



# EXPOSURES 2026

A LEE LANAU COUNTY STUDENT JOURNAL



# EXPOSURES 2026

Welcome to this 38th issue of *EXPOSURES*! This is a collaborative project begun in 1988 to challenge Leelanau County students in grades 7-12 to express themselves through art and writing. It provides a showcase for their work.

It is a testament to the commitment of our teachers and fine arts devotees that we have been able to produce this publication every year during good times and bad, for going on four decades.

Each year hundreds of poems, stories, photographs, paintings, drawings, and sketches are submitted for review. This year, 175 pieces were selected to best represent the heartfelt thoughts, fears, dreams, and hopes of Leelanau County students.

The strong bond our young people have with this special place is evident throughout these pages. We hope you enjoy the inside look at Leelanau County from our students' perspectives, as well as their broader perspective on the world they are inheriting.

We are grateful for the continuing support of the administrators and boards of education from Glen Lake, Leland, Northport, Suttons Bay, St. Mary's, Pathfinder, and the Leelanau School. We appreciate the help of Suttons Bay Public Schools, which serves as project fiduciary.

Ongoing contributions from many generous individuals and Genuine Leelanau, Leland Educational Foundation, and the Suttons Bay-Bingham Fund of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation are of critical importance and are gratefully acknowledged.

Special thanks go to the Leelanau School for hosting this year's show which presents *EXPOSURES* to the community, and to Andrew McFarlane, who generously hosts our website at [leelanau.com/exposures](http://leelanau.com/exposures).

On behalf of all the editors, school coordinators, writers and artists, we congratulate the students whose work is included within these pages. Enjoy their beautiful art, listen to their voices, applaud their imaginations and enjoy *EXPOSURES 2026*!

*EXPOSURES* is a collaborative project which depends upon the time and talents of many people in our community, including:

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Pathfinder School

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Northport Arts Association

Suttons Bay-Bingham Fund

Sally Viskochil

## What It Means To Win

*Adeline Guffey, Grade 9*

The sun was hot and dust filled my eyes as my jeans stuck to my legs. I adjusted my bright pink show shirt for the hundredth time while my leather halter started to slip out of my sweaty hand. I chipped at my hot pink nails that I painted in an attempt to match my shirt. I thought I was going to puke as one of the ring leaders said softly, "All right, let's go," and I walked into the arena with my last seven months of blood, sweat, and tears.

It was 4-H Dairy Feeder Showmanship Day and my last show of the year. Everything I had done in the past seven months all led up to this moment. From the early mornings in the barn bottle feeding, to the hot afternoons cleaning the pen, and everything in between, I had worked my butt off.

Taking care of one calf isn't easy, but taking care of two calves is even harder. My cousin also kept her calf at my house, and because she couldn't always be there to help, I mostly raised them both myself. In general, I put a lot of commitment into my 4-H project.

Years prior, I had come very close to winning Reserve Grand Champion Showman Dairy Feeder and gotten multiple first place ribbons; I thought that this was finally going to be my year. However, things didn't go exactly as planned. Embarrassingly, I placed last in my open showmanship class, but that didn't matter. Right? I mean it was my year, my time to shine, so I had to win at some point. A few hours passed and suddenly we were back in the arena for market. No pressure there, just stand still and make my calf look pretty. If anything, this is when I could do well. Suddenly my heart dropped and blood pounded, almost as if I got a breakup text, when the judge shook my cousin's hand for Reserve Grand Champion Market Dairy Feeder.

Wait, but what? That was supposed to be me! That was supposed to be my banner, my recognition, my success! Besides, she already had her turn, and I did half of the work on that calf! So how was that fair? I did the work and she got the credit for it? I cried the rest of the day with my eighth-place ribbon and sweat soaked jeans back at the campsite while everybody else enjoyed the seemingly not so fair, fair.

It was the next morning and I had a clean slate, a new opportunity to go out there and make my work worth it. I braided my hair and did my makeup, put on my crisp show shirt and dirty boots, and marched into the arena. I painted a smile on my face, but underneath that, I was crumbling. I wanted to win so badly and prove myself. I stood with my calf, smiling while worrying I was going to make a mistake at any moment. The judge started to pull people. My body flooded with relief when he picked the last three people in the class, but my heart pounded in my chest when I was left in the top three. To my right was last year's Reserve Grand Champion showman, and to my left was last year's Grand Champion showman. I thought I could beat the odds, but my heart sank as the judge placed me third in the class. That meant I wouldn't even get a chance to go back out for Grand and Reserve.

I walked out of the ring with tears in my eyes as the judge chose Grand and Reserve, although I didn't care who it was, because it wasn't me.

However, I was happy for the girl that won, and I learned the powers of confidence and happiness in the arena, and the fact that winning isn't always the most important thing. In the end, although I didn't win in the show ring, I won during the late nights, early mornings, and long afternoons pouring my heart and soul into something I love doing. Besides, there's always next year!



*Ashley Siepker, Grade 8*

*Opposite: Sawyer Kiessel, Grade 12*





## Nature

*Kathryn Rokita, Grade 9*

The call of a bird  
The shade of the tree  
The calm of nature  
Welcomes me

The whisper of wind  
The touch of grass  
The spray of water  
It calls me

Today I wander  
Tomorrow I ponder  
And yesterday is a past dream  
Yet nature loves me

The forest is a blanket  
The animals are family  
The wind is a kiss on the cheek  
In this place I call home



*Riley Davis, Grade 10*

## The Short Snowman

*Lamdin Moeggenberg, Grade 8*

Scarf waving wild  
The short snowman cold  
Charcoal eyes and carrot nose

## Untitled

*Ravell Smith, Grade 12*

Water roaring, crashing.  
Paddling toward a certain cold end.  
Finding peace in the chaos  
Feeling mother nature's frigid embrace  
Fight against her power is pointless,  
Connecting with the forceful water gives an uncertain success

Turning back the gloomy beach, distant  
but still in sight  
Now trusting in nothing but yourself to survive  
Human instincts signaling alarm

The deep blue wall propelling you forward  
Now pushing your arms into the slab of plastic that has offered  
your only support  
Standing now  
harnessing its immense ferocity now  
Becoming one with the wave now  
Serenity now

*Opposite: Lilly VanThomme, Grade 11*

## 16th Birthday

Z Phan, Grade 12

Rays of golden light are dappled across the table in front of me  
And I want to say something poetic  
and the world outside is dewy and gorgeous  
and there is a girl who only speaks Spanish  
and stumbles in and out of her room again and again  
She is brooding, violent, and the nurses say she's on Percocet  
I avoid eye contact, lest my gaze agitate  
and provoke her.

This is such a pathetic life to lead, I say to myself,  
as I scrape the last bits of chocolate frosting  
from the container for the cake slice  
which my social worker bought for me on my 16th birthday.  
If I weren't so mopey, I would be more grateful.

My social worker jokes that she hopes to never see me again  
and I give her a halfhearted chuckle

The whole situation makes me feel  
The entire ordeal makes me feel  
The reality of it makes me feel  
timid. Meek.  
And covers my need for a mother.

I have fallen upon the sidewalks of life,  
and I skin my knees.  
No one is here  
There is no mother,  
to help me stand,  
or dress my wounds  
and kiss the pain goodbye.



Kayleigh Harnick, Grade 7



Jayden Kalchik, Grade 8

## Warm, Cold Snow

Jose Mendez, Grade 7

Beneath the silent quilt of snow, the forest slumbers, hushed and slow.  
Pine branches bow like dancers' arms, the snow so soft like a white  
blanket in the forest, no more birds, no more sounds, but you and the  
trees, trees and the snow wet and tight and warm and cold.

## Spring

Annie Griffin, Grade 7

Beautiful flowers,  
Blowing through the wind.  
Soft petals falling



Aiden Vasquez, Grade 11



Austin VanPelt, Grade 11



Chloe Sunderman, Grade 12



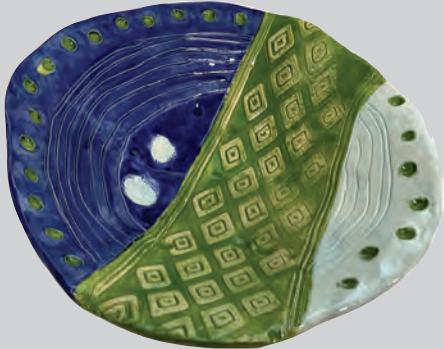
Andrew Nutt, Grade 12



Molly Rousseau, Grade 12



*Piper Briggs, Grade 11*



*J.C. Oosse, Grade 12*



*Cody Tietje, Grade 11*



*Meridian Parsons, Grade 11*



*Natalie Burpee, Grade 11*

## Yarn

*Jazmyne Bressette, Grade 9*

Grab a new skein of yarn, this one is acrylic,  
Size 5.5mm but I'll use 4.5mm,  
Choices lead to different outcomes.  
Losing stitch counts,  
Read incorrect stitches,  
Double or treble.  
Hours pass before I know that  
I don't know how to do a double linked stitch correctly.  
This keeps me away from the awful words that hurt,  
headphones blasting to block out everything they say.



