community with kind souls who enjoy admiring my art. Around 200 people follow my account to see what I am going to make next which is a huge step from me showing my family what I have created. I have also recently started selling my art. I have sold around 15 paintings and have made over \$130. This is insane to me, the fact that people want my art in their homes.

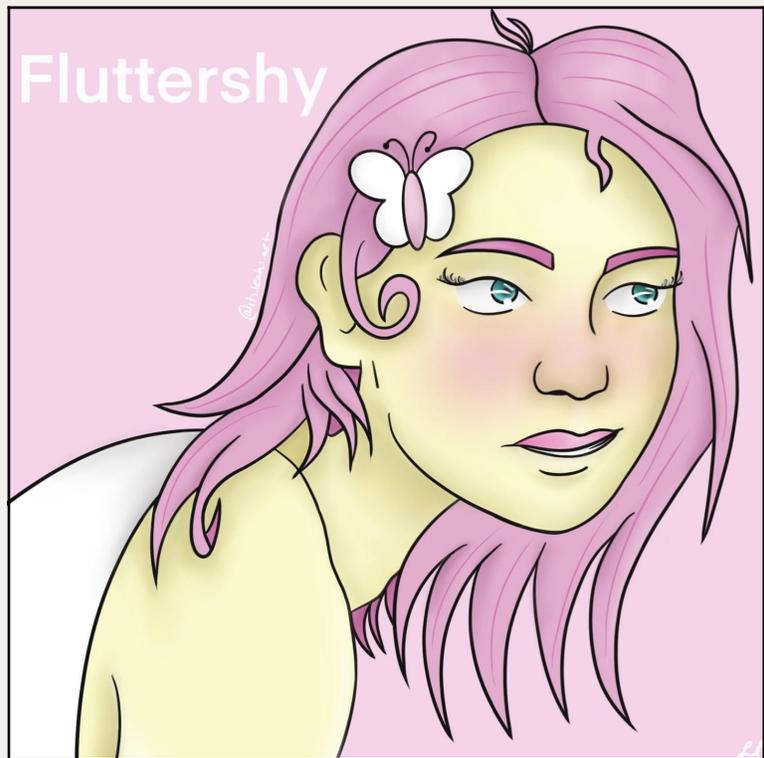
People have even recently been asking for commissions from me which started with one mother wanting me to make her unborn child a painting for their room. None of this would have been possible without my Great Grandma giving me that sketchbook, sadly now she doesn't exactly like what I make due to my personal style which is fine. She does realism with oils paints while I mostly do cartoonish drawings with colored pencils. Even with the differences she's the one who encouraged me to draw and make it into a hobby. In the beginning of my drawing career she's the one who bought all of my supplies because no one else believed that I would stick with this hobby, but I prove them wrong everyday and every time I make something new.



My unexpected treasure was gaining a sketchbook, it opened up a whole new world where I would make friends, a community, and I would find something that helps me express myself. Without art in my life I don't even know what I would do because before I drew I was constantly playing video games where now I am either drawing or reading. I owe everything to my Great Grandmother for supporting me and opening doors for me. She taught me everything I know today, that treasure is something I will truly cherish my entire life.



Hinata



Fluttershy

## Riding Rio

*Reagan D'Zembo*

I have been riding horses since I was 3 years old, and I ride dressage. I have 2 horses, my first horse's name is Rio, he is an American Quarter Horse and he will be 20 years old on April 24. I used to ride him all the time but due to him getting old and being a retired barrel racer, he cannot do everything I need him to. My other horse's name is Maggie Brown, she is a Connemara Pony and she will be 13 on May 7. Maggie is the one I constantly train with, we do a lot of jumping and lateral work, and we go to a lot of shows from early May through late August.



## Reminiscence

*Paige Marshall*

One day you're going to realize you're not a kid anymore. I'm only 15, but there are just things I see and hear, things that I smell and taste, that remind me of when I was little. Things that remind me of when I wasn't worried about whether I'll be able to do well academically and pass all of my classes, when I wasn't holding back tears when I looked at myself in the mirror.

Nostalgia is really painful. Isn't it? Just think about it. Thinking of all the things that used to make you happy, thinking of all the things you took for granted that you should've appreciated more. Things that as an adolescent I wish I had back. I wish I still lived in my old house, it was so beautiful. It's the house I grew up in. My dad basically built it. I remember when my parents said we were moving I was so excited, living in a new place was so exciting to 8 year-old me. I didn't understand that I wouldn't get to be back in the place I now realize I loved so much. I started going to Tamarac in 4th grade. My parents would whisper in the kitchen, being careful not to let us hear that they were worried about us being new kids for the first time. I think it was because they never doubted anything we did, they always let us know we could do anything if we were focused. Sometimes I wish they still tried to hide the doubts they had about us. When I started school, I didn't make friends until about the middle of the year, I didn't really have any problems with anyone until about the year after, and it was all new to me. I had literally zero issues at my old school, the kids there all came from the same place and we were all just friends. So as you can imagine, I was totally blindsided by the words people chose to use toward me.

11 years old. We were all 11 years old.

Everywhere you looked there were kids talking about people they were *just having conversations with, behind their back. I started to hate it.* I didn't have friends. Middle school was all new and I was beyond excited. I felt so grown up walking in the first day, I knew it would be a good year. And it was for the most part. Seventh grade started so fast. By the time it was there I could barely remember the previous year. I walked in on the first day with the highlights in my hair I had BEGGED my mom to get for my birthday, and I loved them. I felt like a whole other girl. I got to my locker and put my things away, and posted the pictures of my dog Olive who I loved tremendously, that I took from my room that morning. She was the one thing I looked forward to coming home to at the end of the school day. As I stood there placing the photos of her perfectly on the rusted locker door, someone called my name.

"Paige, did you change your hair over summer?"

"I did! Do you like it?"

"Yeah," she said as she took the highlighted pieces of my hair into her hands. As I turned back around I heard the same voice group with her friends, "She ruined her hair. Her face got fatter too didn't it?"

What a start to the year huh?

Each day I would get to school and look at Olive. My beautiful girl. Those three photos meant the world to me. She was old, we had her since I was about 5. It was hard watching her struggle to eat her food while standing up, she always had to lay down. She couldn't get up the stairs by herself anymore, we had to help her. She wouldn't jump up on my bed at night anymore, she would just lay on the floor next to me. Most of the time I got down from my bed and joined her. Each day I spent with her was a good day, because she was there. She was there, until she wasn't. I'd rather not talk about it.

Eighth and ninth grade were basically the same. I gave up on trying to please others, I spent less time trying to fit in. I spent more time trying to find things that made me happy. And I did find them.

*Getting up early to watch the sunrise, when the world is quiet.*  
*Taking photos of everything, on those crappy disposable cameras.*  
*Poetry.*  
*Old record shops.*  
*Black nail polish.*  
*Constellations.*  
*Zodiac signs.*  
*Green Day and Radiohead guitar riffs.*  
*My grandmother's old Italian recipes she stored in her brain.*  
*Music.*

Music is what I love, what I turn to when things get rough. What calms me down when I feel like nothing else can, what I use to ease my stress and anxiety. It pulls me out of my "happiness deficit", as one of my little cousins said. Kids are funny. Music truly is an escape for me. I think that's what I love most about it. It will take you anywhere you want to be, for however long you'd like.

What's not to love about it? There's so many genres to choose from, so many artists that create music for the same reason I love it. I like to sit in my room and try and find old music that I would listen to when I was in my room at my old house. It was lots of one direction of course. Come on now, I was like 7. But that wasn't it. That wasn't what I was looking for. I was looking for all the old songs my parents would play in the car when we were driving home late at night, those nights were my favorite. The old Gotye and Pearl Jam my mom loves, or the 70's, 80's, and 90's rock music my dad *still won't stray away from. I swear he's never changed his playlists.*

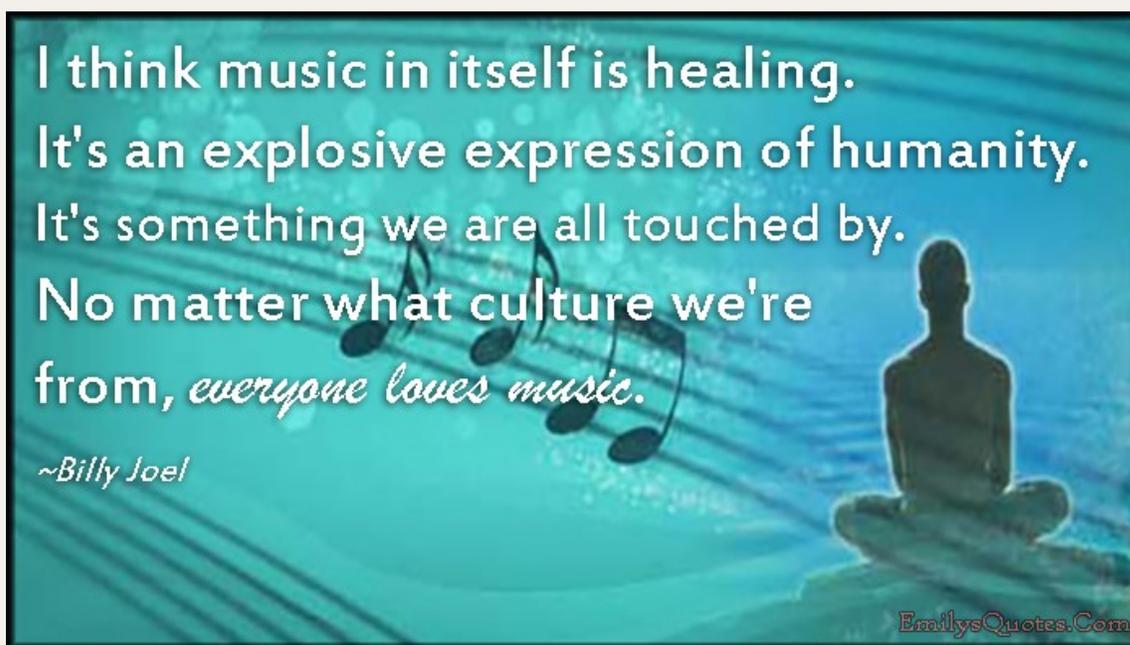
Most people hate long nights when they just can't seem to drift off to sleep, but I love them. It gives me more time to shut everything out and melt into wherever I choose to be. It's an amazing feeling. Looking out my bedroom window after midnight, when the only light that illuminates the world is stars and street lights. My favorite feeling.

Some days you need the music. Other days, you need the lyrics.

I love watching interviews of my favorite artists. The way they explain why they make music, or what made them want to. It's cool to see that they're just people, trying to help other people. Ashton Irwin, Biffy Clyro, Blink-182, The Dixie Chicks, The Cranberries, Coldplay, Dashboard Confessional, Day Wave, Fleetwood Mac, Foo Fighters, Green Day, Harry Styles, Joan Jett, Led Zeppelin, Movements, Nine Inch Nails, Nirvana, The Offspring, Paramore, Pearl Jam, Pink Floyd, Queens of the Stone Age, Radiohead, Rush, Stevie Nicks, Sting, U2, Van Halen, ZZ Top, 5 Seconds of Summer, The 1975. I can't go a day without these people. They don't know who I am, but they help me through everything, isn't that amazing? The amount of times I've been at school, just itching to hear my favorite songs at full volume in my room is insane. I get home, go straight to my room, connect my phone to my speaker, and press shuffle. Just like that, I'm in a good mood. Screaming my favorite lyrics, dancing like an idiot. My favorite feeling. I dream of being able to help people just like my favorite bands do. Going around the world and connecting with people who are in the same boat as you, being on stage and hearing people sing the words you wrote, back to you. What an amazing feeling that must be. Singing to thousands of people, who sing back to you for thousands of different reasons.

11:11. Whenever I check the time, it's 11:11. When I'm driving and looking out the window, there's almost always a license plate that reads 11:11. I noticed the number so often I looked up what it meant. 11:11 is an angel number. There are multiple meanings, but there is one specifically that makes sense to me right now, it means that the things I constantly think about are just affirmations that put me onto a bigger vibration, putting me on the path to the place I want to be in the future. It seems crazy, but we all have our beliefs right? The Earth is energy. If you're constantly miserable, you're going to attract miserable things. If you make the best of things and think optimistically, you'll attract things that make you happy, or make the people around you happy. I choose to believe that's true. So maybe I am embarking on the right path. Maybe sitting alone in my room and thinking about the life I want to live is bringing me closer to that. I'll just have to wait and see.

Music is my treasure. It helped me out of a low place, and made life much better.



## May the Force be with You

*Carter Shufon*



Unexpected Treasures can change your life as well as someone else's life. A moment could be as simple as giving a person something that will make them happy. For me a moment that changed my life was the first time I saw a Star Wars movie.

One unforgettable moment that changed my life was when I first saw a Star Wars movie. This was a big moment for me because my friend talked about how good the movies were and that I needed to see them. So I asked my parents if I could watch them and they said yes. I was so excited because my dad used to watch them when they first came out and said I would like them. He asked me which one to get first and I was so excited because I didn't know how many movies there were in the series. Then I asked him how many movies there were and I was surprised to hear that there were six. He told me that there were the original three and then there were the ones that came out after the first but explained the backstory of everyone. Next I told my dad that I wanted to watch the originals first, then the other three. When I first watched episode 4 "A New Hope" I was shocked that it was such a good movie. The movie was way above adequate and the best movie I have ever seen. My friend said that was his favorite Star Wars movie and that I should watch that one first. I liked the movie so much that I had to watch all of the rest. I liked the movies so much that I had to know everything about the movies and the Star Wars Universe.

After I watched all of the movies I knew that I had to buy anything Star Wars related. I got Legos, action figures, games on my parents phone, games for my DS at the time, and posters. My favorite movie was Revenge of the Sith because of all of the fight scenes and how Anakin became Darth Vader. I also like the movie for all of its iconic lines and I use them while talking to my family and joking around. When I first heard about a new Star Wars movie coming out I was so excited about it that I wanted to see it the first day it was released. It was not seldom for people to be excited for a new movie. My parents knew that I would like the movie so they tried and got tickets to see the movie the second day it was out. One reason I wanted to see it so much was because I didn't want anybody to spoil the movie for me and ruin the experience and excitement that I got to see a Star Wars movie before people would ruin the fun. I would be pulverized if someone spoiled the movie for me and I wouldn't want to see it anymore. I think it is an unfair when people spoil movies for other people and do it for fun. Another reason how it changed my life was when I first heard about the new Star Wars land at Disney. It looked so cool that I had to go. When I first rode the new Star Wars ride it was tremendous, I felt like I was in a movie and my dreams of actually flying a Star Wars ship came true. Finally when I heard that there was going to be a show about a Mandalorian I was excited because it was going to be different from the movies.

An unexpected treasure can be something as small as watching a movie. Even many years after I watched my first Star Wars movie I am still enjoying them and still getting Star Wars related things. Star Wars has been changing my life and will continue to change it for the better.



Cloning  
by  
Hannah Domey

## My Twin, My Rock, My Life Treasure

*Rylee Grugan*



It all began in a delivery room. From the very beginning of my life, I had received my unexpected treasure. This unexpected treasure was a person who would be by my side every day of my life. Without this “unexpected treasure” life would be much more difficult. He is my other half, in fact, my twin. Twin is a term used to describe “one of two children or animals born at the same birth.” I was lucky enough to meet my unexpected treasure at the start of life. My unexpected treasure and I are side by side as we experience more treasures. My twin Ryan Grugan has been with me through thick and thin.

My twin is my rock, my foundation to go to when I feel alone. He knows exactly what to say and how to make me feel better. I am beyond grateful for him, words cannot describe our bond. I love being able to share a birthday and go through all of life’s stages together. Unlike regular siblings, my brother and I are able to connect in a unique way. He can sense when I am feeling overwhelmed or dissatisfied. He reads me like an open book. I can try and conceal my feelings to others but not him, he just knows. It is so comforting to know that he's always there. He’s first to help me with my work, or just hang if I’m in need of company. To be given a life long best friend is an incredible gift. When I feel down or confused I immediately go to him for help and suggestions. Although he may get annoyed with me from time to time, he still helps in any way possible. As a result of him knowing me so perfectly, he is more than adequate to provide me with the ability to help me and improve my mood. I feel overly blessed to have someone as connected and loving as my twin.

Not only do we relate to so many things, but we experience life together. We were born on December 10th of 2004, he was born first approximately, two minutes prior to me. My brother and I grow and learn together through school, awkward puberty, adolescent time, and eventually adulthood. For example, he is a huge help annually when I stress every first day of the school year. Fortunately, he would remind me I was always guaranteed a friend in my class, him. Having Ryan attend every grade level by my side has been super helpful and enjoyable. Being able to have a built-in best friend is unlike any friendship I’ve ever experienced. Most memories that bring me joy involve my brother. Every holiday, party, dance, family gathering have been spent with my twin.

Recently during this crazy unprecedented period, he has been a huge support and very understanding. Throughout the shutdown and these grueling times, my brother has guided me both mentally and physically. He has helped me grapple with school topics that I struggle with and galvanized me to stay active and fit. Ryan and I enjoyed many hikes throughout our land and swimming in our family pool to stay active during the warmer months. However, Ryan has also done so many things that I appreciate wholeheartedly. I have felt very stressed lately with our new normal school routine due to the pandemic. Having such a large shift is definitely one experience I will never forget. But through every struggle and challenge, he continues to care for and guide me.

Although having a twin also means always sharing things like my birthday and eventually a car, I will forever be grateful. He is so caring and thoughtful, that sometimes I feel as if I am taking advantage of his kindness. His personality and attitude are extremely contagious. Through every journey, my twin is right by my side. It's funny to hear our family speak of our bond as toddlers. In fact, my parents tell us we had our own language, which they had no desire to understand, but enjoyed witnessing. From the very beginning and through every battle, my twin, Ryan has and always will be right by my side ready and willing to fight with me.



## **Sunset Treasures**

*Cailyn Hayden*

If you were to look at the sky once more what part would you want to see? The clouds, a sunrise, sunset or a thunderstorm. Personally, I would want to take a final look at sunsets. Sunsets are one of God's most beautiful creations. They hold a beautiful sight, emotions and most importantly, memories. Sunsets are "unexpected treasures." They may not last long, but it sure is something good to end the day with.

In fifth grade, my classmates and I took a trip to Nature's Classroom in Silver Bay, New York. It was a 3 day 2 night stay. I packed a few shirts, shorts, jeans, pajamas, shoes and a disposable camera and I was on my way. When we got there, we were welcomed by the camp counselors and staff. They told us about the activities that you could take such as wood works, water rockets and animal dissection. I can't remember what I chose to do, though. We ate breakfast, lunch and dinner in the dining hall with our counselors and learned about an "ort report" which was a chant about wasting food. I felt very robust with the food I ate there. It was all very healthy and gluten free. We were commissioned and manipulated to do most of what we did and had only an hour and a half to ourselves and free time, which was just play and talk outside.

The final day we were there, we took a two and a half hour hike up to a view spot. After collecting what we were going to bring, we set out for a hike after breakfast. It was really fun for my first hike and I learned a lot on the hike. I learned how to catch frogs and geckos in a pond and learned about trees and rocks. My group and I spent a half an hour around the ponds looking at the little things such as leaves, and other wildlife. A third of the way up, I found a rock. It had quartz, iron and other minerals in it. I carried it in my bag the rest of the way up and back down. At the top of the mountain, there was a monumental view I will never forget. I could see the top of other mountains and the sky was clear and had full clouds. It was beautiful. We ate our lunch up there, staring at the view. Ever since I've seen a view like that in person, I have been obsessed with views. While it was an arduous journey, coming back, there was a beautiful sunset to end a great day. The sky was full of blues, purples, pinks and oranges. It was truly an unforgettable sight. At the end of the day, I texted my grandmother, who loves sunsets, about the one I saw. Ever since that one sunset, she sends me a text whenever she sees a pretty sunset. I take pictures of the sunsets for her because she is unable to take or receive pictures on her phone, and show the pictures to her whenever I get to see her..

The experience I had changed my life forever. Every time I see a sunset, I will always think of my grandmother and the day I had. This experience was my “unexpected treasure” from the rock to the geckos in the pond to the beautiful sunset. I hope everyone has an unexpected treasure just like mine!

## **Frozen Water From the Sky**

*Averianna Crudo*

When winter comes along every year, most people think of Christmas, Hanukkah, or New Years. But my mind instinctively goes to snow. Not just because it’s pretty, fluffy, and means a snow day, rather it brings me back to when I was a kid. It makes me feel childish and free, feelings that somehow manage to slip away from me the age of 15.

I had to grow up fast when I was young, but I didn’t realize how fast until I looked back. I can’t help but feel I missed out on a lot, but try to get the most of what I have left. I would always get called mature, and still do. But the snow reminds me of how short a childhood can really be. I didn’t grow up in the best environment, which my family is thankfully out of now. However, one thing that is a constant reminder of happiness is the snow and Quentin.

My older brother, Quentin, is one of the people I could never live without. He is six years older than me, so I was always the ‘annoying younger sister’ stereotype, if you will. I always wanted to follow him around, hang out with his friends, provoke him of course, just be synchronized with him all the time. I felt like Quentin was my protector, even if we didn’t always see eye- to- eye. He always knew when something was off, always defended me and was by my side when I needed him to be. He always knows how to make me laugh. He is honestly one of the funniest, wittiest people I know. He’s intelligent and seems hard on the outside, but is really soft on the inside. He loves his family.

Like I said though, we are six years apart, so he was always forced into playing with and watching me. The reason the snow will always have my heart during the winter is because of how we used to sled in the snow. It’s no one specific memory, just the feeling of cold wind on my face and seeing my breath in the air and the powder everywhere reminds me of the days we’d spend together. Seeing who could make the best slope and racing to the top of the hill. Building igloos with each other out of the avalanche of snow that was plowed and shoveled to the top of our driveway. Having snowball fights, refusing to let the other one win. Falling from laughing so hard, then making snow angels. Making our mom turn on the spotlight outside so we could keep fooling around after the sun went down. Even if he wanted to act like a big bad teenager, Quentin still came outside every time it snowed.

I look back at these memories now as I am almost 16 and Quentin is almost 22, and wish I could go back. I never realized how hard it would be to watch your sibling grow into a real adult and leave, but it is one of the painful things to experience. Every time his truck leaves the driveway to go back to college, a piece of me leaves too. And that sounds really cheesy and I would never tell him that, but it’s true. The family dynamic isn’t complete without him. Even if I don’t tell him, Quentin is one of my biggest role models and I physically wouldn’t be here today if it wasn’t for him.

