

# HOMMOCKS

**BEAVELER SAYS:**

**"I DON'T READ MUCH,  
BUT THIS STUFF  
IS RADICAL, BRO!"**

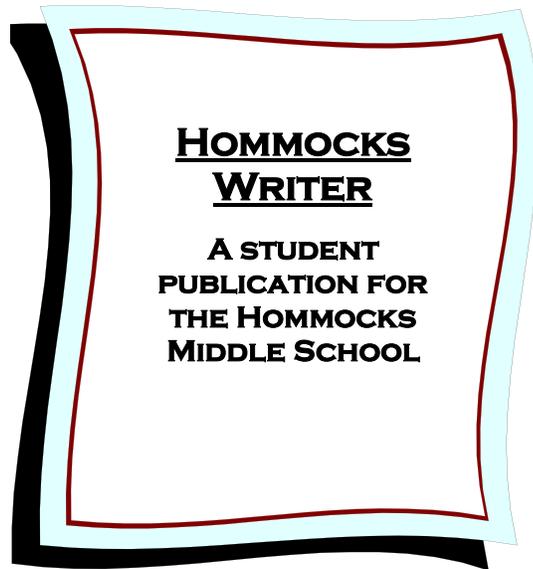


**WRITER**

**Winter, 2017**

## **EDITORS FOR THIS ISSUE**

Samantha Balagot  
Kristian Bustos  
Kiera Butler  
Micaela Cabrera Schiavi  
Caitlyn Carpenter  
Elise Carpenter  
Sophia Claiborne  
Lily Dearman  
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Pia Ducrot  
Ilse Frijlink  
Sophia Gadlin  
Tista Goswami  
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Alex Nagin  
Jessie O'Connell  
Leticia Pinto  
Joe Robb O'Hagan  
Sofia Rosenbaum  
Jarvis Savage  
Abigail Sharp  
Daniella Uvaldo  
Eliza Velez  
Kayleigh Wishner



**ADVISOR: MS. MCCURDY-LITTLE**

**THANK YOU TO:**  
**ARLENE JACOBELLI**

Cover by James Cantalupi

## Poetry Live! Winners April 2017

### A Call to Action

Life is a wonderful game,  
That only the privileged get to play.

We live on this earth for a purpose,  
To make it make it better,  
To make it alive.

We live on this earth to *live*,  
To experience the highs,  
And the lows.

So we dance,  
And we sing,  
And we smile and laugh and play  
and do all the  
things that bring us joy,  
Yet we still seem to be going,  
*Down.*

This is because we all want joy and happiness  
and family and respect,  
So we continue to fight,  
And yell  
And kill  
And scream  
Which eventually just brings us  
*Down.*

If only we had a mutual agreement that lets everyone be happy.

If only the world was big enough so that everyone could have the land that they wanted and the space they desired.

If only the world was small enough so that everybody,  
And I mean *everybody*,  
Could know everyone,



Sami Siegel

And could understand the joy and the heartbreak and the pain,  
That *everybody* experiences.

If only money wasn't such a big deal,  
So much that it somehow ruled people's minds and goals and hearts and lives,  
And made people willing to destroy the environment and so many future generations to come.

If only money wasn't such a big deal and the mil-  
lions,  
*Billions*,  
Of people living poverty could not focus so deeply  
on their financial situation and could instead  
focus on living,  
Living their lives to the fullest extent,  
just as us humans were meant to do.

This country,  
My friends,  
are flawed.

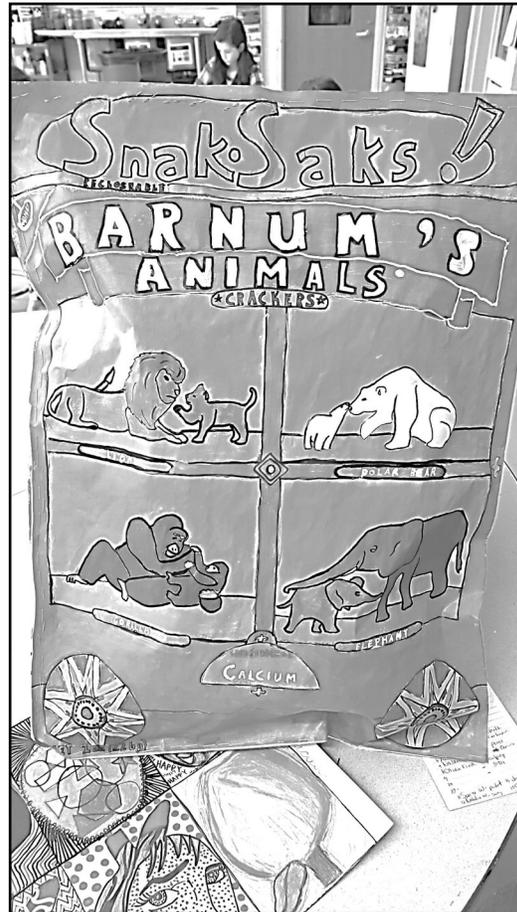
This world,  
My friends,  
are flawed.

The environment is being destroyed,  
People are rioting,  
Countries are at war,  
And you continue to read this poem?

No.

It should be our duty as citizens of this wonderful,  
Crazy,  
Messed up,  
Flawed,  
Planet earth,  
To fix these issues.