*Marlen Guzman, Grade 9*

## Maybe

*Everly West, Grade 8*

In the start of the spring season, most people think of the blooming flowers and the rebirth of what has been diminished,  
But maybe you're different, maybe you think of the winter season that for others has already been finished,  
No matter where you might be in your time.  
Always strive to see the sublime,  
And though the path may seem hard,  
Know that the finish line isn't far,  
And if you can try to be like a fallen leaf,  
For they are as calm and easy-going as the breeze which they've soared beneath,  
When you meet a person during the holidays,  
Give them a smile,  
Because maybe they can't remember the last time they got one,  
Maybe it's been a while,  
Don't be high and mighty and always lend a helping hand,  
Because though you are important, we are all equal to a grain of sand,  
So think of the poem when swimming with friends,  
Because there will be a time when all hangouts have their ends,  
Be grateful for their laughs,  
Because soon it will turn into the past,  
Where they will all fall into a comfortable sleep,  
Then it's just you, the past, the trees, the snow, the spring, the time when you thought you knew,  
But then you see the leaf,  
And you remember the season's meaning wasn't meant to be hateful,  
But to make you  
grateful.

## The Hold of Chaos

Emory Wege, Grade 8

### -OBSERVER-

For many years, we monitored the planets we believed might harbor life—until their foul, resource-stealing machines arrived. Then they arrived on the planet, unaware of the layered world beneath their instruments and of us, the watchers who never moved and yet saw everything. Our listening devices confirmed that the mass relocation from their home planet was a consequence of their own actions—their so-called “technological innovations.” It was a relief, to say the least, that our planet served only as a temporary haven for their species; they left approximately one hundred and seventeen days after they arrived.

### -IGNORANT-

It all started with a beep on my phone. Saying that the planet was dying, and we were to use our means of travel to bring ourselves and a maximum of three pounds of luggage per person to the launch site. The first thing that I thought was that my brother was playing a joke on me. I called him out, and he had no idea what I was talking about. No, no, he was pranking me; the incomprehensibility of the other option only made it harder to believe. No—I would stay put. If I rejected the truth, the truth would cease to be real. So I stayed put. My brother left, the idiot he was, his naivety would be his end. And so that would end my thoughts of him. I ignored the beeps and notifications, estranged from the planet. Over time, I would hear the roaring sound of a rocket in the distance. For countless days, I lived off our garden and my store of canned food. I lived as the sole human on the planet, and then I found out why the rest of our species left our home.

An enormous, scarlet cloud was speeding toward me in the distance. My ignorance finally caught up with me, so I must accept the truth. I chaotically rushed to the boat and flung myself in, trying to start the motor. Pull, pull, pull, the whoosh of the engine revving to life and relief spreading through my body.

The relief was short-lived. I looked back at the ominous cloud moving toward me at a remarkable speed, and all relief was gone; fear was the only emotion provided now. The boat’s wake was slow. Too slow. The cloud surged forward, blotting out the sky—and hope. This cloud was no storm. It had direction.

It had purpose. I was enveloped by the red haze. Death crept in as the air thinned, and suffocation took hold. There I died, my mind filled with thoughts of how human consciousness manifested brilliance and stupidity, light and shadow, life and death.

### -CONFORMIST-

The message came. Not a question, not a choice—just a directive. Fear, surprise, and sadness were indeed emotions, but emotion was for the weak. Obey those who have power, and you survive. Order. Structure. Those are the concepts that life is to be followed. I packed my bags to the exact maximum and calmly strode outside to the car. I designated the launch site as the destination. The vehicle initiated transit. I arrived at the launch site and calmly walked to the end of the line. I observed

the others waiting in line. What was the reason for their fear? For their empty tears? Order. Structure. Obey those laws of life, and all will be well.

I arrived at the front. An impassive, unexpressive man gave me a ticket and assured me of my safety. I followed the markers to the lift. I handed my ticket slip to the attendant, climbed downwards to my seat, and placed my bag in the designated compartment. I had no idea where this rocket was to be taking me, but I had followed the directive, and trust is to always be placed in procedure. I noted the screen at the front of the cabin: ten minutes to launch. Five minutes. Two minutes. A tremor ran through the floor of the lift—unscheduled vibrations. I noted them. I dismissed them. One minute. Ten seconds. Five, four, three, two, one.

Ignition. Shaking. The whole rocket pitched forward. Then back. The noise of the engine silences the screams of others. The machine is forced into the air. Up into the heavens, the shaking increases. The overhead lights dimmed to red. I clung to order. I clung to structure. Procedure was followed. Still, a weak link failed, and I was pulled into the vacuum. My last sight was of a scarlet world engulfed in chaos.

I followed the directive, and still—  
I died.



Christian Feeney, Grade 9



*Lucas Plamondon, Grade 12*



*Natalie Burpee, Grade 11*



*James Bunek, Grade 11*

## **Summer Haiku**

*Evelyn Lambie, Grade 7*

Hot sand on my feet  
Seagulls looking for some food  
Waves washing on shore

## **Simple Pleasure**

*Brooke Warren, Grade 8*

How could anyone feel attached to an environment?  
I do.  
The tall trees and the bright sun,  
I remember it so vividly.  
I am listening to a song,  
Can't remember the name,  
But it's unimportant anyway.  
The thing that's most special about this picture in time,  
Is merely just a rock.  
I notice it every time I come here.  
So still,  
So small,  
yet still so perfect.  
I feel bittersweet about it,  
As if I should become more like it.  
But as quickly as the feeling came,  
It's broken when I walk away.

## Wrapped In Love

*Lydia Fosmore, Grade 11*

From the moment I was born, my mom wanted to provide me with something that would offer a sense of home. She bought my baby blanket, Rosie Budds, for me as a welcome into the world; though looking back, it should've been a welcome into the never-ending chaos of life.

The bond I share with my mom mirrors the comfort that Rosie Budds has always brought me. Consistent, loving, and understanding, even as the simplest concepts of life become rocky. My mom has always been my source of reassurance and my best friend for as long as I can remember. Her love has always been present in both the quiet and grand gestures, such as late night talks, always putting me before herself, and in the way she knows exactly when I need support. As I have held Rosie Budds through moments of heartbreak or failure, I have also fallen into my mom's embrace when life felt overwhelming or when I just needed someone to tell me I'm not overreacting, even if I totally am.

These next few years, I will be navigating life independently through college, and I won't be by my mom's side every time I need her guidance, yet through Rosie Budds, I feel the presence and healing of my mom's love and care, illustrating that humans have a drive to keep familiarity close, even as they navigate the uncertainty of change. On the other hand, holding onto such items can make it difficult to embrace the ongoing stages of life. Relying heavily on a comfort object can cause people to unintentionally avoid the discomfort that comes along with growth, yet this emotional attachment doesn't necessarily limit growth. It can support it in many different ways such as having something familiar to hold onto, providing a sense of stability, allowing a person to take greater risks and face uncertainty. The past does not need to be banned from our future. Baby blankets are a tangible reminder of who we once were and where we came from, highlighting that growth isn't about abandoning who we once were, but about carrying the lessons and pieces of the past into the future we are building.



*Brooke Warren, Grade 8*



*Evelyn Barnowski, Grade 7*

## **All At Once**

*Christian Feeney, Grade 9*

Lines lead away from me  
Pulling back to their source  
Hooks dragging me  
In too many directions  
At once

I wish I could stretch  
Be everywhere  
At once

Or have those sources  
Come to me  
All at once

But People  
Places  
Time  
Can't do all that  
At once

So when a hook pulls too hard  
It tears out  
Shockingly  
Painfully  
But with some relief, too  
All at once



*Katie Toth, Grade 9*

## **Adrenaline**

*Ellie Wright, Grade 9*

All the teams are lined up, a sea of different colored uniforms. Each of us is contained in the spray-painted boxes, waiting. Adrenaline pumps through my veins as I wait for the call. It is quiet, the only sounds being the faint mumbling of the crowd, teammates chattering nervously, and spikes digging into the gravel.

“Runners, to your mark!”

We all step up to the white line and my heart speeds up. This moment is everything. My ears automatically tune out all other sounds as I wait for the gun. When the shot echoes through the air, my body shoots forward. In an instant, dirt is kicked up and a herd of bodies surrounds me, and I feel like I’m flying.



*Madison Scott, Grade 9*



Filomena Channer-Dodson, Grade 10

## The Joy

Ellen Schwaiger, Grade 11

I expected  
 Anger.  
 Expected to feel the imbalance,  
 Feel the barrier drawn by differences.  
 I expected to feel the anger.  
 Maybe resentment,  
 For all we had done to them.  
 But I felt joy?  
 My heart skips a beat  
 Wondering  
 Wondering where it came from  
 How are they showing us joy?  
 But my wonder is quickly replaced by awe.  
 Awe of them, of their strength  
 Of their power to forgive.  
 I will forever remember the joy they showed us.  
 They showed us how to feel the joy.