My brother really stepped up these past couple of years to help my family and to ‘be the man of the family.’ I can’t imagine how it felt to him having to grow up fast, too. He’s taught me so many things and lessons, and just how to be a better person. Quentin is really the only male figure in my life, but he’s more than enough for me. I’m in constant fear that one day when we have our own families and our own lives that we’ll just see each other one time a year, and I’ll be the crazy aunt. But, I know neither of us will let that happen.

When the snow falls a handful of times a year, it’s always bittersweet to me. I never realized how much of a hold frozen water from the sky would have on me, yet somehow it does. I’m not sure if this counts as a treasure since it comes and goes one-fourth of the year, but it is always inextricably connected to me. I’m forever grateful for the snow and my big brother, as they are both some of my most prized possessions.



## **Moving to Tamarac**

*Emily Frost*

Changing schools can be super tough for any child but sometimes it's necessary. Changing schools is more common for a child than one may think and there are several reasons why that is. Someone may change schools because they are being bullied, moving houses, becoming more prone to trouble and many other reasons. I personally moved schools because I didn't have many friends and I was associated with the wrong crowd. Changing schools was very beneficial for me and was the correct choice in terms of my health and education.

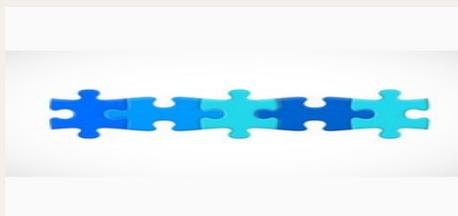
In 2016 through 2017 I was in 6th grade. I had lost most of my friends because I would not allow them to ceaselessly bully Joey, a kid in my class. Joey had autism and was an easy target for bullies. My friends at the time chose to pick on him during lunch, so I decided to sit with him. Consequently, Joey became one of my best friends but this made me a target as well. My old school, Lansingburgh had physical fights break out almost everyday and my family didn't want me to be exposed to this type of environment for much longer. I was mugged by a group of five, had my belongings stolen and even participated in a physical fight between me and another student. After that year, my parents quickly pulled me out of Lansingburgh and I joined Tamarac. This was the best decision my parents possibly could have made.

In Tamarac I have made tons of amazing friends and the teachers are amazing. If I never transferred to Tamarac I might never have found my passion for wrestling either. I wouldn't have been comfortable joining the wrestling team at Lansingburgh, I probably wouldn't have done any extracurricular activities there. The coaches at Tamarac are amazing and have helped me become the wrestler I am today. Someday I will be thanking all of the amazing teachers, students and coaches from this school when in my acceptance speech at the Olympics. Moving to Tamarac has completely altered the way I think about school. Tamarac is much more than a school, it has been a place where I can express myself and create relationships with others.

Moving schools in 7th grade was a hindrance at first, it was difficult for me. There were stricter rules, higher expectations and I didn't know anyone. It took me a while to settle down and realize that certain behavior acceptable at Lansingburgh was not allowed at Tamarac but I adjusted just fine by the end of the year. It also took me a while to find some good friends as well. I bounced around from table to table at lunch everyday and I realized I didn't belong to a "group." This was because I got along with just about everyone despite what group they belonged to. Everything seemed to be changing for the better. I made incremental changes in my grades, I made new friends and I was happy. For once in my life, I felt like I belonged.

I am currently a sophomore in high school at Tamarac and I can tell you I've never been happier. I am motivated to push through any obstacles that will come my way. I am now perseverant, strong, passionate and independent. I am a wrestler, I am social and I am a straight A student. I will continue to be grateful for the opportunities I have been given because I know many other people do not get the chance to have a positive high school experience.

Changing schools was a positive life changing experience for me. I couldn't possibly think of a better school for me. I gained friends, actively participate in school activities and am passionate about my education. Changing schools was very beneficial for me and was the correct choice in terms of my health and education. Moving to Tamarac was in fact, my unexpected treasure.



**When autism speaks, it can't  
always use it's voice  
So when you are listening, you  
can't always use your ears.**

*Facebook/ Autism and other ramblings*

**You must listen with your eyes,  
listen with your heart.**

**Autism does speak, just not  
always with words.**

*Facebook/ Autism and other ramblings*

## **From Mario to YouTube: My Unexpected Treasures**

*Ryan Grugan*

What do you enjoy doing with your spare time? Watching TV? Playing sports? Baking? During my spare time I enjoy playing video games. My love for video games has spiraled from when I was only four years old. I would engage in playing Mario Kart with my older sister, Sydney. I always loved playing the game with her. Some mornings I would wake up at 6 AM to play, waking up my whole family, especially Sydney. This new hobby led me down a path to countless unexpected treasures. These treasures include my collection of video games, gaming merchandise, and becoming one of the highest performing players in the world, including starting a YouTube channel.

Have you ever been accused of hoarding? I have due to my collection of video games and their merchandise. When I first began playing I enjoyed a variety of games. This started my large inventory of items from each game that are now displayed throughout my room. I always enjoyed adding new items to my various collections. Sometimes the ability to purchase specific items proved arduous due to their rarity. But as I began to display them in my room, the work became worth it. The size of my display shelves proved to be a hindrance after a few years of collecting due to their size, prompting my dad to customize them and purchase more. With my dad's help my growing collection shows no sign of slowing and or stopping. This new merchandise hobby that I enjoy would not have occurred if my sister Sydney had not introduced me to video games.

Have you ever wished you could be the best at something? I have, and was back in 2017 when a game was released to the world called Splatoon 2 by Nintendo. The original Splatoon was a game I always loved playing with my friend Jacob, who was introduced to me yet again through my sister Sydney. We played it for years and received thousands of hours from the game. So incidentally when Splatoon 2 was first released we were both extremely excited. We collectively decided we were going to play this game seriously, with intent to win. We played in tournament after tournament trying to achieve our goal of victory. After years of training we felt prepared. Upon playing we immediately rose to the top of the leader boards and gained a monumental achievement. Together we became one of the top 300 teams in the world. This was insane for us but we still enjoyed gloating to all of our friends. Who knew a simple hobby could lead to you becoming one of the best players in the world?

We've all watched a YouTube video at some point at least once. YouTube is an extremely popular social media platform where players can post videos. I've always conceptualized creating a channel and decided over quarantine with all the time provided I would finally create one. I then decided to make my channel about the games I play. I wanted to receive recognition for the games I participated in and played online with the only hindrance being I was forced to edit my creations on my phone. Beginning in April of this year I've begun posting everyday to my channel and have built a community of over 100 people. I find it fun to see the feedback I receive on my videos. It nice to enjoy something I had only previously dreamt of.

Video games have been a huge part of my life since the very young age of four years old thanks given to my sister Sydney. This event has led me down a path of collecting, professional gaming, and video producing. All of these amazing treasures would've never developed if it wasn't for my sister. This life changing event led me to a very exciting life with many extraordinary events. In the end, life is a journey not a race, but thanks to Sydney perhaps mine is.



## **Becoming a Tri-Athlete**

*Bryan Mackey*

Is doing three sports in high school worth it or too much? Being in high school doing three sports is very worth it. My life changed because of this experience. I have really good bonds with some of my friends and we are always together and here for each other.

In 6th grade I moved to Tamarac to get out of a school that was not the best. My parents moved here so I could grow up with a better group of kids. A year later, in 7th grade, I made a lot of friends and I also started playing football. That was the only sport I played. While in football, I met this kid named Ty Roadcap. He told me that I should try other sports. At the beginning of 8th grade I played football. But during that season Ty came up to me again and told me to try wrestling. So I tried wrestling and had so much fun. When the season was over, I realized how much I enjoyed this new sport and wanted to do it again.

When 9th grade came around, I signed up for both sports. Wrestling wasn't the best year for me because I had to lose weight but Ty was always there helping me, encouraging me to do better. After wrestling season was over, Ty walked up to me again and said "Hey you should play lacrosse." I told him no, but he grabbed me by my backpack and said, "Come with me and talk to the coach." I did and then I ended up playing and loving lacrosse. Ever since I started playing three sports I have been getting involved in more activities, going to hangout with people more often, and trying new things.

I wish I started playing 3 sports earlier in elementary school because I now see how these experiences have helped me to gain friends and more confidence in myself. Playing sports with my friends always puts me in a good mood.

So, overall I discovered that you should go out and learn things, meet new people and make good memories. Ty changed my life forever and made me a better person by inviting me to try new things and help me to make new friends.

## **Unexpected Adventures = Unexpected Treasures**

*Chris Hernick*

I am a true believer that unplanned adventures usually turn out to be the most fun. Whenever me and my friends and I or my family and I throw a plan together real quick of something to do and just wing it, it always turns out to be an amazing experience. One of the best days of my life was off a spur of the moment idea.

August 3, 2019 it was just a normal day, I was driving back from the store with my family when all of a sudden my dad and I had the urge to go see a baseball game. We talked about it for a little bit then we just decided to drive down to New York City to go see the Yankees play that night. My dad called his friend to see if he wanted to come with us, his son is also one of my close friends so I was very excited about it. At first my dad's friend thought he was joking about driving down right away to see the Yankees tonight but realized that we were dead serious about the whole situation. Soon after, he agreed to drive down with us and the adventure had begun.

After the call we dropped off my mom and brothers at home and went to go pick up the people coming with us. On the way to the city I ordered 4 tickets for us on my phone, the seats weren't anything special but they were still good enough to see the whole field pretty clearly. My dad was driving, we left at about 3 and got into the city at around 6. The drive was almost perfect, we didn't hit any traffic at all until we got onto the George Washington bridge but that was only about a 20 minute wait. Finally we had made it into the stadium.

Even though we had left in the middle of the day we still got to see the teams take batting practice. It's so much fun to watch these great players warm up and absolutely pulverize the ball. I was trying to get as close to the field as I could before the game started but the security at Yankee Stadium is very strict and secure. There must have been a chairman for the Yankee team on the field because I saw this older man and he was surrounded by police and security members pre-game. Before the game started my friend and I got some food; the food at Yankee stadium is probably my favorite out of all of the baseball stadiums I've been to, the only one that might be better is Nationals Stadium down in Washington D.C. As the sun was starting to set the game was about to start.

That day the Yankees had a rivalry game against the Boston Red Sox so it was one of the best games in sports to watch. Their rivalry is one of the best in sports history. As many people know the fans at Yankee stadium are ruthless toward their opponents, and because it was a rivalry game the fans were extra rowdy. There were chants and taunting coming from the crowd the entire game, there was hardly any time people were letting up. The game itself was a very close scoring intense game up until the last few innings. One of my favorite players Gleybar Torres, whose jersey I bought at the stadium, was coming off an injury that game so I was concerned that it would be a bit of a hindrance for him but it wasn't, he still did well.

As the game went on the Red Sox started to go down by more and more so they started to try and play small ball, which is when they bunt a lot more to try and get runners into scoring position but the Yankees implemented their bunt defense and shut them down right away. The longer the game went on the more grim it got for the Red Sox, for the last few innings the Yankees put in their best closer Aroldis Chapman. I don't think anyone could not be intimidated by batting against him, he's very tall and muscular and throws the baseball at 101 miles per hour. With 2 outs in the top of the 9th the last Red Sox player came up and struck out to end the game, the Yankees took home the W.

As we were leaving the stadium everyone was chanting, it was a super fun atmosphere to be around. By the time we left the stadium it was around 11 o'clock at night and we made it back at around 2:20. It was one of the best unforgettable moments of my life.





Nature Untouched  
*Katlyn Dobert*

## Finally Finding Myself

*Devonte Ortiz*

Strength and identity really clicks with me because this year has been a really rocky roller-coaster. When COVID started I really didn't think about how it would affect my life and everyone around. So when the virus hit and everything was getting closed it limited my options to have a great summer. Wherever I went I had to be at least 6 feet away from someone with a mask on. The things I used to love doing as a kid was stripped away.

As the pandemic was becoming bigger and bigger in the summer, July hit and that was the worst month of my life. My father passed away. It was the hardest time of my life. I had school in no less than a month. So I had to prepare mentally and physically. That was the most mentally challenging moment of my life, balancing out my mental health and physical structure. I was trying so hard to feel like I was being normal and trying to stay on my work for my classes- but being home and staring at a Chromebook was not ideal. My state of mind at the time was just to mourn my father, not really thinking or caring about my grades.

Two months after he passed I was trying to make myself feel better by going to counseling. It really didn't help me that much but as the year has been moving by, my life is slowly looking decent. I can't get my father back but I will make it my priority to put him first over anything.

Six months passed and I was feeling way better than what I felt the first couple months. I started talking to my grief counselor again along with Noah and Aiden who have helped me tremendously by getting me out of the house and interacting with the world again. I was so sick and tired of this online stuff -that was one of the main reasons why I wasn't doing my best other than my father. So one day I was talking to Mr. White and asked him if I could come in everyday. I told him it would really help me. He said, "Let's give it a try" and everyday since my days get better. After settling it with all my teachers, I am coming in everyday. It really helps my grades and the interaction makes me focused and doing all of my schoolwork.

The 3rd week of me coming into school everyday , March 29, 2021, my grandma passed away. I cried for a whole day but when I talked to my mom she told me I need to grow off of these things. I can't change time and they (my dad and grandma) are in a better place. So the next day I went into school still really sad but also knowing it's not going to get better unless something changes. I needed to make it better. Looking back on how my year went, I realized I have persevered through all the obstacles that have been in my way to make it to this day. Today might not be a good day but we will all have good and bad days– we just have to prosper through it.

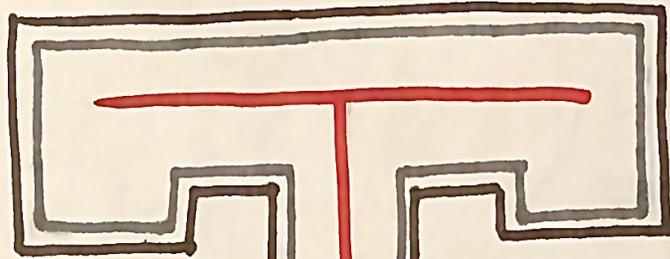
Everyday since my father passed, for a whole week, all I could see was this beautiful earth and that everyday on this earth is worth it even when times go really bad. We can always find that source of light way deep down inside of us. It takes your mind skills to make big problems into smaller ones. We all have that burning light deep down- you are just going to have to find things to make you happy to keep that flame going. And when you find something you love, everything else falls into place.

Seeing my progress through this year really helps my mental health, seeing all the battles I had to go through on my own. These experiences really showed me how I can get through any obstacle that stands in my way, not to have regrets, and live life to the fullest. You only get one life and make the best out of it.



"Landscape" by Katelyn Yerdon

TAMARAC



TIMES

Designed  
by  
Rylee Grugan



This picture features Ruthie the first day we got her, November 21st, 2020. I call her Ms. Roof as a nickname, and while my family doesn't like it she responds to it. I was immediately in love, and I think she took a liking to me too, judging by the smile on her face. She was the tiniest roundest puppy, and she would follow me everywhere. We were inseparable. Since then I got to watch her grow up, and become the loving, energetic girl that she is today. She is crazy though, like jumping up onto the counter that's twice her size and eating an entire loaf of bread crazy, but we still love her. We are still inseparable, that part will never change, and as I am typing this she is snuggled up on my lap. I wouldn't give her up for the world, and she certainly has brightened my year in these unprecedented times.

*By Ella Riganti*

# Gymnastics



I have been doing gymnastics since I was 3 years old. I thought about competing but I thought that would make me lose interest. I realized that winning wouldn't mean anything if I don't enjoy the sport. Sometimes I doubt myself when I don't do a specific skill correctly but then I remember that one of my favorite gymnasts wouldn't think like that. Laurie Hernandez would not give up if she messed something up. My favorite event is beam. I like beam because I have always had such great balance and with that, I can pretty much do any skill on the beam! My least favorite event is bars. I don't have a very good grip so that makes it hard to do the skills everyone else is doing. I plan on continuing gymnastics until I go to college because of how much I love this sport!

By Kylie Purello

## **“There’s No Plate Like Home”**

*James Blake*

For some odd reason it’s always the small things that end up sticking and getting attached to me in the end. Before my grandfather passed away he got to watch one last baseball game of mine. After my game my whole family had one last party before he died and the quote that he said that has stuck with me the most was “there’s no plate like home.”

Before I explain why that quote means so much to me I have to tell you about our relationship and how special it was to me. Before I was even born my grandfather was blind in one eye, so in order for my grandfather to watch my cousin’s football games my uncle would film them and my grandfather and I would watch them all the time on the couch. Sports have always been our favorite thing. He was the big reason why I love playing and watching sports. So when it was finally time for me to play sports my mom would film them and my grandfather and I would watch them so I could figure out what I could work on and what I was doing right. But there was something about baseball that my grandfather and I just loved a little bit more than basketball and football. My grandfather and I loved baseball so much that we used to be curators and we collected as many baseball cards as possible. After watching films together, my grandmother would cook the best dinner ever! I would usually sleep over at their house and my grandparents always made sure I was ok and I didn’t need anything. They were the best grandparents ever.

Eventually my cousin graduated high school and he got to play college football. He still says to this day that the film he would watch with my grandfather was a huge reason he got those offers. It also takes a lot of skill to play college football and you really have to focus on it essentially and I did want to taunt and brag. With my cousin in college my grandfather’s main focus was me, and that was a huge step in my game. That year I improved so much in every sport but especially baseball. That year I had a .495 batting average and the most homeruns in the league but the main thing I didn’t want to do was to get cocky and then start my spring season bad because I didn’t practice because I thought I was too good. That would of been and huge mistake and would of had huge consequences.

Everything was going amazingly well. I was playing the best ball I’ve ever played. Everyone was healthy and I would go to my grandparents house almost everyday. But nothing can be perfect forever. Eventually something will happen that will completely change your life forever. My grandmother got cancer and it just went downhill from there. I didn’t get to see them everyday like I used to, she was always tired, she lost a lot of weight. My grandfather would never be the same after that, but they told me don’t let this affect your ball and it didn’t. In fall ball I had a .546 batting average, almost double the homeruns I had in the spring, but I used it for motivation, I played for her. School on the other hand was a struggle. I wasn’t paying attention and I would always be nervous about my grandmother. Sometimes I would try to skip gym class just so I could call my grandfather to see how she was doing. It would be the same thing every time she did fine to get back to class, and the worst part about it was I knew she was getting worse as the days went by. I could hear it in his voice. But baseball, football and basketball saved me and really helped me get through it.

My grandparents were like one person; when one of them got hurt, the other hurt too. So when my grandmother got cancer it was like he had it as well. To this day I still don't know why she had to get cancer, it's not like she did anything wrong to deserve it. The worst thing was just sitting there and seeing her get worse everyday and there was nothing I could do about it and seeing the whole family go through it too. When it started to get really bad my dad and I had to sleep there to make sure everything was ok. I would only cry at night after we made sure everything was ok and I remember asking myself how more good days will she have or why can't this just stop or what did she do to deserve it? When she passed away it was horrible. She was in a lot of pain and everyone told me that she was in a better place now. It was really bad for the whole family, but the one thing that would get it off my mind was sports. So, all I did was practice non stop and do anything I could to get out of my head. After my grandmother passed away my grandfather moved in and it was good and bad. I got to see him every day again but he wasn't the same. He was always upset and sad but everyone was.

When baseball picked up again, I wanted to be the best and win the championship. I was so motivated. When the first game of the season happened I had 3 home runs and we won 12-7. It was a good start to the season and the team was on fire. As the season went on, I led the league in homeruns and our team was in first place. But the team behind us was only one game behind and they had a kid who would only have 2 home runs less than me. Then it was the playoffs and we killed everyone we played. But the team we played against in the championship was the same team that was behind us by only one game but the kid that was 2 home runs behind me was now tied with my record. That week going into the game was crazy with all the films me and my grandfather watched. It was 2 days before the game and my grandfather said he wanted to go. I was so happy because he really never went to my games.

Then it was game day. It rained all day so the game was postponed to night. We got to play under the lights! The game started and right away the kid hit a home run; then after that we got 3 outs in a row. The same inning I hit a homerun right to center field and my other friend hit one too. The game was scoreless and the rain was picking up, score was 2-1. Then the other team all of a sudden hit 4 homeruns in a row! The score now 5-2 in the 7th inning. That same inning I hit a homerun and we scored another run— bring the score to 5-4 going into the 8th inning. By the 9th inning we knew it was our last chance to win. The first person up just walked then there were back to back outs. The score was still 5-4, 2 outs and a person on first. The first pitch was right down the middle and I missed, the next pitch was in the dirt. One ball one strike the following pitch was a fastball in the outside corner and when me and my grandfather went over film that is my worst spot. But as soon as I hit it I knew it was out and we won the game 6-5! One of the best feelings ever!

After the game my grandfather was so happy— back to his old self. While talking about the game, that's when he said “there's no plate like home” just like there's no place like home. This was a real connection, baseball and family, the most important times. I know that it wasn't a happy story but my grandparents really made me the person I am today and it makes me so proud I'm their grandchild.



# Block, Jump, Spike

*Cailyn Hayden*

Don't touch the long net  
Though it is hard not to touch  
Stay straight up and block

Cheer your teammates on  
Energy to the ceiling  
Loud teams win the game

Bump the ball high up  
Get the ball to the setter  
Jump high and spike it

Go behind the line  
Throw the ball up high and hit  
Go back to defense

Harder than it seems  
a team that sticks together  
With rich memories

No one is alone  
Every player is involved  
This is a team effort





Photo Essay by Emily Frost "Girl Power"

## **Wrestling: A Family Affair**

*Ty Roadcap*

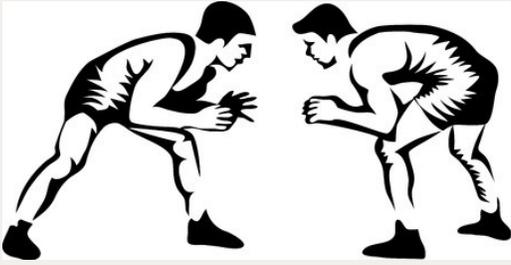
I wonder if people would know the wrestler I would become? I think now people realize I am a better wrestler than they thought I would be. I had made the varsity wrestling team earlier than both myself and others expected. Wrestling has been in my family for years. My father wrestled, my uncles wrestled, and my grandfather wrestled. My brother even wrestles, so the next logical step was for me to wrestle.

Dad wrestled at Cohoes High School. He was a really good wrestler, and placed 2nd in the section. He started coaching at Tamarac when I was very young. My father was the head coach for varsity football and varsity wrestling. He would also teach little kids wrestling from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm, which is where I started the sport. I first started wrestling when I was in 1st grade, and have continued doing it to this day. Practices were always fun because we would play dodgeball at the end. After around 14 practices or so I went to my first tournament. I was not nervous because I was very young, plus I really did not know what was going on. I placed 3rd in my first tournament, and was happy to get a trophy. I did not place 1st during that year in any tournaments, but that would change the next year. I placed 1st at Ballston Spa not knowing that I even won. One of my friend's dad said, "congratulations for placing 1st", and all I remember asking is, "I WON, is the trophy big?" The years went on and I would get some first, some second, and a lot of third places at tournaments. My second to last year I won a tournament with the flu, which was not a fun day. However, my last year in wrestling with the little kids I did very well. During that last tournament I finished on a high by getting first place which was a great way to end the season.

