

HOMMOCKS

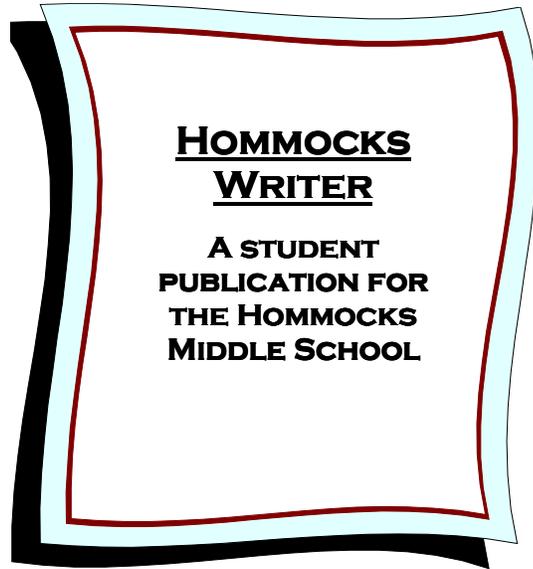


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**THANK YOU TO: SARAH MALGIOGLIO
KELSEY COHEN**

Cover by Andrew Carrier

Poetry Live! Winners! April 2014

The Placid Voyage
Inspired by Poet Laureate Robert Frost

A ship sails by in the pale moon light
In the gentle wind, the sails flutter,
glowing bright
A rolling ripple splashes against
the proud ship's bow
The journey's begun, there is
no turning back now
The ocean's power will not kneel
With the rise and fall of her stately keel
The weary creak of her majestic mast
Shall reach the port and find repast

Kerry Soropoulos

Arden Fluet



War
Based on Robert Frost

War takes lives
no better than fists,
and another body
neither's a victory but death kissed.

War is loud
as casualties stagger to the brink
a dog and a cat
in a never ending fight ending
in a cowardly act.

But war establishes
a power,
for it is not known
respect from fear.

The war will continue
and will never end
and when is that,
when there is nothing left to defend?

Without remorse,
and with no regret
others will kill others,
until all have fallen.

War is pointless.
But people are people,
and who knows when they'll stop
and when demise is not an option
Griffin Boyle

Everything Gold Can Stay
Inspired by: Robert Frost

Pale snow immovable to the sidewalk,
leaves twirling for hours in the fire sky.
Flower's aroma is hard to hide from.
The sun's rays tapping on your shoulder politely.
Grass truly slick and icy,
the night's moon, who is the jewel of the sky.
Thunder strikes in a vibrant crack,
the landing of the sky's tears sounds delightful.
The structure of the earth: so pure.
The awake to this world is a beautiful mystery.
No matter where,
You will find the gold.

Wooden Pain
Based on Robert Frost

These woods I feel I've walked before,
Yet the nature has turned from rich to poor;
This solemn place I once knew
Cannot sustain me anymore.

Factories replace the fields of rue,
The pond that was straight ahead is now gone too,
The air is now smoke instead of clear,
And hardly anyone has a clue.

I ask the folk what has happened here,
And my eye suddenly drops a tear,
For these woods that are defeated once sang a song,
And there is no forest anywhere near.

I think, I work, I run strong,
I must start my journey that is hard and long,
For these thoughtless people will be proven wrong.
For these thoughtless people will be proven wrong.

Flavie de Cirfontaine

Inspired by "Speech to the Young"
By, Gwendolyn Brooks

Say to them the colors
The ones you always see
Say to them the emotions
The ones you can only read
Say to them the beauty
Of a black and white page
Say to them you're different
In over 2000 different ways
Say to them you're special
Say you're one of a kind
Say to them the colors
Are the ones that dance
In your mind.

Mandy Carrasco

Poetry Live! Winner! April 2014

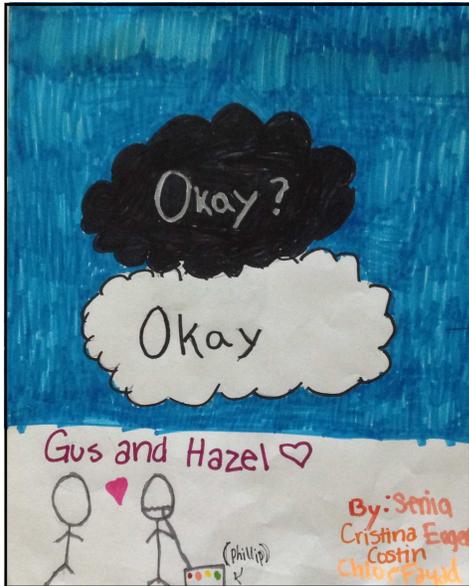
The House on the Hill
Inspired by Billy Collins