## Tragedy of a Ligament

Evan Keen, Grade 11

The tragedy of a ligament.  
 All there, then not;  
 No longer a participant.

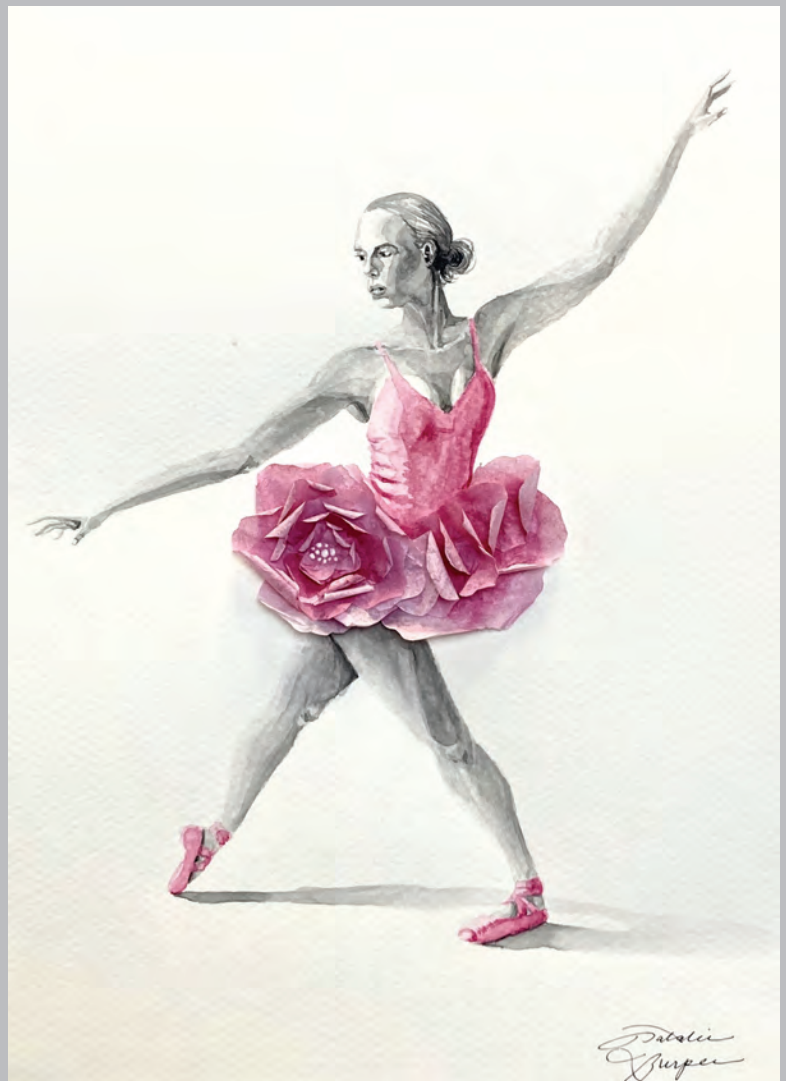
No words to vent;  
 Mind full of thoughts.  
 The tragedy of a ligament.

In a predicament,  
 Frozen in a knot.  
 No longer a participant.

Mind starting a reassessment,  
 Entrusting the plot.  
 The tragedy of a ligament.

Now hell-bent,  
 Time to show what I got.  
 No longer a participant.

Back in my element,  
 My shot.  
 The tragedy of a ligament.  
 Again a participant.



Natalie Burpee, Grade 11



*Filomena Channer-Dodson, Grade 10*

## **The Life of My Past**

*Marcus Myers, Grade 7*

Through the years up to now I feel my past fade away, the struggles through the pain.

Stuff I can't explain.

Friends of the past farther now, connections through the things I do.

People who claim to be my friend but is it true, or do they think I'm just a fool?

People that make my life harder, wish I could stay somewhere close to the life I know.

I try my hardest in everything I do, but it's like they look straight through.

There's only one place that feels like home, when I'm there alone I feel like I'm in control.

An endless hope feels bound, this peace of mind cools me down.

Wish I could stay there forever now, as loneliness starts to kick in.

A part of life I keep forever bound.

Even if it feels like I don't exist, even when they look straight through me like I'm mist.

I try to fit in but it's like I'm not there, as my confidence starts to grow bare.

My feelings lock around me here and there, the lurking shadow of my past.

Every time I look back, memories come in fast.

Would it be better if I just went back?



*Arlo Woodruff, Grade 8*

## **Lockdown**

*Miya Clutterbuck, Grade 11*

Recess died in 2021.  
I never thought it would end.

Playing on the monkey bars.  
Trying to reach the highest point on the swings.

Playing grounded with friends,  
Making sure we don't get out  
Or tagged while trying to avoid the monster.

Recess died, lockdown started.

Instead of sitting on swings,  
We sat in the corners of the classroom.  
We sat under desks.  
There was no swinging out in the open,  
It was hiding in the secluded.

When recess died,  
There was no more holding onto monkey bars,  
Instead, kids were holding onto five-hundred-word textbooks,  
Hardcover, close to our chests.  
Instead of holding on tight to the bars,  
We were holding on tight to our only chance of safety.

Playing hide and seek, laughter filled the air.  
Except this game was no longer fun  
Instead of laughter,  
It was screams.

Recess died when the shooting started.



*Hannah Caldwell, Grade 7*

## Esperanza's Adventure

*Jocelyn Martinez, Grade 11*

Esperanza walked Mango Street,  
seeing cruelty behind closed doors.  
Rafaela watched, too:  
women trapped, afraid to leave.  
Esperanza dreamed of freedom,  
promising to return and help.

She saw women, hopeless,  
trapped behind their windows.  
Safe inside,  
yet too afraid to open the door.  
Esperanza felt the weight of their fear,  
and wondered if she could escape, too.

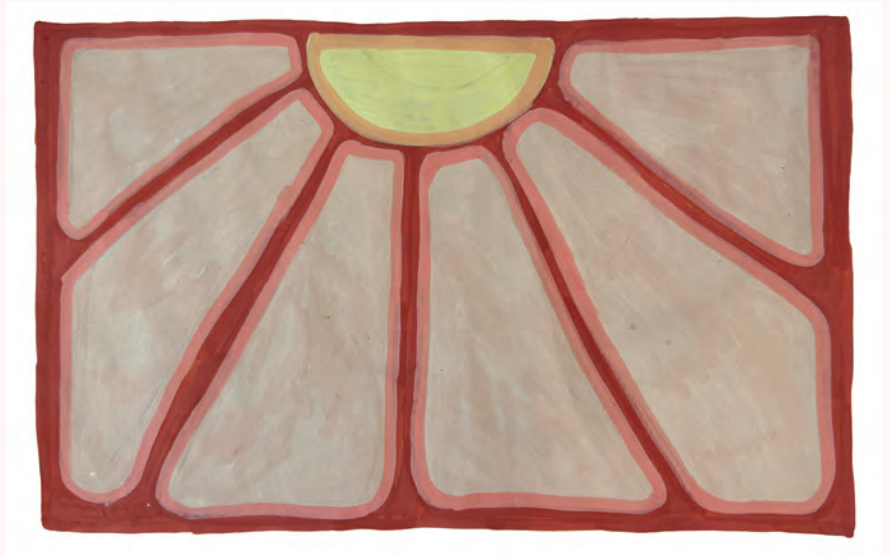
Rafaela, fearing, watched through her window.  
She dreamed of a life she couldn't have.  
Esperanza noticed her yearning,  
feeling she would never want that fate.

The streets lured her in,  
resisting every step.  
She stepped forward,  
knowing her heart  
was stronger than the walls.

She returned home,  
better than most.  
Becoming a writer,  
she carried stories  
that lived in her heart.



*Abigail Martini, Grade 12*



*Elizabeth Jelinek, Grade 8*



## **Where the Hair Ties Together**

*Alexa Diaz, Grade 9*

My regalia laid out,  
like a prayer, like a trophy  
that makes my parents proud every time I put it on.  
Before the loud beat of that sacred drum  
calls me forward and out onto the arena.  
My body, my feet,  
they already know how to move and  
how to make my parents proud on their own

*Veda Weir, Grade 8*



*Josephine Reyes Ramirez, Grade 11*

## **Time Heals All Wounds**

*Tucker Stillwell, Grade 8*

At the start of school, about four months ago, I had this new feeling that made me very anxious. I felt that I needed to spend my time in the absolute best way possible, or doing anything would be a waste of time. I believe that the cause of this was from a summer camp I attended for two weeks, which ended only one week before the start of school. I felt that I needed to spend the free week that I had in the best possible way, or there was no point in my getting a free week at all. My sister was also leaving to go to boarding school five days into the week, so I also believed that I must spend those five days with her perfectly. Unfortunately, I felt that I hadn't spent the week well, and that the time caused anxiousness which continued into the school year.