Then I was wrestling my first year at modified. The practices were much harder than I expected. My buddies and I were hanging on each other, because we had had so many conditioning workouts. The first tournament came and it was a one and a half hour drive. I was getting nervous about my first match because I had never wrestled modified before. However, I managed to win my that match and much more that day. I was winning and winning until one day I lost. I lost by two points to a kid from Mt. Anthony. Even though I lost I was still doing very well, but then I had to wrestle him again. I got destroyed because I was so nervous that I was not doing as well as I should have. Thankfully that was my second and last loss of the season. At the banquet I was awarded MVP for modified which was pretty cool, but it didn't really matter to me because it's only modified.

I reached my second, and final year of doing modified wrestling. I was doing really well at practice and was named team captain with my buddy Devonte and thought, "Wow, I was not anticipating this, this is pretty cool." We would start practices off, and start warmups before every match or tournament. I was doing so well that I was undefeated for a good amount of time, until I lost to a kid I should have beaten. I had him pinned in the second period. The referee did not even call it. Although I lost at the final stretch and was not too happy, I thought, "oh well stuff happens." I was 15-1 going into my last match. I had to wrestle a kid who was on my team, and who I would lose to all the time when I was younger. This time I managed to beat him 15-0, and finished off modified 16-1.

Then it was time for varsity. I was doing really well at practice even though conditioning was even



worse. I was not on the varsity lineup yet because I had to compete for it. I had to go up against someone who I always lost to up until that point. I was very nervous because I wanted that varsity spot, but knew this was the day that I was going to get it. I played it safe and won 1-0. It was a special moment for me because I remember watching the older kids wrestle on varsity when I was younger and now I was doing it. Again, I was nervous for my first varsity match, and unfortunately got destroyed. After the match I went up to my grandfather, and he asked me, “do you think you belong?” I kept thinking about that on the bus ride home, and I said to myself that “I do belong”. As a result I did very well through the rest of the season, placed fourth at a varsity singles tournament, and placed top 6th in the class C’s. In addition, I had 28 wins throughout the season; that’s an immense amount of wins. I thought to myself, “It’s not over yet, my goal is now to win the section and go to states”.

Throughout it all, my dad has been by my side, coaching me all the way. He has been teaching me how to become a very good wrestler. Dad would take me to train in Troy where I would work out, and to my uncles to practice wrestling. My grandfather, who I would spend a lot of time with, has also taught me a lot of moves to become a stronger wrestler. At times he criticized my skills, but that only made me better. My uncle who owns a place where people can go and practice wrestling also teaches me as well. I have interactions with other wrestlers, many who have become good friends.

Looking back, I have done better than I had ever thought I would, and showed that I am good enough to be on the lineup and one day win the section. And hopefully, if all goes well, I’ll go far in states. For now I just have to put more work in, maybe get more individualized training and build some strength. It has been a long journey, but a fun one.

**“I’ll do whatever it takes to win games,  
whether it is sitting on a bench waving a towel,  
handing a cup of water to a teammate, or**



Sylvester Stallone  
by  
Joe Mays

# Love for the Gridiron

*Anthony Palladino*



Football is my favorite sport and it has always been with me and throughout my entire family. My dad was a really athletic person when he was younger and his favorite sport was football growing up. He played it all through high school and even found a spot on the Tamarac wall for best of the year. Dad got a couple offers from colleges to play football, but life took him in a different direction and he decided to hang up his cleats.

Years later he had my brother in 02 and myself in 05. Dad wasn't going to make us, but he wanted us to at least try football. My brother wasn't a big fan of the getting hit part, myself on the other hand, I loved it from the get go. Even when I didn't play yet I would watch a football game with my dad just choosing which color I wanted to win and that is also how I got my favorite color.

I loved football so much as a kid that I was always trying to study and be like the players. Then when I was in 1st or 2nd grade, I told my dad I wanted to be in the NFL. I have lived with a passion for this sport everyday. I was good at playing when I was younger. And I was able to do what other kids didn't just because I watched and remembered the plays.

However, as I started getting older I saw everyone was getting bigger and stronger but I was not. I then moved schools and there was so much competition. I had to change the position that I had always played. But just as my dad told me, "you play where the coaches tell you to play". I still do what the coaches tell me for the good of the team. So even when it is off-season, football is a big part of my life. I can watch it or I can play with family and friends, or on a video game. Like even if you don't play the sport, football is the most popular sport in America. Football will forever be something that brings my family together.

# Family First

*James Blake*

Football is such a team sport and if one player doesn't do the play right or if one player doesn't do their job it can make everyone else look bad. That's why one of my favorite quotes is from Coach Ryan. He says this before every game, "play for your brothers"- because if I know when the person next to me and the other 10 players on the field are playing for me, I'm going to give them my 110% every play. A good explanation of this was our last game against Cocksackie. At half time it was 7-3 us and we should have been killing this team. So we got together and talked about how if one player gives 110% we all will give 110%. On the very first play Mikey threw a quick pass to Bryan and ran for a 77 yard touchdown. Then we got a huge stop and we didn't let off the gas pedal, the second play on offence I ran a 5 yard out and ran for 45 yards for another touchdown. After that you could just feel that we took the energy right out of them. The final score was 45-3, a major win for us.





## Wildcats QB

*Michael D'Agostino*

I have been playing football since I was little. It is the sport I grew up watching and loving ever since I picked up a ball. I love football because of the fast pace, how everyone needs to work together to be successful, and you can't just rely on a couple people. I play quarterback and have been playing this since I was in 1st grade. It's crazy to see now how I'm starting on the high school team.





Lacrosse is a very fun sport to play. I have been playing lacrosse since fourth grade. Tamarac just started a program while I was in seventh grade. We were not so great the first year, but definitely made up for it the following year. Me and my teammates missed last year due to Covid, but we are more ready than ever to start the next season.

*Ty Roadcap*

## **Skiing, My Passion, My Unexpected Treasure**

*Austin Schultz*

Many people have things they do during certain times of year that they hold dear to their hearts. For some it's flower picking in the spring, going swimming in the summer, or going apple picking in the fall. But for me it's skiing. Skiing is a sport that comes in many different forms- there's alpine skiing, which is skiing downhill on skis that have fixed heel bindings, there's cross country skiing, which relies on the skier's movement to get from point a to point b and is usually done on a flatter terrain and the heel isn't bound, among many others these two being the most common. I do alpine skiing recreationally, though I have looked into doing it competitively. I may be skillful enough to possibly compete but when I first started I had no idea I would get into this as much as I did.

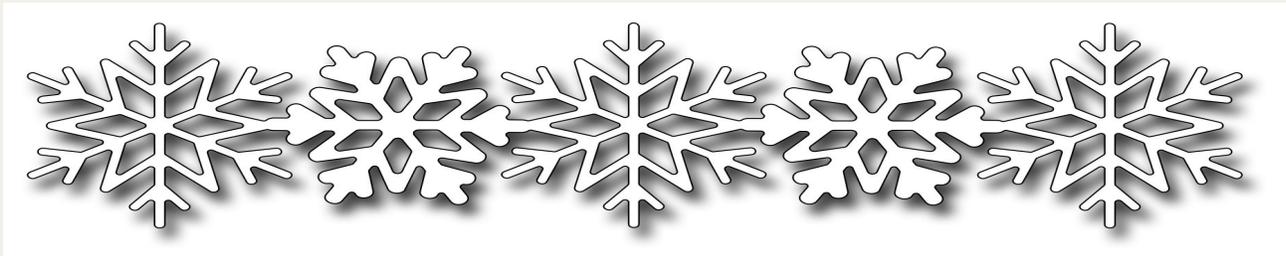
When I first started skiing I was about four or five years old. I entered a program called the Little Colonel at a small mountain not too far from here called Willard Mountain. I don't remember much from this time but I do remember that it was very difficult and I didn't progress very quickly, Although as I grew older and moved through Little Colonel, I my skills developed exponentially. I started understanding concepts much easier and I moved up to higher levels relatively fast. Once you get too old for Little Colonel you move to letter groups that span from A-G.

When I became too old for Little Colonel I moved up to the E group immediately. This caused me to be unequivocally confident, especially since while I was in the E group, my three older cousins who I had skied with at the time were in the F group. It was about this time that I really developed a passion for skiing. I loved going up to the mountain every morning but not for lessons specifically. I loved it for the free period after lunch where we got to ski without an instructor. Though I was told by my cousins and grandfather to work on the things my instructor taught me to strengthen my skill, my distinguishing feature while I skied was I would always go straight down the hill and try to go as fast as I could. I always felt like practicing what I had learned in my lesson was drudgery. I also always liked going on the hardest trails I could handle and trying not to wipe out (that still happened quite a lot). Eventually I worked my way up to the F group with my cousins and then the four of us moved up to G. We then moved around because of a lack of instructors and we ended up in a group that we didn't belong in so we stopped doing the mountains lesson program.

After we dropped out of the lesson program, because of the hindrance with our placement, we started asking our grandfather to teach us what he knew though he wasn't an instructor and never was I still learned a lot from him. After a while my oldest cousin stopped skiing because she no longer enjoyed it leaving me, two other older cousins and my grandfather to be the ones to help teach my sister and my younger cousin. Eventually in the seventh grade I joined our schools ski club after hearing about it from a friend. For the club you have to take lessons at Jiminy Peak, the mountain of choice for the club, and so I enrolled into their lesson program. I learned so much within these new classes. My passion for skiing also grew because I was doing it with my friends and we all enjoyed it. We would race down the different trails pushing 40 to 50 miles per hour. It feels like you're flying. Through these experiences I found a way to express yourself.

and clear your mind. Some people look at skiing and see danger while I look at it as a therapy. We go so fast yet everything moves in slow motion around us. We fly while we're grounded as our edges cut through the snow and skid across the ice. This is why I love skiing and will never give it up.

Now I'm deprived of skiing partners because my friends have moved to a different school, my cousins have moved on with their lives, and my grandfather is starting to get too old to ski. So that is why I will teach my younger family members how to ski better, and why I want to look into opportunities for jobs, or maybe even competing. And one day maybe I'll be good enough to go pro and even make it to the Olympics. But that's all what if for now, I just have to make it a reality. This is why skiing is my unexpected treasure and what it means to me.



### **“A Bluebird Ski Day”**

*Garrett Stancliffe*

On February 25th of last year I started packing for a one week adventure to go see my aunt, uncle and cousins in Colorado. Me and my family had a flight out of Albany Airport at 5am in the morning, it was around zero degrees outside and it looked like a blizzard out the windows of the airport. I was all bundled up in my ski jacket and big sweatpants when I stepped off the plane in Colorado expecting about the same conditions as New York. What I wasn't expecting was when I walked out of the airport the hot 80 degree Colorado air hit me like a flame thrower.

When we were getting our ski bags and luggage off of the outside carousel my ski bag never came around. I was kind of bummed because I wouldn't be able to ski for the whole two week vacation. Usually we go skiing up in the mountains but without skis I would have to sit it out. Knowing the temperatures were way too hot to have snow on the mountains, I was not too upset because I wasn't expecting snow. After a day of biking and hiking in the rocky mountains we went out to a Chinese restaurant close by to my aunt and uncle's house. After the super good Chinese food we went to the Glacier Polar Bear which is the ice cream shop closest to them. While eating, my uncle announced that we would go skiing the next day at Eldora.

Our 2 hour car ride began at the crack of dawn. We started weaving up through the mountains until the sandy, rocky mountains turned to snow covered everything. Even though I had to sit the day out it was still fun watching all the skiers have a great day on the mountain. I was very surprised to see all the snow that had accumulated just because of the change in elevation. When we went back down the mountain pass I saw the snow melting down to water and running off into the stream that was meandering alongside the road.

My uncle started talking about the big snow storm that was slowly making its way to us. Before a snow storm my cousins always have spaghetti and meatballs. It was something they started when they were younger and it stuck. When we made it back to my aunt and uncle's house my aunt and mom started preparing the pasta for a spaghetti and meatball dinner. Even with the wonderful spaghetti and meatballs I was not too stoked with the snow storm because I wouldn't be able to ski at Winter Park the next day. I didn't want to be bothersome so I went to sleep.

I woke up to 6 inches of snow on the ground but no skis to ride still. I was thinking about not going up to Winter Park because it was a three hour ride to the resort, however, I had to passively agree because my aunt and uncle own a timeshare so they were planning on staying the night and staying for another day after that. I was not allowed to stay alone at the house because they couldn't trust me to make myself food and to tend to the dog alone. On the three hour ride mother nature didn't even think about stopping the snow, she just kept going for the whole ride. When we arrived at the timeshare it was buried in 2 feet of snow and me and my dad shoveled out the driveway so we could park the car. We arrived around 10am so everyone wanted to go skiing but I didn't go to the lodge and watch, I stayed in the house watched a bunch of skiing movies and ate ramen noodles all day long. When everyone came back on the shuttle bus they all had a smile on their face because there was so much snow on the trails. It continued to snow the rest of the night and into the next tomorrow morning when it finally came to an end.

Right at 7am the snow clouds started to drift away and all you could see in the sky was blue. This was the definition of a "bluebird ski day" and I was kind of dejected because, again, I wouldn't be able to experience the full beauty by going up the lift and skiing. So I decided to go sit in the lodge today just because it was a perfectly clear and I would actually be able to look out the windows and watch the skiers. I hopped off the shuttle and started walking up to the lodge when I noticed a Powder Hounds dealer with a whole bunch of demo powder skis. He immediately realized I didn't have skis and called me over. I told him the situation I was in and he said "you know what, which pair do you want for the day, pick one and if you don't like them come back and grab another pair." He had a pair of DPS Alchemist Yvette 112 skis (which I had been looking at for a long time) so I picked them. I thanked the dealer once again and went to get my ski gear excited that I could finally ski Colorado powder.

The skis were super flashy and super wide so they handled the powder like no other ski I had ever skied. Just having the opportunity to wear such expensive skis was an amazing empowering feeling, like I could accomplish any feature on the mountain. I had a blast skiing with my family in the Colorado powder. I had found a couple untouched pillow lines (rocks covered in snow that form big stair snow pillows) and a powder fields as well. Over all the day was amazing and it was all thanks to the salesman at the Powder Hounds booth. The unexpected treasure, that undoubtedly changed my life forever, was getting a pair of skis. And because of this, I had the most epic powder day of my life.

# Soccer Cinquain

By

*Justin Heinrichs*



*Kick  
Hard, Soft  
Flying, Gliding, Soaring  
Left, Loved, Forgotten, Adore  
Ball*

*Worn  
Used, Had  
Fast, Quick, Laced Up  
Used, Admired, Utilized, Loved  
Cleats*

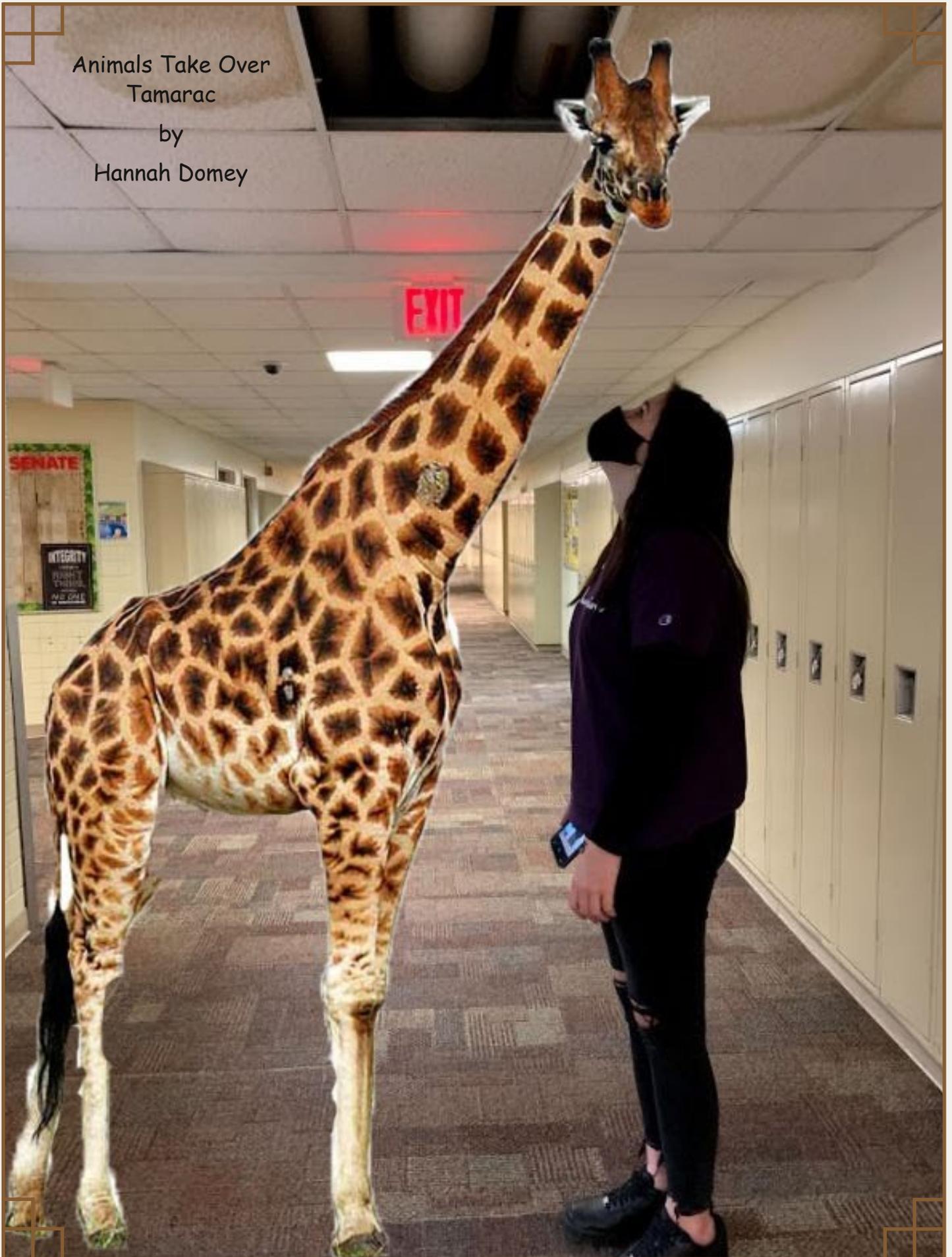
*Soccer  
Highs, Lows  
Kicking, Bumping, Running  
Hurt, Pain, Succession, Satisfied  
Life*



I have played soccer for as long as I can remember. There is no memory where I haven't been playing. Soccer has been very important to me my whole life. I play defense- positioned between the shooters and the goalie. My job as a sweeper is to sweep up the mess that anyone leaves me. I love playing that position because I can normally stop anything that comes toward me. The goalie says he really likes me as a sweeper because I am super aggressive- which helps him a lot. Soccer is very important to me and I can see this sport being a part of my life for years to come.

*Andrew Kaulfuss*

Animals Take Over  
Tamarac  
by  
Hannah Domey



## **Discovering Me Through Quarantine**

*Kyla Rosen*

The last year hasn't been easy for anybody, but it's given us all an opportunity to grow, learn more about ourselves, and find things that are most important to us. While being in lockdown wasn't enjoyable for anyone, it definitely had some positive effects on all of us. Covid-19 and quarantine helped me to become a better version of myself by showing me the people and things that I value and need the most, helping me gain confidence in who I am and what I like to do, introducing me to new hobbies and giving me the opportunity to develop stronger relationships with my parents, sister, and other few people I was able to see occasionally.

During quarantine I began to realize the things that are of the most importance to me. I had a lot of time to work on music and practicing my instruments, and play sports in the yard with my sister and dad. By having as much free time as I did, I was able to realize how much I enjoy music and want to continue pursuing it past high school. It also helped me to realize that as much as I enjoy sports, they weren't my main priority or something I excelled at, so if I want to continue playing for the rest of high school I am going to have to work hard for it and put in extra effort.

Not being able to go out and see my family and friends also helped me to figure out the people that I need most and are most important to me. Certain friends of mine would reach out to me and see how I was, facetime me, or even come hangout outside my house six feet apart, while others didn't even text me for the entirety of quarantine. These types of things really showed me what people I wanted to be around and were worth putting in effort for.

Being in lockdown last year really helped me to gain confidence and become happier with myself. Since I had nothing else to do, I started exercising more often, eating healthier, and taking better care of my mental and physical health. I was able to find the things that helped me relax and identify the things that were causing me stress and found ways to deal with them. By spending time on bettering myself and becoming the type of person I want to be. I began to start caring less about what others think of me and my choices.

Being alone all day for months at a time could quite obviously get rather boring, but luckily I was able to pick up new hobbies that I typically would've never thought to attempt. For example, I began reading quite regularly to the point where I was reading a new book each week and enjoying all the different stories and histories that I was learning. While I didn't dislike reading before quarantine, I have grown much more fond of it and continue to read for pleasure almost every day. When I wasn't reading or playing board games with my parents, I also got the chance to learn new instruments. I started playing ukulele and guitar during the summer, and while I am not excellent at either, I can now play both fairly well and do so on a regular basis.

Lastly, being in quarantine gave me the chance to develop better relationships with my family and close friends. My family and I have always done things together and gotten along decently, but throughout quarantine we were forced to spend a lot more time together and it has brought us all closer together.

Before last year ,my sister and I rarely spent time together and the time we did spend together was often full of arguing. But over the last year we have started to get along very well and are together whenever we're home. We now go on daily Dunkin runs together, take the dogs for car rides, and watch the Bachelor together every Monday. As well as strengthening my relationship with my family, I was also able to better my relationships with my best friends. Whenever we were bored, we would all facetime, text, or snapchat, and I got to know more about my friends than I would've if we were able to be together.

While quarantine was definitely not an enjoyable experience, it wasn't all negative, and improved my everyday life in more than one way. Thanks to being in lockdown, I was able to find new hobbies, find the things that I value the most, gain confidence in myself, and form stronger relationships. I may not want to have to quarantine ever again, but in some ways I am almost grateful for our previous quarantine since it helped me grow as a person.



### **“I am” Poem *Between Shades of Gray***

*Julianna Maxfield*

I am courageous and brave.  
I wonder how much irreversible damage Stalin has caused for my dear homeland.  
I hear the cries of my loved ones while they are dragged away by the officers.  
I see them fall into eternal misery whilst being held captive by the enemy.  
I want to be once again free, to express myself through meaningful pieces of art.  
I am courageous and brave.