Way up here,
in the house on the hill,
you can see the world.
You can see the horizon in the distance.
And the setting sun.
And as it touches the greenish ocean
The sky shines a darkest red
And the trees on the mountains like stitching on a quilt
And the sand like unpainted clay.
The sun is looking at itself in a water blue mirror,
as the birds and crickets sing their duet.
And as the huge Costa Rican waves crash on the shore,
Like giant mouths of the sea.
And as the salt is stinging the eyes of the many surfers,
The sky is getting dark.
Then as the nocturnal moon starts to wake from its daytime sleep,
the sun gets under its big blue covers.
And while the waves are dampening the black sharp rocks,
And as the tall shadows of trees color the ground the nice shade of grey,
And as the sky turns a pitch black,
The thousands of stars are covering the sky,
All with bright but old, old light to share.
And during all this,
A child is sitting down on a couch,
In a house on the top of the biggest hill.
His sister swims in the pool and his parents get ready for dinner.
His brothers sit in their room watching TV.
And the child sits with his book and pencil in hand.
Taking in the scene of nature on his paper.
Making a man-made image.
Then when he is done
He looks at the stars like they are the glitter on a child's black dress.
For way up there
On the hill
The boy can see the world.



Marissa
Hacker

Anonymous



Senia Eugenio,
Chloe Fayad and
Cristina Costin

No Happiness to Share
Inspired by Robert Frost

When the seasons are alive
Her leaves and branches thrive
With the first fall of snow
Her limbs droop low
Darkness arrives at an early hour,
Her leaves and happiness fall in a
shower
With branches sad and bare
No happiness to share

Lindsey Belisle

Some people yearn for me.
Some people avoid me.
I am mean.
I am cruel.

People have avoided me for years.
Others haven't been so lucky.
I meet everybody over time
Most more than just once.

I am the school bully.
I am your worst enemy.

Even though you don't know
I am always there.

I am your worst enemy.

And the second you think you've avoided me,
BAM! I'm knocking at your door.
You'll never see me coming.
I'll stab you in the back.

I am your worst enemy

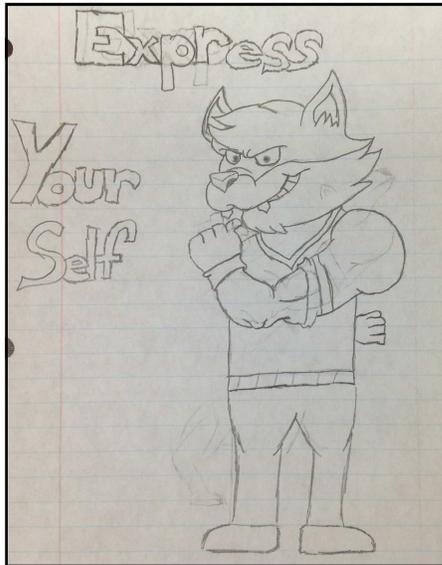
If I don't kill you,
I'll make you stronger

Until I come back
In the form of tackle football
Or maybe after a loss of any kind.

I'm not the worst thing ever,
But I'm quite close.

I'm not a murderer,
But
I am your worst enemy.

Gavin Zinghini



Kenneth Santos



Jeeyeon Barnes

An Excerpt from Haven
Michael Montoni

Everything in Rider's Haven was perfect. It was another safe day for the species Lisarda Dragona: dragons. Heart's Beating relaxed as his Rider climbed the final stairs to the Tower. Heart's Beating looked up through the open roof. He wanted to leave his Roost. He wanted to see every dragon and bring them joy. He wanted to see his home, the Dragon Mountains, where his old pack dwelled. He wanted to fly away to Foothill Valley and live there in luxury for a while. So many things his Rider had never seen, never would see.

And then it all changed.

Chapter I
The Heroes

Luc and Michael were playing up in the loft of Michael's room. The room had stormy gray walls and a ceiling dark as night.

It was an angular ceiling, a strange one with two skylights. The sunlight shone through strong today, and the boys were hiding during a game of manhunt.

Up in the loft, there were shelves and shelves of books. Towards the back of the loft there was an alcove. This alcove was not minded much by the boys, but when the seekers came thumping down the hallway, the boys hid there.

Hours they spent in the alcove, waiting. Behind them, the wall began to glow. Chinks appeared, then the whole wall separated and retracted to form the brightest doorway ever. Minutes later, a pull of air dragged them into the portal.

They were off to Rider's Haven.

Winter

The cold, a dark warrior of the night.
The cold, bringing me pain. Aching through my body,
killing me on the inside

The cold, it fights through my coat, I brace myself but it's too late
The cold, frost bite clenches at my throat, attacking me, freezing me

The cold. It's a beautiful kind of pain, so swift, dark, but it has a kindness like
none other. A beautiful chill, a stinging pain.

The cold is harsh and dark. It sneaks up on you and strikes like a cobra.

The cold is a mix of beauty and pain, comforting yet powerful, a fight between
good and evil, light and dark.

The cold
The cold
The cold...

Miles Howard

The Playground Giant or The Playground of Time

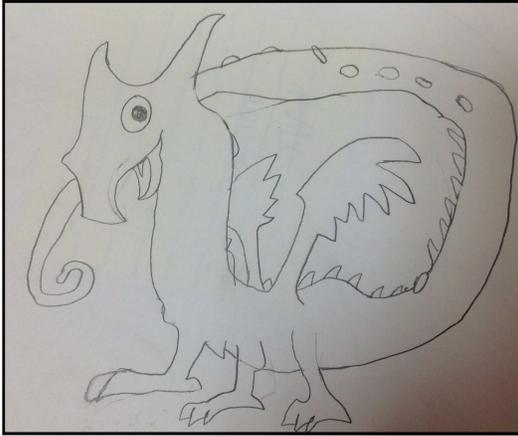
The tunnels I used to fit through,
The swings that went so high,
The imagination that I used to use,
I see all of these things
Even though they're gone.