It should be our duty as *US* citizens,  
To fix these issues.  
It should be our duty as *human beings*,



Lain Brewer

To fix these issues,  
As so many are counting on us.

I bet you that you,  
At least once in your life,  
You have turned off the morning news because you found it too depressing to watch,  
I know I have,  
And I hate myself for it.

The people that these news stories are about can't turn their story off,  
They just have to live with the fact that their friend or family member just got shot by an officer,  
Or they got death threats based on their religion,  
They have to live with the fact that the country which they call home is a war zone,  
And that they have nowhere else to go because no other country will take them in,  
They have to live with the fact that their home just got swept up by the ocean,  
Or that they had to evacuate because the air in their town was  
too polluted to breathe.

They have to live with it.

So, therefore, you and I both need to learn how to keep the TV on,  
And not just turn the story off,  
But turn the situation off,  
Turn someone's life around,  
Turn several people's lives around.

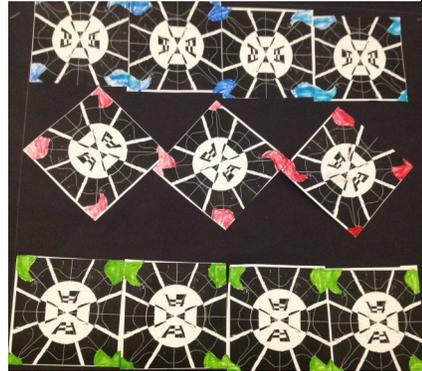
Change the world so that everybody has an equal opportunity,  
Change the world so that every culture is appreciated,  
Every religion is appreciated,  
Every person is appreciated,  
Every animal is appreciated,  
Every bit of life is appreciated,  
Every resource is appreciated,  
So that this world that we're *so lucky* to be granted with, is appreciated.

Now I understand that I am just a seventh grader,  
A kid who is still learning the "ways" of being an adult,  
A kid who is still learning the "ways" of being a mature person,  
A kid who is still learning the "ways" of being a human being,  
News Flash!  
I am a human being too!



Layla  
Hoffmann

And most of the kids that you know know what I'm talking about,  
 We know what's up,  
 We may not know the details of what's up,  
 But we know what's up,  
 So don't treat us like we don't,  
 Don't treat me like I don't know what I am talking about,  
 I read the newspaper,  
 I get the alerts on my phone,  
 And it breaks my heart.



But at least I know what is to come,  
 What I will have to fix,  
 What my generation will have to fix when we graduate.

Jasper Steinmetz

And I hope I have already started fixing some of the problems by writing this poem,  
 Slowly but surely changing your mindset,  
 One word at a time.

Caitlyn Carpenter

### The Tuesday Night Man Anonymous

Hi, my name is Dylan. I'm twenty-one years old. About a year ago, when I was in college, I would work the night shift at my local CVS to make a couple extra bucks. My shift would go from nine at night to two in the morning. So as you could imagine, I was very busy. I worked at the CVS Monday through Thursday night every week. Due to the many late hours I worked, I was the only person working. At times, I was lonely and I wished that there was someone else to keep me company but, most times, it was nice to have some alone time.

There were a few customers that often came into the store from time to time. It was usually a group of kids picking up some stuff on their way to a party. Occa-

sionally, someone would buy a beer or walk in, look through a couple aisles, decide that they don't want anything, then they would leave. I've never been the type of person that's easily scared by things, but the events that took place while I worked there changed that forever.

It all started on a Tuesday night at around 11PM. I was sitting behind the counter, reading a copy of one of the newspapers the store sold. I had just finished restocking the shelves and not many people were coming in the store. It's not like there are ever many people, but tonight was especially quiet. There was a window right behind where I sat.

As I was just about to turn the page,

there was a loud banging on the window. I was startled. I jumped up and looked out the window. In the middle of the parking lot, I could see the figure of a tall, thin man staring at me. He started slowly walking but it was not clear which direction he was walking in. He just seemed to be moving around. I stared at the figure for about a minute. I ducked down and eventually forgot about it.

About an hour later, I had to use the bathroom. I took the keys to the employee bathroom and made my way over. When I got out, I was shocked at what I saw. There was a ripped box of cereal and coffee poured all over the floor. I knew for sure that it wasn't there before. Although I was a bit spooked out, there wasn't much I could do but clean it up. After my shift was over, I went home and everything seemed okay.

\* \* \*

Fast forward a week later. It was Tuesday night again. By now, I had almost completely forgotten about the incident that had happened a week before. So, my shift went okay, nothing out of the ordinary or weird happened. In fact, everything was fine, until my shift was over. I walked over to my car. The first thing that I noticed was that the tires were slashed. On top of that, there was a note that said, "Thanks for cleaning up for me, buddy."

When I read this, I was scared out of my mind. My tires had been slashed before but I thought that it was just some kid pulling a prank on me, but after seeing this, I was terrified.

I called the police. When they

showed up, they said that there were no fingerprints so it would be hard to figure out who it was. They towed my car and gave me a ride home. Before they did, though, they had me describe the few features that I could make out. After they made a sketch of the man, they discovered that he matched the description of a man who was on the run from the cops and wanted for some bank robberies. Hearing that this man was on the wanted list freaked me out. I was happy that at least I had the police helping me out. However, at the same time, I was too scared to sleep for the next three days.