I pretend I am back home, smelling the fresh soup that Mother has cooking on the stove.  
I feel the fresh air glide across my face as I lay on the sweet grass in my yard.  
I touch my soft bed sheets as Papa tucks me in after a long day of school.  
I worry that I will never be able to feel them again.  
I cry out to Papa in sorrow into the emptiness of the camp each night.  
I am courageous and brave.

I understand that there is so much hidden darkness in the world that light may never shine upon.  
I say that we are strong and can make it through the terror of this new life.  
I dream that one day I will make it back home to unleash the secret I've been living.  
I try to forget the things I've seen but the images still haunt me every time I close my eyes.  
I hope for abundant love and success in the future of those here with me.  
I am courageous and brave.

Matt LeBlanc

By

Rylee Grugan



# Spring & Summer Haikus

by Moira Collins

Spring is upon us  
The leaves are starting to bud  
The season of growth



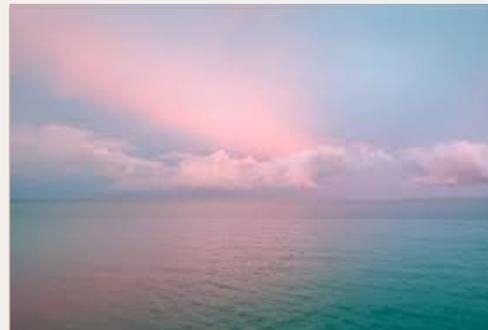
Soon the Earth goes green  
Floral scents are in the air  
People begin to smile



The breeze brings fresh air  
New beginnings all around  
The air is now clean



The warmth of the sun  
Hear the waves of the ocean  
Summer is now here



Lightning lights the sky  
Wind whipping at my window  
A storm is brewing



The tide draws me in  
The ocean and all it holds  
What is really there



## Class Cinquains

*Ryan Grugan*

Class  
Algebraic, geometric  
Calculating, graphing, solving  
A game of numbers  
Mathematics

Class  
Literary, Creative  
Writing, reading, discussing  
The world of words  
English

Class  
Chemical, atomic  
Hypothesizing, experimenting, analyzing  
How our world's run  
Science

Class  
Global, cultural  
Studying, attacking, developing  
How we got here  
History

Class  
Instrumental, musical  
Practicing, playing, performing  
Shows practice makes perfect  
Band

Class  
Physical, healthy  
Stretching, jogging, exercising  
Remaining fit is fun  
Gym



# Spring Haikus

*by Alex Ednie*

The grass is growing  
Frolicking through the grass  
fields



Roses are blooming  
Petals are glowing with light  
Flowers have power



Picnics in the park  
Wicker baskets full of eats  
That food tastes so good



Cherries in the sun  
Enjoying fruit for fun  
Berries are not done



Baseball is starting  
The Yankees are still the best  
Baseball brings much joy



Autumn  
*Julia Roseberger*

# The Seasons

*Averianna Crudo*



## *Fall Haiku*

The weather cools down  
The leaves are turning bright shades  
It is the best time

## *Winter Haiku*

Snow falls on my face  
The cold and dim days are here  
I grab a blanket

## *Spring Haiku*

The flowers bloom now  
Baby birds chirp with their moms  
Summer time is near

## *Summer Haiku*

Sunshine all the time  
Late nights and later mornings  
Tanning by the pool

# Cosmic Cinquains

*Composed by E.Mc*

Stars  
Bright, Meaningful  
Forming, Observing, Darkling  
Patterned stars making shapes  
Constellations

Princess of Ethiopia  
Beautiful, Powerful  
Exhibiting, Liberating, Converging  
Neighboring to the Milky Way  
Andromeda

The Hunter  
Strong, Bright  
Hunting, Searching, Cunning  
Belted to Rigel  
Orion

Queen of Ethiopia  
Vain, Beautiful  
Alluring, Deceiving, Condescending  
Connected to one of the brightest stars  
Cassiopeia

Son of Zeus  
Mighty, Determined  
Self-sacrificing, Revolutionizing, Pioneering  
Hero to many battles.  
Hercules

The Drag  
Prodigious, Defeated  
Scheming, Twisting, Shocking  
Defeated by Hercules  
Draco



# The Day That Changed Our Lives

*Andrew Kaulfuss*

It was a normal March day just like any other, when we started hearing news about something coming to the US and closing down the world.

“This will only last two weeks.”

Those are the last words I remember hearing from my teachers before the world changed forever.

States started closing down, masks became a necessity and our world was being turned upside down.

I can still remember the day, everything was normal.

March 13, 2020 and I remember thinking to myself... is this going to be the end?

March 13th was my dad's birthday and we went out for dinner.

The next day was when everything turned chaotic and the world has not been the same.

“Maintain distance!” “Wear your mask!” “Stop the spread!”

These phrases were everywhere.

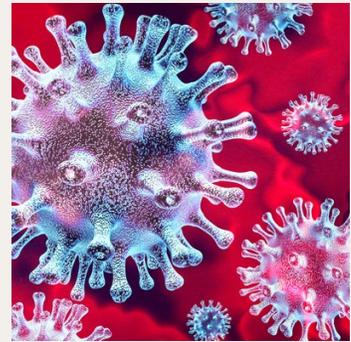
I feared that this virus was going to wipe out the entire human population.

People losing loved ones left and right.

You never knew who was going to be next.

It was spreading like wildfire on a warm sunny day.

And there was no stopping it.



Scientists tried and tried for months, trying to find the cure for this virus that would not stop.

Failure after failure they kept trying and trying to make our lives normal again.

There was just no stopping this monster.

After months and months of the world being chaotic,

They found a prevention.

Scientists finally created a vaccine that would make you immune to the virus and keep you safe.

They started with the most vulnerable people

Doctors, nurses, teachers and anyone who would be exposed the most.

March 2021, the world is slowly starting to get back to normal and they are starting to give the vaccine to more civilians.

The people are starting to feel like themselves again and feel as if they can finally overtake this monster.



"The Lion King" by Cyra Briggs

## **The Storm**

*Katelyn Yerdon*

This week, a year ago is when everything began.

A cycle started that no one could prepare for

Because for many people,

it was unknown.

It rained down upon us like an unforeseen forecast,

hail, sleet, and snow all at once.

We covered our heads with our arms for protection,

from the storm that had just begun.

We focused on the sky,

our eyes and hearts on the edge of their seats.

We wondered “What will happen next?”,

And continued the search for answers.

At first it was exciting,

2 weeks away from the world.

The storm had brought us a respite,

little did we know how much it would impact our lives.

The storm kept on,

moving all across the globe.

It kept everyone watching the streets

from the safety of their windows.

It hit cities far and wide

at a fleeting pace.

Many tried to beat the storm

But were caught in its embrace.

2 weeks stretched into months,

stuck inside our homes.

With impatience and hope we watched,

our lives get stripped away.

Storm after storm,  
piling upon the previous.  
We had gotten used to the  
same boundless feelings.

Lonesome and sad,  
we gazed upon the future.  
We wondered if our lives  
would be any different.

Anger arose amongst the people,  
Who had had enough of hoping  
for the return of their  
past life freedom.

The loop continued,  
On with it's cycle.  
People craved something new,  
or something worthwhile.

Finally the world had begun to break free,  
returning back to work and back to school,  
as many hoped we would be.  
But it wouldn't be the same and soon we would see.

Many were still stuck at home,  
living in a sequence.  
We wondered if the closing of the storm was nearing,  
or if these blustery events were just the beginning.





Kiss me, Ace  
by  
Jessie Dunteman

## **This One's for You, Papa**

*Jackson Bauer*



It has officially been almost an entire year since we left school for what we thought was only going to be a week or so long quarantine because of the developing coronavirus epidemic. I have learned so much during the whole experience of this pandemic that has taken almost a year of normalcy from my life that I will never get back. One of the many things I have learned from this life changing experience is not to take the little things for granted.

The little things like visiting my grandparents for a day even if it's just to do yard work for them is so important. I realized I had taken this precious time for granted when on Christmas Eve I had found out my Papa had tested positive for Covid-19. My Papa has raised me my whole life and I am very close to him. My Papa is seventy three years old and has been on oxygen all the time. When I found out that he tested positive I was terrified because I knew things could get really bad. Also my seventy-five year old grandmother who works four jobs in order to support the house her and my Papa live in was not able to get a Covid test because she showed no symptoms but was not allowed to go back to work at any of her jobs until she had received one. On top of the fear of losing my Papa, I had also found out that almost every member of my extended family had also tested positive, including my little cousins who are five and eight years old. I was beyond worried about what would happen to my family as they all have multiple jobs to support themselves and I was worried what would happen to them if they could no longer work. Luckily I was able to keep in touch with most of my family members during their quarantine except for my Papa who was hospitalized and we were not able to see him. After weeks of not knowing how he was doing we received a call. The call gave us lots of relief and less stress of the situation when we heard that he was doing much better and was eating and allowed to be released from the hospital.

Another little thing that had affected me during this pandemic was missing just being able to go to work like I used to. Work was a safe and happy place to me. I work at Lebanon Valley Speedway with lots of my family members, which as you can tell from my last paragraph I have a strong connection to my family. I missed cheering on my uncle as he would race. I miss making money so I can go out of the house and be with friends making the most of my teenage years but sense Covid 19, a lot of that has been taken away.

The last thing that has impacted me since Coronavirus has spread is that I miss in person, normal schooling. I have never been much of a fan of school, but once it was moved to online I lost all motivation. My grades showed that I have for years taken advantage of school. In the past I didn't realize how nice it was being able to see friends everyday and how much easier it is to do the work in school rather than at home. With the loss of motivation, doing any of my school work when I am not in person at school is extremely stressful and a drag. It has shown drastically, classes I would normally get 80s & 90s in have dropped so significantly to around thirties and forties and I'm worried if I can't salvage them again. I now know for sure that after this crazy school year I will never take a normal in person school year for granted ever again. I will always appreciate being able to be in school and talk to my friends on a daily basis.

In conclusion, I will never take time for granted ever again after this experience. Time is extremely important to me now that I don't have much of it. And many things can change your life in a second so I will try for now on to make the best of it. For example, I will always take advantage of what being in school provides for me when I'm back to normal schooling, going to the race track, cheering on my family, and most importantly my time with my Papa.

## **The Meaning of Life**

*Hannah Domey*

The Coronavirus pandemic has been a huge eye opener. There have been many negative things that have happened this year, from being isolated to not being able to go anywhere or do anything. This year has been definitely tough, but I learned so many things about myself that really improved my mental state. Without having time during the pandemic, I don't think I would have been able to improve my well-being. This last year has been very influential to me, it has some negatives, a lot of positives, and made me realize who I am and what I want.

Before the pandemic started I was in a tough place, I was constantly busy with either cheerleading, my shoulder injury, or schoolwork. I barely had time to rest and to think about what I wanted. I had so much on my mind for like 2 months straight, that it would really stress me out causing me to feel unmotivated and tired. This caused my grades to start to drop and put a strain on my friendships with family and friends. My father and I started to argue a lot and I lost a close friendship that really hurt me. During this time, I felt like a stranger. I didn't really know who I was and I didn't like that, it made me feel terrified. I tried so hard to feel like myself but I just couldn't find a way with what was all happening. Then the pandemic happened and I thought I was going to become worse.

For many people they saw the pandemic as a terrible thing when it first started, myself included. I thought not being able to go anywhere or do anything would drive me crazy. After a little while, I realized that I actually enjoyed it the first couple of months. I had a lot of time to just sit there and think about what I wanted to change and my life and learn how to love myself again. It was one of the best experiences I have ever had. It really impacted mental health positively just becoming more like myself again. As a result, my friendships and relationships started to improve and I could concentrate better causing my grades to increase. Lastly, I learned what my true values were and what I wanted to do differently in the future.

The pandemic really impacted me as a person, it made me who I am today. Without the pandemic, I don't think I would have had the time to figure out and realize what I truly wanted for myself. Yes, this experience was frustrating at times- but it still helped me in many ways that I am grateful for. This last year has been very influential to me, it had negatives, positives, and made me realize who I am and what I want.



**Duke & Buster**  
Photo by Kori Meyer

## **Finding The Good In The Bad**

*Kaitlyn Bechand*

I can still remember March 16, 2020 sitting in classes, like normal, and having each of our teachers tell us that the school doesn't know if we will have to be out of school ever, but just in case we are going to be getting two weeks worth of work. Two weeks. They thought that maybe we will be out for two weeks but that has to be it, right? Nope. So here we are less than one week away from the one year anniversary of that day, and we are still out of school.

I think we can all agree that this past year has definitely been a handful with all of the changes that have occurred. It was definitely a year to remember but probably not for the amazing things that happened. You will most likely remember this year to have been horrible, it was the year that took away half of our freshman year and practically all of our sophomore year. It was the year that took a record breaking number of lives. It is so easy to look at all of these things and think that this year has been nothing but horrible, a year that you never want to think about again. But if you really think about it this year has been more than just these things. This year has brought us together more than ever. It has definitely given us difficulties but through working together and being creative we are getting through this.

This year we may not have been able to actually be together but through this hard time we have learned how to adapt and not take things for granted. This school year has taught me to appreciate being able to go to school like normal. It has helped me to appreciate being able to see my friends, and being in classes with my friends. This year we barely are able to see people and classes are nowhere near what they were in other years. My schedule especially has been different as half of my day is music classes, which are a lot different these days.

Even though I'm sure that everyone prefers to be learning in person like normal, for me, this time of learning online has been a great experience. Learning online is what thousands of college students do every year. I think that this learning remotely has helped to give people a glimpse of what online college would be like to better prepare them for the future.

Online learning has also made for me to be able to be more independent with my school work. In a normal year you are given a pretty straight forward schedule that repeats every single day and it can get boring over time. This year, we are mostly given assignments that we have to independently complete but for most assignments you could do them at a later time if you had to. I like being able to control my own schedule when it comes to doing assignments. Not only has this year allowed me to be independent but it has given me more free time.

As students, the majority of our time is spent doing school work, eight hours of school, and then maybe three hours of homework at night, just to wake up and do it again. Most students don't have much free time due to all of this work. But this year we have been able to have much more free time. For me as soon as school closed the first thing that I picked up was my guitar. Over the past year I have spent countless hours playing my guitar, improving my skills and the enjoyment that I have while playing. This free time has also allowed for us to have more time to talk to friends.

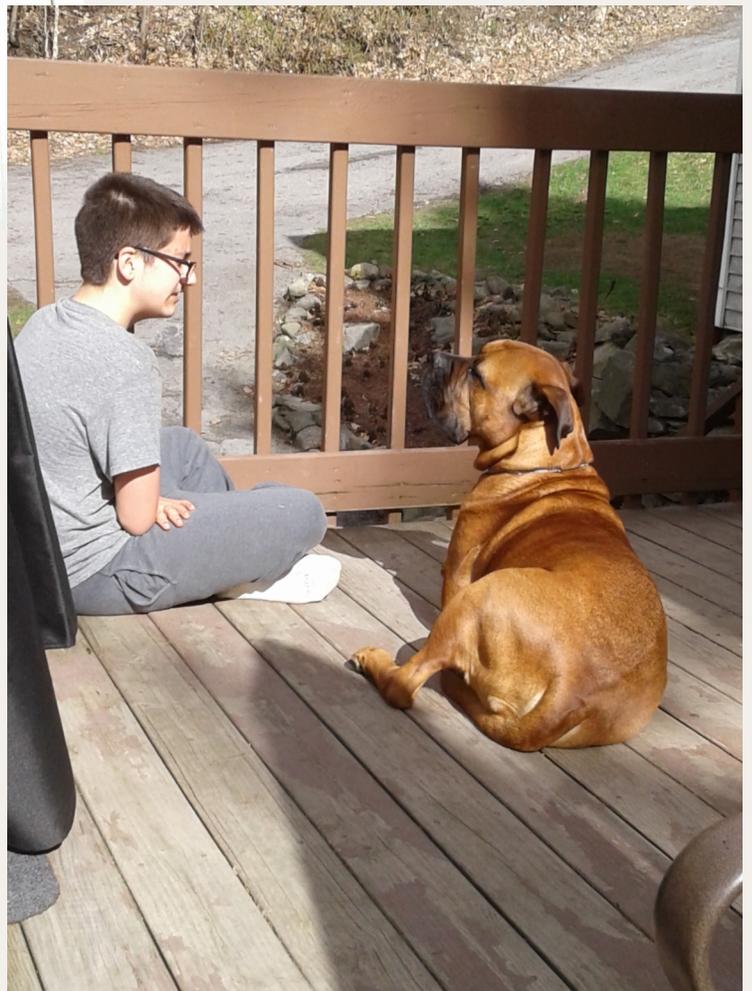
A lot of the time that we spend with friends happens at school since we are there for so long. But this year there was no school to talk to our friends at so we had to get creative. This year I have spent so much time talking to my friends on FaceTime. Sometimes we will just sit there together and do homework or just talk during lunch, either way it's just nice to be able to talk to our friends again.

This year has definitely been a hard one for everyone whether it be because of school being online or because of a more personal event, everyone can agree that this year has been a year to remember. I have had my fair share of losses and difficulties this year, but the most important thing is that we have gotten through it. We have learned to adapt to this new way of life and we have learned to appreciate normal life even more. This year may have been bad but in the long run we will be able to look back on this year as a year that has taught us so much.





Red is special to me because he loves me when I get home from school. He always misses me. We like to play ball together. I sometimes roll the ball and he goes after it really fast!



## A Boy & His Dog

*Joe DeGeorge*

## "Pre Party Panic"

Jenna Lackey

1950 is me and you  
they don't know about what we do

Don't blame me if I am crazy  
I can't help it Betty if in my dreams I see Dorothea

Though I love you're the girl next door  
The illicit affairs in my head grow like ivy  
Even if at the Mariner's apartment complex you have a million reasons to be mine!

But I'm in the business of misery

Like a lost Valerie,

And the monster in me grows on nights like this  
And even though I'm not so secretly in love with you,  
And you're forever on my mind

I can't.

Because you're only an angel and I'm nasty  
Cold like Alaska but I'd go for you  
Even if you're all I wanted

I can't.

In the ordinary world I wouldn't have August or our song

This addiction to andante

But in the red of rehab I replay our ride with Rhiannon

And I tell em this love is too deep time after time to no avail

Time stays still at the willow  
Clueless in the cruel summer of blue velvet  
But like Yoko Ono she wasn't bad

And don't you miss the way I loved you  
the fighting and the you don't know me's  
All I ask is the living proof of our love song to live 4EVER  
Like pink lemonade on Sunday

And even though we were born to die  
I'll always remember us this way  
As spark's fly in your diet mountain dew eyes  
And it's something to hold on to

But back to black and expectations in empty space  
Figures on the wall like the ghost of Atlantis  
Battlefields in my brain bringing me to the cliff's edge

Because I'm a fool  
And it's complicated  
As you set fire to the rain.

A shameless fool like Francis forever  
As I hope you come to my window

Your best American girl  
because climbing the tower is Something American to do!

But it's not you who calls my phone or who dances with me tonight  
But somebody else,

And training wheels trip and fall and crush it all  
Leaving bad like a call to Tyrone  
Distractions close to me fed jealousy led to a loss of true love

Fire on fire as the dominos fall  
Cause falling for you lost me being beneath your beautiful at all

And with a last goodbye

And a tattooed heart

You write on me forever

And I'm sorry I ruined it

Because everybody loves somebody

And I loved you

- James

*The poem is written with hidden song titles from my favorite songs of all time.*

*See if you can find them all! (ps. There are 87 in total)*

*Songs by*

*King Princess One Direction Taylor Swift Fleetwood Mac*

*Copperpot Jason Derulo Lana Del Rey Lady Gaga*

*Paramore Amy Winehouse Little Mix Kehlani*

*Dylan Conrique Harry Styles Janet Jackson Aliyah Moulden*

*Duran Duran Doja Cat Lily James Zendaya*

*Sabrina Carpenter Camila Cabello Cyndi Lauper*

*Ellie Williams Mob Rich Liz Gillies Adele*

*Clairo Sam Smith The Band CAMINO*

*Lauren Jauregui James Arthur Jessie Reyez Adaline Seafret Jordin Sparks*

*Hayley Kiyoko Alyson Stoner*

*Avril Lavigne Mitski Melissa Etheridge Jade Bird*

*Olly Murs The 1975 Melanie Martinez Ella Mai Erykah Badu Ellie Goulding*

*Jordan Fisher Jessie J Labrinth Ariana Grande Fifth Harmony Dean Martin*



Kaleidoscope 2

by

Joey Poulin

# Orange Cookies

*Gianna Gervais*



By Gianna Gervais

## Ingredients:

2 Tbs Orange Rind

Juice of half an orange

1 1/4 cups of honey

2 1/2 cups All Purpose Flour

1/4 tsp salt

1/2 tsp Orange Flavoring

2/3 cup butter (softened)

1 egg beaten

3 tsp baking powder

## Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix together the butter & honey. Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt- then add to the honey mixture. Beat until all combined and the batter is a smooth, creamy texture. Fold in beaten egg, grated orange rind and orange juice. Refrigerate the dough for 30 minutes. Drop the batter in teaspoonfuls on a greased cookie sheet. Bake for 8-10 minutes.

# French Vanilla Cupcakes With Swiss Buttercream Frosting

*Gianna Gervais*



By Gianna Gervais

## Ingredients:

3/4 cup unsalted butter softened

2 large eggs

1/2 tsp baking powder

1/8 tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla extract

3/4 cup light brown sugar

1 1/3 cups All Purpose Flour

1/2 tsp baking soda

1/2 cup milk

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

- 1) Combine butter & sugar- add eggs one at time.
- 2) Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda & salt. Measure out milk & vanilla extract together.
- 3) Add about 1/4 of the flour to the sugar / butter mixture. Add 1/3 of the milk & vanilla mixture and beat until all is combined. Repeat these steps, alternating the ingredients.
- 4) Fill about 1/2 to 3/4 full of cupcake batter.
- 5) Bake for 20-22 minutes until golden and the cake springs back when lightly touched.

## Frosting

### Ingredients:

6 large egg whites	2 cups granulated sugar
1 1/2 cups unsalted butter	(cut into Tbsp size pieces)
1/8 tsp salt	2 tsp vanilla extract

### Directions:

- 1) Separate the eggs. Save the yolks for another recipe.
- 2) Cook the egg whites with sugar: Whisk sugar & eggs together, set bowl over a saucepan filled with simmering water. Do not let the mixing bowl touch the water. Whisk the whites and sugar constantly until the sugar is dissolved and mixture thinned out (look for frothy consistency).
- 3) Transfer the warm mixture to another mixing bowl and beat until stiff peaks form and the meringue is not longer warm to touch. (refrigerate for 10 minutes)
- 4) Once cooled, begin to add the pieces of butter 1 Tbsp at time. After the butter has been added, beat in the vanilla and salt.