I pass the little boy's bakery,
The girls saving the world,
The "big kid's" slide,
All the things that filled my heart with joy.

My size seems abnormal,
So does my maturity level,
All the qualities around me,
I now totally lack.

Years ago I played here,
Small, young, and innocent,
Wanting to be older
If only I knew.

Rachel Barry



Louis Valdivia

Walking On Water

I am taken to water
 Just like a brown otter
 Slowly skating around
 I am less than a pond
 This is me,
 Graceful and free
 Frogs stare and drool
 They believe I am a fool
 The water strider's a snack
 That won't fight back
 They don't see my arts
 My amazing leaf smarts
 The fish are the same
 They think it's a game
 So every day of my life
 I go through endless strife
 Running from birds, frogs and fish
 A nice life is a wish
 And slowly I cried
 In the pond where she died

Gabriel Suh

Her Golden Rays a Blessing *Inspired by Robert Frost*

The sun sinks low beneath the clouds
 A beautiful painting speaks aloud

True to her hue
 With pink, orange, and blue
 The sun creates a story

Couples dancing
 Children prancing
 The sun a silent victory

Families relax with hands held taut
 But without a second thought
 The sun shines in her glory

And early the next morn
 A new day is born
 Without a second thought
 The sun's golden rays a blessing

Emily Nadler



Carly Levin

The Soccer Goal

Corner kick
Then a little flick
From the head
The other team
Was definitely shred.
As they celebrate
I easily can relate
to someone
who lost
his head.

Vincent Jacobe deNaurois

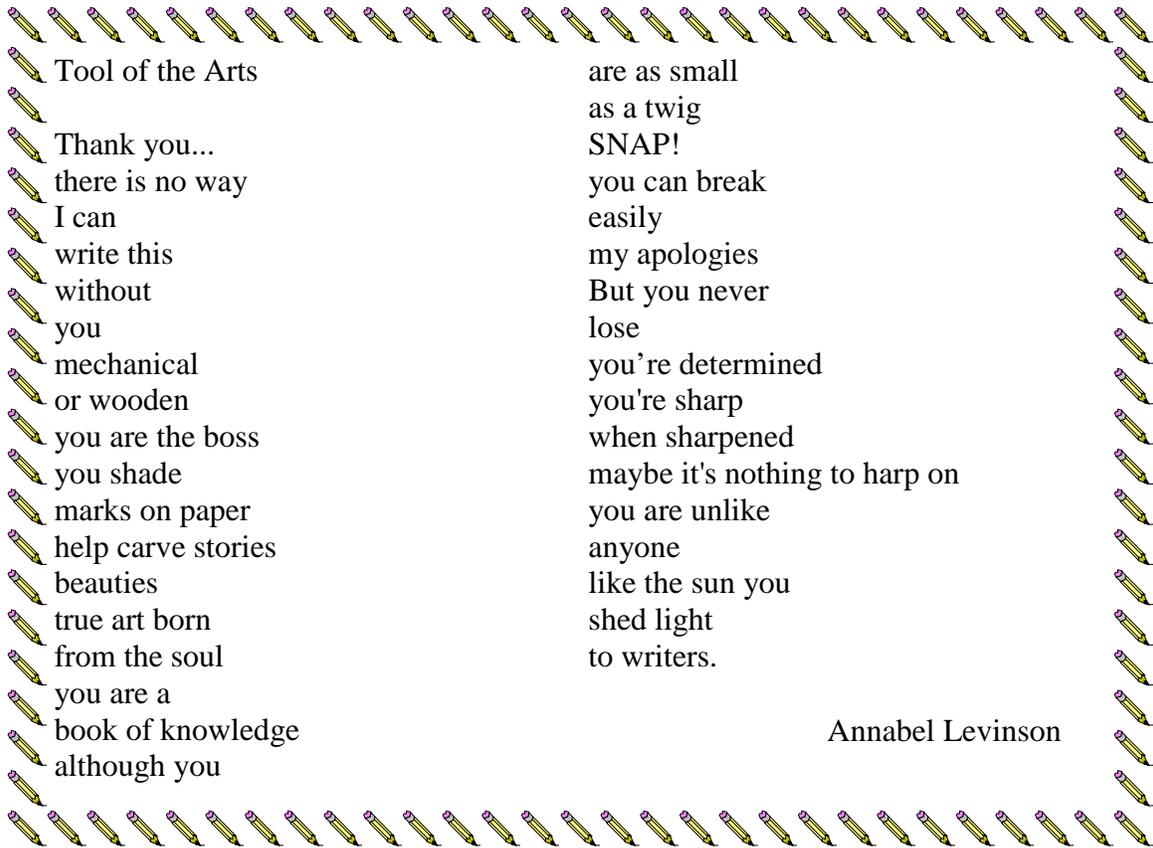
Angry Birds

I was walking and talking
Then I see
A horrible sight
It made me pee
Two angry birds
Literally from the game
Trying to kill
Me
I run away
No delay
Until they're there again
Then they're everywhere
Stealing my spot on the comfy chair!
That's when I scream
I guess I should delete the game

