

Skipping Stones

A Multicultural Literary Magazine

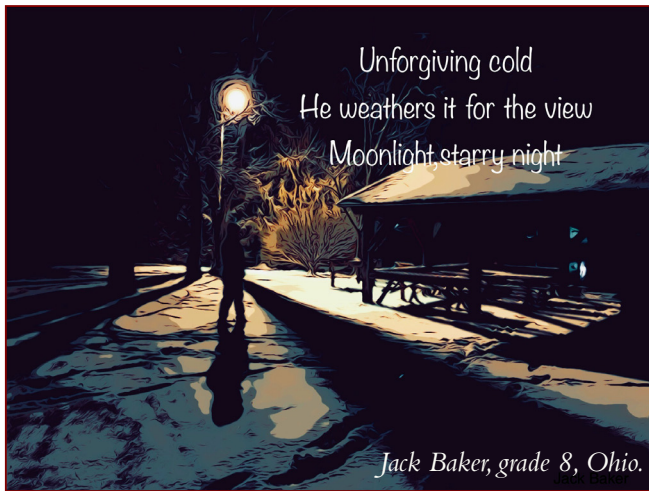
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Koi keep on swimming
Against the rushing current
Trying to get home.

The 2020 Haiku Exhibit • Wonders of the Wilderness

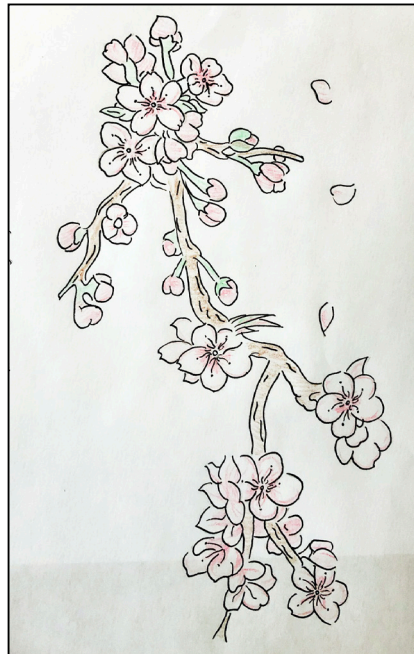
Art: Michelle Ying Zhang, grade 7, Shanghai, China.



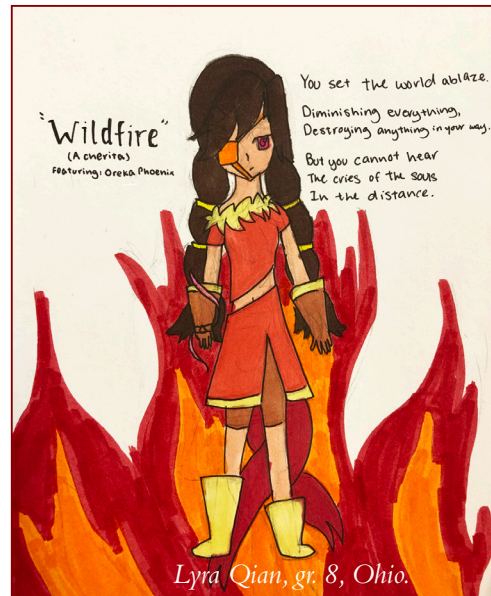
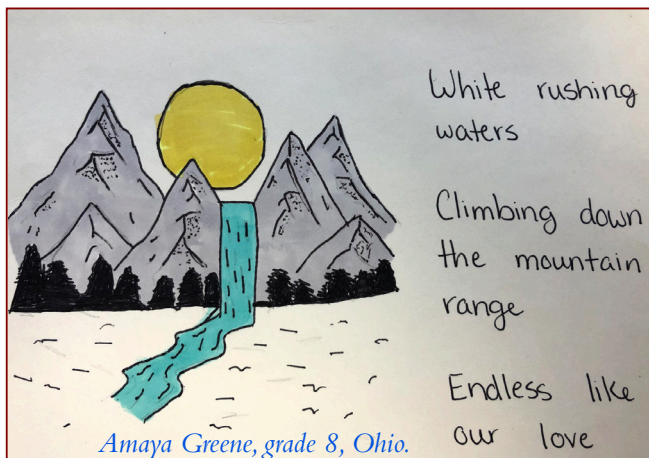
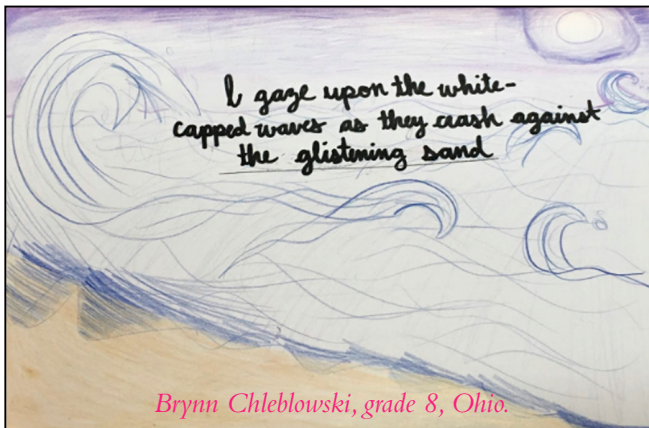
Haiku by Eighth Graders at Maumee Valley Country Day School, Ohio

See Haiku Exhibit, pp. 32-36

Cherry blossoms filled the air
the pink petals swaying softly
in the dazzling sight



One by one they fell
leaving the trees empty
but leaving our hearts full.
—Sarah Elgamal, grade 8, Ohio.