After the incident with my car, whomever was responsible for it was angry that I called the police. A couple days later, I started getting weird calls. The calls were from a private number and they were all the same. There was some guy on the other side laughing in an evil tone of voice. This happened not just during the day, but at all hours of the night. Sometimes I would hear the doorbell and when I answered it, nobody would be there. I reported this to the cops, who were not able to do anything. I was so scared that I called in sick for a few days, hoping this would blow over and this guy would just leave me alone. I wanted this to be over. I thought that it would be over next Tuesday night when I went into work. Looking back on it now, it's crazy just how wrong I was.

\* \* \*

My car was still at the shop so, because of this, I took a cab from campus to CVS. When I got out, the guy who has his shift right before mine, looked like he had

seen a ghost.

“What’s wrong?” I asked. He just stared at me. He looked terrified. For about thirty seconds, we just stood there staring at each other. Then he finally opened his mouth.

“He’s after you dude,” he whispered quietly in my ear.

“Who’s after me?” I replied.

“There was a man wearing all black that came in about an hour ago. He asked where you were. I told him that I didn’t know. After that, he left but said he would be back.”

Those words hit me like a bullet. I was terrified. I went inside and pretended I didn’t hear what my co-worker had said.

About an hour later, I heard someone running towards the door. I looked out of the window and it took me two seconds to realize who it was. I quickly ran to the front and locked both of the doors. I hid behind the counter for about thirty minutes.

When I finally got the courage to stand up, I slowly walked to the front only to see that nobody was there. Once again, I called the police who were there in just five minutes. They discovered that whoever it was had left a message in spray paint on the side of the store. When I saw the message, I nearly fainted. It said, “I WILL FIND YOU.” The police called my manager who let me go home early. I walked back to campus and I swear, there was someone watching me.

\* \* \*

A couple weeks later, I quit my job at CVS. Shortly after that happened, I had to drop out of college because I was too

scared to stay in the area. I moved a couple states away and I later realized that dropping out of college was a bad idea. I have made it my mission to find the man who cost me my job and my college degree. I have been doing lots of research on the internet. The police found him but realized he wasn’t the one who robbed all those banks. But because of what he did to me, he spent three months in jail. He’s out now and I finally found his address. I’ve decided that tonight, I’ll pay him a little visit. I want to see him and settle what he started.

It turns out he only lives a couple hours away from me. I’m going to pack my car in a couple minutes. Then I’ll drive through the night until I get to his house. We’ll settle things once and for all. I want to punish the man who ruined my life and make him pay. It was his fault that things turned out the way that they did. It’s his fault that I now live in the middle of nowhere with no friends and nobody to talk to. It’s because of him that I live in a trailer with no windows and I drive a rusty sedan from 1970. He’s the reason that I’m typing this story on a computer from 1992. I have never gotten over it.



Anonymous

words

words are like humans  
words can be pretty  
or words can be ugly  
words can sing beautiful songs  
or words can drive you crazy  
words can be used to change  
or words can be used to harm  
words can change the world  
or words can destroy it  
words can love  
or words can hate  
words can save  
or words can kill  
words can unite us  
or words can split us  
words can help  
or words can drive you to tears  
Use your words carefully  
for they can do more than you think

Max Shapiro



Bryan Contreras

When I Was Young at the Beach

Lucia Gillsäter

**W**hen I was young at the beach... I would run in the wind as it whistled in my ears, like birds early in the morning. I forgot about school and all my worries. I could feel the wind sting my face, but I kept on running, never wanting to stop. When I got tired, I would sit on the cold wet sand, panting, before I got up

and then started running again.

When I was young at the beach... I would swim in the ocean, gasping when I realized how cold it was, like little needles poking me. As I got used to it, I started jumping, diving, playing and splashing in the water like a baby seal. When the water got too cold for me, I got out and dried myself in the sun before I went back in.

When I was young at the beach... I would roll down the sand dunes going

faster and faster. I was like a marble spinning and rolling down the hills of sand. I was covering myself in sand but I didn't care because, just then, all that mattered was getting to the bottom of the hill and not crashing into anything. When I got up, I was so dizzy that I fell back down and lay in the sun.

When I was young at the beach... I would make sand castles, crying when they crumbled and fell down, and smiling when they stayed up. I would gather shells to decorate the castle. I felt like a queen when it was done, my new beautiful home, ready for me. When we came back the next day it had been stepped on, rained on, and swal-

lowed up by the ocean. It didn't really matter because I just gathered more shells and built another one.

The sun set late in the evening, casting a beautiful orange light on the ocean that was glistening and sparkling. I let my face soak in the light and I let the water tickle my toes. It didn't matter that it was cold or that the sand would get stuck to my feet. The only thing that mattered to me was that I was where I wanted to be.

When I was young at the beach... I never wanted to be anywhere else, the mountains were too cold and the city was too busy, but the sand and the water were enough for me.