Vincent Jacobe deNaurois



Isabel Mikheev



Tool of the Arts
 Thank you...
 there is no way
 I can
 write this
 without
 you
 mechanical
 or wooden
 you are the boss
 you shade
 marks on paper
 help carve stories
 beauties
 true art born
 from the soul
 you are a
 book of knowledge
 although you

are as small
 as a twig
 SNAP!
 you can break
 easily
 my apologies
 But you never
 lose
 you're determined
 you're sharp
 when sharpened
 maybe it's nothing to harp on
 you are unlike
 anyone
 like the sun you
 shed light
 to writers.

Annabel Levinson

Money: The Green, Moldy Sandwich

Money makes the word go round,
 eventually right into the ground.
 Money is a moldy green sandwich.
 If you really need to, you'll eat it.
 Yuck. Yuck, your stomach hurts.
 Call the doctor and he says,
 "Your money works."
 Greedy, nasty, mean old money.
 Like a dictator it rules
 Hurting everything.
 Everyone drools
 For the moldy, green sandwich.

Money is the point in the sword ,
 stabbing everyone like fast darts.
 One day maybe I will be sucked in
 and rob a bank.
 Money always yanks my heart.
 Money,
 The drive for evil
 Taking and consuming all.
 When the world relies on money,
 Every living thing will fall.

Robin Kim

The way she
Flips her hair
And smiles
Makes me
Feel so
Small.

She
Shines with
Perfection
Yet she
Doesn't
Know it.

When it is
Cold as the Devil's heart,
Her presence fills me with
The roaring warmth
Of a
Fire.

She is blind
As a bat
When it comes down to
Seeing her pure
Beauty.

But if
She could see
I know she wouldn't be
Perfect
Anymore.

Anonymous



Louis Valdivia

Clock

The clock goes tic-tock like language speaking to
me.

All day on track, not missing a beat, time after
time.

Waiting for the next hour, waiting, waiting.

Its circular shape gives it an illusion

That

Time

Is forever changing.

Brewster Sawyer



Eli Worth

The Homework Cycle

Danny Regan

School, ugh. After spending six hours in one of the many buildings that houses our extremely flawed education system, it's nice to just relax: grab a soda, maybe watch some *SpongeBob*, and get all of that stress out. Of course, before you can do all of that stuff, you must do your homework. Once you're all relaxed, you remember, "Oh, dang it, I've got to do homework." But you're so comfortable where you are, you think, "Eh, I'll do it later."

You spend the rest of the day doing what an average middle school kid does: texting people, playing *Flappy Bird*... maybe go outside if the weather is nice. By 9-10 o'clock, you remember the homework. But you're so tired that you just go to sleep thinking, "I'll get it done tomorrow."

Tomorrow comes.

You do your morning routine, go to school, and think about random things while your teachers are talking about some president who was so pointless that his face didn't make it onto any money. And then, at lunch, it hits you like a bolt of lightning. Next, you're doing that homework at the speed of sound; half the time you don't know what you're even writing. You finally get to the next class and you hand in your mess of random words. The teacher gives you that look, and then he goes over the answers just to make you feel even worse. And then, at the holy time of 2:56, you head home to start the cycle all over again.

Why I Read

When I read, I feel like I own the world, spying on characters,
watching them make life-changing decisions.

When I read, I feel in control, turning the page on my demand.

I read the page like an obstacle course, dodging periods and commas,
racing towards the finish line.

I read dark works on a light page, telling me to read on *if I dare*.

I read insane words, tempting characters to do the unthinkable.

I read when the characters have nothing and feel betrayed.

I read when they have hope.

I read until the very last word.

Carlos Melo
13

The Hungry Sea

The sea was starving
And so it said,
“I think I’ll eat up
That little sand bed.”

So the waves rose
And the sea was fed
No longer was there
The little sand bed.

But the sea was not satisfied,
Not one bit
So said the rough water,
“That spit of land?
I think I’ll eat it.”

So the waves rose
The tsunami hit
And no longer was there
That poor land spit.

The sea, still not full
Let out a hungry roar
And that cute beach over
there
Was nothing but no more.

Cause the waves rose
Strong as a bull
The beach was soon gone
From the sea’s
push and pull.

Now the water was satisfied
Full as could be
And nothing remained
Of the town
By the sea.

Rachel Barry



Hanna Young



Eli Canter



Mira Goodman

The Stranger
Cristian del Cid Barrios

My mom shook me awake. I was startled. *What's happening? Why am I up so early???* I fell back down on my marshmallow pillow.

“WAKE UP!”

I have a surprise for you... well, for you and your sister,” my mom said. “Go wake her up and tell her to come.”

When we came downstairs, my mom had a glued smile attached to her face. It seemed like she couldn't take it off.

We said, “Why are you so happy? Did something happen?”

“Do you remember when you keep asking me about your—”

Ding dong!

“Wait right here,” yelled my mom excitedly.