—Cece Martorana, grade 8, Ohio.



These are trying times! Are you feeling the stress that's going viral? As I write this letter, there are a lot of uncertainties looming on the horizon. All over the world, a number of events and services are being suspended. We are getting tons of emails about ways to cope with the virus that has spread so rapidly on all the continents and in most countries.

We live in a globalized world. Events and issues from one part of the world impact the rest of the world. To contain this virus, governments and institutions have restricted travel, cancelled public gatherings and closed schools and libraries. Everyone's schedule has been interrupted. Please know that these measures are in the best interest of us all and our human society.

Since no immunization is available for Coronavirus at this time, the best strategy is to slow its spread. That way our health care and social systems are not stretched to their breaking points. We can reduce the risk of getting the virus and spreading it in the community by realizing that for now, prevention is the best cure. To reduce a rapid spread of the virus:

- ★ *Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if no water is available.*
- ★ *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.*
- ★ *Avoid close contact with those who show the symptoms.*
- ★ *Stay home if you have a cough, fever, or illness.*
- ★ *Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away in the trash. No tissue? Cough into your elbow.*
- ★ *Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently touched.*

Doctors are also suggesting that we follow best practices for social distancing, including staying away from others who are sick, washing hands often, and avoiding crowds. No hand-shakes, kisses, or hugs to greet people. Recommended social distance is six feet.

The Coronavirus is not deadly for most people, especially the young and healthy. If we are helping each other, there is no reason to feel desperate. We have been through tough times, as communities and countries, many times in human history, and we have pulled out of those insurmountable situations. (*On pages 24-25, read about the Dust Bowl crisis of the 1930s*). We are in this together—as a nation and as the whole world. There is no reason to be in a panic mode even if this

Coping with the Current Challenges

COVID-19 epidemic has been called a global pandemic by the WHO (World Health Organization). It just reminds us to spare no efforts to overcome this. Let's do our part in helping contain it.

One tried and true way to feel hopeful and in charge, is to be involved in doing something positive.

In February, about 60 youth, ages 9 to 18, and their mentors came together for an Environmental Leadership Summit. The weekend was organized by PeaceJam Northwest at the University of Oregon and was focused on the urgent challenges facing the environment we live in. Youth have shown strong leadership around the world in addressing these issues, and the event offered them a chance to inspire and inform each other. There were workshops, action planning using sustainable business models, interactive events, and a keynote address by Kiran Oommen, one of the youth plaintiffs in the landmark climate lawsuit *Juliana vs United States* brought by Our Children's Trust. It was an inspiring gathering that encouraged cooperation and community. PeaceJam is an international education organization guided by over a dozen Nobel Peace Prize winners and with programs in 40 countries. Their mission is to inspire young people to create projects at a local level that have a global impact.

In the weeks ahead, you might find that your school is cancelled, and that you are spending days at home. You can think of that time as your "individual study time." Read books from neighbors and e-books from the library, write stories, learn some new skills like cooking or practice musical instruments, sing, and walk or jog outdoors. Your time at home can be devoted to do things that you always wanted to learn or practice.

Our Spring 2020 issue features nature awareness and nature appreciation. As you browse through you will see scores of nature haiku, many with eye-catching nature art—all by youth like yourself. This issue's photo essay (pages 16-20) by photographer Paul Dix features many wilderness areas and high mountains that offer a place for nature to thrive. The majestic peaks are symbols of the grandeur of nature. It wouldn't surprise me if after seeing these breath-taking photographs, your family decides to visit them sometime in the future.

Wishing you good health in 2020 and beyond,

Arun

Skipping Stones

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Myra Barot, gr. 5. See p. 5.

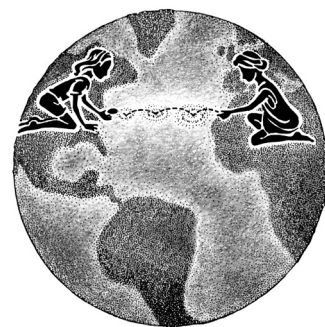
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Climbing Chamonix in the French Alps.
Photo by Paul Dix. See pp.17-20.

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Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity, and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore stewardship of the ecological and social webs that nurture us. We offer a forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. *Skipping Stones* expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We invite you to send us your creative art and thought-provoking writing.

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Unfinished Business

The world is full of cool mysteries
And everything happens in a series.

Every country sings a different song
Sometimes right and sometimes wrong.
But it seems that countries are having a race
What is important is controlling the pace.

The technology of phones has become a fence
With trade wars that are becoming fierce and intense.
With China exploring the far side of the moon
Will other countries be catching up soon?

People want to get more information and news
But fake news does nothing but confuse.
The number of people catching fish is increasing
And so the amount of marine lives decreasing.

As for trash, countries are very aware
But people are littering everywhere.
As every country wants endless power
The dominant ones make the others ones cower.
All the countries want to be strong
But they need to make everything right, not wrong.

—Billy Ren, 12, Shanghai, P. R. China

Faith: An Antidote to Coronavirus

One scary night, in the city of Wuhan,
Outbroke a virus called Corona without a plan,
It crept and crawled every place around,
People live in fear and are going underground.