Anonymous

## Homework

I try, try, try  
Sometimes, it makes me cry

All I need now is more time  
And if I don't finish, I feel I'm committing a crime

I try thinking harder  
But really, I didn't go much farther

I try breathing slower  
But I just think of my grades getting lower

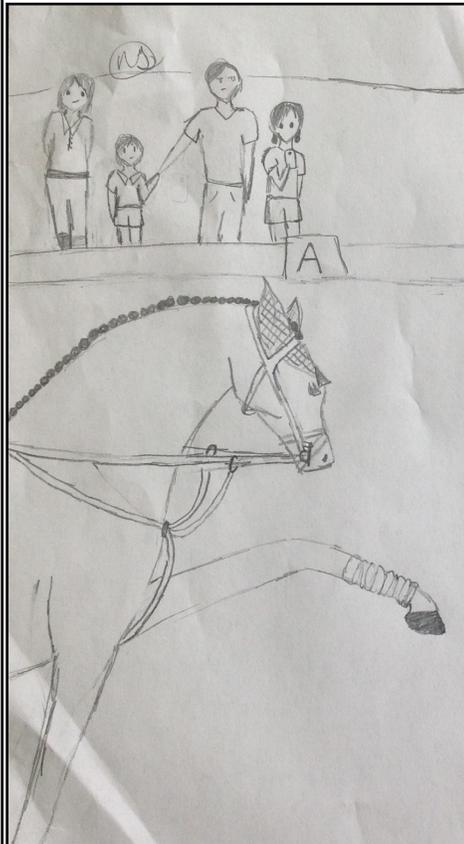
My time is slowly running out  
I'm so mad, I just want to shout

Finally, I picked up my pencil  
I didn't know what to write: it's suspenseful

I try, try, try  
Sometimes, it makes me want to cry

It's just my homework.

Kristen Santos and Stephen Moore



Anonymous

Friendship is a kind of love everyone  
knows  
That we keep and share  
It is a feeling that keeps on growing  
no matter what

Friendship is like a piece or gold  
very valuable  
I have a sister  
that I love so much and her  
name is SAMARA.....

Bethanny Essue

### Through the Eyes of a Tiger

If I were a tiger, I would claim my jungle  
I would roar at the deer I would strangle  
In the jungle. I am as big as the world  
My fur glistens and is anything but curled

In my jungle, I would be like Washington  
I would be reasonable and give home to Paddington  
I would balance the forest, maintaining the food chain  
Because of the cycle of life, all animals gain

I would protect my animals and be the judge  
To stop rebel animals, I must provide a nudge  
In my forest, there are many species  
This means the ground is filled with feces

Thanks to humans, my forest is burning down  
We have to relocate with a frown  
A human is hunting me for my fur, I curse!  
Now, unfortunately I become a purse

Rayeed Rahman



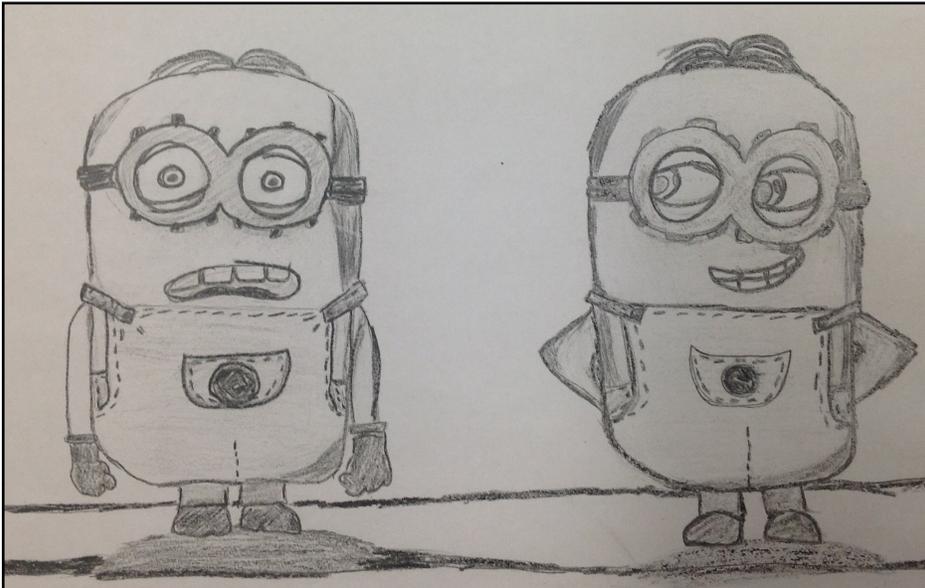
Anonymous

### Hope

Hope is a friend  
But also an enemy.  
It's that voice inside your head  
That always whispers  
"What if..."  
It's your light  
In the darkest of times  
Even if it is artificial.  
It always stands  
By your side  
Your companion,  
Lover,

Giver.  
It offers itself to you  
Whether you want it  
Or not.  
It will consume your thoughts  
As if it is holding your hand  
And never letting go.  
It is selfless.  
Hope is everywhere  
In everyone.

Anabella Pizzurro



Jaslyn Potes  
and  
Mario Ramirez  
Ayala

### Outside

Outside is warm  
It's cold  
It's snowing  
raining or pouring  
Dang, the weather is boring  
It never alters - for the changes are slim  
You're either running outside or trying hard to get back in.

I can't sleep at night  
It seems like the stars are too loud  
There is always activity  
Always night sounds.

Outside always echoes  
It never seems to stop  
There are footsteps and croaks  
Jumping and cries from long throats  
Trumpeting and howling  
Growling and splashing  
It's not quiet anymore, never quiet  
But never changing



It's so boring, and now I'm snoring  
I fell asleep after all.

