

# HOMMOCKS

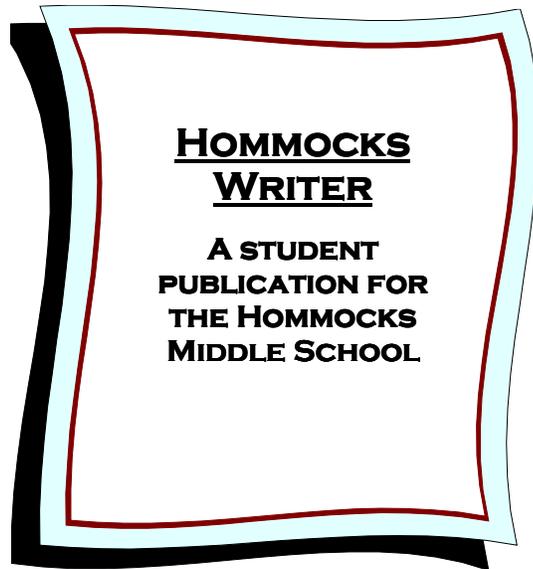


**WINTER**

**Winter, 2013**

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Rotary Winner 2012  
The Truth Might Hurt...But Lies are Forever  
Emma Biermann

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I could smell summer. It was practically here. Thirty minutes left of school and then I was free. Free from all the tests, all the homework, and free of my locker which has been a bottom one all year.

On the last day of school, my best friend Madison and I would go to my country club. We would swim, jump off the diving board, and take tons of crazy pictures. We would stay at the pool until it closed. I was so pumped. This had been our tradition for the last eight years and I couldn't wait to get started. My heartbeat was in sync with the ticking of the clock. Time seemed to be moving quickly because the next thing I heard was my teacher announcing, "Have a great summer, class."

I jumped up and sprinted towards my locker. "Yes!" I screamed in my head. "Time for some real fun!" I shoved my books and papers into my bag—leaving my phone in the depths of the mess.

I was so excited. It was ninety-five degrees and I had been boiling all morning. I could practically feel the cool water on the tips of my toes. I ran downstairs pushing through crowds of people. I waited in the commons for Madison. And I waited. The crowd started to thin out. She was nowhere to be found. Then my phone

started beeping rapidly. I dug for in furiously, reaching in and around my books and papers until I found it. My phone read, "New message from Madison." "Hey girlie, I have a fever. Had to go home. So sorry. Love, Mads."

I was so bummed. I just couldn't believe it. But I quickly responded and texted back, "*Hope you feel better. Will miss you so much.*" Even though she was sick and I was super disappointed, I was still going to try and have a fun first day of summer. After all, I would still be with my babysitter, Bree, and little sister, Jordan.

When we stopped at home, we grabbed our swimsuits, towels, and sunscreen and off we went. Bree blasted Katy Perry songs and we all sang really loudly. We were laughing and having a great time until I saw something shocking. My jaw fell open. From a distance, I saw a group of girls. As the car slowed down for the red light, I saw her. It was Madison with the most popular girls in our school, girls who didn't care about her at all. Girls who were often mean to her because she was a spaz at sports. She wasn't sick. She was fine. Time seemed to stand still. Madison was shocked to see my car. Our eyes met. She looked at me in horror. She was frozen. She didn't know what to do. Tears started

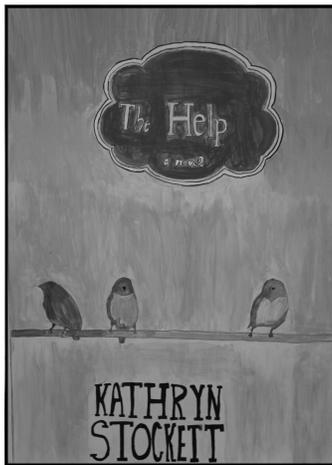


Inspired by Poet Laureate Robert Frost's  
"Nothing Gold Can Stay"  
Nature

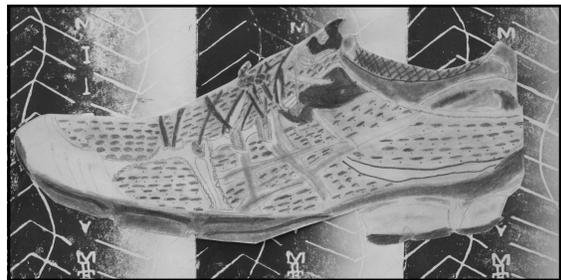
Its beauty so subtle  
Unbeknownst to the untrained eye  
Its intricacies so amazing  
And its allure so great  
Yet it recedes.  
How could a force so powerful  
Vanish into thin air?  
It is we,  
The human race.  
We strive purely for perfection  
for the achievement of our being  
not for the existence that fathered us,  
But  
there are some people  
who strive to preserve it  
so that it may not  
just disappear.