# The Life of a Tree

*Kyla Rosen*



Today I wake up and it's raining. I hate the rain, especially when my leaves have not all grown back. Now my branches are going to get soaked. To top it off, I can hear thunder in the distance, and where there's thunder, there's lightning. Lightning is my second biggest fear, after chainsaws, and I saw my buddy get struck only a couple weeks ago.

The rain doesn't pass for a few hours and I feel like a wet dog. Speaking of wet dogs, that little one that lives in the house next to me decided today was a good day to mark his territory. On me. Now on top of my dripping branches, I also reek of dog pee. I hate dogs. They think it's a competition to see who can pee on me last and make it smell the worst. And it's not like I can wash it off. The little dogs are especially awful. Not only do they pee on me, but afterwards they almost always kick dirt into my face. Once again, not like I can wash it off.

Now don't even get me started on birds. At some point in time they determined that since I can't walk away, they can build their nests in me and leave their little, annoying, chirping babies there all day long. Plus, birds poop a lot. Somewhere along the line it seems that the animals decided I'm nature's toilet. I do not appreciate it. How would you feel if everyone did their business on you all day, and there was nothing you could do about it? Not very sanitary right?

Humans are the worst of all. They might not use me as their personal bathroom, but they hardly even notice I'm here at all. They play sports and hit me with the ball, they carve writing into me that can never go away, and some of them even climb to the top of me, which usually results in a few broken branches. Ever broken your arm? It's like that. Just as painful, but unfixable. The first few humans I met I was rather fond of. They were a cute young couple who had just moved into a house on my street. They would come and have picnics under me and bring a blanket to watch the stars with me at night. I was really starting to feel like we were good friends. Then I heard it. The chainsaw coming from their backyard. Once I knew what they were doing I never looked at them the same way again. They were tearing down my cousins in their backyard so that they could get a pool. That's when I ultimately realized the truth. humans are selfish.

Now I understand that my previous statement might seem like an unfair assumption. But think about it. You tear us down so you can use our wood for your own personal benefit. You dehydrate us because our sap tastes good. You rip off our branches to put in your fire pits. Now think about it from this perspective. Imagine I chopped off your legs and used them to make myself a desk. Imagine I drained all your blood from your body because I wanted to turn it into syrup and sell it. Imagine I ripped off your arms because they help get my fire started quicker. Not a pleasant thought right? Well that's essentially what humans do to us every day.

I don't want it to seem like I hate everyone and everything, it's just easier to get that out of the way first. There's plenty of things that I like. For example, I really like deer. They're gentle and kind. They poop around me, but never on me. I don't think they could hurt me if they tried. But of course the little demon dogs always chase them away. I'm also rather fond of the morning dew. It's quite hydrating and gives me a glossy complexion.

Okay but now that I got some positives in, one more thing. I absolutely completely and utterly hate those little frogs. I can't exactly explain this one. They just seem so conceited and egotistical. Hopping around all day, getting in everyone's business, even though they serve no real purpose in nature and are entirely unnecessary creatures. Sometimes they'll chill in my dirt like they own the place, or get this, sometimes they'll even hop onto my trunk. It feels rather violating.

Anyways now you know a little more than you wanted to know about my life, and maybe now you'll be a little more considerate when you want to impress your friends by climbing the tallest tree.



## Photocubism



*by Emily Film*



**Color Select  
Tree**  
*Sal LoPorto*

## **Life's a Pitch!**

*Evan Franz*

Babe Ruth once said, "Never allow the fear of striking out to keep you from playing the game." I am glad that I got your undivided attention. My name is Rawlings. All of my family members have the same name. Isn't that weird? I was born at the Rawlings Factory in Costa Rica. I weighed 5.1 ounces and measured 9 inches in circumference. I am white and have one hundred eight red stitches on me. My name and the logo for Major League Baseball are tattooed in navy blue ink on me. I was packed in a case with seventy one of my friends and family. My destination was unknown.

Why do hitters hate me so much? Pitchers adore me until they give up a homerun. I hate that I always get blamed for human error. I prefer pitchers that throw a lot of strikes. Pitchers have different ways to throw me including a fastball, curveball, slider, changeup, cutter and knuckleball. Bat boys are my best friends because they find me and bring me back.

My favorite song is Take Me Out to the Ballgame. My favorite movie is Sandlot, but the Beast gives me nightmares. My idol is Nolan Ryan because he threw seven no-hitters.

My great, great grandfather was hit by Ted Williams five hundred two feet on June 9, 1946 at Fenway Park. A red seat located in the right field bleachers in section forty-two, row thirty-seven, seat twenty-one marks the place my grandfather landed. Unfortunately, my great, great grandfather sustained a concussion during that incident. He was never the same again. My grandfather was the ball from Nolan Ryan's last no hitter on May 1, 1991. Those are some big shoes to fill!

My work has given me the opportunity to travel. I would like to go to every Major League Baseball stadium during my lifetime. The best stadium is Fenway Park. It is one of the oldest stadiums and has a lot of character. The worst stadium is Yankee Stadium. It is a new stadium, but it is still my least favorite place to work. Foodies flock to baseball games due to the wide array of food available there. I highly recommend the mouth watering Philly cheesesteaks from Citizens Bank Park. I have more recommendations on my blog, Taste Me Out to the Ballgame. Check out my blog for additional information.

I am still grieving the loss of my brother. He was murdered by Martin Maldonado from the Milwaukee Brewers on April 18, 2014. He was blown apart at the seams near first base. It was a tragedy. Rest in peace.

I had the honor of being the ball that was David Ortiz's final home run. It was September 30, 2016. It was a day that I will never forget. I cried when he walked up to the plate. Ortiz had a reputation for hitting nukes and I was frightened. I think I peed my pants, but please don't tell anyone. Ortiz gave me a splitting headache when he sent me sailing at Fenway Park. I dream of being enshrined at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York when Big Papi is inducted. Players have to wait five years from when they retire before they are eligible to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. My mother's mantra is patience is a virtue. I am chomping at the bit. While I wait to be inducted, I want to get a tattoo on myself that reads "Kiss my seams!" so that I will be unique and not look like all the others in the Hall of Fame. I think this will show that I have filled the shoes of my grandfather and great grandfather!



## A Day in the Life of Taj

*Michael Brooks*

Hi guys! My name is Taj. I am black and white Pitbull Lab mix with big floppy ears. I love to play with everyone, but when my humans take me out most of the other humans run away from me like I am going to hurt them. I wonder why that is? I am super friendly and always happy!

I'd say my favorite day of the week is Friday. That is when my "friends" come over to play (as in my brother, Jake and Michael). My day typically starts at 5:00am. I wake up, stretch, jump and lick my humans. Sometimes I hurt them by mistake, my nails are sharp. My human takes me outside to run around and "do my business". Michael makes sure I have breakfast in my bowl and cold water; I love ice cubes. While I am eating, I keep walking over to my human. I need to be sure he is still around. I hate being alone, my doctor said I have anxiety. Whatever that means?

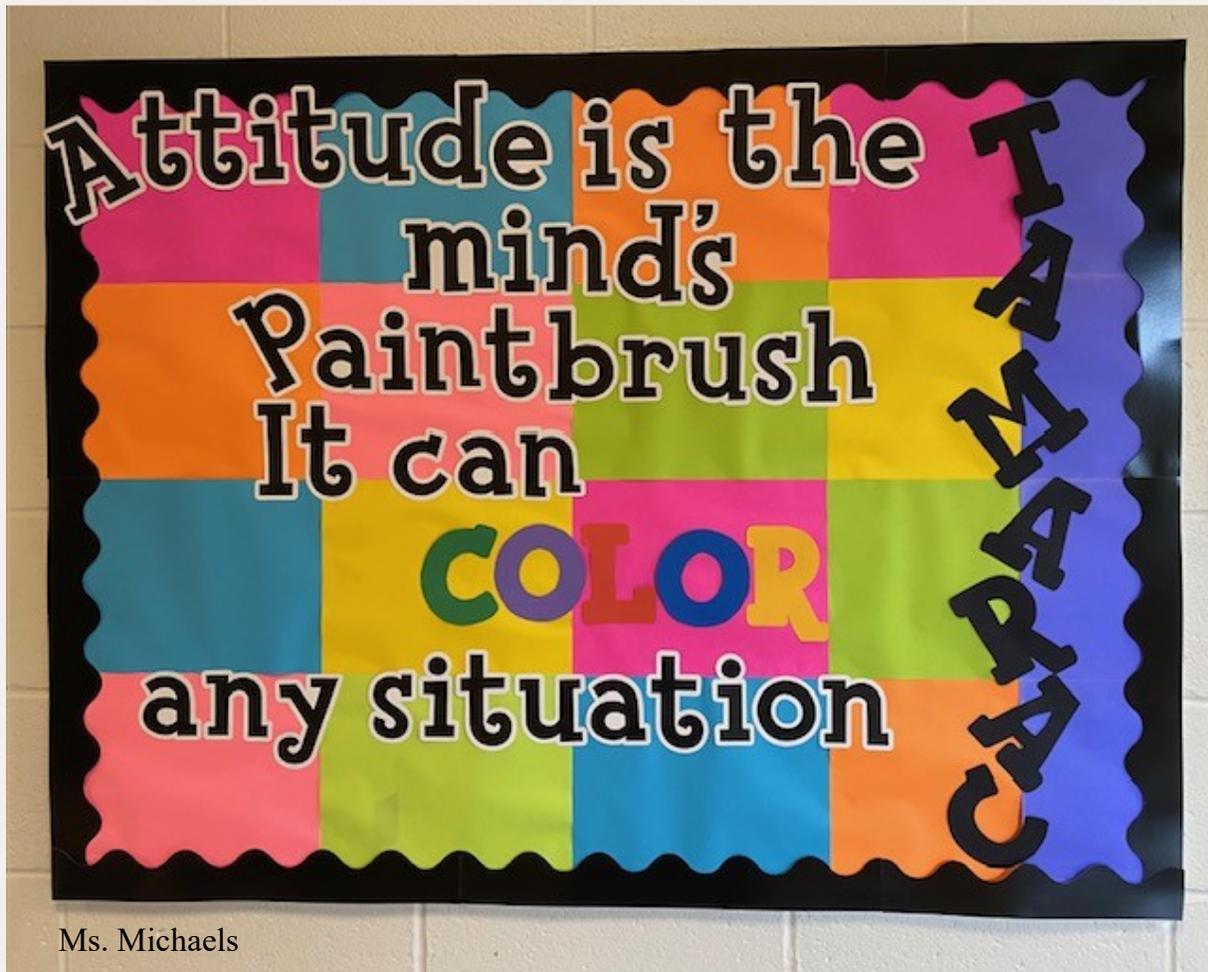
When 7:30am comes around my mom meets me in the kitchen. I am so excited to see her that my wagging tail takes out all sorts of stuff around me. This is my time to annoy her for a little while. I bring her my toy for her to play fetch with me. And I wait for those magic words "Do you want to go outside?" I must sniff everything and don't miss a spot- until I hear those mean words ringing in my ears, "Time to come in!" Cold water and ice awaits me as I bound up the stairs. Mom is my BFF, she always makes scrambled eggs, I have to stay close by and watch in case she drops something, but I always get a scoop anyway.

At 12:00pm every day I get to go for a ride in the car. My dad human takes me to McDonalds, where I get a snack, a plain McDouble. I don't like pickles and onions. And I sometimes get lucky when he throws in order of French fries. But the grease upsets my stomach if I have too many fries, so I have to be careful. When I get home my human gives me my snack, it does not take long for me to finish but It takes my humans forever So of course, I have to stay close by and watch in case they drop another treasure for me to eat.

After lunch I go outside to play. Some of my humans are outside jumping around on that big black circle thing with a bunch of netting around it. I don't wait for an invitation to join them- I know where the entrance is!

Last summer my Mom and Dad fixed their pool. I got to go swimming; I really hope this summer I can go swimming again. I really liked swimming, but I did make it hard on my Mom when I wouldn't get out and kept swimming away from her. I also popped all the big things in the water that my humans like to sit on. Don't tell anyone, but I missed the ball on purpose while playing with my humans, and had to go into the pool to retrieve it. I loved to sneak to the pool sometimes, but my humans found out and fixed the hole in the fence. Before you know it I am back in the house again. My mom usually has dinner ready, but sometimes they leave the house and I have to eat by myself. I wonder where they go. After I eat, I go lay down in my human's bed until they come home.

When the night comes my mom and brothers pat my head and I choose whose room to go in. I normally go to my brother's room because I like his room better. Don't tell my mom though. Sometimes in the night my older brother comes home from work and he brings food. So I stand there acting cute so he will give me some. Then I close my eyes and go to sleep.



Ms. Michaels

## **Quaran-Teen**

Always in my house; my brain twisted and twirled  
Never wanting to go outside; now I want to explore the world  
I've never felt so alone, quarantine never ends  
But even though I'm alone, I've got so many online friends  
With all this time inside  
I finally took the time  
To figure out what's going on in my head  
I think I need a break  
From all the stress that it takes  
For me to just get out of bed

I spend all of my time on my phone  
Staring at screens meeting people I'll never know  
Cause this is Quarantine  
As a Quaran-Teen  
Figuring out my identity  
Cause I don't know who I am  
I don't expect you to understand

I try so hard to just get up  
That I never act like a 'grownup'  
I'm slowly figuring myself out  
Feeling less and less doubt  
20 hours on my phone a day  
To 5 or 6 about every day  
Taking a step away from screen  
So I can catch my breath before I collapse and scream

I'm clearing my head before it's all gone  
Making my phone something I don't depend on  
Which might sound strange coming from a kid  
Maybe I'll go outside, cause that's what I did  
I took a step away and focused on myself  
I tried my best to take care of something else

I spend all of my time on my phone  
Staring at screens meeting people I'll never know  
Cause this is Quarantine  
As a Quaran-Teen  
Figuring out my identity  
Cause I don't know who I am  
I don't expect you to understand

I think I've got it resolved  
My emotions have no need to dissolve  
Quarantine might have been hard  
But I spent lots of time in my yard  
Distracting myself from the fact  
That it'll be a while till I get to interact.

**Composed by- Olliver Bulmer**

## A Shape Poem: Gratitude

by  
*Justin Heinrichs*

In the past year I have learned  
so many lessons about my life.  
I have been very grateful to  
be able to see my grandparents.

Some people aren't  
able to see their  
family. I am also  
grateful to be  
able to play  
sports during a  
time that it seems  
the most difficult.

It is incredible  
that people make  
it possible for me  
to do what I  
enjoy. It came  
so quickly and  
nobody was ready

for COVID-19. I am grateful  
for my awesome friends who  
stuck with me through these  
times. I am grateful for  
everyone who is making  
sure everyone is  
safe.

## Realizing What's Important In My Life

*Noah Buckley*

This past year has been a very big change for everyone in the world. But despite all of the negative things that have been happening, it has helped me realize the things that are important in my life. Since quarantine I think I have really grown as a person. I have learned the importance of hard work, thinking ahead, and the fact that there's nobody out there who is going to get you to achieve your goals but you.

Once school closed in the spring last year I started working full time with my father renovating buildings in Troy. I learned many valuable working skills, the importance of having a drive to be successful, and I also met many high status employers that I could potentially work for later on in life. I have also learned many lessons through working with other people. There was this one man who worked with us. He was 35 years old with 2 kids that he didn't take care of, he had no car, lived with a friend and didn't even file his taxes to get a stimulus check. He was the only worker who showed up at the construction site with no tools. Even I came with my own tools and I was 15. I just remember watching him mess everything up for 3 months until he lost his job in the middle of a pandemic and it was all his fault. All I could think to myself is that it is so easy to do the wrong thing, and no matter what I do I don't want be like that guy. I want have my life together and have a plan. My father has also shown me the importance of forecasting and preparing for the future. If you don't think about it and plan ahead then you will mess up and fall behind. Then it's impossible to catch back up again. I am very grateful to have a father who teaches me all of these things and has helped.

Once summer ended and classes started again I realized how much I just want to get out of school and start my life as an adult. My dad even told me that working a full time job and having that amount of money as a kid for the first time would ruin me. I felt like I had nothing to do and I hated the fact I couldn't find any work until I got a job at Tommy's pizza that I can do after school. I think about this so often that I have even planned everything out. I want to go to Vo-Tech to study HVAC, and after I graduate high school I will go to HVCC to get certified and then get right into the workforce. I have been saving up all my money from working to get a truck that I can use to make more money by mowing lawns, changing hot water heaters or any other type of odd job. I'm going to save all of this money and try to start my own business. I'm glad that working has helped me mature and start planning ahead.

Even though this quarantine has been a big change, it's a little bit bitter sweet because I got to be exposed to all of these new experiences and learn so many new things and I am starting to see the bigger picture in everything. My life as an adult is coming very soon and I am starting to see a path to success.





"Ari"  
by  
Jessie Dunteman

## With Friends And Family By My Side

*Carmelo LoPorto*

Over the last year there have been a lot of good and bad changes in my life due to Covid. Luckily for me I was still able to see my family and hang out with a friend here or there because I wasn't affected as bad as a lot of other people were. I was able to have a lot of positives come out of this, and I hope there is still more to come.

I was lucky to be able to get through these hard times a lot easier than other people, but I couldn't have done it without my friends and family alongside me. Over this past year I started doing a lot of things I thought I would have never done if it weren't for Covid. Ever since Covid has started I have been wanting to get out and do new things, so a few of my friends and I decided to start playing golf. We all loved it, and whenever we were bored and needed to get out of the house we would go golfing. Golf really helped me get through these tough times, and I am glad I was able to share these great experiences with the people closest to me.

I know a lot of people didn't make it through as easy as I did through these hard times, and I am so grateful for the fact that I can be with my family. I wish that everyone could have the luxuries that I have. We have been able to spend time with my grandparents. And during the pandemic, I was able to spend more time with my dad because he did not have to work as much.

Ever since Covid has started there have been a lot of people who have lost someone close to them, and luckily that was not the case for me. But thanks to my friends and family I was able to make it through the year without any major problems in my life. Eventually we will be able to go back to normal, but before we can do that we all have to work together, and let this virus take its course, and then we will be able to build ourselves and our communities back up to the way they were before.

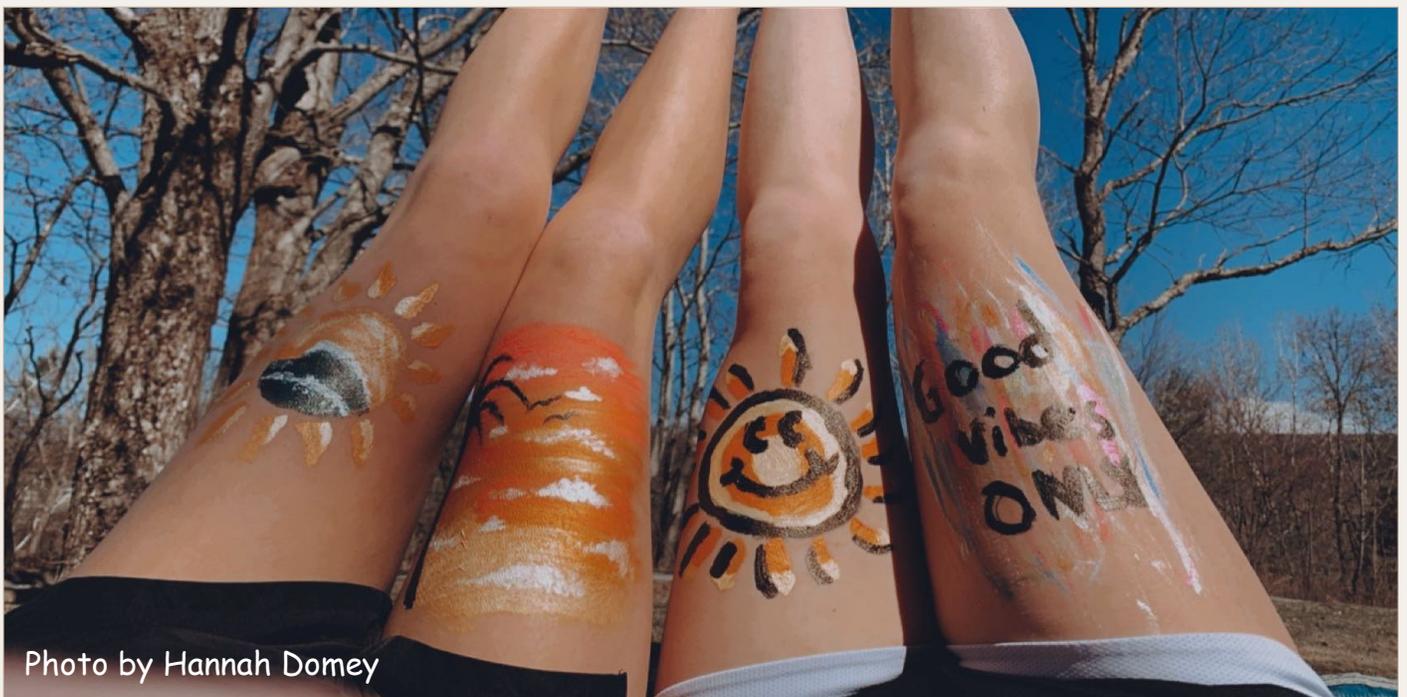


Photo by Hannah Domey

# **We Didn't Start The Virus**

*Ella Riganti*

Wildfires, WW3, Harry left the Monarchy  
Kobe and Gianna died and no more party  
Work from home, computer slow  
This virus will not seem to go  
Death Hornets sneak in  
Trouble out in England

Tik Tok, quarantine  
Make sure to keep clean  
Carol Baskin, Tiger King  
My boredom keeps occurring

Try and find the vaccine  
Everything must stay clean  
Out of toilet paper rolls  
And very high death tolls

We didn't start the virus  
And we must quarantine  
Until we can be seen  
We didn't start the virus  
Gonna binge Outer Banks  
And wear a mask, thanks!

2020- year from he\$\$  
Wear a mask or go to jail  
When will this end?  
I can't seem to tell

Online school, which doesn't rule  
This year is not cool  
It just doesn't seem to end  
I just want to see my friend

Corona ruins everything  
I'm holding on by a string  
My boredom is sinking in  
This is getting under my skin

We didn't start the virus  
And we must quarantine  
Until we can be seen  
We didn't start the virus  
Gonna binge Outer Banks  
And wear a mask, thanks!