Outside, leaves and snow falls  
Outside, the sun shines bright over us all  
But outside, I'm drifting  
Can't stay in one place  
Always looking, always searching  
Looking for an escape.

Outside I'm stranded  
I can't find the peace  
For now what's outside likes to twitter and creak  
Outside, I'm bored with nothing to do  
Yet outside I've finally found something new!

I'm watching leaves fall  
I'm gazing at rain  
I'm hitting the snow with a grin on my face  
I let the sun burn my skin, and tears wet my eyes  
But no mistaking the joy in the tears that I cry.

I've found the splendor in the greatest of the outdoors  
I've found it  
I'm cured  
I've seen the beauty of outside.

I'm proud to be outside once again.

Anonymous

Your family is your wings,  
Without them, how would you fly?  
Your family is like your wings,  
Without them, how could you strive?  
Although they sometimes  
drive you crazy like  
when they never pick up the phone

They're always giving you  
a helping hand  
And you know they'd never  
leave you alone  
Your family is like your wings,  
You sometimes take them for granted  
If it wasn't for your family  
How would you strive?  
Your family is your wings  
Without them, you couldn't fly.

Daniella Uvaldo

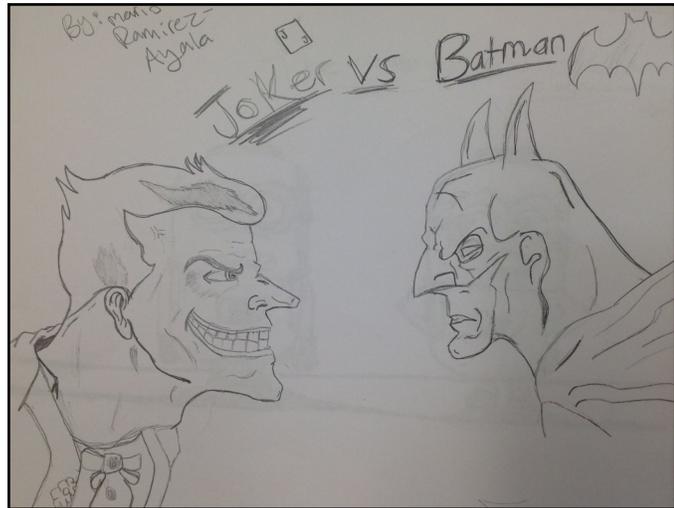
Teachers  
Nice, mean  
Sharing, learning, growing  
Masters and apprentices alike  
Students

Lain Brewer

Air

I can hold you  
But not for too long or I will die  
I can go without you  
But not for too long or I will die

You always give me a gift  
Life  
You then whisper to me to  
pass this gift on  
You urge me to let you go  
For you will come back



When I let you go, you are no longer you  
You have changed  
You will turn back with the help of others though  
And you will search for me  
Because I need you

Mario Ramirez Ayala

I am scared to think what would happen if you left me for good  
The higher I go up  
The harder it is to find you  
Finally  
You are gone  
But it is okay  
You have packaged your gift  
You will not be left forgotten  
You have saved me.

Julia Zimmerman

Fire  
It's very hot  
When it spreads  
there's a lot

My poems are fire  
So don't call me a liar  
'Cause I only inspire  
They're so popular  
They're as tall as the Empire

Me plus water is steam  
And my rhymes are so mean

You can't even compete  
So just take a seat  
And now this poem's complete

15  
Stephen Moore

Mother mother mother  
Who she is I wonder  
Her heart is like a river  
Smooth and always together

Mother mother mother  
You are the best mother ever  
You help me so much in studies  
You cook delicious food for me  
Mother mother mother  
You are the best mother ever!

Mother mother mother  
You are as beautiful as a rose  
You are as pure as water  
When I am with you  
No one can defeat me

Mother mother mother  
You've been the greatest mother to me  
Teaching me many things that others never see  
Mother sees her child grow up  
She will be the first to jump

Mother mother mother  
You are the best mother ever!!!  
Alan Silva

Black bubbles of smoke,  
black wisps darker than night,  
her chest covered in soot,  
wherever you go, you will  
always see the human foot.  
Icebergs are in snow,  
but now being tugged away.  
Every day,  
Is a dark day.  
Their greedy hands pulling her hair  
simply for money or just a tear.  
Jellyfishes once covered the earth,  
but now plastic bags cover  
our earthen mother.

Sami Siegel



Benjamin Tunkey



I Am From

I am from familiar settings  
that you have seen before,  
from gentle smiles  
and outstretched hands.  
And I am from the giggles of children  
laughing at nothing,  
but also laughing at everything.

I am from flowered, sunlit fields  
that only exist in my dreams  
like blankets of ease and tranquility,  
and from partly-cloudy skies  
that are both warnings and blessings.

I am from transgressions forgiven  
by all but myself,  
a guilty conscience like a road block,  
and hope given during my darkest hour.  
I am from sharp thorns of resentment  
that try to bring me down,  
even when I simply smile  
and say they, too, are beautiful.