When she came back in, she was with this man. He was tall and had a long beard. He had long hair which made him look like a girl, old clothes and dirt all over himself. It seemed like he had work clothes on. I saw him and said, “Umm, who is he and why is he in our house?”

I saw my sister galloping to him and turned red while she was yelling, “DADDY, I knew you would come back.”

How did she know him? How did she recognize him? She is only four and younger than me! He looked like a stranger to me.

I looked back at my mom and she gave me a look. It seemed like she wanted me to

say something or to go and hug him. While me and my mom were talking, my dad was there staring at us quietly.

“Do I know him?” I whispered.

I looked back at him and I was wondering how he could be my father. I gasped.

“He's your dad,” Mom said. “Do you want to go to school or do you want to stay and get to know him?”

My sister exclaimed, “We want to stay home!”

“Okay, then stay here and try to not ask him a lot of questions. Ask him one or two,” my mom said.

“Okay!”

When my mom left to go to work, we had all day with my dad. We asked him two questions. We kept talking and talking until I asked, “Do you have a game console of any kind?” I asked.

“Yeah I have one console; can you get me the bag that's in the living room?”

“Okay.”

I gave him the bag and he got out a PlayStation and a PSP.

My sister was a little jealous because I got something and she didn't, so my dad gave my sister the PSP and I got the PlayStation. I saw my dad yawn. “Do you want to sleep?” I questioned.

“Yeah, I would like that. I had a rough time and I couldn't get enough sleep in the car,” my dad spoke sleepily.

We left our dad to sleep for a little while. We went outside and started screaming that we would be out of control for the rest of the day.

"We finally have a dad!" my sister cried.

"I know. We can go to the park with

him and go to the beach with him. We can have double the fun with Mom and Dad," I cried.

We went to the room and slept with him. My sister and I cried tears of joy!!!

The Missing Puzzle Piece Alix Master

"Come quick! Your brother is coming!" My Grandpa rushed into the room. "Quick, get your shoes on. We're going to the hospital," he hollered.

I was showered with joy as I frantically rushed down the steps. We piled into the car as voices overlapped each other. I flopped down on my grandpa's lap. His knee shook with excitement. The corners of my mouth felt as if they went from ear to ear.

Together, as a family, we bounced into the stark, white room. There were no distractions so our eyes went straight toward the main attraction. Suddenly, everyone broke out in tears, like a sun shower, when they saw his face. His cheeks were chubby like a little chipmunk. He lay in my mother's arms. Tears gently sprinkled down her cheeks as she gazed into my brother's eyes. My stomach felt like it was leaping in many directions. My heart melted when those blue and hazel eyes appeared to focus on me for the first time. He smelled refreshing and full of life. My fin-

gers pressed against his tiny toes. His streaks of blonde appeared like rays of sunshine. He looked like an angel. We heard his sneeze and actually celebrated as though he won the Olympic gold medal for such an amazing feat.

I wrapped him in my arms. His cocoon-like blanket reminded me that he would not stay in there forever, but would grow into a boy. His head lay on my shoulder and sent a chill through my body. His eyes slowly shut as his head fitted on my shoulder perfectly.

Our family of four had been content with our lives, but we were unaware that there was so much more: the missing piece. He is the piece that senses weakness and rushes over to offer comfort, the piece that cannot ever lose his smile, always bringing joy. Now that we have our fifth puzzle piece, our family finally feels complete, a family who blasts "Rocky Mountain High" and even goes on ten mile hikes.



Clara
Hewson



Cice Kaufer

Why I Read

I read for the drama,
For the moments I remember.
I read for the suspense,
For the game-winning shot
or walk-off homerun.
I read when it's dark,
When it's silent as a stone.
I put my head on a pillow
And pull the covers up to my chin.
I grab a book and turn
On the light
I see words running on forever.
The book is getting
Lighter and lighter,
Until it's out of my hands.
Then I start another.
Looking for the drama,
Looking for the suspense,
Putting my head on the pillow,
Covers up to my chin.
That's why I read.

Matt Segal

How to be popular in 10 easy steps (Girls' Edition)

White converse are not an option. They are a *requirement*.

Travel in groups everywhere.

If you can't figure out how to communicate verbally, just make an annoying high pitched noise repeatedly. They'll get it.

You're never supposed to use the right form of "your."

One Direction is still relevant, right?

#always #use #irrelevant #hashtags.

Selfies are great. Everyone wants to see your filtered face on their dashboard.

FYI, speak in acronyms even when you're not texting. It makes you sound extremely intelligent.