Gabriel Marchiony

Lindsay Randall



Ian  
Melamed



The Noise of Beauty

My violin quite likes to ring  
The intonation is the key  
And in my orchestra, as you can see  
My violin is the king.  
Fiddle me not  
For that isn't the one  
Certainly the banjo has none  
Of the qualities my violin has got.  
Along with its elegance  
My violin has marvelous resonance  
And, careless to say  
I could listen to my violin  
All day

Emma Kaneti

You red headed stepchild  
Worthless. Stupid. Ugly.  
Pizza face  
Dumbo ears  
Your daddy left because he doesn't love you  
Uni-brow, girly boy  
Sticks and stones can break your bones  
But words do hurt you  
Walk away  
Laugh along

Act like it's no big deal  
But it hurts inside  
Makes you cry  
And  
never lets you have a smile  
Stand up  
Say it out  
Never let it get to you again.

Riley Leonard

### The Wind

The leaves begin to scatter on the ground.  
I walk on the sidewalk, my head down.  
My eyes sting when I face forward.  
The cans on the pavement rattle as I step over them.  
My house is inches away, and I am longing to arrive.  
The rain slices the grass;  
the wind rubs against my skin.  
I take one step forward,  
and I see the dark clouds hovering over me.  
Tree branches bend side to side.  
I shiver.  
Goose bumps travel from my forehead to my toes.  
I reach towards the door and...

The smell of warm apple pie travels through my nose.  
The warmth of the room does not surprise me.  
My dog rushes to the door and I bend down to pet  
him.

I wrap myself in a damp towel  
and scurry towards to the fire.  
My feet tingle on the wood floor,  
and I sit down.

In a while, I get tired and creep downstairs.  
My eyelids close so I can't see the world  
until I gently fall asleep.

Erin Meador



Rebecca Marcus



Something Unexpected  
Emily Wiener

I suddenly awaken as the car stops short.

“Where are we?” I tiredly ask.

“We are at the beach,” she answers.

My tiredness drifts away, my eyes light with excitement, and my mouth comes in to a big grin. I scream, “Yay!” I try to unbuckle my car seat but my four-year-old hands are unsuccessful. My mom comes into the back and undoes it for me. I try to run straight for the beach, but my dad snatches me before I can bolt.

He says, “Not so fast, mighty-might. It’s Fourth of July and there is going to be a lot of people out. It’s going to be darker than it is now. I want you to put these glow sticks on your wrist, around your neck and head, so if we lose you, we will be able to find you!” He puts them on me. I ask why I have to wear them and not my sister. My sister cuts my dad off before he can answer.

She says, “Because you’re 4 and I’m 11. So I’m more mature than you,

and won’t run off.” I don’t even listen to her. I just run straight to the beach with a towel.

It is about 7 o’clock, and fireworks are at 8. We get to the beach and have dinner and listen to music, having a fun time. Boom, Boom, Boom! The fireworks begin. We sit there in awe, watching them. I stand by the water. I keep running back and forth to my family and to the water about fifty times. In the middle of the show, around 8:30, something unexpected happens. The barge that shoots off the fireworks is set on fire.

There is a fire on the ocean!

Somebody calls 911. A few minutes later, you can hear the loud ear-piercing sirens coming from the north side of the beach. Their big lights are flashing everywhere. My mom grabs me so I won’t be in the way of the fire trucks and firemen. I sit there, watching as they put the fire out. About fifteen minutes later, my dad says it is time to go because it is getting late. He picks me up and I fall asleep in his arms before we even get to the car. He straps me into my car seat and we are off.

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Rotary Club Winner  
Liar, Liar, Hands on Fire  
Bruna Vieira

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There once was a girl named Emily. Emily was a well-known trouble maker, which meant you had to keep your eye open at all times. If you owned a business, there was a possibility that a plastic rat would show up in one of your products, which happened to Mrs. Kean, one of the nicest shopkeepers in town. If you owned a restaurant, get ready to find out that you gave ALL your employees a day off, which happened to Mr. Pretto, the owner of the best Italian restaurants in the U.S. But, no matter how good her “prank” was, she was mostly famous for her lies. Emily knew it was wrong, but she lied, and lied, and lied, until one day her lies led to the worst day of her life.

It was a special week in Emily’s school: Fire Awareness Week. The lesson they taught Emily’s grade was what to do if there was a fire. Emily and her class were told to always tell an adult first. When she got home from school, Emily’s mom, Joan, told Emily that her teachers were right. Emily’s mom always told Emily what to do in an emergency, and now she had the school to help her. Emily asked, “Mom, you’ll know what to do in an emergency like a fire, right?”

“Well of course! We have a fire extinguisher, fire, smoke, and heat alarms, and we have the firemen to help us in a

real emergency. You’ll always be safe,” Joan answered. Then, something clicked in Emily’s mind. An idea.