Lets end Covid 19  
By getting our vaccine  
I just want to be seen  
By the time I turn 16

Is King Jong Un dead  
Cause that what he said  
All these rumors spread around  
I just want the truth to be found

Who is anonymous  
And what does he want from us  
Trouble out in Beirut  
This issue is not acute

We didn't start the virus  
And we must quarantine  
Until we can be seen  
We didn't start the virus  
Gonna binge Outer Banks  
And wear a mask, thanks!



# Team Believe

*Grace Huffam*

2020 has definitely a year that no one will forget. Years from now history books are going to be filled with everything that happened and our kids will ask us where we were during all of it. Many of us will say to them that we felt trapped and fell into a place of depression. I am glad to say that many of the things that happened in 2020 were positive. One thing was that I joined a new synchronized skating team called Team Believe. This team is located in Saratoga, New York.

Last year I was on an open adult team called Empire Edge. This team was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and my friend and I were the only teens on the team. United States Figure Skating changed the rules over the summer preventing anyone under the age of 18 from being on an open adult team. This made it so I could not be on the team and I would have to find another team to be on for the next season. I wasn't too worried about it because I had months to find somewhere.

At this point, I started to look at colleges and I was looking for schools that would allow me to continue skating with the college. Not being on a team was not an option for me because I wouldn't be able to be on the higher level teams if I wasn't already on a team in high school. I always knew of Team Believe. I looked up to them when I was younger and I always saw them at different competitions. Some of the girls on the team I would see every once in a while at skating sessions. Last year they came to my club's Christmas show and I realized that they were about my level and I could easily be on that team.

Over the summer my mom reached out to the team to see if there was an open spot for me. We were a little hesitant because the rink was an hour away from my house and that team was known for having up to 5 practices a week. I decided to make that commitment and sacrifice so that I could be on Team Believe. After emailing back and forth for about a month they told us that their first practice back was the following week.

As soon as I got there I loved it. The girls were all nice to me and very friendly. The coach, Missy, was my type of coach. She was strict but also liked to have fun and had relationships with all of the girls which I think is really important. Since then I have been on this team all season and we have grown relationships together and had a lot of fun together.





Grace Huffam

2021

**Be Yourself;  
Everyone Else is Already Taken**  
*Oscar Wilde*

## **Aerial Silks and Hoop**

*Julia Roseberger*

Aerial Silks and Hoop have been a genuine life-saver for me in 2021. Aerial Silks is fabric strung from the ceiling that is usually 10 to 20 feet in the air. Hoop, or Lyra, is a metal hoop with tape wrapped around it also strung from the ceiling. The height of the hoop though is dependent upon the person's height as it should usually come up to the person's chest. I take lessons every Monday and Wednesday, and it has helped my mental health not completely nose dive. Aerial Silks and Lyra have helped me through a lot these past months, and for that I am grateful.

Aerial Yoga is a broad term that encompasses a number of things that are done in the air. A few of these things considered to be Aerial Yoga include: Aerial Silks, Aerial Hammock, Pole, Trapeze, and Hoop (or better known as Lyra). There are many variants of the Silks, for example— chains (yes, actual chains hung from the ceiling), Braided Silks, and Aerial Handles. In addition, there are some alternative forms of Aerial Hammock— such as the Swing Hammock (which has a multitude of handles). Lyra also comes in many versions- the lollipop hoop- which looks like is a pole sticking up from a platform with a hoop at the top, a double tab hoop, a single tab hoop, and a tab-less hoop. The three aforementioned tab hoops differ in how they are strung to the ceiling.

Aerial Silks and Lyra are a great way to workout and relieve stress because both require focus to avoid seriously hurting yourself. Silks and Lyra can be challenging because you are suspended in the air and have to have some semblance of upper body strength. Aerial Silks are definitely on the more dangerous side because as you grow in experience, so does the height at which you practice. Even though Lyra is a metal hoop, it's a safer option to start as your height suspension doesn't increase like that of Silks. While you can increase how high you are in a hoop, the incredibly high heights are usually only reserved for those who work with Lyra professionally or in a circus like Cirque du Soleil.

Initially, I started practicing on Silks and was introduced to Lyra a couple months later. I began teaching myself Silks last year between March and April, and then began Lyra during the month of October of last year. In the beginning, it didn't go exactly as planned because I knew very little about Silks and when it came to them, it was better to have an instructor as you can only learn so much off of YouTube. However, I still practiced on them while looking for a studio to take formal lessons. That's when I found the Good Karma Studio near us, where I finally was introduced to Lyra. They didn't have any Aerial Silk classes open because COVID-19 made maintenance of the Silks tedious whereas hoops were easier to maintain and could be placed farther apart. Currently, I am also taking Aerial Hammock classes along with my Hoop and it's wonderful!

Aerial Yoga is an umbrella term for many aerial activities, they're a great getaway, and I thoroughly enjoy practicing on my Silks and Hoop. Without them, I don't know where I would be, so I am truly grateful to have them in my life.



Conan Gray  
by  
Leah Patterson

## Me in Quarantine

*Kylie Purello*

Once COVID-19 started I thought, “this pandemic will never go away.” I would say that same thing everyday. I was sad, stressed, and somewhat angry. There were some bad times once the pandemic started but almost a year later, I am realizing that there are actually some good things that happened. I was able to do a lot more activities during quarantine than I expected.

The first day the whole school went home for supposedly 2 weeks, we received packets on top of packets on top of packets. I thought, “this is insane and I will never complete all this without wanting to pull out my hair!” I tried to map everything out, but that didn’t help me whatsoever. Of course on the first day we had no school, I blew off doing work but I realized that maybe that wasn’t the best decision because it made me more stressed. The next day I started working but didn’t get much done. I felt stressed and worried I wouldn’t get all the work done before we went back to school since I can take forever to get schoolwork done. By the end of the two weeks we had off, I didn't have all the work done. However, my parents got a call from the school. No one was going back to school until Spring Break was over with.

Once we got the call, I was somewhat happy but miserable at the same time. I was happy that the packets didn't matter now since we started doing online work, but I wanted to go back to school because I didn’t like staying home all day. Thankfully, my sister was home from college and she always hung out with me after doing homework. We loved doing many activities. One thing I loved doing with her was watching movies in my basement with my guinea pig. Secondly, we also loved going on bike rides in my neighborhood. Sometimes we even went on the road that led down to a house that has a bunch of feral cats! Even though I fell off my bike and had the worst wound ever, I still rode my bike with her when my knee was all bandaged up and it hurt so bad to use the pedals! Not only did I go on bike rides with my sister, my whole family went on hikes. I hated them so much. Even one time I got into a big argument with my sister while we were hiking and she decided to throw a stick at me. Nonetheless, I am still glad I went hiking with my family. Once April was over with we got another call from the school. We were supposedly going back to school May 15.

As soon as it started getting warmer, more places started to open up. My mom, sister, and I went to Target quite a few times. I was so thankful to finally go somewhere after months of not leaving the house. I was so happy that it was almost summer. Summer of 2020 was one of the best summers ever. I did so much more than I anticipated. I started going on bike rides during sunset with my sister. Not only that, I started playing tennis with my sister, cousin, and his friend. I found that it was really something I enjoyed doing. After playing tennis with my cousin, my sister and I would go to his house and visit the rest of my family. We would eat lunch together and go swimming. One thing I will never forget is watching a show called *The Fosters* with my sister. At first, when my sister begged me to watch it, I refused. I thought it was stupid and not something I would enjoy. However, I gave in and I told her I would only watch one episode. Well, one episode turned into the whole 5 seasons. I became so obsessed with it that my sister and I watched it every single day for all of July and part of August. We started watching the spin off show called Good Trouble.

I fell in love with that TV show as well. I will never forget this past summer. There were so many enjoyable moments that felt so special. I hope this year I can do just as much.

Even though the time everybody was in lockdown because of COVID-19 might have felt sinful, there were still lovable moments. You just have to open your eyes a bit wider to notice it. At first COVID stressed me out and angered me. However, now I think of what would have happened if it was never “born?” I don’t think I would be the same person I am today. I discovered so many things about the world and about myself during this pandemic and I don’t think I would change anything even if it meant I was still able to go on the New York City trip!



## **Perspective, Opportunity & Strength**

*Julia Yerdon*

Over last year and this year it is clear that I've grown with perspective, opportunity, and strength. Although it was hard to steer and look through all of the crazy, I definitely got to see what it was all worth in the end. Through great losses within my family, tough times in school, and just stressful days overall, I'm glad that I had support from my peers. I've had a couple of close friends help me along as well, and the kindness was reciprocated.

At the beginning of COVID-19, it was really hard to accept the fact that life wouldn't be normal for a while. No more going out for movie night with friends, going out to eat, hanging out with people (friends, and family). In the end I got to see what the real value of the little things in life are, and what they really mean to me. I found a way to navigate through everything even through all of the tears and hardships.

I like to look at one of my blessings being technology. It's a blessing to have the technology we have today because we may not have even been able to FaceTime our loved ones and see their faces. I'm glad I'm able to talk to my friends and family because at the beginning of the year I wasn't allowed to see them, along with everyone else in the world.

I'm very thankful for all of my friends who helped me during this past year and today with coping with COVID-19. I feel like together with everyone going through some of the same struggles we all came together with strength and identity to pull through and be there for one another, because everything that's happening to us is understood.



## Side by Side With Mom

When I ride with my mom, there are two ways to feel. It is like a rush of fun and excitement when she drives the side by side. And when I drive, it feels like I'm free. When mom rides with me, it's not so lonely and it's still fun. But when I ride with her, I always think that we are going to flip— but thankfully we never do.

*Emily O'Donal*





Gathering with my family is always something I look forward to. I have four sisters and a brother. We always create the greatest memories when we are together.

Since I was very young, my family has had a tradition of going to North Carolina. Other family from all over would meet us there as well and we would just enjoy spending time with each other.

During our time in North Carolina, we do things like puzzles, watch movies, swim, go fishing, cook, jam out to music and much more.

One really fun tradition that we look forward to each time we gather is “the UNO Championship”. All of the girls play a competitive game of UNO that sometimes takes hours. The winner gets their name written on a cardboard belt my dad created– which has a single UNO

card right in the middle. To some this tradition may sound crazy or bizarre, but to us girls it means everything.

My family is all about creating memories. Being able to sit down for dinner together and share the good times, makes me feel closer to those who live a long distance away. I hope these special traditions and stories will someday bring great laughter and joy to my own children– my parents grandchildren.

*Isabella Ellsbury*

# Family Means Everything



The most important thing to me is spending time with my family. I like when we get to go and do things together. I like sharing in all the special memories that we make.

*Cameron Urquhart*

# The Good Times

*Cameron Fanfa*



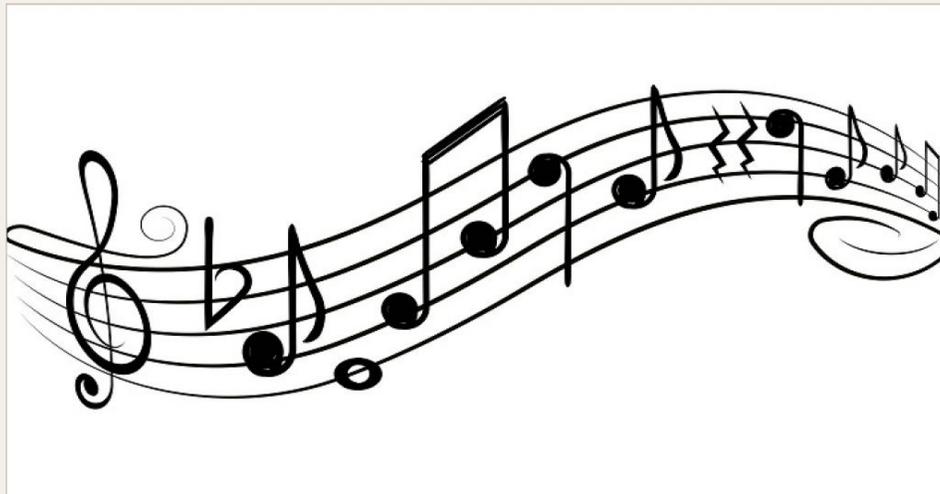
Nelson Mandela once said, “there is no passion in playing small and settling for a life less than the one you are capable of living.” On average you will meet 900,000 people in your lifetime, you will either remember them or you won't. Surround yourself with people that will build you up, cherish the times you spend with the people that are always there during your somber times, the ones that will drop anything to just be there for you when you need it.

When I look at the photos of us from some of our best times together I have a wave of emotions hit me. I feel happy because of the memories that come flying back of the days and the countless nights of us getting into “trouble” somewhere. There was this one time we stumbled across a house in the woods and we all saw the barn full of crosses. Another time, around 1 a.m. my friends and I were at my house in the basement. Bryan was on my couch and started to shiver and complain about his head, saying that it felt like a Mack truck was driving through his head. My dog started freaking out by the front door and that's when Bryan fell off the couch. James and I went upstairs to investigate and we saw a dark figure standing on my front porch. The figure went away as soon as I went to the door. James and I ran back down stairs. We told the other guys what we saw and we all started to think what it could have been. After my dog calmed down, Bryan came upstairs and was

perfectly fine and couldn't recall what happened. To this day, we all still laugh about it, but also wonder what it could have been. Other memories I think about are the days we would spend in the pool swimming and trying to do back flips off the diving board and smacking the water so hard our bodies would glow red, our fingers would be so wrinkly from the horse of swimming and almost drowning each other.

When looking at this photo I also felt a little depressed because of the fact that in two years we will be saying our last goodbyes before leaving for college. So, when I say cherish the times you spend with your closest friends it's because you will never know when your last hang out, your last laugh, and your last deep conversation about if aliens are real and if the FBI is watching us will be.

The friends I have shaped me into the young man I am today. My dad told me something when I was young and I did not fully understand the meaning of it until now "There are friends and there are family and then there are friends that become family". These boys have become family!



### **Music is my Thing**

Music was a thing that always was in my blood ever since 2nd grade I was into performing music. In 3rd grade I started church choir and it made me feel better than I ever did. In 5th grade I started playing trumpet in band and got really good right away. In chorus I was a soprano until last year and then I became a tenor. Throughout my music career, I have played trumpet, drums, steel drums, and piano, and I have been singing as well. Music was the best part of this year for me and the best teachers of music I have ever had. Doing music keeps me calm and it always will.

*Scott Burdick*

# Secret Story of the Evergreens

*Jenna Lackey*

I named him George  
the tall pine outside  
He sways with roots that run through the town.

George carried birds on his branches  
Like the Lark who was always with the Sparrow  
George was home to the ivy and the iris

Bee and his friends loved George  
he would often tell me about how the wind on George made the perfect place to relax.  
Or my crows would visit,  
They would sit straight at the top and stare with onyx eyes.

But a man came today  
he looked at George and pulled out an axe.  
I told him he couldn't take George from me  
He didn't listen.  
I begged for the crows and Bee  
For ivy and iris  
For my Sparrow and Lark

Then with a smile  
and eyes like my favorite park  
"I'll leave the tree"  
I sent a letter to the Sun and Moon of the good news.  
George was saved  
But then the man raised his axe  
And George cried.

Yes he left George  
but he cut off his roots.  
And as the water left  
So did my spirit.

The change wasn't instant  
but soon the Ivy left  
Iris with it.

I never saw my crows  
they left without a goodbye  
But I'm not surprised

The Lark left the Sparrow  
because Lark's should be with other Larks.  
And the Sparrow died  
With a forgotten forevermore!

And then Bee  
bee was last.  
But also gone.

I cried for George.  
months and Months gone by  
But then I,  
I had an idea.

I was going to rebuild George.  
so I watered him daily  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
But then a small thing began to grow

So I found the crows  
and the crows helped me  
How's one to know? Ivy and Iris would give up the willow!  
To give  
For George,  
So we could bring back butterflies

The Lark came back to the Sparrow reborn  
they squawked at each other  
But, the love was found a new  
And with that the Lark named Sue  
helped me with her Sparrow!

Now Bee  
he was hard to find  
But Bee came back slowly  
Like George and rebuilt  
And with Bee brought life anew

I met the poppy on yellow lane and the cardinal from Nutbush  
I forgave the hummingbird and learned to love how she flew  
I grew a new...

And with the view  
we had a forest.  
So George wasn't alone  
And if he came back,  
the man with the axe.

We were ready



Cubism by Jenna Lackey

“I am” (Lina) Poem: *Between Shades of Gray*

Christian Harriman

I am strong and caring.

I wonder where my father lies.

I hear the sound of a baby’s cries.

I see the soldiers full of greed.

I want my family to be freed.

I am strong and caring.

I pretend to be just fine.

I feel like our lives are on the line.

I touch my mother and don’t let go.

I worry that we will never go home.

I cry over the houses the soldiers are tearing.

I am strong and caring.

I understand that these times are dire.

I say that going home is something that I require.

I dream to be an amazing artist.

I try to help my family, I do my hardest.

I hope this memory will be the farthest.

I am strong and caring.





Harry Styles  
by  
Mia Quackenbush

## Covid Showed Us Who We Really Are

*Lance Miller*

I have learned a lot about myself these past two years and look at the world in a different way now. Not being able to ride in the winter and the little riding I had last summer, has forced me to be more resourceful. It's amazing how much you can do with very little resources.

One thing I have done to make sure I'm ready for this season without being able to ride is taking care of my body. In November I finally stopped making excuses and came up with a plan, I have been working out and on a diet since. I have lost 30lbs. My best advice with a diet is by the end of the first month you shouldn't think of it as a diet, rather just the way you eat. Come up with a plan,; having a plan helps you stick to it at first. Also know that there is a lot of nonsense about working out and eating out there.

Even though I do not have a lot of things, I am grateful for what I do have. I have a great opportunity with a new team this year, I'm able to ride, travel and kind of go back to my normal life outside of school. I'm going all over to race in the summer: New Jersey, South Carolina, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Virginia, Tennessee, Canada (if the border opens up), and all over New York. I am traveling to all of these places to compete in the national series and the gold cup (gold cup is regional) series for BMX. I know I'm going to make a lot of new memories to hold on to and meet some great new people.

I am thankful for my dad supporting me in BMX especially since I know it can get very expensive and he spends money he doesn't have. BMX can and cannot be expensive depending on what bike you have, gear and how much you travel. Staying in hotels can get expensive, which is why we camp out at the track now. I think one year my dad spent like \$1,000 on hotels for when we traveled. The new bike parts I'm getting for this year was \$750 even though we have discounts. If I tried to find the price of my bike it would be about \$2,000. It is worth every penny though; it's completely custom and has some custom painted parts on it. Then here's the gear, you got your jersey, pants, shoes, gloves, and helmet. There are also goggles: some riders use them and some don't. I do; they cost \$150. I think my gear (jersey, gloves and helmet) was about \$150 dollars, even though I got 40% off on some things. Without my dad I would not be able to ride and have great stories to tell.

Covid has changed my life, mostly for the better. It forced me to become more independent. I am grateful for what I have and try to make it work. I am in the best condition I have ever been in.



## Quarantine Discoveries

*Gianna Gervais*



Covid -19 has changed everyone's lives drastically, especially kids. Schools are still not quite back to normal and there has been a lot of family time at home. I have learned to make the most out of it and I have really grown to love spending time with my family. I have always been incredibly grateful for my parents and all they do and sacrifice for me, but it wasn't until Covid that I truly connected and bonded with them. When it seemed like the world was ending, they were there to support and help me through it with abundant love, just as I was with them.

My family has taught me many important lessons throughout my life but the most valuable have been when we were all enduring something horrible together. They have taught me to not give up, and to always look on the bright side. It is easy to be pessimistic and overlook all the good things in your life, but there is always a positive. During quarantine we had all the time in the world and there were so many stories of people starting businesses, getting into shape or forming new friendships and talents. That really inspired me to set goals for myself and take advantage of the less than ideal situation and turn it into a positive experience that I can benefit and learn from. I tried out new recipes ,workouts, which is how I found I love running and I even learned to play my ukulele. I learned first-hand that if you look for the positives in bad situations it makes them better.

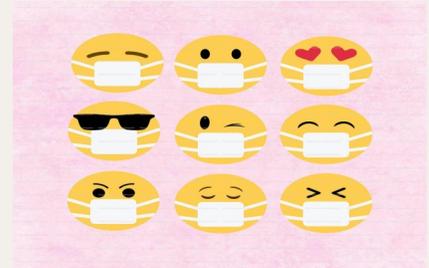
I also inevitably had a ton of time to myself which made me much more independent and I learned new things about myself that I never knew before. I used to be such a busy body always wanting to do something and I hated staying put, but that changed during isolation and I realized life doesn't end when you just relax and slow down to enjoy life. Quarantine definitely made me a stronger person overall and showed me how to preserve even when times get tough and how to be self sufficient and go with the flow. I realized I can handle a lot more than I give myself credit for.

I found myself wishing to go out and see friends, go to a restaurant, shopping or anything really. But the one thing I missed the most was school. I was upset that I couldn't do extracurricular activities and earn real grades. But my family was there during it all to support me and reassured me it will all be ok and I realized that by staying home we were saving lives. I definitely feel like I am more prepared if we have to go into lockdown again and if worse comes to worst I will make lemonade out of lemons again.

Even though life isn't completely back to normal I'm okay living under a mask, because it means I can live again. Maybe someday Covid will feel like a distant memory but as for right now it's far from distant and people and their families are being impacted greatly by the disease mentally, emotionally, physically and financially.

## The Year in the Life of a Quaranteen

*Julianna Maxfield*



We're always told to expect the unexpected... however, I don't think any of us ever expected a global pandemic. With the snap of our fingers, life switched from normal to everything but that. For the first time, the words "quarantine" and "social distancing" became of use in our everyday vocabulary. We were hit with a wall of chaos and confusion, worry and panic. Nobody really knew what was coming next, and fear rose among people all over the world. As a species, we had to learn to adapt and survive a deadly pandemic that was present in a world of political chaos and environmental disaster. Most people living during this unexpected time, if asked about their experiences within the last year, could name 100 negative things that have happened to them, their families, and the world in general. But, in trying to overlook the bad, we've learned to pick out the bits of positivity that still really do exist in 2021.

Being a "quaranteen" has been a rollercoaster ride of emotions for all of us. You would think most teenagers would LOVE months of living in isolation, with endless video games and TV episodes to binge, not having to go into school and being able to take classes in the comfort of our own homes. Seems like a teenage dream, right? Well, sometimes it was... but most of the time, it was our worst nightmare. Missing "normal" life like crazy, spending Friday nights alone in our beds, wishing we could've squeezed our family and friends just a little tighter.

For a while, it was a really sad time for all of us. But, we knew we couldn't just sit and dwell in our sadness and let it overcome us. We had to make the most out of the time we had to ourselves and to spend with our family. So, we had countless movie nights, little family parties in our basement, and the not-so-smart hair dying sessions. We learned all the TikTok dances and did YouTube workouts in hopes of an overnight 6 pack. We online shopped for hours, and hours, and hours until we were spending money that we didn't even have. We had so much time on our hands that self-care became a necessity. Face masks were now a daily thing, baths and trying new skincare products became part of our night routines. Morning walks to breathe in the fresh spring air were a great source of relief and also gave us a way to see our friends and family.