So many deaths and humans suffering in pain,
How do we find a way to refrain,
It has travelled the globe without any visa,
Including Italy, hacking into their pizza.

Let us all stop giving it so much affection,
Since we have no better option,
Stop discussing and talking about Corona,
Instead, let us all pray and send it in a coma.

The universe works on the principle of energy,
All of us here should be in synergy,
Think and wish for a healthy planet ending this tragedy,
I'm sure our faith will show its magic and give us a remedy.
Pledge today, that we will not crib and amplify the situation,
So that the universe can save its own creation.

—Myra Barot, grade 5, Ecole Mondiale, Mumbai, INDIA.
“I believe that if we all remain positive and have faith in the universe to save its own creation, we can escape this situation.”

Trudie Strobel: A Life in Tapestry

Toni Morrison once said, “If there is a book that you want to read but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.” She is on my mind because of her recent passing and, like so much of her writing, this statement speaks to me about more than the writing of books. It is about the living of life, the courage to act, and the call to produce change.

For many years Holocaust survivor Trudie Strobel could not speak about her personal history as a child prisoner of the Nazis but when Trudie began to depict those years in thread, she started to heal. Trudie’s story—her survival, her perseverance, her crippling depression, and the art that led her out of it—stands as a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the power of expression. Sitting in Trudie’s house, surrounded by the vast tapestries that she has stitched to tell the stories of her own life and of the history of the Jewish people, I knew the importance of sharing her work, but how to make this happen was a mystery until I heard about the Dragon Kim Foundation.

“Make a difference about something other than yourselves,” Morrison advised her students. This is the mandate of the Dragon Kim Foundation which financed our inaugural exhibition of Trudie’s work, a project my partner, Lila Dworsky-Hickey, and I call “A Life In Tapestry.” The Dragon Kim Foundation enables teenagers to try to write their own “books” in the pursuit of having a positive impact on their communities.

Again, I am inspired to quote Toni Morrison: “Something that is loved is never lost.” And I’d like to add: May the books of our lives be filled with love.

Taken together, Trudie’s body of work is a portrait of an artist who survived the brutal waves of racism and xenophobia that sought to kill her. That Trudie can tell her story in thread is nothing short of miraculous, and it is such a blessing that we have been able to exhibit it for people to view in person. Racism and xenophobia continue to pollute our communities, infect our politics, and infest our way of life. But xenophobia, by definition, is born of fear—fear of the unknown, the different, the unknowable. If we can make the unknowable knowable, if we can humanize the dehumanized, if the perpetrators of racism can meet a survivor like Trudie, or experience her work, know her story, sip from the deep well of horror that she endured, then maybe little



by little, and together, we can begin to write a new book, one that we would all be proud to read.

The next exhibit of “A Life In Tapestry” will be open from April 15 to May 13, 2020 at The Merage Jewish Community Center, 1 Federation Way, Irvine, California. The exhibit is free to the public and we invite everyone to come.

Tapestry shown above is called 1942. This piece depicts the Nazi guard taking away Trudie’s doll, the only possession she had left from her father who had already been taken and who she would never see again. These tapestries are stitched single thread by single thread, and they are quite large. This piece is 37 inches by 36 inches. Photo by Ann Elliott Cutting.

—Maya Savin Miller, 17, California. Maya, the 2018 Youth Honor Award winner, is on our Student Review Board.



Lila Dworsky-Hickey, Trudie Strobel & Maya Miller

My Father: *How Migration, Disability and Death Affected his Life*

When I was a child, I didn't quite understand what the word "strength" meant. Of course, I knew what it meant to be strong in the herculean sense. Comic books give us men who can stop a speeding bullet or scale a building in a single leap. They show the fearless acts of courage by men and women with divine-like powers. However, the word "strength" encompasses so much more. It is the men and women that wake up every day with the purpose of bettering everyone around them. It is the single mother who already has 16 years of education and decides to pursue more. It is the children who fall asleep with empty stomachs, knowing it will be no different the next day. And it's a father who goes to work every day with a leg that has been ravished by polio.

Often when I was younger, I took for granted the things my father did for me. I was unaware of all the children who never got to use that word, father. My father immigrated to this country in the 90's from Cairo, Egypt. He left his entire family to raise his own in America, because he thought it would give us the best opportunities in life. He spoke little English, was a minority in both his ethnicity and religion, and had been suffering from Polio since the age of 6. These things would not typically add up to success in America. No matter what the laws say, discrimination still occurs. Many times, during his career as a banker in the United States, his lack of proficiency in the English language was used to blame him for mistakes. He never let these sorts of things get to him. He would always stick it out, because he knew my mother, two sisters, and myself were at home. Perseverance is defined as persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. This trait embodies what my father was and still is. He started his banking career as a teller, standing on a step-stool with a knee-brace on his right leg because he was too short and unstable to stand for his 12-hour shifts. Over many years, he worked his way up to a managerial position and is now a risk manager for a very large bank. He carved out a small piece of the "American Dream" pie for himself and my family, and for that, we could not be more grateful.