The next morning, Emily asked if she could heat up her cocoa in the microwave. Her mom told her to be careful, and went off to answer the phone. Emily knew the microwave would not give off enough heat to set the fire alarms off, so she decided to improvise. “FIRE! FIRE! MOM! HELP! FIRE!” she screamed at the top of her lungs. She heard her mom’s footsteps as she rushed down the hallway, fire extinguisher in her hands. Emily tried to hold the laughter in, but her mom’s crazed look made her start laughing so much that she sounded like a hyena at a comedy show. Her mom’s face went from confused to fuming in a matter of seconds. She was about to scream her head off at Emily, but the bus honked its horn and sent Emily out the door. When she came back from school, her mother was angry, yet she had calmed down. She sent Emily to her room and didn’t let her out until she finished her homework and apologized for what she did.

After that, Emily let things calm down between her and her mother, but all the while she was conjuring another plan. On Sunday, after Emily took a shower, she asked her mom if she could blow dry her

hair alone. Her mom showed her how and went to the laundry room to start the washing machine. Emily knew that her mom would be suspicious if Emily started screaming again, so instead, she climbed on her chair and found the nearest heat detector. She put the blow-dryer on high, turned it on, and held next to the detector. Soon enough, the screeching sound came on and Emily smiled with pleasure as she heard her running up the stairs. This time, Emily's mom caught on in no time. She started to say something about going to her room, but the phone rang and cut Joan off midsentence. Joan glared at Emily's grin, and went off to pick up the phone. Emily ran to her room and pretended to be sorry all over again.

The next year, when Emily was older, the firemen came back for Fire Awareness Week, but Emily had a bad fever and didn't go to school the entire week. On Friday, Emily decided to help her mom cook. As her mom went to get the missing ingredients, some of the liquid for the pasta spilled all over the stove. Emily turned around to get some more pasta, but came to a halt as soon as soon as she heard a roar. She turned back around quickly to find that a fire had started right where the liquid spilled, and the fire grew quickly.

Emily screamed the exact words she screamed a year ago. "FIRE! FIRE! MOM, HELP! FIRE!"

Suddenly, the fire alarm started screeching, and Emily heard her mom say,

"Nice try Emily, but you won't fool me this time." Emily panicked and tried to turn the stove off. The fire burned her skin and the pain shot through her like a thousand knives. She looked for the button, but she couldn't find it. The smoke filled her lungs and made it hard to breathe. She stepped away from the stove and examined her hand. It was red, and she was sure it would leave a scar.

Then she heard a crash as her mom opened the door and saw the raging fire. She ran to get the fire extinguisher. When she came back, she got the fire extinguisher on and started to put out the fire. Emily watched the fire tone down until there was not a spark in sight. Her mom put the fire extinguisher back and came back with a worried look on her face. As soon as she saw Emily's hands, she sprinted toward her and grabbed her hands to examine them. Then, she took Emily to the sink and stuck her hands under the freezing water. As Emily's hand burned with relief, she looked at her mom and asked "Why didn't you believe me?" She felt the tear roll down her cheek.

Her mom took her into her arms, keeping Emily's hand under the water and answered "I thought it was another joke. I'm so sorry, sweetie." Then, Emily remembered her laughter at her mom's worried face. She understood the true meaning of Fire Awareness Week for the first time.

Emily's hands got better, but remained badly scarred. Every time she thought of the perfect lie or prank, she

looked at her hands and the pain shot through her with the image of the fire replaying in her mind. From that day for-

ward, Emily never told a lie again. If she did, the pain would not be physical, but emotional and mental.

### All These Years

Found on the floor  
Waiting for a claimer  
Square  
Crinkled  
Wrinkled  
Nobody ever came  
Lonely  
Crumbling slowly  
Until an elderly woman finds it.  
It was her dead son's picture  
He had passed away ten years ago.  
She had never found his picture;  
Her mind was filled with grief  
and hope for the picture to show.  
It'd been hidden under her own  
warmth and comfort,  
Her own security,  
Her bed  
All these years of waiting and aggravation  
All these years of pain and sadness...  
And she had had it all along,  
All these years.

Anonymous

### Snow

The white flakes are like powdered sugar, falling from a sifter.  
The snow is a blanket that muffles the noise of everyday life.  
The snow-covered hills are like piles of bleached cloth.  
The snow is confetti.  
The clouds are celebrating.  
The children are as happy as clams  
The snow is a key that locks the schools closed.

Thea Barovick

Dimitrios Orfanos



My Journey Through the River of Death  
Olivia Hoffmann

It was a hot summer day about two years ago. The sun was shining brightly through the millions of trees around me. Even though I was sweating like crazy, I was not surprised; it was always hot in India. We were all walking through the park: my aunt, my uncle, my two cousins, my sister, and my mom and dad. They were all enjoying themselves, as if they didn't feel the burning heat of the fireball in the sky. "Why did we even come here?" I thought to myself.