I always felt horrible whenever I had free time, because I stressed so much about spending it flawlessly. I would worry about whether I spent too much time sleeping on weekends, or in the bathroom, or doing homework. Nothing I did would satisfy myself. I could spend time having as much fun as possible, or being as productive as possible, but nothing worked. I also started dreading school, even though I love being at school, because I wouldn't be able to control how I spend my time there. At school, I would be anticipating the end of the day, while at home, I would be dreading the next day's school. This eventually spiraled into me being worried about how I would spend my time before middle school ended, my childhood ended, or my life ended.

Nothing would seem nearly as fun as before, and I wasn't even as productive as before. The same message kept going through my head, "You're wasting your time." Not even any amount of therapy would work to remove this feeling or convince myself to believe that I didn't need to spend my time perfectly. What seemed most paradoxical was that I couldn't get used to the feeling at all. It hit just as hard or even harder than before. I realized that nothing I tried to do would fix this problem. So I decided to wait.

Time, the thing that got me so stressed about everything, also got me through what it had caused. I had finally broken free of the curse, slowly, but surely. I learned that time truly heals all wounds, physical or mental. I learned that you can't fix stress or sadness. Everyone experiences it, and no therapist or psychologist can fix it more than just temporarily. Anxiety alone isn't a disorder; it's an emotion.

Reflecting on this stress, fortunately, did not make me stressed again. It got me to learn from my mistakes and experiences. It got me to realize many things that I am sure I shall keep with me forever.



*Delanie Dembowske, Grade 10*

## Who I'm Supposed To Be

*Lana Kennedy, Grade 8*

I'm far from who  
I'm supposed  
To be,  
But who  
Decides  
That for me?

I'm the only  
Me  
There will ever be,  
So why should I be forced  
Upon a theme?

I become more me  
With every little key  
That unlocks a degree  
Somewhere in  
Me.

This sole being,  
Known as  
Me,  
Will forever be  
An unusual  
Thing.

So I won't let others  
Get to me,  
I will stand strong  
And do my own thing.

I'm the best  
Me  
There will ever be,  
And I can do  
Anything.

I am free  
Because I'm  
Me.

I am  
Who I'm supposed to be.



*Garrett Grant, Grade 11*

## Ode to Little Olive

*Olive Craker, Grade 9*

I look at this picture everyday  
Something about it always makes me think  
About when I was in my old school.  
Kids everywhere  
Wooden chairs and thousands of chains.  
Makes me think  
The big face brings me back  
To the good old days  
With good old friends.  
When we fought over silly things  
Like colored markers  
And who is first in line.  
It's so different,  
Now the old friends  
Are gone.  
The silly fights turn into  
Ruined friendships.  
And bad memories.  
Laughing with friends  
Turns into conversations about  
Who did this and who said that.  
I still look at the portrait everyday before school.  
I see myself a little happy girl  
With no clue of what the future brings.  
It reminds me that  
Whatever happens in life to be kind to everyone.



*Liberty Schaub, Grade 8*



*Danica Reuthers, Grade 10*



Jessie Peplinski, Grade 11

## Ending

Norah Fehrenbach, Grade 9

The end of a book is not  
 The last page you turn of words and  
 The end of a book is not  
 The blank sheets in the beginning but  
 The end of a book is not  
 The corner of a page you fold over  
 The spot you marked  
 The place you'll come back to.  
 The end of the book is when  
 The story fades from  
 The deepest part of  
 The memories you hold in  
 The mind you possess.

## Revenge of the Water

*Lauren Knowlton, Grade 7*

The ocean.  
The blue  
Dark Waves,  
Full of various animals.

The navy waves,  
Span  
Across the world.

Sharks and fish, thriving, living together.

Trash, burrowing into the corners.

This magnificent being, being destroyed by the  
Carelessness  
Of the patriots “defending”  
This entity.

Sand, providing cover and necessary survival  
Tactics,  
Being taken, to do the same thing,  
But for me.

This vital force, home to millions of species.

Waves, crashing  
Against boats.  
Whale tails, sticking out  
To dive deep down.

Sea grasses, covering the bottom  
As a home,  
A safe space,  
Organisms.

Reef sharks,  
Swim around  
At the semi shallow depths.

The never-ending space, is more  
Known  
Rather than this soul.

Describe as wet,  
Deadly,  
A character needed for humanity’s survival.

This spirit,  
An ironic spirit,  
Is home to much more than the  
Mind  
Could think of.

Water:  
A colorless, transparent, odorless  
Liquid that forms the seas,  
Lakes,  
Rivers,  
And rain  
And is the basis of the fluids of living organisms.

H<sub>2</sub>O  
Voda  
Oceano  
Aqua  
Ocean  
Eau  
Agua  
Maji  
Atsiafu  
Amanzi  
Names that we call the  
Water, the ocean,  
But what do the life forms that  
Live in this amazing, vast water  
Call this liquid  
We humans are so undeserving of?

Home?  
Or torture?  
No being deserves to live in  
A body holding so much debris.

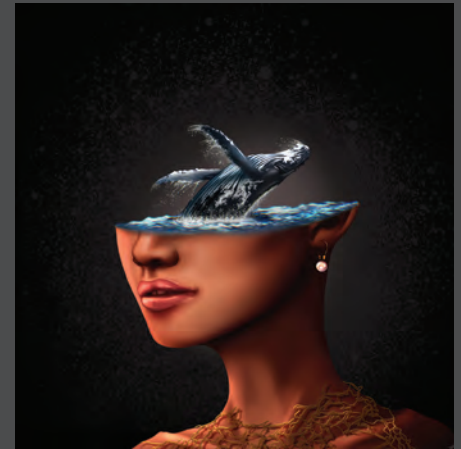
Sacagawea led two men  
Who never in a million years  
could deserve to glance  
At the Pacific.

After replenishing water from a stream,  
Or being a home for food,  
Letting millions of people  
Perform their hobbies,  
It is fed up.

Tired of hosting the Great Pacific Garbage Patch,  
Tired of being ignored,  
Tired of being used as a trash can,  
With the exception of being helped occasionally,  
The water has taken revenge.

Tsunamis, hurricanes, floods  
All things harming us.

This is not bad luck,  
It is revenge.



*Amelia Rollo, Grade 9*



*Natalie Burpee, Grade 11*

## **Haiku**

*Angel Monroy Gallardo, Grade 11*

Mi cama fria  
La luna me abraza  
Me voy a dormir

My cold bed  
The moon hugs me  
I go to sleep

## Happiness

*Faith Steffens, Grade 8*

Weeks go by,  
then days.  
Minutes and minutes,  
Until we see.

The smile is revealed,  
Blooming flowers inside me.  
Only for seconds,  
Then gone again,  
Until next time.

The sound of rain,  
Reminds me of your calm.  
My smile fades,  
Until we see.

When the time is here, I glow again.  
The presence of you,  
Completes me.

Wishing upon everything,  
Yearning to see.  
Days and days,  
I will wait.



*Fayth Lehnen, Grade 10*

## One Side Old, One Side New

*Ada Wetherbee, Grade 10*

One side in pristine condition  
Hardly even touched

One side overloved until it couldn't  
Hold together on its own

The new side strong and bumpy  
Thick and secure

The old side barely one piece  
Faded and thin  
Loose strands hanging off in  
Every direction



*Cassandra Espinoza, Grade 8*

## My Diving Mask

*Jack Scripps, Grade 10*

The key to  
new worlds

The headstrap tight  
below my crown,  
The windows are a lens  
to a foreign landscape

A familiar scent of  
salt water and rubber,  
The silicone seal leaving  
the red ring when all is said and done.

The mask that taught me  
what I know, and will  
follow where I go

## Brain Department

*Asuma Bradford, Grade 9*

Your brain's an empty office  
inside sits one small desk  
Your thoughts appear as files  
the drawers are where they rest

Top desk is center stage  
that's where your main thoughts roam  
but put them into drawers  
save the thinking for home

It's good in time of need  
when there's something to be done  
File all your thoughts  
except the working one

Then later in the day  
you open up those drawers  
Look around inside  
Find thoughts that were yours.