Self isolation provided us with time to work on ourselves and to become the best version of us that we could be. As a society in the beginning of 2020, we were getting too ahead of ourselves in so many ways and the Coronavirus was God's way of telling us to slow down. Locked away from each other, forced to think about things we would've never previously had time for. Endless time to think, and reflect. There were so many unresolved issues that needed to be addressed and solved and quarantine gave us a chance to do so. Our brains were begging for us to take care of them, as they do so much for us and all we did in our busy lives was overlook them and beat them up. We could finally take care of our bodies and our minds.

This pandemic and quarantine is truly a blessing in disguise. Personal growth has been incredible for me. The voices of the unheard are finally being heard. Front line workers and doctors are getting the recognition they have always deserved. We are feeding the hungry and curing the diseased. We are appreciating each other and our different minds and opinions. Finally, for the first time in a long time, we have started to celebrate each other's differences instead of bashing them. And that, that right there, is the most beautiful thing that could've ever been brought to light from the darkness that has been 2020.



*"5 AM Sunrise"* by Abbie Yetto

"Life is a journey, not a destination.  
Happiness is not "there" but here,  
not "tomorrow" but today."

*Sidney Greenberg*



"Boat" by Katelyn Yerdon

“The Book”  
*Kaitlyn Bechand*

Saturday morning, September 25, 9 A.M.

The morning seemed to be normal, the sun was up, the birds were singing, and it felt like it would be a great day. Rachel’s regular day, however, would end up going a little different than predicted.

When waking up she looked over to her night stand to grab her phone, just as she does every morning. But, on her phone she noticed that there were hundreds of text messages from all of her friends. “*Did you hear what happened?*” “*We need to find her, where are you?*” “*Are you ok?*”

They were asking if she had heard what had happened and saying that we needed to find her. But, she didn’t know what they could possibly be talking about.

She tried to message and call her friends, but there was no service. At this point, Rachel felt worried and needed to figure out what had happened. She often writes notes on her phone to remind her of things so, she checked there first to see if she had written something that might be able to help her solve the mystery.

Frantically looking through her notes, Rachel discovered that there was one written in at midnight which read, “154 Apple Lane, second row, top shelf, 5 in.” She had never heard of somewhere that was located at this address. When searching her GPS to see what it was, Rachel learned that it was a bookstore. It seemed to be directions that were leading her to a specific book in the store.

Rachel quickly got ready and ran out the door. When she arrived at the store, she headed down to the second row, to the top shelf, where she found the 5th book. The book was, *Spellbook of the Lost and Found*, by Monica Cherry. Although Rachel knew this book, as it was written by her childhood friend, she was confused as to why she would have written down the directions. Never-the-less, she purchased the paper back as her copy has been worn from reading it so many times.

Rachel, even more confused, found a quiet spot in the cafe to begin piecing together everything that she knew. She sat in the cafe looking at the book and the note that she had written on her phone. As she carefully flipped through the pages of the book, Rachel noticed that on page 112 there were two words highlighted, “the cabin”. Not thinking much of it at first, as it was a used book, she figured that the last person that had highlighted it for some reason and didn’t think anything more about it. She decided to try to go to her friend’s house to see if they could tell her what happened.

Rachel hurriedly ran the two miles it was from the cafe to her friend Jenny’s house in hopes that she would know what happened. She arrived at Jenny’s house, and before she could even knock on the door, it swung open. Jenny came running out to her.

“Oh my god, Rachel, where have you been?!”

Rachel replied, “I was at home, what happened? Why is everyone so worried?”

Jenny answered, “You didn’t hear? Monica went missing. She was at Lucas’ house last night and then this morning she is missing. That’s why we were trying to find you, to make sure that you were okay!”

“She’s missing?” Rachel asked.

“Yes,” said Jenny. “Here come inside.”

They go inside where Rachel and Jenny continue their conversation. Jenny explained to Rachel that she has been looking for any clues that can help them find her because the police won't help them yet since it hasn't been 24 hours, so they can't report her as missing. Rachel thinks about the book and the highlighted words.

“This morning, I found some strange notes in my phone, directions to a certain book in a store, *The BookEnds*.” She hands her the book. “This might have something to do with her being missing.”

Jenny intensely looks at the book and then at Rachel. “It must have something to do with it, why would you be led to this book on the day that she has gone missing.”

“That's what I was thinking. In the book, on page 112 there is a sentence that is highlighted. I don't know if it has anything to do with her or not since it was a used book but maybe it will help.”

Jenny flips through the book to page 112 to the last line of the page with the highlighted words.

“Wait, I might know where she is.” said Jenny.

“Really, where is she?” Rachel inquired

“The highlighted words, the cabin, could mean that she is trying to tell you that she is at her cabin. The one that her family owns on the lake.” Jenny explained

Rachel thinks for a moment before saying, “You're right, they do still have the cabin. We have to go see if she is there.”

“I agree.” said Jenny.

After the 25 minute drive to the cabin, they get out of the car to see that there is no car parked in front. The girls start to think that maybe they are wrong and that she isn't here.

“I don't think she is here.” Jenny said.

“Why don't we just go knock on the door before we leave just to give it a try,” Rachel suggests.

Rachel walks up to the door with Jenny following, and knocks on the door. There is no answer.

“She's not here.” said Jenny.

Rachel tries to open the door and sees that the door is unlocked.

“Let's go see if she is inside, it can't hurt to be sure.” said Rachel.

They walk inside and down the hall looking in each room.

Nothing in the living room. Nothing in the kitchen. Nothing in the guest bedroom. Nothing in her parents' room. The last room there to check is Monica's room. Worrying settles in that she may not be there, and that she may really be in danger.

The door to her bedroom is mostly closed with only a small crack open. They slowly open the door to her room, eyeing the closet, the bed, and lastly her desk. At last they find her. Monica is sitting with her headphones on and reading a book.

“MONICA!” screamed Jenny, running up to her and hugging her.

“Jenny, oh my god, you scared me! What are you doing here?” Monica shouted

“We didn't know where you went, we called you but you didn't answer and we were so scared!”

Jenny expressed, while still hugging her.

“How did you find me?” she asked.

“I found directions on my phone to a bookstore that led me to your book. On page 112, two words, the cabin, were highlighted so we thought of your cabin leading us to be here right now.” Rachel tells her.

Monica laughed, “ I didn’t highlight that as a way for you to find me. I gave you the directions to the bookstore yesterday because I saw my book there and I knew you were looking for another copy.”

Relieved, we all laughed.

“Well at least it led us to you.” Rachel exclaimed.

“Hey, how did you guys get in here anyway.” she asked.

“The door was unlocked. And we knocked, didn’t you hear us?” Rachel asked.

Holding up the book she was reading, Monica replied.

“No, I didn’t hear you knock. I wasn’t really paying attention, and this is a really good book.”



## Bloodline: A Beginning

*Eoghan Maloney*

Back in an age long since passed, there were two warriors far above any other. They were friends and enemies, and stories of their battles traveled far and wide. Two warriors of legendary stature yet neither able to best the other. They fought because of their beliefs. One thought the world should be ruled with one man in control to keep evil driven out by fear, while the other thought the world should be allowed to be free, but united to counter evil if it ever arose. Eventually came a day where the two fighters had to work together to defeat an enemy far greater than either of them alone. After this triumphant victory both warriors decided to end the fighting and worked together to bring an end to all war. They grew old and had families of their own and eventually the memory of these two fighters became myth, but they were real. Eventually conflict arose and peace was no longer everlasting, but the blood of these warriors had birthed humanities greatest fighters. Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Ramesses of Egypt and even Julius Caesar. After many thousand years later these bloodlines crossed paths again, not as enemies, but as lovers. They had a son, who now has the blood of the two greatest warriors imaginable flowing through his veins.

Jack was a pretty popular kid. He was charismatic, strong, brave, quick-witted. But what he had in virtues he certainly did not lack in vices. He was sour, arrogant, and full of himself. A new school year had started and Jack was being his usual snobbish self, but there was a new teacher at school. Mrs. Amari was recently hired to teach at Jack's school. Jack had begun to act a fool in class, but she was having none of that.

After a few months of school, Mrs. Amari wanted to speak with Jack about his behavior. Mrs. Amari was a history teacher and was an expert on the Ancient Wars they were currently learning about. While in class, Jack would often interrupt saying it was all fake, but Mrs. Amari believed that it was all real. During their meeting, Jack talked about his parents and the things he said had peaked Mrs. Amari's interests. Curious to know more, she said she wanted to have a chat with them to discuss grades, but what she really wanted to know about was their heritage. After meeting with his parents, Mrs. Amari had pieced it together that they must have been descendants of the Ancient Warriors they were currently learning about. She did not inform them of this fact, but after learning where each of their families came from, and stories that had been passed down to them she thought she was pretty spot on.

Before settling down in the States, Mrs. Amari had made a career out of finding pieces of Ancient History and she had kept many treasures she had found. Two of these artifacts were the hilt of an old sword, and a garb worn by many in the Ancient Middle East. These two specifically were found in a tomb in Germany despite the fact that said artifacts were much older than the tomb itself and were never used in Germany during the time they would have been useful. Mrs. Amari believed them to be possessions of the two greatest warriors to ever live.

One day she had brought the old cloth garb to show her class, she had explained the backstory and the misconceptions about others like it. After class she had told Jack that she again wanted to speak with him after school. At this meeting she gave him the garb and had explained the importance of him taking care of it. She

did not tell him her real motive in doing so. When Jack got home he threw the garb on his bed and forgot about it.

After he had arrived back home from baseball practice he noticed the cloth robe was gone. He scrambled to find it but he couldn't. He asked his parents, but they had no idea either. He then ran out the door to go look for it. In the back of his mind he felt like he knew where it was, he could picture in his mind where it was and he didn't recognize it yet he still ran in that direction despite not knowing how to get there. When he felt he was at the right place he looked around and saw an antique shop. He went inside and instantly recognized the robe. He went towards it and was stopped by a young man, only maybe five years older than Mrs. Amari.

"Hello boy" The man said.

He wore a black robe similar to the one he was looking at right now.

"Where did you find this" Jack exclaimed.

The man had explained how he found it in an old shop many years ago and people still refuse to buy it from him. Jack bought it right away. The next day he had brought it back to class and Mrs. Amari was pleased with him.

"Did you find what you were looking for?" She asked.

Jack didn't know what she meant, so he just said yes and sat back down.

It was nearing the end of the school year and Jack was still wondering about the garb Mrs. Amari had given to him. He wondered why she even gave it to him in the first place. On his way home there was a commotion around the corner. Jack went to see what was going on. He saw that same young man except this time he had significantly transformed his body. No longer was he a skinny frail man, but he was large muscular and he held a glowing staff. Jack had never seen anything like it before. The man's gaze had fallen onto Jack, and fear struck his heart. Then all of a sudden Jack was pulled into a car. It was Mrs. Amari and her husband. They explained to Jack that the man he just saw was the same man they learned about today in class. He was the being of pure evil, the bringer of chaos, the one man who could challenge the Legendary Warriors and win. Jack didn't believe them, but he just saw a man floating with a glowing staff lifting cars and smashing buildings. Jack soon realized he saw no man. He had seen pure darkness in the form of a man, and he was terrified by it.



## Forever and Some Time

by Mc S.

The overhead bell of the inn chimed as I walked through the entrance. It's interior, depressing as it was; it reminded me of my childhood home. Wallpaper that had been torn from the walls were effortlessly covered by posters and flyers for upcoming live shows within the city, water stains spread across the ceiling making the building slightly smell of mildew, and the lighting ran yellow and dull, barely reaching the four corners of the room. It's no surprise the building cut it on repair costs, they'd barely gotten any business in the past 30 years. The only usuals left were a couple of drunks and me who had all been coming here for the last decade.

I scanned the entirety of the room, it was peculiarly quiet besides the few poker games taking place in the back, and it wasn't until I caught the bartender winking at me to my seat that I got a hold of my senses and slumped down onto the stool. "The usual?" he questions. I give him a slight nod and listen as he scrambles about gathering the bottles of amaretto and scotch. The sound of the shaker could be heard all throughout the room's abundant silence and I noticed a few turn their heads as if I was a bothersome to them.

After a couple of drinks, the bell above the door disturbs the solemn silence of the bar. Wondering if someone had left, I turned around to notice everyone still in their seats. It wasn't until a cheery voice arose from behind me asking for a cosmopolitan that I noticed someone new had walked in. A young curly-headed man in a trench coat and colorful scarf stood in the doorway, evidently cheerful. He catches my glance, and embarrassed, I turn away. His footsteps can be heard as he walks behind me and sits in the empty stool nearby. *How could this man be as happy as he is in such a slummy part of the city? He hums a tune while waiting for his drink and upon its arrival after being slid from the other side of the counter, clumsily knocks elbows with me while trying to catch it, resulting in the red liquid spilled all over my jacket sleeve.*

"Oy, watch it buddy," I aggravatedly scolded him.

"Oh jeez, I'm so sorry friend. I didn't get any on-" He freezes.

His bright green eyes which appeared so full of life had locked onto mine; Dull and gray. It wasn't until this moment that I had realized I've seen this man before.

"Have I seen you before?" He questioned. "You look quite familiar."

I break contact, sitting up from my chair and throwing some spare pocket money onto the counter to cover my drinks. "Thank you, Darius. See you again soon" I say in the bartenders direction.

I throw on my jacket and proceed to walk out of the door. I had seen this man before, but I was unsure of when or where and something about his presence made me more than uncomfortable. *Was it possible that he was like me? I shrugged away the thought. No one can be alive as long as I have and stay joyful. Everyone dreams of living forever until the consequence of losing everyone you have ever loved kicks into play. I had lost my family, my friends, and most of all... my wife. If he knows something, could I be in danger? The same tune the man had hummed within the bar could be faintly heard from behind me. In an attempt to ignore it, I continue walking without turning my head in hopes to avoid his attention.*

Only a few moments had passed until the inevitable tap on the shoulder. I turn around to see the same man from within the bar still sipping from his drink. He seemed relatively the same besides the flushed cheeks, which must have been from trying to find me after I had left.

“Did you follow me out here?” I scoff at him.

“Perhaps, but it was for a good reason.” He chuckles, outstretching his right hand in my direction, “I believe we know each other.”

“Whoever you are, I haven’t a damn clue.” I lie while smacking away the hand.

His smile fades, “I’m so sorry to have bothered you, but I really must talk to you. We could go to my apartment or yours if that’s what makes you comfortable. It is a rather serious matter.”

For the first time in his short appearance he looked genuinely serious, but whether I had truly known this guy or not, his solemn appearance was not enough to convince me into visiting his apartment. Despite the attempt to decline his offer, a surprisingly strong grip begins to drag me in the direction of his apartment anyways.

Upon our arrival to the mysterious apartment, he turns to me and smiles, “Don’t mind Victoria, she won’t bite. I hope you aren’t allergic to cats.” *Victoria... That’s my first wife’s name. If he somehow knew me, did he know her? Was that even possible? She had died of Tuberculosis over 100 years ago.*

His front door had at least 6 locks on it, all requiring separate keys. This sight along with the cat made me unbearably uncomfortable. It wasn’t that I was scared of him, I knew that if he attempted to hurt me I was bigger in proportion to him and could easily defend myself despite the alcohol still stirring within me, but something about him didn’t seem right. It was as if he had been stalking me, he seemed to know too much.

The door opened into the living room which was lined with bookshelves compacted with books and strange artifacts. Several piles of crumpled papers filled corners of the room and various desks were stacked with files and documents. It would appear at first glance as if the place were a mess, but upon further inspection, I didn’t see any dust and the place smelled of fresh citrus. I take a seat on the couch facing the door and watch as he enters into the kitchen, setting down his keys on the counter and heating a kettle.

As I wait for further information or conversation I lounge in the chair inspecting various things within the room. There were many books on alternate realities and black holes, a couple of guide books on how to write a personal narrative, and *Victoria, a longhaired white cat sitting within the windowsill. After noticing my curiosity, he enters the living room clearing his throat and setting two intricately painted mugs on the coffee table filled with tea I had no intention of drinking.*

“Why am I here?” I question him.

He takes one of the cups from the table and takes a sip while looking me in the eyes.

“I know who you are and what you can do, Arlo”

*That was my name. How did he know my name? What does he mean by ‘what I can do’?*

“My name is Elliot, and I would like you to know I pose no threat to you. His earnest expression fades into a delighted grin, “I can do something pretty extraordinary myself.” He assured.

“What are you talking about?”

Elliot holds out his wrist in my direction. An eccentric watch featuring many gears was placed upon it. It seemed to rapidly change faces and times, and I wondered if it could possibly even work in such a state.

“There's only one like it. My grandfather found it buried in the woods as a young boy and it was presented to me after his passing.

“What does a broken watch have to do with anything?”

An enormous grin spreads across his face from ear to ear, “If you can't tell by now from the features of this room,” he pauses, “I can time travel.”

“You have to be kidding me,” I grumble at him. “We're here because you wanted to spout madness?”

I begin to gather my things and sit up from the couch. I had no wish to sit with this man as he rant on about insane possibilities. I had grown accustomed to my continuous life, but the thought of someone else living with similar abilities didn't seem possible. This man is crazy, my instinct to ignore him was correct all along. Just as my hand met the doorknob, I heard Elliot stand up as well and approach from behind me.

“I know a way for you to see your wife again,” He states, “I would like you to see her again.”

Furious I turn around, grabbing him by the throat and slamming him into the wall. His eyes gaped wide and he began breathing heavily in fear.

“I've done as much research as possible, and it seems as though the watch will only work for one person at a time. It isn't until the watch owner passes on that a new person may use it. I would like to give it to you, but you must wait a while. I'm afraid you can't claim its possession until after I have expired. I know how much you love your wife. I have spoken to her, she's a lovely lady and I know how much she loves you. This watch can give you the chance to see her again. I know how much pain you're in, and I wanted to give you the chance to be happy again.” Elliot explains, his speech rapid and forced.

“Don't ever try to get into my head again, Elliot. Do you hear me!” I warn him.

He forces a convincing smile, and I frantically throw him out from in front of me. Frozen, I continued looking in the direction of the door. I knew he meant well, I had been too harsh on him.

The room went silent other than a loud thud, and I instinctively looked in the direction in which I had thrown him. Elliot was not moving. *Was he really that scared of me? Was he worried I would hurt him? I kneeled down beside him to tell him I was sorry, but it wasn't until a thick pile of blood pooled around the man's head that I realized what I had done. I wasn't aware of my size compared to him, and I threw the innocent man much too hard into the side table along the wall. He had hit his head on the corner, leaving an untreatable wound on the side of it.*

*I had killed a man.*

Elliot's face had frozen in a state of peril. I'd lived through plenty of wars and seen many bodies, but something about seeing one at the fault of my own hand was agonizing. I never intended on hurting him. I just wanted him to stop talking about my suffering as if he truly knew what it has been like. Filled with dread I grab the first sheet I could find and cover the corpse. I had no idea what I should do. I had no record of existence. It's not as if I could call the police and notify them of the act of manslaughter I had just committed.

After hastily removing the watch from Elliot’s wrist for further inspection, I decided to abandon the scene, but as I reached the door, the machine began to whirl and spin. I examined the face of the watch and hesitantly placed it around my wrist, feeling it immediately bond to my skin. *I had doubted him, and in the process killed him... just for him to end up correct in the end.*

I dropped to my knees, disappointed in my actions and wondering if there was anything I could possibly do to keep his death from being in vain. *He wanted me to use this watch to see my wife again, but he never got the chance to tell me how. I began fiddling with the buttons and dials on the sides waiting for anything to happen. Hoping that somehow... I could be taken away from this situation. One button appeared to change the location on the watch, while a dial had been changing the date and hour, but I didn’t see any form of input. There were only the two buttons. Why had there been no way to enter any information? I frustratedly begin hitting the watch and attempting to rip it from my skin, but to no avail. Desperate, I close my eyes and begin praying to the watch; wishing for it to take me away.*

As I open my eyes, I’m no longer in the apartment, but rather in the middle of a bustling street in central London. Women in Victorian dresses with parasols walked alongside men in dapper suits. Horse drawn carriages filled the streets. A young boy stood atop a crate advertising the weekly newspaper. Despite having been away for so long, I could clearly remember where I was. *221 Clover Street... My old home. I sprint up the stairs leading to the apartment and bust through the door to see my wife, Victoria, in the kitchen baking a cake as if nothing had ever happened.*

“Welcome home, my love.” She greets me, alongside a warm smile.

Without hesitation I dart into her arms and without second thought, begin to sob. It was as if my life had meaning again.



## Between the Brush Strokes

*Garrett Collins*

The alarm clock at 7:00 AM on a Saturday was harsh on Kate's ears. She would've loved to have a few more minutes to rest. But, she knew she had something important today.

"You got that portrait today, right?" said her husband John, who had gotten up before her.

"Yup," she said with a yawn "A veteran I think."

"Which war?" John asked.

"Vietnam." She said a sigh. "I think he's the father of one of the secretaries at your office. She arranged it with me."

"Oh. What time's the appointment?"

"2:00"

"Well, have fun." John said snarkily as he went to the front porch to read the paper.

Kate looked at a photo on her mantle. Her and John in 1965 protesting the war. She sighed and ran her fingers along the glass.

*I'm glad she can't see me now.*

2:00 arrived. Kate pulled up to a beautiful brick house that looked like it was built early in the century. It reminded her of her grandma's house. After hauling the paints, brushes, canvas and the easel from her trunk, she rang the doorbell. A couple seconds passed by before she was met at the door by a blonde woman about her age.

"Hello! I'm guessing by your supplies that you're here for the portrait?" said the woman kindly.

"Yes!" said Kate with a chuckle.

"Well, let me help you with that then." she said, grabbing the paints and the canvas from Kate.

"Thank you." said Kate, taking in the house. She felt nostalgic in it. It looked almost like a relic of the past. She would've painted the house too, if she could.

"I'm Betty, Robert's wife. He's downstairs all ready to go. And I believe you know Anne, my daughter," she said as she motioned to a short and pretty woman in the kitchen. "Whenever you're ready."

Kate smiled at Betty and went downstairs, once again hauling all the stuff. The basement was a bit musty. Once she got to the landing space on the stairs, she set her stuff down to take a look. It was an unfinished basement, but it tried so hard to not look as such. There were paintings galore on the wall, a pool table, and in the center was a large chair, facing away from her. Kate made her way down the rest of the stairs and began to set things up. As she put down the aisle and positioned it, she got a good look at the man's face. He had gray hair that was beginning to go away in the back, and dark brown eyes. His face was wrinkled, but not really in usual spots.