We were hiking up the trail, which was a morose brown color. Every time the wind blew, a cloud of dust swirled around us, getting into our eyes and making them itch. As if it wasn't hard enough to hike up the path in the blistering heat! We arrived at an old tree house, built so visitors could see the view of Bangalore from up high. As we climbed up the creaking wooden staircase, all I could think of was how annoying walking around this huge park was. I seemed to be the only one fighting to stay awake from exhaustion. When we reached the top of the tree house, I was surprised to find the room was spacious. My dad nudged me and pointed outside toward the sun. When I saw the view, my heart stopped beating for a second. The lush trees spread into a green ocean below me. Further out, I could see the town bustling with people and beyond, the mid-morning sun.

We all hiked back down the sloping hill to the beginning of the track because of a lake my aunt wanted to look at. I wished I could have taken a picture of the amazing view from the top of the tree house; I thought I would never see a sight more astounding than that. I was so wrong. In the distance, I saw a slime colored body of water. There was a disgusting layer of brown algae coating the top of the stagnant pond, as if it had been rotting for years. An old canoe, which matched the color of the pond, rested by the dock. It looked as if it had been made by someone in a hurry, not caring about any safety features. Everyone sat at the brink of the dock, staring in wonder at the icky water. "Come on," I thought to myself. "Can't anyone see how gross this pond is?" Of course they all thought the pond was beautiful.

An old man hobbled up toward the boat. My aunt, who is an adventurous person, had an eager look in her eye. "Do you give boat rides?" she asked the old man.

"Oh, um yeah, we do," he said, caught off guard. "I charge fifty rupees per person!" he exclaimed without hesitation. My aunt got up and aggressively beckoned everyone forward to board the boat.

The boat was moving at a slow pace up through the pond. When someone shifted in their seat, the ride rocked back and forth. I clutched one side of the boat, my knuckles turning a pearly white.

A Call Home From Camp  
Anonymous

It stared at me, watching my every pace around the tight, dusty phone booth with its big, black, ominous eyes. It lazily lounged on the dirty wall, as if it ran the cramped stall. I got the strange sense that it knew more about their puzzling absence than I would ever know. I had been waiting for my family to call me from home to my camp for ten minutes.

Possibly twenty.

I tried to think positively. Maybe there was bad reception. Maybe they didn't make it to the house yet. Maybe they couldn't find the phone.

However, there was always this one, small, troubling thought in the back of my mind that gnawed at my insides, slowly making an imposing appearance: Maybe they forgot about me.

I was at sleep-away camp for the first time, and the camp had very strict rules about contact with people outside of the parking lot. A camper was permitted three phone calls that lasted under two minutes each to her close relatives per summer. There were rumors of some lucky kids who were able to sneak in an extra minute or two of their beloved call because the office workers forgot they existed. Then again, these kids generally spoke with extreme quietness so that they wouldn't be discovered. This was not something that I was capable of doing, for whatever reason. This would mark my first call to

my parents in four, long weeks. This was the longest period of time I had ever been deprived of verbal contact with my mom, dad, and sister. It was unbearable. Everyone else in my twelve-people-holding bunk had already had at least one phone call. I was the ugly duckling; the odd man out, alone.

When a fortunate camper had a scheduled phone call, they were royally escorted from their activity or game by a counselor to a vast, lush, green lawn by the main building. Then, you were prompted into the camp office waiting room. To a dirty, thrilled camper, it seemed as though the room was something like a study from a movie: old, dusty, swathed with books, and if you looked closely enough, it seemed as though you might be on the verge of a secret trap door. As I waited in this mysterious expanse, I learned more about myself than I ever thought I would know.

I discovered an array of peculiar habits of mine that were never acknowledged to me that transpired when I was nervous. I bit my nails. I ground my teeth. I made unnecessary chatter with receptionists. I never asked the right questions. Most disappointing of all, I learned that I was a pessimist, one of the worst. This is why I doubted that the intimidating black telephone in the dustiest corner of the room would ever ring.

As I neared the phone booth, I watched as kids left nearby stand with seemingly minor dabs of water in the corners of their eyes. Quietly, I entered, sat on a vandalized bench, and I waited. And waited some more. It slowly seemed that my family really had forgotten about me. I kept waiting. I waited for that black, tubular device to echo across the enclosed space. I was in there for about fifteen minutes without any sign of a person on the other end of the line, but then a miracle occurred. It rang. And it rang again, and again. I was unable to comprehend that they were there. They were truly waiting for me. I was shocked, and my only reaction was to pick up the phone.