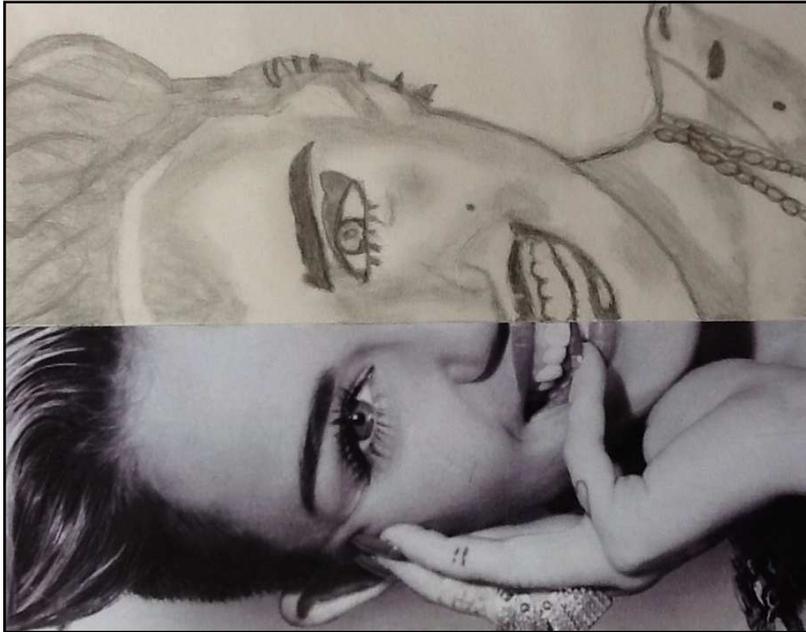
Your Instagram bio should include years "young", all your friends' user names, and a meaningless quote.

You are literally unable to even.

Susanna Weber

Dust
Anya Raikhovski

The scent of fresh despair is hanging above our heads like a persistent storm cloud. I stuck against the wall to avoid contact with anyone walking by. I hugged my books to my chest and continued down the hall to English. So many things were running through my head: the math exam tomorrow, not to make eye contact with London, not to look stupid in front of London, what I'm going to have for lunch, not to make myself look like a fool in front of London, etc. etc. Just my luck. I saw London strutting down the hallway, her new fluorescent Nike sneakers squeaking and her glossy brown hair swinging down her back. I hoped that she and her posse would just prance past me, leaving me unnoticed in the shadows of lockers looming above. She approaches and just when she reaches me, she snaps her head directly towards me: her upper lip protruding slightly, giving her the appearance of a prehistoric chimp. She narrows her plain brown eyes and drills them straight into the pits of my pupils. Her expression says, *You're such a loser*. I'm serious. You read books describing popular girls who snivel and sneer at you and tell you blatantly that you're pathetic. News flash America, that's not how it works. These girls just look at you, just give you one look, and everything inside you crumbles to ashes and resentful dust.



Donnie Murray



Bridget Roldan

The Hit

Crack, Bam,
Whack there it goes
Long,
No seemingly endless
Gone,
nothing but a white speck
Never to be seen again

Zachary Kringdon

The Wild Creek Audrey Maneker

My house is a small one. But it's strong, standing by the creek running to the Long Island Sound. I'm happy to say I've lived by that creek for twelve years. I played with my friends in it in elementary school. Pretending to be a mermaid washed ashore, someone special. That creek has a history, a real one. Not one plagued by greedy neighbors trying to hog it and claim it as some sort of prize. It's not meant for that. It never was. When you look across the street from 19 Jochum Avenue, it doesn't look like much. Untamed and grizzly-looking grass mingles with monstrous weeds. Two ragged, short, and ugly looking trees and some ivy running along the dirty trunks of the strange trees. A small, beaten up and faded *Private Property* sign tried to claim the wild crop of land but failed.

Bushes grow alongside the bank, popping neon blue berries in spring. Dirty, muddy, disgusting water flows over rocks, somehow shining in the sun. Also taking residence along the side is reddish brown mud, so when you walk there barefoot, it squishes between your toes. Old tiles of all different shapes and sizes collide with rocks on the left of the creek. They make little jagged places to sit and read, maybe even just sit and listen to the sound of nature flowing into your ears and through your soul. Society ebbing away. You'll see nasty brambles and twigs that'll snag your hair. You see a disgusting excuse of nature. You think it should be taken down and turned into something useful and productive.

You know what I see? I see a place where I spent my childhood. I see the

grass that tickled my three year old toes as I smelled the onion grass and wrinkled my little undeveloped nose. I see the weeds I used to sneak out of the house to cut up and pretend I would make potions and heal the sick rocks that were in dire need of medical attention. I see a tree that I would climb and think I was ruler of the world or Jane from Tarzan. It's the other tree that was mysterious and strange with magic ivy running around it, marking it as the best place to sit and read alone after school. I laugh at the *Private Property* sign; my neighbors thought they could tame nature. They couldn't. The bushes that were the best hide-and-seek spot and the place where I learned that if berries were brighter than

usual, you shouldn't eat them.

The water that held hidden treasures like the gold bracelet I found when I was six. The water that when it rained, you could go swimming and get carried by the tide out to sea. I see the best places to sit and talk, the creative blend of tile and rocks to make a masterpiece. I see mud that I wrote my name in and watched as the tide rose and washed my name away. I see the sun shining serenely through the tree's leaves. The bushes provide shade, the water gurgles away to a steady beat. I see the brambles that challenge me every day. I see my life. I see my home. I see the creek, the place where nature runs wild and, sometimes, so do I.