My father's life has been mostly that of working hard and fighting off stress. These two things combined to cause unhealthy eating throughout his thirties, forties, and into his fifties. I felt morally obligated to assist

my father in trying to be active despite his disability. It took some coercing to get him to sign up at a local gym and swim, one of the few exercises he can do. It brought me great joy to know that, in some way, I have now become a watchful eye over my father. This is the mentality I will need to have in the long-run to ensure that my father gets adequate care into his 70's and 80's. I know that avoiding smoking, eating a well-rounded diet, and exercising will stretch out my father's life and his quality of life. I also need to care for myself as I am the most likely to become a caregiver for both of my parents. Thinking about the future is not something most 23-year-olds do, especially when it comes to the long-term care of their parents. Most individuals in their twenties live in the here and now, but I need to plan to care for my disabled father, because I know that eventually his right leg will give out entirely. My goals for the future are giving both of my parents the best quality of life I can. Considering my mother and father are very different from each another, I need to think about how that will affect their mental health in the future. Promoting healthy behaviors in diverse adults takes conscious effort. Every aspect that brought them to where they are in life was different, and I will always have a fundamental understanding of those differences.

The word "death" makes people uncomfortable. We often like to use terms like "passed on" and "at peace" or even "bit the dust." Humans by nature try to soften the idea of dying by entwining it with something more pleasurable or comedic. However, I think this can be more harmful than helpful. Many individuals avoid talking about death and the bereavement process. This is the very reason why my father did not handle the death of his mother well. He was in a completely different country, and she was very ill. He almost never spoke of the inevitable event that he knew was coming. As a Muslim man, he knew that his mother's fate was in God's hands. The day that his mother died he was devastated that he could not be there to carry out the traditional process of mourning her death. The burial process in the Muslim faith consists of a period of mourning with your family, which he never got to experience. Whatever support my mother, two sisters, and I gave him didn't seem to be quite enough. Ever since that day several years ago, he never seemed like the same person. There is always something missing. =>

What's On Your Mind?

What You Seek

One day, I approach the old man of the village and ask him:
 How do you listen and hear the sounds of the critters beneath the ground?
 How do you sing and the mountains join your tune?
 How do you speak and the wind stops to hear?
 And he responds with:
 I do not judge, I do not blame
 I do not lie, never light the flame
 The answer is to never boast
 To never speak when the words seem crude
 I do not see it is night by the sky's appearance
 But by the crickets' chirping in the tall, lofty trees
 I hear the ground speak and I stop to listen
 I do not continue on until I've heard it all
 So to answer your question,
 If you stop to listen then you will hear everything
 If you take the time to linger to observe what they all have to say
 If you sing and let the mountains take notice of your song
 Then they will accept it and start to take note
 If you speak with honesty and integrity
 To always be selfless and kind
 Then the wind, cruel and strong,
 Will start to realize what you are saying
 How you are saying it,
 The tone of how you speak changes everything.
 So if you stop to acknowledge what everything
 around you means,
 Then you will truly know the answer to what you seek.

—Mae Mae Gad, age 10, grade 5, California.



***** Home *****

Home isn't a place	Sharing its love
It isn't a house or town	No matter what, home
Or even an apartment	will be there
Or the place you go when	Putting you above
you're feeling down	All that guilt
Home isn't a single thing	Clouding your mind
It's a feeling no less	All that fear
Where ever your love lies	That you just can't find
Even in a mess	A way to let it go
	It's hard to do
Its where you family is	But that why you have
Your friends, your foes	home
Your heart and soul	It believes in you
Everyone knows that	—Juliana Igo, grade 6,
Home travels with you	age 11, Pennsylvania.

—Juliana Igo, grade 6,
 age 11, Pennsylvania.

Nest at Night

daddy's doing dishes
 with momma in the kitchen
 each night
 humming
 to the radio
 changes slow
 rubber gloves
 slide into sink
 one with the song
 taking hands
 change of plans
 gliding
 in circles
 laughing
 loving
 pretending
 that it's ok
 i'm not in bed
 but soon
 we can't pretend
 the song must end
 cotton covers
 storytime
 voices soft
 goodnight kiss
 makes us miss
 the night already
 holding tight
 to a hand
 a lullaby
 momma's voice
 familiar noise
 sliding away
 good night

—Maggie Munday Odom, 16, Connecticut.



=> Therefore, I believe that no matter what a person's faith or ethnic background is, we must always have an open discussion about how that person's death will be handled. My final thoughts are this: always cherish what you have while you have it. Caregivers and family of older adults should always give as much as they can, because the day will come when you can no longer give it. The satisfying feeling of being honest and open with your family will go very far.

—Mohammed Baraka is a student at Univ. of S. Florida.

Why I Love New Mexico's Forests and Public Lands

I heard a story once about “horny toads” from my mother; she used to catch so many they filled a shoebox. And grandfather told me about the Lobo’s howl.

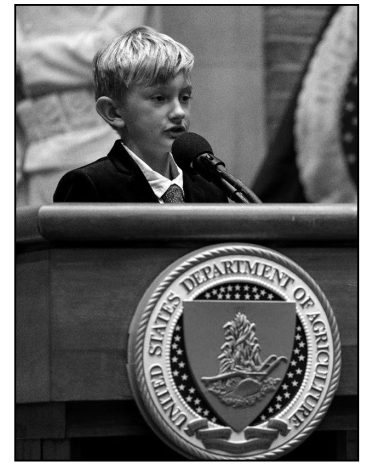
Both of these animals are rare or endangered now, and I have not found one myself. I hope one day to tell my own children about the animals I experience in the forests of New Mexico. Tadpoles, horned owls, fence-tail lizards, trout, coyotes, and bats. We hike through the forest into the Rio Grande Gorge, and it is magical. The beauty of it all is more than enchanting; it takes my breath away, or brings me back to it in a way. I feel like Brian from my book, Hatchet. When I spend time in the wilderness, I return to a place of quietness and respect for nature.