We had a long, but still short, conversation. We talked about everything: my sister's recital, my sports game, their trip to Florida, and my friends. Then, a short,

hostile woman with grey hair pulled into a tight bun demanded, "Time's up."

Those two words struck the life out of me. I was limp and lifeless; the color had drained from my face and I knew that they would be gone. I told them I loved them, but that I had to go. They wouldn't hang up. They said it had only been a minute and a half, but I knew it was three.

The lady came back and angrily shouted, "GET OFF OF THE PHONE!"

But they wouldn't leave. They pleaded and bargained, but I had to let go. I looked at the phone, holding it in my palm like an old friend. I slowly set it back down on the stand. It made the forlorn click of the end of the call.

It stared at me, watching my every tear around the tight, dusty phone booth with its big, black, ominous eyes.

### Winter

The white blanket puts the underlying ground to sleep while creamy eggnog is sipped and the gingerbread men come to life.

Snowy angels fly down from the heavens as steaming kettles of hot cocoa play a song.

Little white diamonds fall to the ground.

The never ever evergreens never ever lose faith.

A world of snow white and fire red goes to sleep. Another world is coming at sunrise, a world of green grass, chirping birds, and a beaming sun.

Time to wake up.

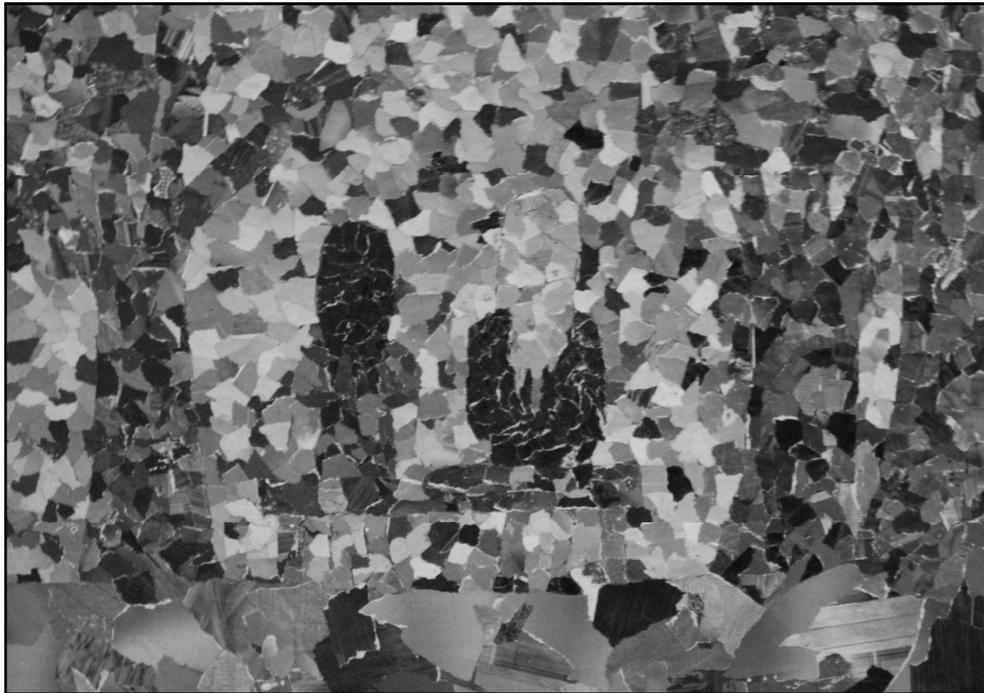
Clare Lane and Molly Kreisman-Dionne

in the dark,  
gloomy night,  
i move along.  
    slowly,  
        swiftly.  
lifting things up with my strong arms.  
and down.  
and up,  
and down.  
back and forth.  
side to side.  
i am the heart of the sea,  
a deep,  
    dark blue.

i can drown a helpless sailboat  
with one small push.  
i can wipe out  
an entire city with some help from  
the wind.  
i am depended on by  
many things,  
and i dont mind.  
i provide shelter for those who  
can't make their own.  
i hold many moods-  
calm and quiet,  
or mad and terrifying.

Ellie Lundberg

Emily Ma



Two inches from the wall  
When are you there?  
Really there.  
At that perfect spot  
Emotions  
Comfort  
Other people.  
All intertwined  
In the web  
Of sheer  
Pure  
Happiness.

Somehow  
I can  
Reach  
That wall.  
I'm straining  
Fingers like boards  
Thumbs mashing away,  
But I can  
Never  
Touch  
The wall.

There's always  
An excuse  
Not to try  
As others say.  
Stitchy, gross piece of gum  
- STUCK!  
People don't want  
To touch,  
A suspicious looking

Insect  
Creepy  
Crawly  
For beyond the standards  
Of even the most daring  
Follows.

What makes us  
Not take  
That  
Extra  
Step?  
That extra  
Feeling  
Of pride  
That over-  
comes  
The frustration  
Of not  
Reaching?