Keira Minor, Grade 12



*Z Phan, Grade 12*



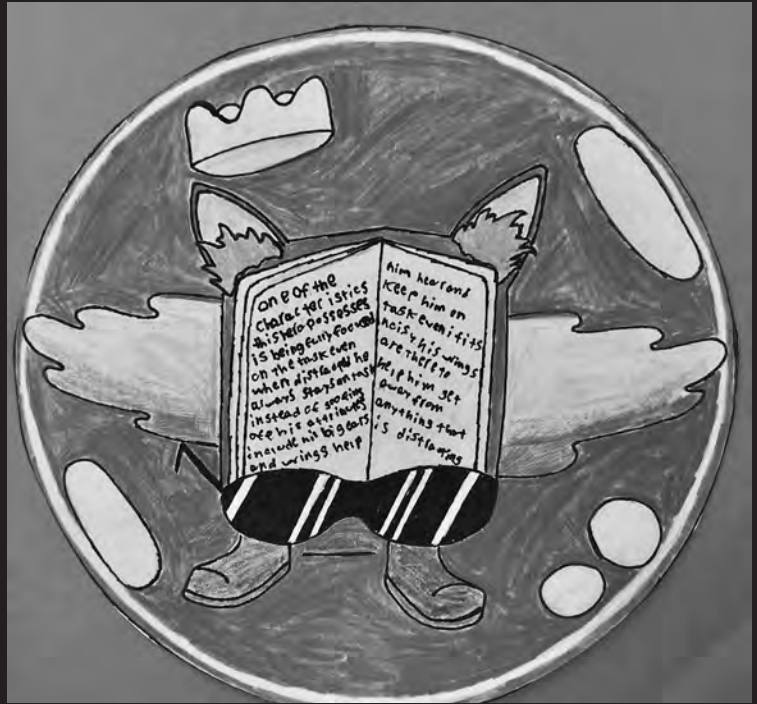


*Jessie Peplinski, Grade 11*

## **Thanksgiving**

*Cadence Bachelder, Grade 9*

Every Thanksgiving was similar. Since I was little we would drive to Texas and have Thanksgiving with my mom's mom, who we called Mawmaw. I saw my cousin and older relatives and friends of my mom with southern accents that I all called aunt or uncle. Everyone brought a dish and we would have a full table. Mom and Dad would sit on the porch with everyone and talk until we could hear the crickets chirp. I love the memories I had before it changed. Now Dad no longer comes with us, there are less people, an emptier table, and Mawmaw can't remember my name.



Marcus Myers, Grade 7

## PLAYBILL

Miya Clutterbuck, Grade 11

Almost like the table of contents

It holds the actors in future plays.

A thick yellow stripe at the bottom. *PLAYBILL* in big letters. Just a simple program.

But to me, it meant The World.

Jumping feet-first into a land of props, ballads, and stage cues

Even in the audience, you could feel it, almost like there was a magnetic pole taking you closer and closer.

Your body moving with music you didn't even know you'd enjoy.

Because when you go to that first performance, you don't know what's gonna happen. You don't know at all.

You know nothing.

That's all you know.

Because that's how life works.

When you're at a show.

## Ode to Passport

Elsie Purdy Teahen, Grade 10

Small blue book

The key to the world

I carry it close to my heart

DON'T EVER LOSE IT

Little stamps

Red, black, green, and yellow

Colors from adventures

Slide it across the counter

Look it over, take it back

Move through

To new languages, sights, and sounds



*Amelia Rollo, Grade 9*

## **Darkness Without an End**

*Jax Noonan, Grade 12*

Like an abandoned building,  
I crumble into oblivion once the night falls.  
Depression like daggers piercing through a sea on fire,  
burning my every thought until I turn to ash.  
Cursed by my ashes,  
forgetting who I was.  
I'll disappear into a sea of fire.

Leave me with nothing.  
Alone, I feel the void call to me.  
Darkness, imprisoning me  
Longing to escape this abyss,  
I stare, frozen in a state of nothing.  
Endlessly repeating, "I am nothing."  
Even if you search the darkness,  
you will never find me.

The numbness swallows me,  
cleansing me of this soulless existence.  
Losing all sense of reason.  
I try to scream but nobody's listening.  
If I control my thoughts, would I feel the pain?  
Staring into the pale moonlight,  
this depression has me trapped underwater,

but my head's in space as she tells me to come down to real life.  
Falling asleep in this labyrinth,  
WAKE UP!  
Escape the maze.  
Misery swallows me like a tsunami in this endless deathbed.  
Like the general, I long for a way out of this labyrinth.  
"Dammit, how will I ever escape this labyrinth?"  
Once again, I'll fade into a sea of fire and take you with me,  
To the end.



*Noelle Morio, Grade 8*



*Garrett Grant, Grade 11*

### **Scarlett**

*Scarlett Gallagher, Grade 7*

A bright and precious red that could be found in a cave  
 With other precious gems, like itself  
 That shines brightly against my eyes when I look

I could also imagine my name being in a book  
 The Scarlett red cover  
 The Scarlett velvet robe  
 Scarlett O'Hara, from *Gone with the Wind*

My name sounds like it could be in a ceremony  
 Or a celebration for a cultural event  
 It could be the bright red scarf across her neck  
 As she walked down the aisle

Or my name is when my family is gathered together  
 Around a table, on a snowy cold night  
 This is my family connected together:  
 Gallagher playing games or even watching a movie



*Daniel Chaney, Grade 11*



Charles Hale, Grade 7



Rowan Wert, Grade 12

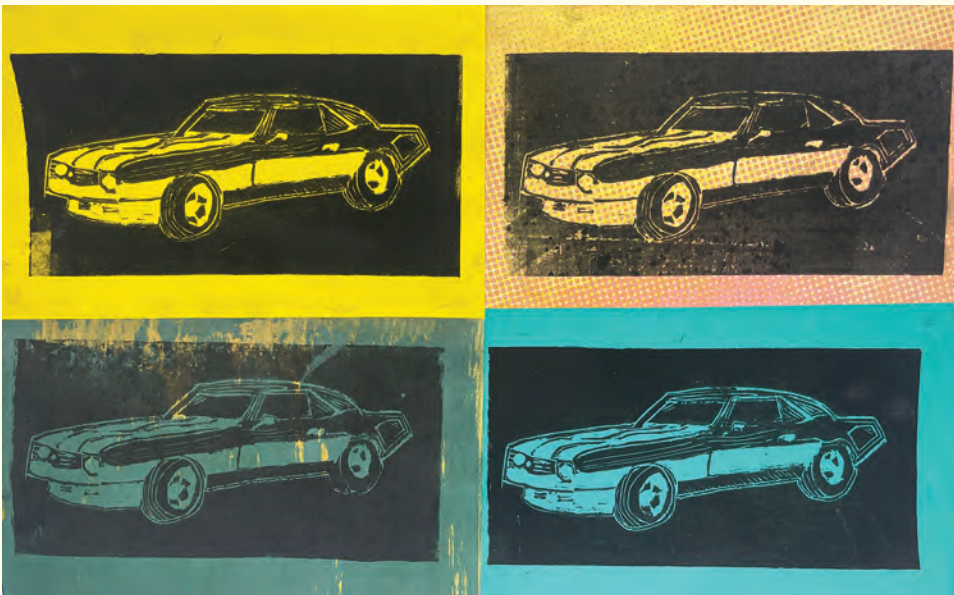


Emery Wichern, Grade 8

## Hidden Creature

Keegan Bridges, Grade 9

The sun shimmered on the waves and the crystal clear water matched the cloudless light blue sky. The water was cool against my skin as I slowly swam at the surface like a water beetle. In the tall, flowing weeds, I spotted something. I knew as soon as I saw it that it was what I was looking for. I filled my lungs with the crisp breeze and carefully dove down. As I got to the creature's level, I could see its eyes studying me, hoping it was still camouflaged. I reached out and I could feel the slimy body for the blink of an eye before the pike vanished, leaving only me in awe and a cloud of sand.



Lantz Courson, Grade 12



Carson Scott, Grade 8



*Berkleigh Carol, Grade 11*

## **Divorced**

*Tawny Herrera-Orozco, Grade 11*

Two beds. Two houses. To and from. Back and forth like a swing being pushed in two directions. Nowhere feels like a place to settle. Nowhere to claim as mine. A place you should feel you belong. Feeling at home. Do I have a home? *Can* I have a home? Questions are being asked as if I knew the answers, as a writer knows their next book title. I feel alone with these questions, no sense of where I belong or even where I fit in. My thoughts feel more like my friends than my enemies. I can't help but wonder how far these answers are. Questions need answers, like I need to find a place of *belonging*. I hope to see this sense of belonging soon. Soon enough, I will find the place I can call home. Buy a vase and call it mine. Keep old books on the shelves to fill them as full as a tall glass of water. Be able not to go back and forth, here and there, two beds, two houses, but to have my own things. Things that are *mine*.

## My Most Important Summer

*Ravell Smith, Grade 12*

Have you ever considered the importance of holding your pencil in a very specific way? Me neither, until I landed at Camp Spring Creek, a camp for kids with dyslexia. In June of 2020, six months into Covid, I was signed up for an eight-week camp for dyslexic kids from all over the country. Of course there was the back and forth, would it go, wouldn't it go? It went! I was thirteen.

Suzy, the camp director—wildly structured, tough love personified—taught me how to hold a pencil. Holding the pencil properly was the only way I would ever write cursive properly. First, hold the pencil lightly between your thumb and index finger, just one inch above the pencil lead, use your fingers to make movements instead of your wrist, and stay relaxed. Learning cursive is one of the things that has come most naturally to me. I found I could complete ideas quickly without losing my train of thought. I appreciated the fluidity of the process and also think it's pretty cool that I'm the only student in my class who knows how to write in this way. Some of my younger teachers can't even read cursive. I think the education system has done a disservice to learning by dropping it from the curriculum. I've heard it compared to a more musical way of writing; this makes sense to me. Suzy taught me how to write in cursive, quickly and adeptly

and when she said I had done this well, it was the best feeling in the world.