Ashleigh Elden

Anonymous



Timmy Anderson

Poetry Live! Winners April 2017

Lost on the Road  
By, Anabella Pizzurro  
Inspired by Robert Frost's  
"The Road Not Taken"

I am lost.  
Everybody's lights have gone out.  
There is no one left to lead my path,  
so I stumble and I fall  
with no one there to pick me up except for  
myself.  
I have stopped expecting anything else.  
My road seems to keep going on forever.  
What if I simply stopped walking?  
Would anybody care?  
The night ventures on for what seems like  
eternity.  
One that I know will never end.  
What if I stopped trying?  
Would it matter  
if I stopped,  
fell onto my knees,  
and lay there  
With no hope,  
No purpose,  
No reason to go on?  
But as I slowly let everything go,  
I begin to see hope all around me.  
How could I not have seen it before?  
There was life,  
Nature and happiness,  
Light and freedom,  
All surrounding me.  
My thoughts,

My fears,  
Had been clouding my mind.  
My eyes,  
Had only been seeing what I thought I was  
capable  
Of seeing,  
Of understanding,  
Of feeling,  
Of believing,  
and of what I was searching for.  
So listen to me when I tell you this:  
For I have experienced being  
lost on the road:  
Your friends,  
Family,  
Partners,  
And teachers,  
Are all there walking by your side,  
All simultaneously walking the same path.  
We all must learn to walk hand in hand.  
We must learn to walk united,  
If we are to get past this lost road together.



Dalton Hindsley

Day Dream

By, Kira Walter

Inspired by Billy Collins

The dozy afternoon of Monday, Wednesday blues, the silent billowing of the breeze, the feeling of security, the hazy whispers of the students echo through the classroom.

The children typing away at the keyboard,  
expanding the knowledge in their heads in English, faster than the hushed clock in science which had long forgotten how to tick,  
the numbers neat and orderly as math class, four students with pencils etching away, murmuring the numbers quite like in social studies,  
all scribble down the answers to packet number 97, noses in their textbooks, determined to finish their work.

And whatever the lesson had to offer, the students worked diligently scribbling, typing, calculating, note taking away so that they could reach their prized incentive.

Yet one young soul stood apart from the crowd, in a sea of red flowers, there stood a blue, one whom had eyes fixed on the window in room N307 gazing out at a sky of endless grey,  
one who thought of nothing besides another world and one who had forgotten how to pay attention quite like the sky itself, an unnatural tone of storm grey,  
and as the emptiness arose, one could wonder if the sky could feel the same.

So then the dreamer placed a hand on the window, and drifted through,  
now a ghostly silhouette, glancing back at N307,  
stolen away by the wonder of the sky, flew up and stroked the cloud,  
just to see it turn blue and full of life, like a violet blooming under the moonlight.

The dreamer travels further towards the cloud and merges into a sea, one such sea, turquoise and splendid,  
gurgling with life and sea creatures of all shapes and sizes, great tortoises swim alongside basses with a colorful intermix of shrimp,  
reflecting the light of the sun and igniting the reef with silver brightness, a whale old as the reef itself, like a wave upon the sand, emerges and spirals through the sea,  
all others making way and bowing in their heads, until the whale is lost in the turquoise glare.

Then into the gardens of London, plunging out of the tropic waters into a cabbage patch, laying in the leafy greens, gazing up at the sky and painting pictures with the clouds,  
the smell of dew from the last nights rain hangs in the air, and one could find themselves catching dew drops off leaves, into their mouths,  
and letting the fresh salty air in, silently with delight,

And before the dreamer could scream, the clouds pulled her out of the gardens of London and over the Atlantic ocean,  
Finally traveling to the bright night lights of New York City.  
The famous city was a jungle of rectangles and squares, diverse people, and action packed excitement, the towering skyscrapers, and one could taste the scent of a nearby barbecue, smoky and spicy, food vendors set up for the night,  
The Radio City Music Hall, glowing with pride, inviting all to come see its treasures,

Yet the adventure had to stop, for it was time to return,  
So the daydreamer sank back into room N307, to return to the typing, scribbling, calculating, notetaking emptiness of the monday, wednesday blues.

The dreamer sighed and gazed again at the sky, surprised to find that it now was blue, and dancing with life, contently went back to work and smiled.

No wonder our dreams carry our hope, our good working will, and,  
No wonder we can see with our eyes closed less than with eyes wide open,  
So forever, our dreams will guide us through life, and all who dream are to find happiness,  
So whoever you are and wherever you're at, dream on  
Dream on  
Dream on

#### Seasons of Possibilities

The wind of the calm, autumn evening gently caresses the veins of the crumpled leaves  
With the evening's intent to portray itself as anything but abhorrence.

The birds congregate in the empty, orange, sky  
Flying to their next destination,  
Where another poet will recognize their unspoken beauty  
And as another day flows into time  
We question if there is much material left

Even as the leaves begin to crunch,  
And their bodies diffuse across the blank landscape,  
We hope there will never be an end to great possibilities.

For time is always passing,  
For the days in which we live upon continue to advance,  
For the society we have created for ourselves is always progressing,  
We **know** that possibilities are endless.

As long as time always continues,  
The great virtues of our earth may be  
sprung upon us,  
And its beauty always last.