Maybe we  
Don't want to  
know  
Don't care  
Or feel  
That it makes  
A difference.

Maybe you  
Don't care  
But  
I'm  
You're

Two inches  
From  
The  
Wall...  
I'm watching.

Annabel Levinson



Yeji Han

Once In a Lifetime  
Jesse Harwin

“Wake up! Wake up!” my parents yelled.

In a flash, I hopped down from my bed in the RV. BANG! BANG! The RV rattled as everybody stomped through it. As I was sleepwalking, I hammered into everything within an arm’s-length from me. In my pajamas and a fleece, I walked out of the RV into the fresh morning air of Bryce Canyon. Darkness took over my vision. The moon and stars were the only lights that I could see. I felt as if I were in the middle of nowhere. The cool breeze whipped my hair every which way. The dirt and rock path below me crunched after every step I took.

“Which way are we going?” I asked my parents in confusion.

“Keep going straight, and then take a right. Be careful and hold onto the railing as you walk,” my parents replied.

“Thanks,” I whispered, somewhere into the darkness.

As flashlights began to flicker on, it became much easier to stay with the pack. We were a group of eighteen people, including our family friends.

After walking for about five minutes, we neared the peak of Bryce Canyon. After a couple more exhausting minutes of walking on the rigorous dirt path, we reached the peak. There were benches and rocks to sit on, but I stood and waited eagerly for the sun to rise.

Suddenly, the moment arrived. The sun emerged from behind the canyon. It was the most extraordinary sight that I had ever seen. I felt as if my eyes were lying to me. My mouth dropped open as I savored the beauty of what I was witnessing. It was a dream that I wished was everlasting. My imagination was coming to life. I glanced to my right and to my left, and it seemed that everyone felt the same way.

The sun lit up the canyon with life. Pink, white, orange, and yellow clouds wandered around the blinding ball of light. It was unreal.

Shortly after the sun came up, we left the canyon.

“Wow! Can you believe that?” I asked my friend Bradley as we began to walk away from the peak.

“No,” he said back.

I had just seen something I could never recreate. It was beautiful, amazing, and unreal. It was sunrise at Bryce Canyon.

A Precious Present  
Brigid Knowles

One Christmas morning, before I can even remember knowing what Christmas was really all about, I received the best present ever: a Cabbage Patch baby doll. Despite her lack of beauty, I fell in love with this cherub-faced object the moment I laid eyes on her. She wore a blue shimmering skating costume. I can vividly remember her perched beneath our Christmas tree, her curly brown hair and sparkling green eyes illuminated by the iridescent lights.

As we discarded all of the wrapping paper that was scattered across the floor, I eyed my doll, making sure that my brothers didn't touch or go near the exquisite object that lay beneath the snow colored blanket. When everything was thrown out, my dad shouted, "Breakfast!" I didn't react to my dad's voice but to the sight of my brothers playing monkey in the middle with a doll. My doll. I charged forward, pushing past my mom, who was reading instructions on how to assemble one of my younger brother's gifts. I screamed boisterously, thinking that they were going to break my new present, something that I knew I was going to love and cherish forever. I grabbed hold of her with the feeling that I would never let go again.

Years passed and I still treasured Baby by the way I had the Christmas morning I received her. I brought her everywhere with me: to restaurants, friends' houses, vacations, and even to the grocery store. I would prop her in the metal seat of the shopping cart and make sure I was the one to push the cart and not my parents or brothers. She was mine and always would be.

One day before Valentine's Day, my birthday, we made a trip to the grocery store to buy cupcake mix and icing. I needed to bring my baby on this trip so she could help me pick out the flavor of icing and mix. I had planned to have Baby help me make the cupcakes for my class. I propped her in the seat and pushed her down the aisle, scanning the shelves for icing. I found the flavor we wanted with the cupcake mix and threw it into the cart. As we proceeded through checkout, I thought about the cupcakes we were going to make and how Baby would love helping. We entered the hectic parking lot and tossed the grocery bags into the trunk of the car. I pushed the cart back across the parking lot with my dad holding my hand as he was telling me to look both ways before we crossed the lot. When we returned to the car, I

strapped myself in and told my dad that we had to make the cupcakes as soon as we got home so I could bring them in tomorrow morning. We pulled into the driveway, grabbed the bags, and made a dash for the door. I told my mom that we got everything we needed for the cupcakes and bought pink icing. As we put the final batch in the oven I realized something: where was Baby?