*Maybe they're scars?*

The man, who had been reading the paper, finally noticed Kate's presence. He gave her a small smile and a grumbled hello then dove back into his newspaper. Kate quietly scoffed. Military men had never liked her. Even as she set up her paints and grabbed water from the kitchen, he remained unphased. He almost looked like he was thinking deeply about something.

After a moment of awkward silence as she waited for him to look up, Kate finally said

"Is there anything you're supposed to be wearing for this?"

He nodded and looked a bit angry with himself, almost like he forgot he had to be dressed.

"I'll be right back." he said, his gruff voice much softer than she expected.

As he went for the stairs, Kate couldn't help noticing a slight limp in his step. She found it ironic how the most strong and looked up to men in the world were reduced to physical status like his. She almost pitied him.

Almost.

Kate heard the door from the basement open. The steps slightly off indicated Robert coming down. She looked up from her easel and saw Robert standing there in full uniform. His chest was decorated with medals and badges. His uniform was a crisp navy blue, with a narrow hat to match. It was tailored perfectly, even after all these years. His posture improved dramatically, and he was almost smiling.

He looked strikingly similar to her brother David, who was shipped off to serve all those years ago. Kate began to feel a lump in her throat. It was a harrowing site.

“Sit, please.” Kate warbled out, trying her best to hide her emotion.

Kate grabbed a pencil, and began sketching a rough outline of everything.

“Oh. I almost forgot.” Kate said as she rustled around in her purse. She pulled out a small camera, and positioned it from her view. Robert began to grin a little.

“Don’t smile. Unless that’s what you want in the portrait.” Kate said, trying to focus the camera perfectly.

Robert’s grin faded, but a prestigious look stayed on his face.

Flash! Kate got the perfect shot.

“I don’t think I want this portrait at all.” Robert said with a smile. “I’d much rather be where you are. Behind the easel.”

Kate let out a small chuckle, beginning to focus on sketching again.

“Well, it’s not as easy as it looks.”

“I dabble a bit in painting.” Robert said, pointing to the paintings on the wall.

Kate put down her pencil and looked around. They were mostly outdoor landscapes.

“Is that where this one will go? The Olson Hall of Fame?”

Robert let out a chuckle.

“I’m not sure. My wife mostly set this up.” He went up to itch his face.

“Don’t itch! Well, not that you’ve started, keep going. I just need your hands in the same spot when you put them down.” Kate said. She had just gotten to sketching the hands.

“Sorry.” grumbled Robert.

The silence went on. That’s how Kate got when she was focused. She began to mix some of her colors, trying to find the perfect color for his skin. Robert finally broke the silence when he asked:

“What made you start painting?”

Kate hadn’t really thought of that before.

“Well. I had always liked drawing, and my mom bought me a paint set once when I was a little girl. And I just kept doing it. Then I went to art school. Not very fascinating I guess.”

Robert nodded, thinking about her answer.

“And, I suppose it pays the bills.” she added.

Robert nodded again. The silence resumed.

After a few minutes, dainty steps down the stairs broke the silence. It was Anne, holding a glass of water. She was only 20 and looked a lot like her father

“Here you go Pa. Hello Mrs. Filbrick! Can’t wait to see what you’ve done here.”

“Thanks Anne.” Kate said with a smile

Anne went back upstairs. Robert began to stare at the glass of water, pensive.

“You have any kids?” he asked Kate.

“Yup. Eyes on the easel please.”

“Anne’s my youngest,” he said with a smile “I have a son named Daniel. He lives out in Boston. Advertising.”

“Anne works with my husband,” Kate said, her brows furrowed as she tried to stay in the lines.

“Oh really? Who’s your husband?” Robert inquired.

“John Filbrick. He’s the editor in chief there. She’s not his secretary but I think she works on a desk near his office. She cornered him for my office phone number. She did most of the arranging for this.”

“That sounds like Anne,” Robert said with a chuckle. “Persistent.”

Kate laughed. She hadn’t told him how achingly annoying John found Anne at work.

“How old are your kids?” Robert asked.

“Kid. And she’s 23. She’s getting her masters in political science.”

“Good for her.”

“Yes.” Kate said with a sigh. The small talk became grating. Her irritability began to spike, and it didn’t help that the lack of windows made her feel a bit closed in.”

“Where did you meet your husband?” Robert asked

“Protesting. Protesting Vietnam actually.” Kate said firmly, almost pointedly at him. She didn’t mean for it to come out so negatively.

Robert sighed and began shaking his head.

“Stop shaking. I’m trying to get your face.”

Robert began to mumble things under his breath. His leg started to twitch.

“What? Have you never met anyone who disagreed with you before?” Kate blurted out.

Roberts eyes widened, surprised at being spoken to that way by her.

“Yes, in fact I have. And I’d be surprised if you did. All you’ve done this whole meeting is be short with me. It’s incredibly obvious you despise me.” Robert said, his voice rising. His posture had changed to a more confrontational stance.

“Well, then aren’t you glad I haven’t been keeping any secrets from you?” Kate replied, finding it harder to focus on her painting.

“You people,” Robert said, looking away from her. “You’re told all your life that the most patriotic thing you can do is serve in the military, but when you come back, all you’re met with is people like you. People who push us away and look at us with barely concealed hatred.”

“Well, if you were wise like the rest of us, you would’ve lost that patriotism a long time ago.” Kate replied, dipping her brush in water, releasing more anger than she thought she had. “This country’s a mess.” Kate said coldly, still not meeting his eyes.

“This country’s doing the best she can, with half of its citizens not believing in it, of course it’s suffering.” Robert said through anger, almost spitting a little.

“The country’s suffering because of people like you who turn a blind eye to its citizen’s strife in the name of patriotism.” Kate finally put down her paintbrush. She’d had enough.

Kate began to pack up her stuff.

“Oh, come on.” Robert said, baffled at her.

“Mr. Olson, I believe our session here is done. I’ll see you tomorrow.” The session wasn’t done. She ended it 20 minutes early. But she had to get out of there.

He nodded, but this time with a cold expression on his face.

When Kate finally got outside, she was happy to have the fresh air and not be in the stuffy basement. But she dreaded having to come back the next day. She knew it would be much worse than today.

It took Kate record time setting things up the next day. When she got to the basement, Robert wasn’t there. She had painted some of the background when she was home the night before using the picture she took. She hoped she could finish today, a day early. At this point, she’d rather give them a refund for the third session than come back another day.

The offbeat thump of footsteps indicated Robert coming down. He was already dressed in uniform. She didn’t look him in the eyes, and pretended to look for something in her bag as she sat down. Without either of them saying hello, Kate began painting.

Her motions were rigid and firm, more meticulous than the day before. She even found herself ignoring some mistakes she made. He’d already expressed his disdain at her presence, why should she give him her best?

After a long silence, Robert finally spoke.

“You know, I’ve been thinking about what you said yesterday, and I just wanted to say that while I’m not sorry, I maybe could have been kinder.”

Kate was surprised by this. She couldn’t name one other man in her life who would apologize first besides maybe John.

“Well, I’m not sorry either.” She said, almost with a smile.

Robert let out an exasperated sigh.

“Come on, I’m giving you the benefit of the doubt here. I was thinking last night that maybe you’d had a rough day and that’s why you were so cold.” Robert said, trying to make some semblance of peace.

“Well, I wasn’t having a rough day. And I shouldn’t have to justify my attitude yesterday. The same way you don’t have to justify your sour mood. Because nobody expects that of you. You’re a big strong man who feels big loud emotions.” Kate said, looking him directly in the eyes.

“That wasn’t even what we were talking about! You’re being irrational.” Robert said, again in a confrontational stance.

“Well, the whole war was irrational. This whole portrait is irrational because you shouldn’t have had to serve. Why are you defending something that has seemed to ruin your life?”

“What?” He said, aghast.

“Your limp,” Kate said, pointing to his foot. “That affects your everyday life. That is a permanent reminder of that war.”

"This hasn't ruined my life." Robert replied shocked. "And I'm glad all I got was a limp. I've seen my best friends go completely unrecognizable from that war."

"Yes, and they shouldn't have had to. Have you ever stopped to think that maybe us protesters were on your side? Not on the soldier's side, but the human side. Looking out for you as people, rather than seeing you as vessels of combat."

"Oh shut up." Robert dismissively blurted out. He inched closer to Kate and said:

"You're trying to act like you cared about the well beings of others, but really deep down you were just selfish. You didn't care at all for your country. You lost nothing. That war hasn't affected you at all. Your protest stories are just cool experiences you get to share with people. A fun fact to use as a party game. You lost nothing. You contributed nothing. You're pathetic."

Kate thought about David. The last time she saw him was in his uniform.

"You know, you're right." Kate said calmly.

Robert sat there, not knowing what to say. He thought she would've quipped back. He was almost enjoying the argument.

"That limp hasn't ruined your life. But you know what's ruined mine?" Kate paused, growing overcome by emotion. She stifled it and looked directly in Robert's eyes, her gaze piercing. "The last time I saw my brother was 24 years ago. He was dressed in uniform, as you are now. He didn't have any medals. He didn't even want any. He didn't even want to go to war. But he lost his life there. He died for his country. So don't sit there and tell me I haven't lost anything. Because I have. He did much more service for his country than you ever did. You're sitting there, almost completely mobile. You've built a family. You've got to see them grow up. My brother lost all of that. He was a hero. You? You're just a glorified terrorist."

Kate stared at him for a moment longer, then picked up her brush and started painting again. She tried to get David out of her mind, and just focus on the canvas.

Robert was speechless. He sat up again, with a pensive look on his face. After a long and deafening silence, Robert firmly said:

"You know, what do you do all day except sit and paint? People work day in and day out and you just do this?" He motioned to the canvas. "Oh, you paint and wallow in your sorrows over something that happened almost 30 years ago? Move forward. Stop living in the past. You can't change what's happened, so don't take it all out on me."

It had come out of nowhere to Kate. She looked up and looked him in the eyes with a sigh.

"And what is it you do all day, Mr Olson?" She said, her voice unwavering. "Expect recognition and support for something that happened 20 years ago? You killed people. In the name of patriotism, you destroyed lives. Innocent lives. And you come back expecting to be a hero. Please. Just remember, that the people you were shooting at, there in the jungle, were probably just like you. Ambitious, headstrong men who believed what they were doing was patriotic. And they could've gone on to live a life of comfort like this too. If not for you...My brother died for his country. You killed for it."

Kate started packing up her things, releasing all the anger she didn't use in her words with her body. She rushed out of there without saying goodbye. Robert hadn't said anything either. He just let her go. It wasn't until she got into her car that she realized:

*She hadn't finished.*

Now she would have to go back. She would've loved to not see him ever again. But she couldn't abandon the project. Deep down, unbeknownst even to her, she wanted to go back.

Kate slowly crept down the stairs with her supplies, wanting to savor the time she had where she wouldn't have to look Robert in the eyes. Just as she had done on the days before, she put down her stuff at the landing pad, meaning to grab a few things to set up at a time. When she put down her easel, she saw Robert sitting hunched over on the chair. There was a coffee table where she usually set her easel. She walked quietly over to the edge of the chair and saw polaroid photos spread across the table.

Robert pointed to a photo on the far left. It had who she presumed to be a young Robert and next to him was a man with a big grin on his face.

"That was me and my friend Don. We had just gotten our hair buzzed off. He had recently bought a polaroid camera and wanted to commemorate the moment."

His voice was soft, a stark contrast to its booming timbre from the previous day. Robert sniffled. He pointed to a photo in the center.

"That was us in uniform for the first time." Robert pointed to a photo next to it, with the same man, both smiling wide in their uniforms.

“That was us after a night in Saigon. We thought we were living the peak of our lives... And he was.” Robert looked up at Kate. He had tears in his eyes.

“Don was killed during battle. He blocked a bullet headed for me. Don died for his country. And you’re right. All I did was kill for it.”

His voice began to waver. Kate put her hand on his back. She surprised herself with the gesture. “Kate,” His voice trembled, and he looked down for a moment. Kate put her hand on his shoulder, surprising herself at her kind gesture. Robert looked up again, the tears slowly streaming down his face.

“Kate, I know I’m not a good man. I’ve made some mistakes. But everything I’ve said to defend myself and this war... is for Don. I wear these medals for him. All he would’ve wanted was to be remembered for his service. It was what defined him. He wouldn’t have come back and settled down like me. And I think... I think that’s why I’ve been hostile towards you. Because every attack you made on me felt like an attack on Don. And I couldn’t let that happen.” Robert broke down into tears, trying to hold them back. Kate embraced him, trying to comfort him.

“I feel I’ve been doing the same.” Kate said, her voice now wavering “I’ve been attacking you in David’s name.” Kate let out a breathy chuckle.

“We were both affected similarly by the war. I suppose we just viewed it differently. You saw it take away someone you love and thought that all he’d want you to do was defend the war and his service. Me, I saw it take someone from me, and I despised the war for it. And it made me hostile towards you as well. And you were right. I really haven’t been around people I disagree with much at all. I guess this was a much needed intervention.”

There were now tears in Kate’s eyes too.

“And Robert. Nobody’s good. Not really. Everyone is just trying their best. And you’re best has been much better than mine, believe me. I’ve been nothing but bitter in my efforts to stick up for what I believed was right. I commend you for not doing the same.”

Kate kissed Robert on the forehead, something that would’ve felt awkward had they not been so vulnerable with each other. It was like a handshake compared to what they just shared.

Kate got up and set up her stuff. Robert didn’t move. She placed the unfinished canvas onto the board. All she had left was his face. She looked at him. He had moved from the floor but his face was still stricken with emotion.

“Come on Robert. Look at me how Don would’ve looked at me.” Kate said assuringly.

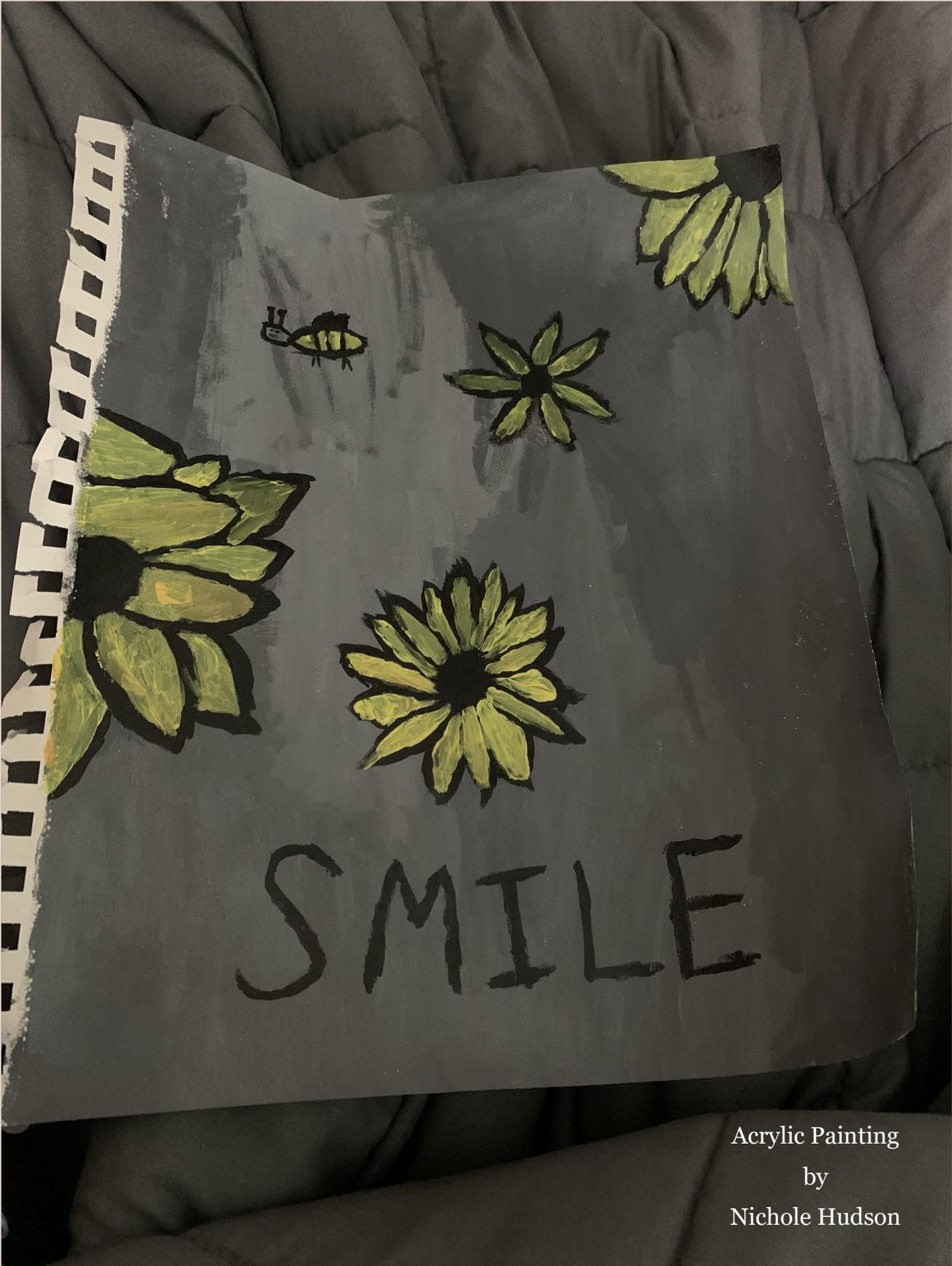
Robert looked up. He wiped his eyes and adjusted his hat. He closed his eyes for a second and then looked up. He looked brand new, a proudness and confidence on her face she hadn’t seen before.

Robert lifted up his hand to his face.

“Don’t itch!” Kate said. They both let out a small laugh.

They were completely silent for the rest of the session, but there was no awkwardness in the silence. This time, the silence was welcomed. It was welcome because now, it meant that they were on good terms.





Acrylic Painting  
by  
Nichole Hudson

Refurbishing  
A  
Wooden Chest  
By  
Nevin Wilkie  
&  
Friend



Bird House  
Under Construction  
By  
Jack Casey



*Nevin Wilkie*  
**“The Art of Refinishing Furniture”**



Learning to Build in  
Home Repairs  
by Aiden Forster

## Welding Memories

by CJ Duncan

These photos show how my grandfather, my dad and I re-furbished a loader for our John Deere 750. First, we drove to Ohio to buy the used loader. We had to make each arm 20 inches shorter and weld it all back together. We modified it to fit our tractor and painted it John Deere green. Even though it was a lot of hard work, it was a lot of fun. It was a great learning and bonding experience for all 3 generations.

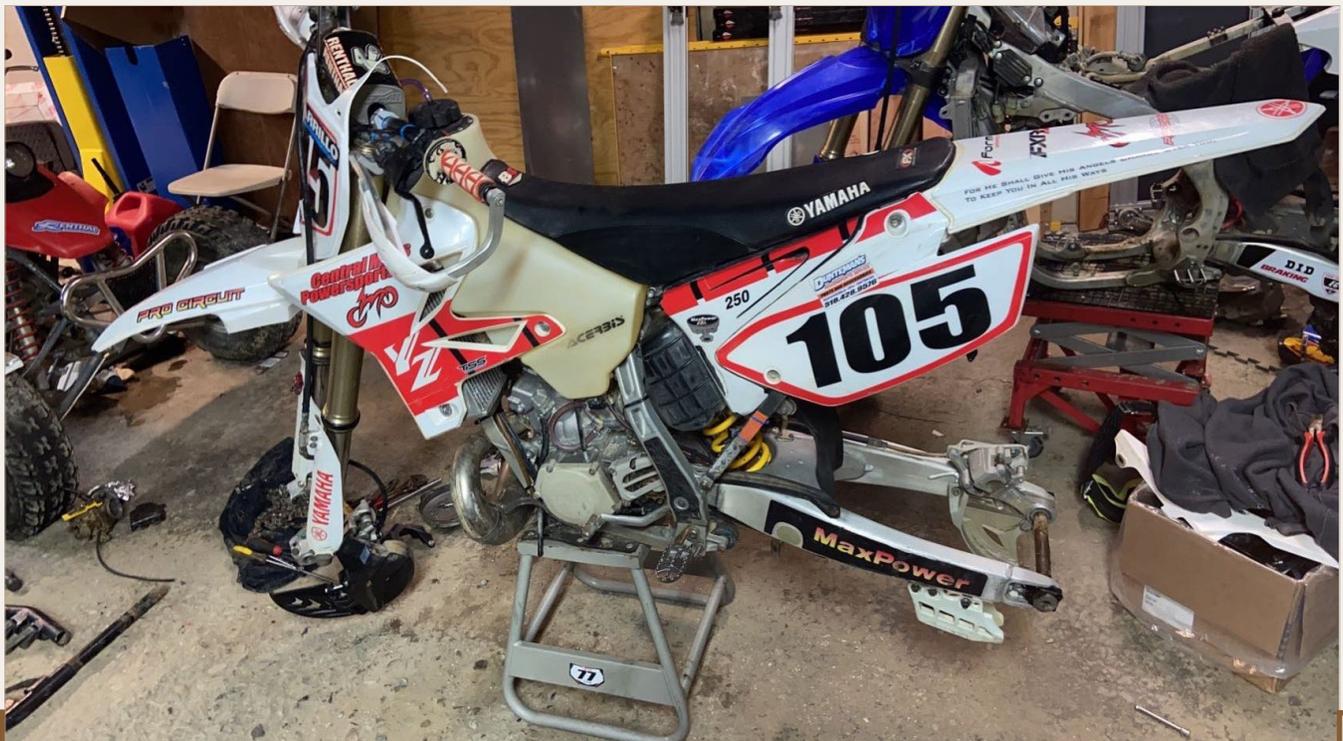




Motors  
Gears  
Wheels

Restoring  
Things That Go Fast!

*by Wally Hayes*



Tinkering & Rebuilding  
A Father & Son Thing....



*Michael Brooks*

# Lebanon Valley Speedway Bound



A Father & Son Project  
Dylan Grogan

"All our dreams can  
come true if we have  
the courage to pursue  
them."

Walt Disney

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<https://images.google.com/>

Autism, baseball border, Billy Joel quote, BMX border, book, cardinal border, children, clock, collage of pictures for "We didn't Start the Virus", Coronavirus, cosmos, Derek Jeter quote, emojis with masks, football, four seasons square, guitar, lacrosse border, Lithuanian map, music score, Pikes Peak, runner, snowflake border, various pictures of seasons, Walt Disney quote, Winnie the Pooh, wrestler.

THE

TAMARAC

TIMES BY THE CLASS OF...

ENTRIES, DRAWINGS,  
PAINTINGS, AND MORE!



2023

Designed  
by  
Kylie Purello