Sometimes when I go fishing, I catch rainbow trout in the glimmering Red River. I see Rio Grande Chirping Frogs hopping along the riverbank. When I hike in the Taos Ski Valley, I see marmots by Williams Lake at 11,000 feet, with deep blue sky. I am stunned when I explore Fossil Hill and discover the fossils of the sea creatures that used to live in New Mexico. It is amazing how a million years ago the New Mexico forests used to be seaweed under the ocean. I see Red-tailed Hawks near

the Carson National Forest swooping down to catch little creatures to bring home for their babies. I see Stink Beetles burying their head in the trail near my home in Llano Quemado. I watch lizards climb the trees and scurry off into the wilderness.

In Bandalier, I explore the cave that Native Americans used to live in. I can see where the fire burnt the top of the cave and there is a *Kiva* hole to stick my head out of. Going down the 10-foot ladder it scares me and I respect the rich culture that came before me, their fearlessness. We must keep this beautiful forest natural and unharmed because the animals deserve a home, deserve not to be hurt. The people of this Land of Enchantment deserve the clean air the aspen, ponderosa pine and pinon trees help make. My friends deserve the chance to swim in clear rivers and discover the secrets of our wilderness. When I lie in my bed and dream about my future, I see myself as an entomologist. I want to discover all the insects, arthropods and arachnids in New Mexico. If we protect our open spaces and wild areas then these creatures will still be there for discovery, for hope and for awesomeness.

—Asher Dean, 11, New Mexico. He won the USDA’s 2019 essay contest.



Које Је Боље

Један мален дечко
Није ништ уживо,
Све је схвати тужно,
Све је схвати криво.

Мучила га често
И та мисо црна
Зашт ниједна ружа
Да није без трна?

Тај је дечко имо
Веселога друга
Кога није лако
Обарала туга.

А зашто га није?
Верујте ми, зато
Јер је свашта лепше,
Веселије схвати.

Па и он сад рече
"Радујмо се, друже,
Што се и на трну
Могу наћи руже!"

Which Is Better

Everything always seemed sad
To this one little boy.
He never knew how to have fun,
He showed no hint of joy.

Often this dark thought of his
Made him quite forlorn:
Why must every rose out there
Have at least one thorn?

But this glum and mournful boy
Had a cheerful friend,
Who in the darkest tunnel
Could see light shine at the end.

How come he knew no sorrow?
This, with you I'll share:
He found much joy and beauty
In all things and everywhere.

Happily, he took a flower
And brought it to his nose,
Saying, "Even on a thorn
You can find a pretty rose!"

<= This is just one of the many poems by the famed 19th-century Serbian poet Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj. Zmaj's poems embrace the world of childhood. His poems describe games, animals, doubts, hopes, dreams, emotions, and family relationships. They help children navigate the world, seeing themselves and their surroundings reflected in his vivid characters. While many of his poems are playful and light-hearted, others are poignant and help introduce more serious topics that we face in life.

—Una Dimitrijevi, translator, France.

I Could See the World

There is greatness in the simplicity of things, and that is no exception for this work: it was inspired by a one-hour trek through open space at Storm King, an art museum. All references to natural elements (i.e. spider, tree, wheat) are based on my encounters and thoughts about them at Storm King. Untouched landscapes force contemplation, and my short-lived trip to the museum led me into unknown depths of my mind, and although the luxury of situating oneself amidst nature is difficult to come by, perhaps remnants of that museum landscape that I've managed to salvage for this piece will suffice to encourage readers to contemplate as well.

From the Perspective of the “It”

I liken the universe to a spider.

It takes 600 eggs to make one spider and the flesh of its mother to let it live.

I trust that the wrinkles embracing my eyes—those firm encasings that flood my vision or otherwise tame it—are testament enough that I ought to be taken at my word, for I saw the universe before it ever was.

It was, in truth, very much like a spider; so much so that it's difficult to fathom how it was not confused for one to begin with. When it was created, it worked with nimble fingers and maternal affection, weaving with utmost craftsmanship the fabric of space and time, sewing into place each galaxy, and embroidering the finished piece with celestial bodies of colors and textures so unlike that it was quite a shame their beauty was lost in the vastness of the garment. I imagine it is this way with spiders: their webs are spun, precisely and deliberately, to the tune of divine blueprints, every string, soft like threads of gold, lifted masterfully into place in such a remarkable display of purpose that it is hard to imagine that the spider lacks any sense of it. The spider has no reason to believe in the concept of ‘the future’ because ‘the present’ is the only reality it has ever experienced. So, when the spider rests on the seventh day of Creation and reclines into a sinister stillness at the center of its masterpiece, tranquil and vigilant, it is as likely to be waiting for its next catch as it is for a gentle breeze to come and sweep it away, web and all, into the vastness of the world.