Survival of the Fittest

It's time for a check of the truth
If you're not strong, we eat you
Nothing personal
I'm sure you've seen us, in those dark corners of your room
Ducking behind a tree in the woods
That snap of a stick or creak of a floorboard
That's us
We need meat
Juicy
Slimy
Raw
We want you
Look behind you
Now look again
See if you can find us
We are all that you hate
Look again

Worgen (A pseudonym)



Anonymous

The Helpless
Audrey Maneker

Blood-red splashes of color cross the sky. I'm sitting on the top of my building looking out in the chilly air. The world is just beginning to wake up. Its early birds, clumsily trying to successfully get to their destinations awake. Most fail in their attempts. The sky swirls and I sigh, purple blooms and crashes against the red in the sky. Like bruises and blood in the morning of winter. I breathe in the sharp air that surrounds me. When I puff it back out, it shapes a cloud that's small and unimportant. Just like me. I rub my eyes and I can tell they're blood shot from their tenderness. The sky is now a collage of colors. Peach, cream, and rosy pink like a wailing child's cheeks. I sit there on the roof of my apartment, wondering if it would just be better to jump than to deal with my mother. But then there's Michael, little but strong. *I can't leave Michael.* I thought to myself angrily. It was frustrating having all of this responsibility being thrust upon me. I stumble more than I walk with the tragic weight in my heart.

I stand and force my Converse down every step. I stare at the door. I really don't want to enter that room and see what my mother has done. I stare. The chipped and dull beige paint looks grizzly. We really should re-paint. I open the door of apartment 234 on the sixteenth floor. I hear my mother before I see her. She's wailing into Michael's shoulder. I see Michael's look of

helplessness. He's only eleven.

"Mom, stop it!" I cry, "Get you're self together! You're scaring Michael!" And my crazy mother looks up at me. Her eyes are wild with grief, she looks like a madwoman. For a moment I consider sprinting back up to the roof, to leaving this woman alone in her grief. But then I think of Michael, and I stand my ground.

"Lily!" Michael squeaks, for my mother has grabbed him by the front of the shirt with bloody hands. Her hands leave stains on his white shirt. She rattles him like a doll.

"Where is he?" She shrieks, not capable of handling the death of my father. She's beyond help. I start forward, but not before my mother does the unspeakable. My mother hits her own child. She slaps

Michael across the cheeks, leaving them red. Michael looks terrified, shocked that his mother would raise a hand against him. I reach her before she can strike another blow. I grab her hand and pin her down as she thrashes around.

"Mom? He's gone, get over it!" I shout, but I step on the shards of my mother and father's wedding frame. I see she has thrown a fit and destroyed her room. But I don't care, I can't. I used to think I could help her, that I could fix her issues. But she lost her mind the second my father's body was buried. I tried for months to fix the shattered soul of my mother. But

it was when she threatened to kill me if I didn't help her resurrect my father that I knew. My mother only loved me if my father did. And the dead can't love. I had tried unsuccessfully to get Michael out of here. But he wanted to stay and he wanted to love my mother. When she hid in her

room all day and on occasion gave a scream of pain.

As I left the building with Michael I knew he understood that mom wouldn't get better. But the police we called would lock her up. And Michael and I could live a life of love. Not grief. Not anymore.

The End

it was 4 years ago today
1460 days
too many hours
i remember waiting
waiting for what, i don't know
and then
no one came home
i slumped in a wobbly chair
melted into the sticky vinyl
and then the flood of calls
washed me away
"it was quiet.
they didn't know what hit them.
the car smashed instantly.
they're gone."
and that
is when my world
ended.

Anya Raikhovski



Morris Jansen

Once I Threw the Shoe
Audrey Williamson

Bul-ly, 'boōlē/n., pl. bullies origin: Dutch, German Definition: a person who uses strength or power to harm or intimidate those who are weaker.

I didn't much dread the subject but the *answers* that followed. Mom would call us for dinner: *us* meaning me, Dad, and Andy. We would eat the mashed potatoes that always tasted like conditioner to me and left that weird feeling in your mouth that conditioner would. Andy, sixteen and "much too good for conversation", who always has his headphones on. (Most of the time, you can hear some cheap rock and roll song which probably took about thirty minutes to "produce" through his cheap ear buds. The fact that he listens to some band called "Knife Party" tells you all you need to know about his personality).

Dad is a regular fogley: most of the time he tries to stay away from "gadgets and gizmos". Once, Andy was screeching along to one of his "songs" and he sang part of a cuss word. Dad waited until he stopped singing, then told him that he does not have the need to "cheat" by using flashy over-used curse words. He says that he is perfect-

ly content using terms like "holy cow" and "gosh golly", and that everyone in this family should be too.

Then there's Mom. She is pretty much classified (or at least close to) normal. Nothing really special about her; she mostly has her own life.

Just when I find that tiniest bit of courage to say what I need to say, I open my mouth then I think I'm going to throw up, so I close it again. Oh, it's not the subject - I can deal with that, but more the reaction my parents would have as they heard it. Dad would shake his head and open his paper with a sniff, and my mother would sympathize with me. I swallow past my fears and tell them what happens at school.

My mom said, "We should do something..."

As if I am not there, my dad said, "The boy's got to learn to stand up for himself."

"But he doesn't have to suffer."

"All kids have to learn; I didn't take it when I was his age."

"We have got to tell somebody! He can't go to school every day and be treated like this by other students."