Alex Nagin



Grace Holzman-Hansen

### Summer's End

Nicole Zimmerman

An upstate abandoned town. Stretches of land. A great big lake. A huge camp awning printed with the camp's name in big colorful mosaic tiles. Dirt roads and big green, grassy fields, empty, left with nothing on them ready for the cold winter's snow. As I walk, I feel the crisp, clean air brush around me sending my hair all around in a messy frizz. The big, bright, yellow sun beating down on me in the scorching summer which was about to end. Everything packed up, ready to be stored away until the next time it is needed. I hear my counsellors telling me to eat before I leave so I am not hungry on the ride home. I run into the big house in a hurry, grabbing cereal and milk. The rip-off Lucky Charms splish and splash in my mouth, washed down with milk while I quickly devour them, not wanting to miss anything occurring outside. The Lucky Charms are tasteless and bland from the sadness in the pit of my stomach.

I rush to the front gates of camp, my four best friends to my side. Multiple bags on our arms and backs drag us on the dusty path. White coach buses lined up down the camp street exit. The sound of crying campers and counsellors echo in my ears. Friends are running towards me in tears, embracing me. Tears streaming down my face as I say bye to all my friends. Last hugs are given before I step on the bus in misery. My thoughts wild about next summer as the bus starts to move farther and farther from summer.

The Grass Fields  
Kira Tretiak  
Chapter 1: The one

“EQUAL, AND THE SAME!” my class chanted. Today was day forty-eight of school; we would be learning about why equality in our nation is important, as we always do on days that end with an eight. It was always the same idea: people would revolt if there were differences. Then we would all be in danger. My teacher, Madam Suzanne, talked in her usual monotone, reading out of a packet. I stared out the window, the sky was a beautiful blue, one of the only colorful things here in Potrealle. One of the only things that the protectors couldn't change was the sky. I cherished it deeply. That and the tall grass in the distance. We were told by the protectors that we were not allowed to go that far out, but no reason as to *why* was provided. I imagined being lifted from the ground by air so strong it could blow you away - to the grass fields.

After four hours of daydreaming (with the background of Madam Suzanne's dreadful voice), the bell rang twice -- lunch. On eight days we have ground nuts and steamed lettuce, gross. Gruel, was what I called it. In our history books we heard stories of people who acted differently, and were sent away. In the places they were sent to, they were fed a disgusting food, called gruel. The people there were locked in cells, a place called prison. I imagine their life was similar to mine; the

protectors just hide their motives better here. I can't leave or I'd be hunted down, or worse. I sit down with my plate at the learning level eight table, next to Rosanne. She looks up at me with dull grey plain eyes, her eye color was switched as a child. My eyes were going to be changed as well, they had a hint of color in them. The protection doctors decided against it; too much work. I sat and ate my food silently like everyone else. In the middle of lunch, there is an announcement:

STARTING TODAY, THIS SCHOOL WILL BE ADMINISTERING A NEW RULE. ANY SIGN OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE RULES SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE PROTECTORS. THEY WILL BE GATHERING UP STUDENTS WHO DO NOT BELONG, STUDENTS WHO ARE DIFFERENT. TODAY, WE WILL BE EXPECTING ONE STUDENT FROM EACH CLASS.

A silent gasp went around the room, nobody would dare to gasp out loud, especially now. This is bad news, especially for me. When we head back to our classroom from lunch, there is silence (even more than usual). We begin our lesson once again, but this time everyone is watching one-another. I try to ignore all the eyes on me, and stare at the Madam Suzanne. Nobody looks away, I can't blame them. I am probably the most likely to have a slip-up.

When the class is three hours into the lesson, I turn my head to look out the window, only slightly. The grass seems to have a magnetic pull, pulling my eyes to look at it. I resist, I have been raised to do so. Then I see the grass move, and it seems everything taught to me about behaving has been thrown out the door. My head whips around to see the grass, but there is

nothing there. I was sure I saw something though! I leaned closer to the window to look, when Madam Suzanne goes silent. A few seconds pass where I am stared at, then Madam Suzanne says what might be the most joyful thing that I have ever heard from her:

“It seems as though we have found our one student.”

### My Life as a Hurricane Sofia Rosenbaum

Hi. I am Irma. Some think that I have anger issues. I would disagree. I get upset over a lot of things, but I always hold in my feelings.

Until now. I have gone absolutely insane. We storms do not tend to be kind, but most are not as destructive as me. I have to let it all out. I cannot take it anymore! I am a category 5 storm and I am powerful!

Here is where it all began: My ex-best friends Sandy and Harvey let their anger get out of wind and harmed many. I swore not to do the same.

It is too late. I have destroyed Puerto Rico, Barbuda, and St. Martin and I am already on my way to Florida. I will stop after that. I will not be like Sandy, who continued up North. I will end this after Florida.

I have to admit that although it is never a good time for a hurricane, right now is a particularly bad time. Sandy destroyed so much, and then, just recently, Harvey caused a lot of destruction.

I really wanted to control my anger but as much as I tried I could not control it. I just could not control it. One gust of wind, I want to get my anger out. But on the other gust of wind, I do not want to harm anymore innocent civilians.

I should just end this storm.

Nobody wants a hurricane anyway.