I had witnessed the creation of the universe, but, in spite of this, I could not see the world imme-

diately, not out of any fault of my own, I suppose, and certainly not out of a lack of things to see—but perhaps that was the issue: that I searched for things to see and that, inevitably, everything I saw was what I expected to see. I lived in a blind man's world, but the ignorance was comforting. Seeing with the eyes had been child's play because for as long as I've had eyes to see with, that was the only kind of seeing I had known: the sight of things. In that way, I was not much different than the spider. I lived with a fervent dedication to ‘the present’ that discounted ‘the future’ as expendable, even extraneous. No breeze was a cause of concern whilst I lay lofty and exalted at the heart of my web. But when I looked down at the sky, I saw misery. It wouldn't be long, however, before I realized that the sky was simply a reflection of things.

I neared its edge with reluctance, let my fingers caress its ferocious oceans, tumbled over its mountains and settled triumphantly in its valleys in hopes of getting a better view; that was the first time I truly saw. I saw an encroaching emptiness devour whole a sense of common purpose. I saw spiders, thousands of them, infatuated with ‘the present,’ and I thought of how many eggs were laid and how many mothers sacrificed for them to be able to live lives so idle. Everywhere I turned I was surrounded by more of the same—intoxicating levels of it—and I couldn't help but wonder if I had joined their ranks. People began to resemble each other: they walked with a robotic, reverberant pace [one step, two, three steps, four...]; they breathed in unison [in, out, in and out]; even their gestures were done in a bizarre, hypnotic synchrony: the pursing of lips at disgust, the formality of money-laden, sin-stained handshakes, and the cynicism of artificial smiles and raised brows to cover up the latent distaste for it all. There was misery and pain as there ought to have been, but just as there is no room in a lifeboat for a boulder, there was no room in that world for illness and misfortune. Old men—boulders of the past—raised glasses of wine to heartiness and youth. Bliss was the country's currency, and old age begot poverty. So, they fought impermanence with greater impermanence. In truth, the whole ordeal was pitiful and unorthodox, quite dull actually, but then I looked up at myself, and I saw one of them.

From the Perspective of a Human Being

“Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11:24)

There is life in the breath of things as much as there is life in the breadth of things, but when these things are not seen, is life drawn from them?

When I saw a cardinal drenched to bone in rain-water, mate at her company, wings weighed down by the wearying weights of life, could I be certain that the scene continued in my absence—that an understudy didn’t replace the lead actress at the turn of my head elsewhere—or were the curtains drawn at the closing of my eyes?

This was far too much to ponder, and besides, my feet ached terribly.

I considered resting on a tree stump nearby, but I couldn’t: it reeked of death. And worse yet, death by other life. The tree had been betrayed, and 30 pieces of silver put the smoking gun in our hands.

I imagine that the tree bled—not of that fiery red soup that does both give and rid of life—but of life itself. The tree bled life. And when its killers collected it into jars, they had, in sum, three pounds of syrup.

In one jar, they stored the sap of unhealthy trees and in the rest, that of healthy trees. By all measures with the exception of volume, the syrup of both trees were nearly indistinguishable; unhealthy trees simply bled less of it. So, I thought of how much syrup flowed within me, and if it flowed at all within spiders. I wondered if a spider would ever weave its web on a tree stump, or if it would flee in cowardice at the pungent odor of death, as I had. But most of all, I pondered what ‘the future’ of that tree could have been—all the spiders its branches could have nurtured and the reserves of syrup that could have run like the honey of Canaan through its veins—had it stopped living for ‘the present.’

My feet still ached.

There was a bench nearby made of wood, shined and polished, from what I imagine was the same tree as the stump I had refused to sit on. There was no way to be certain of the difference between it and the stump, but I knew that more people were willing to sit on one over the other. By then, my feet had become swollen

and bruised, a symphony of deathly reds and blues accented with fine paint strokes of exhausted veins. The weight of my body became a burden no longer worth bearing. My mind was now the cause of bitter enmity between my members, and so, in spite of my moral convictions, my feet stopped at the bench and the rest of my body, in reluctant subservience, stooped into a sitting position. It was a pyrrhic victory for the flesh.

A new tree had been planted thirteen feet away, not far from the gravestone of its sapless, mummified ancestor, next to a sign that read “Scenic Overlook,” more game to hunt, I figured. Its leaves convulsed violently in the wind, frenzied and flailing, as if to break free from the branch; as if the currents of air had been harbingers of doom. It was lethargic and grossly misshapen, eroded by gusts of wind into a grotesque asymmetry that left the sapling limp and lifeless before its blood had flowed. Its bark was firm, but its roots brittle. I feared ‘the future’ of that tree and of those to follow it. In my head, I counted the jars of syrup that would be collected that season, each filled to the brim and sealed firmly, as if collectively holding their breath lest the sap should escape them and they be left scattered in the vastness of the room. The sap overflowed: it must have been open season on healthy trees. In my mind, that tree had already died—and someone somewhere was resting on a bench made of its wood, oblivious to the corpse beneath him and to the bloodshed that had brought it there.

I looked up at myself, and I saw that person.

The contrast of life—the arrangement of tree, stump, and bench within sight—was haunting. Had this been what the old men meant when they said they would “sculpt” the land? I had lost the desire to see, but my eyes, of their own accord, remained open. It was the horrible sanity of it that drove me to insanity: how was it that something so mangled could pass as “Scenic Overlook”? Death was to the old men a breathtaking landscape, the final masterpiece. There was some audacity in facing it while still alive and strength in mocking it before it’s had the last laugh. I looked away from the scene of the massacre and shifted my gaze upwards, hoping that at the turn of my head elsewhere, it would all disappear and the curtains would be drawn.