While it was Suzy who taught me to write, it was kind, patient Leann who unlocked reading for me. We were a team at Camp Spring Creek and for two years thereafter we worked together remotely. Leann, with her southern drawl and honking laugh, taught me the rules of language first and then the skill of decoding. Rules include complete sentences, proper punctuation and correct spelling. Decoding is connecting letters and chunks of words to their sounds. It is still, “tion” and “sion,” that are the most difficult to rectify. The stereotype of the dyslexic mind is that words move on the page. This was a theme in the Percy Jackson novels and made for good reading and better movies. I have found that I add words where they don't exist or are not necessary. Interestingly it is the small words that trip up my mind, not the bigger ones. Drilling was paramount and revisiting and repetition. Learning the rules and then what rules specifically resonated with you; you had to learn the rules of language before reading. Leann is still dear to me as well as the kids I connected with at Camp Spring Creek. It was the easiest community I've been a part of. One thing that stood out uniformly: those kids had the best sense of humor of any kids I've ever known. I think this is an overlooked attribute of the dyslexic mind.



*Bryan Cole, Grade 10*

## The War Pig

*Eli Ulbrich, Grade 12*

In darkened halls, they plot and scheme,  
A world consumed by endless greed.  
The war pig rises from the fire,  
Feeding on the world's desire.  
He moves in shadows, cold and swift,  
A force of death, a deadly gift.  
The leaders hide, they turn away,  
As the war pig leads the fray.  
No mercy in his savage eyes,  
He walks where hope and honor dies.  
The drums of war will never cease,  
For the war pig knows no peace.



*Alex McCormick, Grade 11*



*Z Phan, Grade 12*



*Josephine Horowitz, Grade 7*

## **Fresh Water Ocean**

*Howie Kropp, Grade 12*

We departed from Suttons Bay at 7:15 a.m. with the hopes of sailing to Leland, 50 nautical miles away and much bigger waters. We left the dock with high hopes, what we thought was plenty of gas, and a gallon of water. The first hour or two was smooth, then we got into the big water. Sailing into nothingness, we agreed we would be just fine if we just followed the shoreline. But we soon found that that wasn't an option. As we rounded the point into the big water, a thick fog was rolling in and we had about 30 nautical miles to go with no sight of any shore; no navigation, just a compass. Fog so thick you couldn't see 20 feet ahead. We realized we were less than halfway there with minimal fuel, no sight of land and, worst of all, no wind. After about an hour of motoring and much debating on what the next move was, we decided to head straight west. West was into the Manitou Passage which means big seas, unpredictable weather, and much farther from land. As we headed west, after we got about two miles offshore, the swell started to pick up, with wind up to 20 knots. The fog disappeared as the wind grew strong, although still no sight of shore. As we were downwind, surfing the four-foot seas and trying to fight our way east, the waves did not want us to go back to shore. We had been sailing west too long and were much farther offshore than we had anticipated, although we were making great progress. When we decided we needed to tack back east we knew it was going to be rough going against the waves. Immediately as we tacked we were very overpowered and heeling hard to port. We brought the head sail in after the first wave crashed over the bow. The waves were only building when rain started to fall from the dark sky. I sent Eli to get my foul weather gear from the cabin. As he was down there being tossed around looking for the gear, I saw a break in the sky. He resurfaced from the cabin and right off our bow we could see the bluffs of Leland. We had made it to shore and were about two miles from the harbor. The feeling of seeing those bluffs was indescribable and so relieving.



## Imagine Being a Flower

*Eloise Michaels, Grade 7*

Imagine being a flower.  
Beautiful and vibrant is always the first choice  
Your pistil feeds the bees with your sweet nectar  
Imagine being a flower  
Beautiful, perfect, always colorful

Imagine being a flower when winter comes  
You're sad like a stormy day  
Dead and ugly like being sick  
Imagine being a flower  
You just need to be a dandelion

Imagine being a dandelion.  
Loved in almost every season  
Beautiful in the summer, fun in the fall, gone in the winter, and back in the spring  
Imagine being a dandelion  
Invisible when it's bad, there when it's good  
Bright when happy, gone when sad  
Imagine being a dandelion

Then imagine being you.

There, when happy, has a favorite season story hobby  
Loved but sometimes didn't feel it  
Imagine being you  
Tell me about your opinion, your favorite game  
Imagine being you  
And tell me about you

*Taryn Kelley, Grade 7*



*Beckett DeFour, Grade 11*



*Rebekah Miller, Grade 10*



*Megan Lint, Grade 11*



*Ella Ingwersen, Grade 12*



*Kianna Piirainen, Grade 12*



*Grace Noonan, Grade 12*



*Tomas Chippewa, Grade 10*



*Jade Chavez, Grade 9*



*Megan Lint, Grade 11*



*Jania Monroy Gallardo, Grade 11*



*Adrienne Schaub, Grade 11*



*Jewel Bressette, Grade 7*

## An Ode to Pencil

*Nahwahquaw Laske, Grade 11*

Oh Pencil, a slender rod of creation often overlooked,  
I sharpen your head to smarten mine  
The instrument of mind, a voice of change  
Oh Pencil, thank you for losing yourself finding mine  
They say the pen is mightier than the sword, yet the  
power of yours ne'er erased  
The power of yours may not be able to change the past  
but rewrite the future



*Cooper Trombley, Grade 7*



*Z Phan, Grade 12*

## Echoes of the Court

*Tawny Herrera-Orozco, Grade 11*

The ball dribbles up and down the court, feeling the grooves on the leather on the outside of the ball on my hands, thinking of the hard workouts, sweat dripping down my face. The movement feels like an echo in every gym I walk into. Everything with basketball is like a ghost from the past I don't recognize. I walk past my own memories, knowing there was a time when basketball was as lovely as watching the leaves fall from the trees. Echoes upon echoes of bouncing and yelling, wishing it could all be of things I could turn and go back to. I turned my back too fast and too late. Basketball is driving off without me in its place.

## My Father

*Fischer Copeland, Grade 12*

Across the dining table is my father  
Who decades ago, was a soldier

And when I see him, I still see that corpsman  
With firefly spirit, charging to aid burning inside his soul

Helping men whose lives are at death's door  
Running into the fight showing his bravery

Caring for those who need his help  
Even in his time back at home

He still saves lives every time he wears his scrubs  
Helping those who need his aid

Showing bravery and courage to care for strangers  
and from this, what I see, is a hero

A man to some, angel to others,  
and to me, that man is my father and greatest motivation.

In midst of a fight, a man runs through the smoke  
To find a man on the ground  
Bleeding from his wounds, he cries for help  
It is a corpsman here to keep death away  
In the wounded man's eyes, it is an angel

The corpsman says with a focused face, "You're gonna be ok, son. Everything is ok"  
The corpsman grabs his pack and tends to the man letting him live to see another day  
He then calls two men over to carry the wounded back  
Then the corpsman is through the smoke running through hell  
To save another man then just one more and more after that  
Till his life is laid out doing his mission  
or the fight is done, and he may live to fight another day  
To some, it is just a corpsman  
To others, he is a friend  
To me, this man is my father  
Whose help is never in short supply

*\*Dedicated to those who throw their lives down to death's door just to save a life and who show the greatest of what people are capable of doing — soldiers, airmen and naval personnel who have served.*



*Violet Whinnery, Grade 11*



*Noelle Morio, Grade 8*

## Winter Haiku

*Logan Harper, Grade 8*

Snow falls to the ground  
Sun blocked out by clouds' grayness  
The cold wind blowing

## (My), I know, I have, I try, I am

*Isabel Simmons, Grade 11*

My sense of smell is horrible. But only because it's weak.  
My left eye alone is barely functional.  
I think it's broken, in a way.  
Also weak.  
My mind feels like it's spiraling; it's going to explode.  
It's a riptide.

I know my eyes look tired, but I'm wide awake.  
I'm aware. I observe.  
I know I'll never be able to have a tail, so I ripped the idea away.  
I shredded it long ago - all torn up.  
I know I spoke at a late age, but that doesn't mean I don't have a voice.  
Even if it's small right now. It's there.

I have long fingers, but they're never able to reach.  
Unable to grasp. Not yet, anyway.  
I have broken legs, yet I chase improvement.  
Practice makes progress, because perfection isn't reality.  
I have a crooked smile, and so is my tongue; My language, my words.  
The way I speak, I mean.

I try my best because I believe I can.  
Though, sometimes it's not enough,  
Inadequate.  
I try to look happy, in the dark times, in an attempt to find the light again.  
Oh, but it can be so exceedingly difficult.  
How funny - Humor is a great tool.  
I try for those who I care deeply for, however. And for those I know who care about me.  
It is hard, yes. But certainly not impossible.