I frantically ripped through the grocery bags in the trash and looked under my coat. Baby was nowhere to be found! I blinked back tears, realizing that the last place I had seen her was the grocery store. "Dad!" I hollered. "I left Baby at the grocery store! We have to get her!" I cried. Tears were rushing down my face hard and fast. I couldn't believe it. I never left Baby anywhere before in my life. My dad ran out of the kitchen and told me to stay home because he would find her faster if he were by himself. I couldn't bear the thought of my dad coming home empty handed and Baby being all by her-

self. I stood at the door anxiously, waiting for my dad to come home. Minutes past. Tick, tick, tick. Each second and minute was making me more and more nervous. Finally, I heard the sound of a car rumbling into the driveway with my dad in the front seat, an exasperated look on his face. I ran out the front door and asked him, "Did you find her?"

He sighed and said, "Yes, Brig, I found her." I squealed. I reached out and grabbed her. I hugged her, relieved that she was in my arms again.

To this day, I love and embrace every moment I spend with Baby. Whether it's swaddling her in my blanket every morning or receiving pictures of her from my brothers when I'm away, I enjoy looking at her welcoming face each and every day. More importantly, I have learned not to drag her around with me everywhere I go unless I want her to end up in the garbage can of Nicky's Pizzeria. Baby will be a part of my life, no matter how old I get.

### Sky

I am blue. I stretch all the way around the world. I see everything bad and good. I have different feelings. I could cry. I could even be full of rainbows and butterflies. God watches over me. I have looked at people for so long. I think it's a part of my heart. I can change from blue to black. People look up at me every day. Sometimes people can't see me because stuff is covering me. I am not cruel. When I get angry, you should run inside your house, so you don't get hurt. I don't need to exercise. I meet new people every day. I have seen so many fires and earthquakes. I am round, not flat. I am tame. I am my own master. I please everyone with my powers. I will always be here during spring, fall, winter, and summer.

Danielle Spano

From the Bully's Point of View  
Sofia Menes

Dear Stranger,

I really needed to get this all off my chest. I hope you can learn from my slip ups and hopefully you won't judge me. Remember that I, like you, am only a human and we all make mistakes.

I watched the results that I caused by hurting yet another kid, the way his face contorted in pain- as if it was almost unbearable. His body would curl into a ball on the floor and, if you looked quick enough, it would look as if it was a small child sleeping. The way everyone reacted was almost identical but each person completed the next step differently. Some would immediately get up and walk away and others would stay there, in that curled up shape, and just cry. I believe that the final step and how you handled yourself was a matter of how big your pride was. Some people believed that they needed to get up to show others that they weren't affected by this event, even though it might have just changed their lives. Others didn't care what people thought of them and would just lay there, thinking things over and eventually just giving up emotionally or physically or both.

The first time I ever witnessed bullying – and remember it- was when I was three. It happened in my house, and was between my parents. I can clearly see my father hitting my mother after

she had forgotten to tell him that she was going out with her friends that night. I was too naïve at the age of three to know that anything was wrong, in fact I didn't find that out until I was ten. When I was ten I was finally able to go to a friend's house after school, and that was when I realized that my family didn't work how most families did. One night I started seeing more visible bruises on my mother's body and after that it only progressed. The marks were obviously in the shape of hands and it pained me to know that I couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't help her, and I couldn't stop him.

The first time I was in a situation with bullying- first hand, I was the person being bullied. I was constantly made fun of for being skinny and short, not having many friends, and being smart. I didn't understand why I was being targeted. What did I ever do to these kids? But then one day I snapped. As my bully yelled at and tormented me I realized how tired of it I was. I suddenly stopped trying to look smaller and I could see her face change. She blinked several times almost as if the thought of me finally standing up to her was too much to handle. I took control of my situation and then I became a bully. I started doing everything that I had absolutely despised about some people. I would make fun of

people for being different, coming from backgrounds that weren't the same as mine, if they had an accent, or if they weren't as smart as I was.

However I didn't see that about myself. All I saw was that I finally wasn't the helpless one. I wasn't the kid that people could pick on to make themselves feel better. But I didn't realize that *I was the one that people feared*. I had done everything to make sure that I didn't end up like my mom, or how I used to be again that I became the person that did the bad things to me. I don't know how or when I started to see the monster I had turned into but now that I realized it, it wasn't going away.