**I heard the comforting song of ‘past’,
‘present’, and ‘future,’ and it was a symphony.**

**Overhead, a wheat field whispered a morn-
ing song,** and I breathed a sigh of relief that I no longer had to see, just listen. I heard the undertones of a gospel hymn, the soprano sung by fleeting breezes and streams of early birds gliding weightlessly through the fields—the wheat plants played like strings on an instrument, plucked precisely and deliberately to the tune of the song; the alto hummed by the gentle sway of billowing grains; and the tenor belted by the rustle of critters and the tempered pitter-patter of small rodents. The wheat plants drifted weightlessly in the afternoon wind, pulsating, as if the wind breathed life into them. Their stems were too thin to bear any sap, but in spite of this—or perhaps because of it—their movements were elastic and spirited. The stems were brittle, but the roots robust, a firm armor against unyielding gales; there was depth to their roots as much as there was death in their roots. Death was their undying fate, but not their ‘future.’

I tried desperately to picture it: I saw spiders weaving their webs and destroying them, mothers feasting rabidly on their children, six hundred eggs left to rot on wheat stems, pools of sap surrounding the victims, and the unsettling carnage of polished wooden benches. But when I turned to the wheat fields, I heard the comforting song of ‘past’, ‘present’, and ‘future,’ and it was a symphony. Death was to the wheat fields a boulder in a lifeboat kept afloat. They had learned to dance in the direction of the wind—to capture it, weave it into an intricate fabric of melodies, adorn it with subtle wisps of passing fowl, and never to resist it.

From where I rested, my eyes traced the ebb and flow of the sea of wheat as the wind caressed it. It was a humbling throne, a far cry from the heart of a web or the stump of a tree, but from it, I could see the world.

My feet ached only for the journey ahead.

—*Jessica Sidrak, high school senior, New Jersey.*

I’m Sorry to Say

I’m sorry to say
The glint in my eyes is a tear
The reason I smile is out of fear

I’m sorry to say
Deep down inside
I have deep regret that I just can’t hide

I’m sorry to say
My cheeks are only pink
Because of the tears that fall when I blink

I’m sorry to say
I really do try
But the girl you know is a lie

The Girl I Want to Be

The girl I want to be
Loves the bright sunlight
She has nice rosy cheeks
And she smiles so bright

The girl I want to be
Has so many friends
Everyone loves her
It has no end

The girl I want to be
Has a glint in her eye
She always takes risks
Her whole character isn’t a lie

The girl I want to be
Never hides
Who she really is
On the inside

The girl I want to be
Is always so free
She lets go of her guilt
But she just isn’t me.

—*Julianna Igo, grade 6,
Pennsylvania. In addition to writ-
ing, she loves animals and acting,
dancing, and playing basketball.*



“I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be closed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.”

—*Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), nonviolent activist.*

The Women's Suffrage Campaign

“I thought everything would be like before I left for the war,” my father mumbled to himself. I let that sink in.

“What do you mean, Father?” I asked.

“All Mother’s been talking about is women getting the vote. It’s making me nervous.”

Oh, by the way, I’m Thomas Wright. I’m ten years old and live in Boston. I have a two and a half-year-old sister named Maggie. Things were tough when Father was away at war, and I thought things would be perfect when Father came home, but I couldn’t believe how much tension began between my parents. I got so overwhelmed by the tension that I almost ran away, twice. I don’t think that my parents understand how the stress between them puts an amazing amount of pressure on me and even Baby Maggie. She is even cranky sometimes now, but she never was before.

When Maggie was born on February 14, 1917 everything was fine. No, more than fine, joyful. Five and a half months later Father’s 101st Massachusetts National Guard Regiment was deployed, and he left for France.

“I knew that’s what you meant, Father. I overheard Mother call you an ignorant bigot. She was crying and almost screaming asking what happened to your fair mind. I heard her say to you how proud you always were that your great-great grandmother and grandfather were Abolitionists and had actually met Elizabeth Stanton and Lucretia Mott. When those women added getting the vote for women to fighting to free the slaves, they supported them. I also heard you say you wished President Wilson never pushed to pass the darned amendment, only you didn’t say darned. Then Mother went to bed crying,” I reply.

“I’m proud that my ancestors were Abolitionists, but this is not the same. Women are already free. They have their place in the world. I think Mother is confused by all the changes in women’s lives since the war. We should try to go back to how things were in times of peace.”

We hear the door squeak open.

“I heard everything you said, and honestly I think you’re the one who’s confused, Ben. You can’t undo

what’s already been done. We women are educated. We know how to do most jobs you men can. Why can’t we help govern this country by having a ballot? Before the war changed everything I wouldn’t have imagined working in a factory, but I did, and I actually did a good job. So now I feel it’s only natural to vote. If I can work like a man, then I can vote like a man. Also you say women are free, but we’re not free to vote.”

The room fell silent.

“I didn’t like that you had to work in the factory, and now your job is to stay here and care for me and the children.”

“Ben, you do a fine job of caring for the children. If you can leave me with the children I should be able leave you with them and go out to vote.”

“Marion, it’s not just about going out one day to vote, and you know that.”

My baby sister comes into the room and says, “Mother, I want some milk, please,” breaking up the arguing.

“Ben, this isn’t just about us! Maggie is a clever girl. Think of what good she could do for our country if the 19th Amendment gets ratified!”

I pick Maggie up and twirl her around.