"I don't want my son to be a coward!"



Grace Boniello

Silence.

So I guess I am cowardly but, by this point, that fact does not bother me anymore. And even though I already knew what my parents would say, the words still stung. Not as bad as the ones that the “bullies” say to me at school, but the point that my dad doesn’t care is what really hurts. Though I was anxious about going to school tomorrow and facing the kids of Ridge Valley’s very own Hazel Wood Middle School, I don’t say anything about that. Mom scooped the mashed potatoes. Then she looked at me, obviously trying to change the subject, and said, “What did you learn in school today, honey?” I say nothing and we leave it at that.

Next morning is just like any other. I wake up, get dressed in a gray shirt and jeans, and go downstairs to eat the

Corn Chex that Mom left out for me and Andy. When I get there, I see that Andy is already sitting down. He is dressed in jeans and a black shirt with Ridge Valley High written on it in purple. He also has a dark purple ski hat on. I dig in, and then see that we are eating in sync. Andy notices it too, so he stops for just a second, then goes on eating. What a relationship.

I finish quickly, then go upstairs. I brush my teeth and wash my face thoroughly. I see Dad walk out of his room dressed in a suit with the smell of his cologne tagging along after him. I know that he is going downstairs to grab a mug of coffee and the paper. Then he will leave to walk to the train station, and ride the train. On the way to his office, he will go to the oatmeal place, grab a small paper bowl with a

cap on it and a cup with pulpy OJ. He will let the people at the front desk see his badge then will walk into his office, wave to his secretary, Maggie, and start working. For a second, standing on the cold, tiled bathroom floor, I wanted to be Dad - not exactly Dad, but just be an adult. Have a schedule, a job, and a family. I don't just want to be some loner kid who gets bullied and whose parents don't care, or at least don't want to do anything about it. But as I bring myself back into reality, I tell myself that I don't really want to be *him*, just not *me*.

I go downstairs, grab my coat and head outside, my breath making clouds in the cold morning air. I walk to the end of my street and wait for the mustard colored bus to pull up. After a while, I finally see it coming up the hill. It clumsily comes up to a stop and the doors fold open. I step up into the bus, trudge over to the middle and find an empty seat which I take. I put my backpack on the seat next to me and close my eyes.

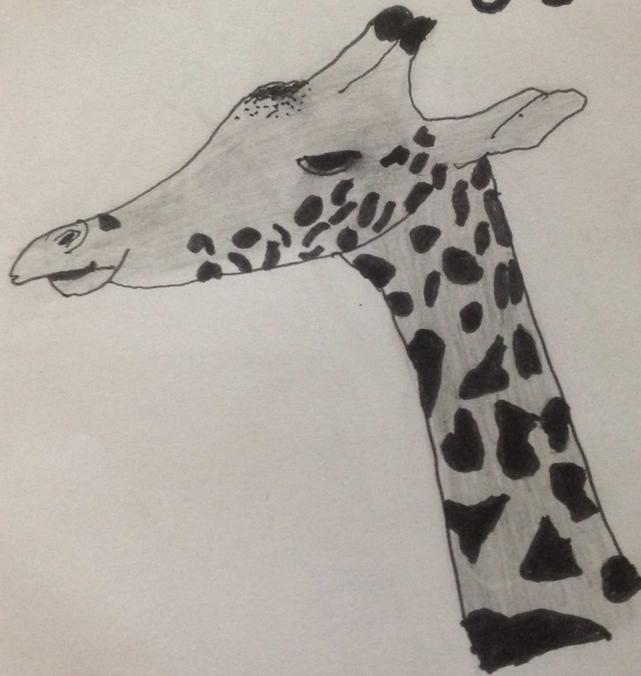
When the bus pulls up to the next stop, I don't even brace myself even though I know that this is Elliot's stop. When the bus comes to a halt, I hear loud footsteps, buzzing phones, and excessive talking. When they come closer, I hear some snickers. (They were probably laughing at me, sitting all alone, as always). Finally, Elliot comes up real close to me and says, "That's my seat."

I answer back lamely, "No, it isn't." (I still wish I had said something better). He is so close to me that I can smell jam on his breath; he probably had toast for breakfast.

He grumbles, "Move it," then he bends over fast, takes his shoe and throws it at my nose. In a second, I feel the blood trickling down my nose, taste the metallic flavor in my mouth, and start to feel my eyes slightly burn. I think, *This is ridiculous! Who throws shoes at people?* Then I get angry. Why do I put up with this every day? Why don't I ever really try to do something? Why did I let this get so far? Any other day I would have just waited 'til they stopped laughing, then tore off a piece of notebook paper or something to stop the bleeding. But not today. I take the shoe and throw it back at him.

I don't know where I hit him, or even if I hit him at all; all I know is that once I threw the shoe, Elliot and I were dragged away from each other by the bus driver. Once I threw the shoe, I opened a new can of worms. Once I threw the shoe, I knew it was incredibly stupid, but also in a way incredibly smart. Once I threw the shoe, I know that I would never go back to be the loner who no one knows. Once I threw the shoe, I knew it was the best thing I had ever done.

Giraffe



David Carpanzano