I am a work in progress that will never be complete.  
I don't think it should.  
I am a mistake that was meant to happen.  
A fantastical error, a marvelous accident.  
I am only me, in the end,  
a mere human,  
and that is all I'll ever be.



*Molly Rousseau, Grade 12*



*Josephine Horowitz, Grade 7*

## Misophonia

*Violet Dubord, Grade 8*

I stand around the people I once knew  
Trying not to scream, but I hate the way they chew.  
I try to stay calm from all the noises some think are just a quiet tone,  
But for me, it speaks louder than a megaphone.  
Maybe it'll be better in a quiet room I think,  
But the clock ticking on the wall has my chest in a kink.  
I dig my nails into my skin and rip at my hair,  
All just to hear, "It's no big deal" but that's not fair.  
I wear a smile I can't explain,  
And hide the roaring, hidden pain.  
My face lights up red,  
My voice is about to spread.  
My mind racing,  
And my brain pacing,  
For words that I just can't find,  
To tell them this happens all the time.  
The wrong words always come out,  
With an ear shredding shout.  
I don't want to be mad at every little sound,  
But God, please understand I want people around.  
No one understands my true pain,  
The gut-wrenching ache like I got hit by a train.  
There's no sound I can escape,  
In a room full of squares, I'm an unknown shape.  
Maybe one day there will be a cure,  
But for now it's just a pain I'll have to endure.



*James Hoskins, Grade 7*



*Jewel Bressette, Grade 7*



*Sadie Hill, Grade 10*

## **Falling Endlessly**

*Cody Pugh, Grade 9*

Sinking rapidly like a rock  
I fall deeper in the bottomless void  
An unknown I want to embrace

## **The Story**

*Cassandra Espinoza, Gr 8*

There is a voice  
It tells a story  
A story that isn't true  
A story with a different ending  
An ending that's too perfect  
This ending you want  
But you know you could never have  
Because you're not perfect  
But you wish you were  
Perfect like the girls in the magazines  
Or in the movies  
But this story is already written  
And it's not yours



*Olive Craker, Grade 9*

## Embers

*Sadie Hill, Grade 10*

Fire burns bright  
until it's given a reason to stop.  
Or until someone  
runs out of patience.  
Until someone blows them out.  
And so,  
as the embers of what once was  
made their inevitable descent,  
I watched you  
watch them  
with pity.  
I watched you  
watch me.  
Like I was next.

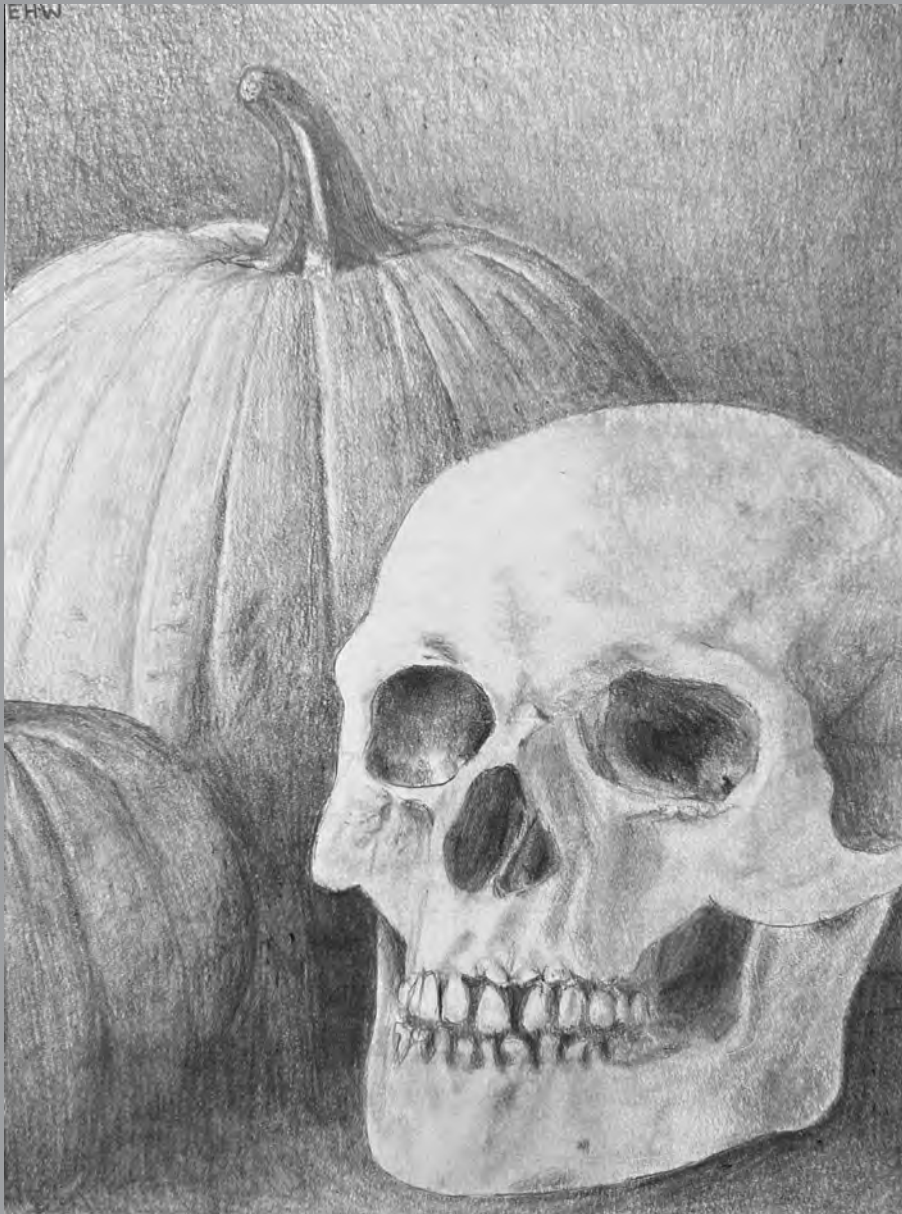
## Mood

*Nora Ciolek, Grade 11*

“Hey, Alexa, What’s the weather like today?” I ask as I roll out of bed.

Alexa replies, “Today there is a high of 30 degrees and snow showers in the afternoon.”

I sigh as I throw on bundles of warm clothes. Day ruined. I walk down the stairs slumped, thinking of heading back upstairs and hopping into my cozy bed. Day ruined. I pour myself a bowl of cereal, half asleep, pouring the milk on the table instead of into the large bowl. Day ruined. As I open the door, the dark sky and gloomy clouds hit my soul with a bullet. Day ruined. There is nothing that will turn my day around; I could win a life-changing scholarship but that wouldn’t matter because the weather has already decided my mood for the rest of the day.



*Ellie Wright, Grade 9*



*Isabel Simmons, Grade 11*



*Grace Noonan, Grade 12*



Jessie Peplinski, Grade 11

## Betrayal

Alexis Rosinski, Grade 8

The quiet whispers,  
The obvious stares,  
While walking down  
The hallway and you  
Weren't next to me.

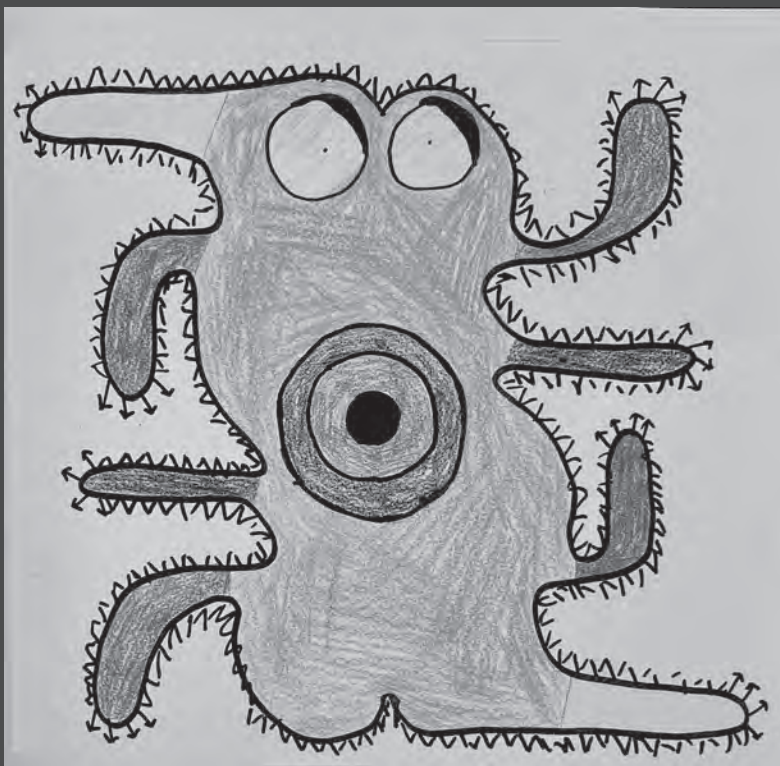
My legs become weak,  
And drag me to the ground.  
My eyes begin to water,  
Creating oceans so blue.  
I try to swallow, but  
A bitter taste distracts me.