Dear Sixth grader,

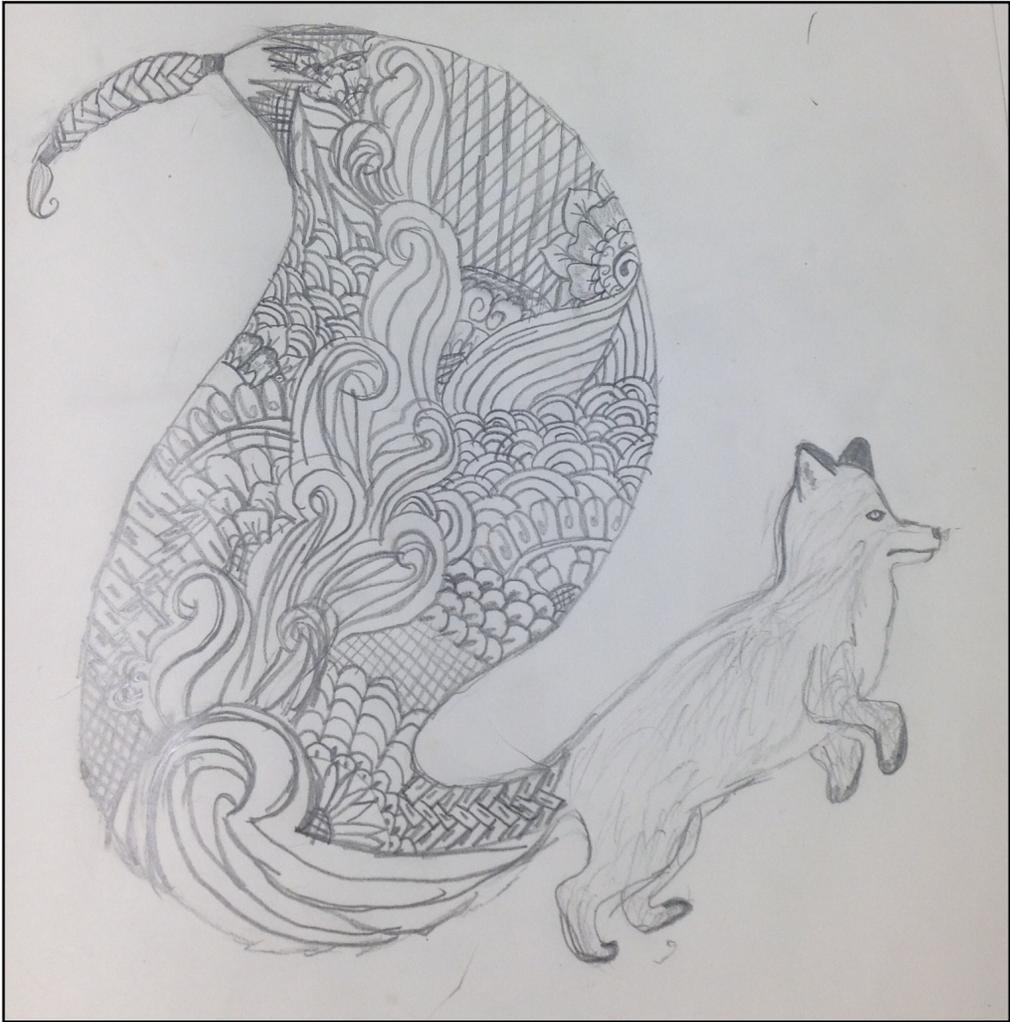
Welcome to the Land of Hommocks Middle School. You will love it, and hate it (a lot). Now my main sixth grade problem was math, (graded classworks more specifically). I would always get awful grades on math graded classworks for no reason! This is because I had no idea what a graded classwork even was. You are probably thinking, "Why does it matter that this random eighth grader got bad grades on graded classworks...?" Well, here you go, what I am trying to say is that you need to ask questions and be organized in order to truly succeed in this school.

Now, just so you know, this school never used to be this way. There was a day when orange hall passes and campus supervisors did not exist, (really, I know). As you can tell, the school has organized its own priorities just like you should. I remember I was in a teacher's sixth grade class and it was right after lunch. I was so bored out of my mind that I blanked out completely. Now this wasn't exactly the best day to do that because it just so happens that we were discussing the next big literary essay. The moment we left the class, everyone was saying, "What are you going to write about for the essay?" I realized in that moment that I had messed up. Instead of going back into the class or going to Office Hours, I *guessed* how to do the task. I had no rubric whatsoever and I barely focused when I was reading Maniac Magee. I got a seventy-three on that essay....

So, pay attention in class and ask lots of questions! The reason I did so miserably on the graded classworks in math was because I had no idea what a graded classwork was! You might think you will sound stupid asking dumb questions like, "How do I solve this equation?" or "I'm sorry, could you repeat that?" Well trust me, it's not stupid. Sitting in my eighth grade English class right now, I hear your small, timid, and somewhat blood-curdling screams through the window during your lunch, (that are really not helping me focus, by the way) and I think about the future you will face. The anxiety of what math placement you will get next year, the awkwardness of learning about reproduction in science, trying all three languages, (and regretting your choice even though you will learn to love it), the amount of times you will change for gym, and the long hard walks down to guidance when your locker is jammed.

So, as an eighth grader, I'll tell you now that Hommocks will treat you right. Eventually the building will become your god. You will learn to love this place even when you failed a couple tests. So keep your wits, state your case, and have fun, you young'n, good luck!

From, Millie Sach



Victoria Verdeguer