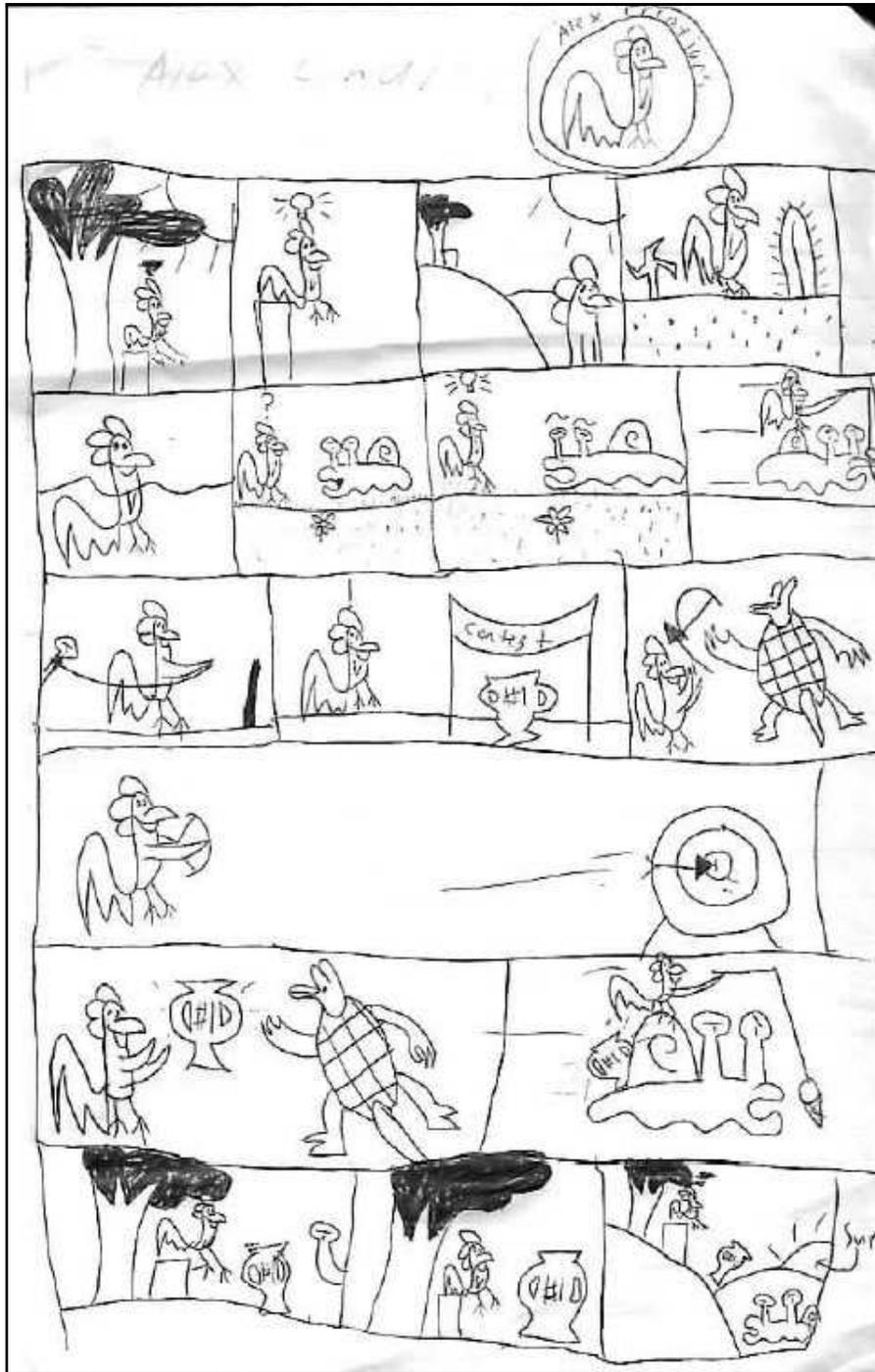
I remember the first time I tried to sleep after seeing the monstrous creature I had turned into. I kept tossing and turning, the thoughts suffocating me. The faces of people I had repetitively punished for no reason swirled through my head in a whirlwind of hurt. The cries of pain were echoing off of the insides of my brain and preventing me from getting a wink of sleep. I woke up sweating and with dried tears running down my cheeks. The covers were twisted and turned over indicating I had moved as much as I thought. I knew I had to make up for my irreversible actions. What I didn't realize what that the enormous guilt would never go away. I would have to live with this forever and it so would the people I bullied.

The first day going to school after

my shocking awareness of my prior actions was horrible. I walked through the halls unable to even see straight. All I could see and pay attention to where the bruised bodies and broken smiles of my peers. However the worst was yet to come. When I got home, that was when things got really bad. I started to feel angry at my mom and my dad for starting this whole things and myself for having to go through with this. Then I started throwing things. It started with my phone. I threw it against the wall screaming nonsense at it hoping to feel better but it just felt worse. I grabbed the vase next to my bed aggressively and hurled it at the floor. The glass pieces shattered and for some reason it looked beautiful. The shards were a symbol representing me. I was broken and ragged on the edges. The only thing different between me and the glass was that glass is transparent and I was not. In fact many people could relate to that. You never know what something is thinking inside and you never know how people are truly feeling about something unless they tell you.

People always say that your demons will eventually catch up to you. I'm writing this now to tell anyone who sees this that they are right. Always keep a close eye on what you are doing and be sure that you aren't hurting your future or anyone else's. Stay strong and please keep my secrets.

X, Anonymous



Alex Linares