A sharp pain grows,  
In my gut, and I  
Realize you were behind me.  
Holding a sharp silver blade,  
So bright.  
Covered in the darkest,  
Red you will find.

A smirk on your face,  
As you look into my eyes.  
All of this has hurt me,  
Inside.  
The best part is,  
I am still alive.



Valerie Glidden, Grade 12



Pierson Humphrey, Grade 7



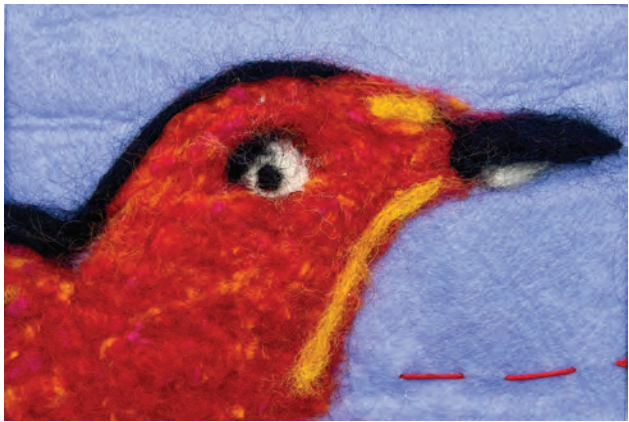
Shelby Worlow, Grade 11



*Jane Selleck, Grade 7*



*Violet Winnery, Grade 11*



*Hazel Wetherbee, Grade 8*



*Ursella Denton, Grade 9*



*Joshua Garver, Grade 10*

**Untitled**

*Aydrian Day, Grade 10*

The bears are asleep  
Mother Earth freezes and creaks  
Snow is your blanket



*Jazmyne Bressette, Grade 9*



*Victoria Worth, Grade 11*



Jacob Beck, Grade 12

## Ode to a Silver Bracelet

Lilly Dean, Grade 12

O silver circle, worn thin by time,  
 you rest against my wrist like a promise kept.  
 Two small flowers bloom in your surface,  
 forever surrounding the blue tiger's eye,  
 steady and calm, like a watchful gaze.  
 You go with me everywhere  
 through sleep, through showers, through ordinary days never  
 leaving, never loosening your hold.  
 I found you tucked away in my grandmother's house, hidden  
 beneath a small box, nearly forgotten.  
 If I hadn't reached for you,  
 you might have been melted down,  
 your history erased into something new.  
 My grandma didn't have much,  
 but this bracelet holds more than silver.  
 It carries love, memory, and the quiet strength of the woman  
 who wore it.  
 As long as it stays on my wrist,  
 She too stays with me forever.



Jania Monroy Gallardo, Grade 11



Hope Bunek, Grade 8



Tim Duperon, Grade 12



Jacob Beck, Grade 12

## VIXEN

*Cam Doblas-Burt, Grade 11*

my white n' black guitar  
the designs made with thin sharpie crowding it  
the one you can find strapped around me, or in my room  
the one that always brings me comfort, even though it seems strange  
the strumming of the chords  
the white and black of it rusting whenever I put it down  
the metallic smell filling my lungs  
the smaller shape of it, fitting perfectly in my hands  
cold to the touch the imprint of the chords in the tips of my fingers  
the perfect imperfection of the top string  
a slight bend causing a strained ring  
the sound is enchanting  
empty thoughts as I strum  
peace washing over my tensed body  
when I use it, I think of nothing but it  
I fidget with it, pluck chords, learn songs  
I play the chords  
but my guitar makes the magic happen  
the one thing I'll love  
is when my fingers are sore, and have lost the blood flow  
only then will I know  
that I have completed what I've needed to  
I've created music



*Wheatley Denoyer, Grade 7*



*Lucas Plamondon, Grade 12*



*Warren Dittrich, Grade 11*

## Sawdust

*Isaac Petoskey, Grade 11*

A byproduct.  
A resource to be discarded and ignored.  
And yet it finds a purpose in my memories, heart, and soul.  
It cannot be found but must be made.  
An idea my grandpa encapsulated perfectly.  
Always working, always helping, always building a spot in the memory of mine.  
Always covered in sawdust.  
Always smelling of the fragrant yet painful-in-my-nose sawdust.  
Always an opportunity to clean my grandfather's workshop of the light and plentiful markings of hard work.  
Always an opportunity to play in the pile outside of his shop and get covered in brown and clingy sawdust that invaded every crack and crevice of my outfit and looked and smelled like him.  
Always an opportunity for throwing it like confetti to watch it drift down and blow every which way.  
Always a marker to signify the hard work my grandpa and I would do.  
Always an opportunity to make memories with him.  
Always a reminder.  
Forever a part of me.  
Sawdust.

## Untitled

*Riley Sahs, Grade 10*

Laces on  
Worn tired leather  
Built for most weather  
From new to dusty  
Still very trusty

From my dad  
A small part of a bigger picture

Laces off



*Collin Drow, Grade 7*



*Lauren Truckey, Grade 7*

## **The Ice Is Melting**

*Ingrid Paciorka, Grade 12*

It is still winter  
But I know summer will come  
I know summer will come because it comes every year  
I know summer will come because I see thousands of people lining the streets demanding that summer come  
I see people of all races, ages, and genders telling summer, "The time is now,"  
Ice is going to melt  
Ice will be washed off the streets along with the rock salt and other signs of a long, grueling winter  
Ice cannot handle the heat  
For every snowstorm, there is a flower sprouting  
A sign from God that spring is on its way  
Every man can be a forecaster  
Every woman a meteorologist  
So please, believe me when I tell you  
The Ice Is Melting



*Ella Ingwersen, Grade 12*

## **Fawn**

*Cielle Fort, Grade 12*

Speckled fawn,  
 With your mother,  
 I watched on my lawn  
 Under shaded cover.  
 How cute you were with soft white spots,  
 Prancing, limber-limbed,  
 With knees like knots  
 And energy not yet dimmed.  
 How scary I must've been to you.  
 But by next spring,  
 We both grew.  
 You were big, and I knew one thing:  
 The spotless hide I saw while driving—

Little deer in my garden would not be arriving.

## **Spring Shan't Seem to Come Again, and Winter Left for Short**

*Tucker Stillwell, Grade 8*

Little powder starts apart  
 And when it melts, it darts, departs  
 But slowly dirt gets harder, martyr-  
 ing the spring's death (started ardor)

Layers set and forming,  
 With nothing to disturb  
 It seemed ne'er to be warming Absurdly quite superb!

Either snow increases, ceases  
 Falling into pieces, niece of  
 Sleet slithered to flakes it takes Another month to break it aches

And no one seemed to notice  
 With a withering so vile  
 All the dying lotus  
 As the snow began to pile  
 Now it's coming weaker, sleeker

Those began to peak or speak or  
 Beg to god for spring and singing  
 All together mingling, ringing  
 Solstice has passed weeks ago  
 With people missing skiing,  
 There is no longer falling snow  
 But just brown ice (decreed)

Now we all are melting, wilting  
 All the world is smelting, melting  
 All our souls be dying, lying  
 Until winter, all beguiling

## My Person

*Sydney Adams, Grade 9*

All the candy you could imagine, the random joke that you didn't understand, and all the tight hugs you now wouldn't trade for the world. My grandpa was my person. I may not have known it then but I now understand when people say "Cherish every moment," to actually do it. I miss him more every day and all the little things he used to do. Holidays will now no longer have the one person I was excited to see every time. He always had that sort of spark that makes a person super fun to be around. His presence will never be forgotten and he will stay forever loved.

## Late Night Thoughts

*Norah Fehrenbach, Grade 9*

My Eleven PM Thoughts keep me up  
So late and then I start to hear  
My Twelve AM Thoughts where I  
Begin to think about my previous choices and  
Then I start to think  
My One AM Thoughts and those  
Bring my mind back to memories  
Of times I didn't always  
Choose to leave behind and so I'm in  
My Two AM Thoughts that remind  
Me of the promises I made to  
Someone who broke them even though  
My Three AM Thoughts explain to me  
That I just didn't do enough and it's my fault  
That I have to hear what comes next which are  
My Four AM Thoughts that tell me to  
Call you right then and right there but  
You probably aren't awake and you  
Probably don't want to talk anyways  
Just like how I don't want to hear  
My Five AM Thoughts which lead me  
To the conclusion that I should get  
Out of my thoughts and my last one  
Questions what is in yours.

*Katie Toth, Grade 9*



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Daisy S.

Daisy Serrano, Grade 12

### Untitled

Arlo Woodruff, Grade 8

When the world breaks  
Would you let me cut out paper leaves  
And pin them to the sky again  
Would you let me build tree trunks out of clay  
And hand mold every single detail so I could live in a beautiful world of forests again  
Would you let me throw birds into the sky  
So I could hear them sing and watch them dance and  
I wonder if you would let me kiss the ground  
Until flowers rise where my lips touched.