“She *is* a clever girl” I exclaim.

“And a lucky girl,” I added.

—Amani Das, grade 5, Massachusetts. His entry was the winner of a state level D.A.R. competition in 2019. The 19th Amendment was passed by the U.S. Congress on June 4, 1919, and was ratified on August 18, 1920. The amendment granted women the right to vote.

Did You Know?

On 15th of January 2020, the state of Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the proposed Equal rights Amendment (E.R.A.) to the U.S. Constitution. It will become an integral part of U.S. Constitution after a few legal hurdles have been crossed (because of its decades-long rattification process that began in March 1972). E.R.A.’s operative section reads, **“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”**

Let’s hope soon we will be living in the ERA of E.R.A.

Nana Jean: On Dehumanizing Metaphors

Casual use of words that enter our everyday conversations often unveils deeply seated societal prejudices and reveals the ways the history of racism in our country has been hidden.

Two people sum up their day, “Hard day today. We worked like slaves.” Or someone comments about their boss, “He’s a real slave driver!”

Have you ever overheard, or maybe even said, words like these?

I am greatly troubled that the experience of being owned and sold as human chattel is often trivialized as a metaphor. Enslaved people were, yes, overworked, as the metaphor is used, but enslaved people were mistreated and abused, and most importantly, were not free.

Imagine that you were abused and overworked every day of your life, had no way to learn to read or write, had no right to make your own decisions about your family or where or how you lived, or what work you did. And your life was valued at \$1,150 (\$36,000 in 2020 dollars) while your owner was made rich by your labor and others like you who were also enslaved.

Recently a white friend, Bonnie, and I spent time discussing how to address these and other dehumanizing phrases. We know that most people who use these metaphors do not think of the implications or the reality of the system they are referring to. And yet unconscious biases and racism appear in the words we so easily speak.

Can we help ourselves and others improve our collective environments by noting such words and changing them to non-hurtful ones?

Most of us have been embarrassed and then learn from our mistakes when we are called out for using a word or phrase that is offensive. The words or phrase may have been a natural part of our speech and we had no overt intention to hurt or insult another.

Once I referred to people from Asia as “Orientals,” but my daughter informed me that this term should be reserved for objects, not people. I was discomforted. I changed my language.

Or think of the implications of the term “you people,” which sets the speaker above and apart from a group, or labels like “well-spoken” or “not really Black”



for African-Americans—which unwittingly confirm the speaker’s deeply ingrained racist prejudices against black people.

How can one respond when one is hurt, dehumanized, or degraded by a phrase used too casually by someone who cannot understand the depth and seriousness of the implication? One response might be, “I know that’s a common metaphor, but it hurts me when you use it because it compares your hard work today to the oppressive institution of slavery.”

My ancestors were enslaved violently and completely against their own will. If they are labeled as ‘slaves’ that puts them in a box that defines them as property with no basic human rights. Calling my ancestors slaves diminishes their humanity. Please call them enslaved people.”

And how could the listener who has just been told that their words were hurtful respond? An appropriate response might be, “I never thought of the implications of those words. I don’t want to hurt you. I’ll be more careful in the future.”

Over the years Bonnie and I have learned from our mistakes and worked to keep both our language and hearts as open and kind as possible. We have discovered it takes practice, the commitment to truly listen to others, and a belief in the value of who they are and what they have to say.

Examining the deep roots of our nation’s racist history has the potential of helping our country grow in humane and caring directions. Yet in many societies, and in hidden places in our society as well, the misuse of people’s labor, and sometimes enslavement of people through human trafficking, continues. Perhaps exposing the underlying messages in our words will also help us be more aware of the current misuse of people.

Look around. Listen. Are there ways you can make a difference by speaking up when someone uses racially insensitive terms?

—Professors Jean Moule and Bonnie Morihara, Oregon.

Where Deer Play

There are four ideas to keep in mind when hiking through the woods looking for deer. I'll walk you through our journey.

Charles steps up on a fallen log and points the way ahead. Jake pulls back a branch covered with leaves; and holds it for us to pass. Lilly hops straight in front of me, onto flat rocks crossing the creek. And I, Nina, hear birds singing a hundred different notes and melodies. **Listen to Bird Songs is Number One.**

"Thanks" I say to Jake as he snaps the branch back behind us.

Charles jumps next to me, and we leap onto rocks side by side. Jake bounds upward onto a very long vine and glides over the brook!

"My turn!" Lilly taps Jake's shoulder. He hands Lilly the vine and gives her a push; she swings back and forth until Jake catches her.

"Jump off," Jake says swinging the vine my way.

I step back and jump grabbing the vine, riding over the creek to their side on a dirt mound.

Charles takes off next, jumping very high up on the vine, while crossing by us he hollers, "Deer prints! First to find them." We follow the footprints to another brook where the tracks end. **Discover Deer Footprints is Number Two.**

Jake lunges grabbing the top of a high hanging vine; he swings to a tall tree branch. Shinnying further up the tree, he points, "That way!" Jake swings on the vine landing beside Charles.

Lilly and I stay close behind the boys skipping through the creek on small mounds of mud.

Seeing their beige bodies at last through the wall of trees, "Deer!" I say in a loud whisper so as not to frighten them. Peering beyond slits between wide tree trunks, my friends and I watch a group of deer leaping, nuzzling, nibbling on leaves and eating grass.

"We'll never get through here," Charles says running alongside the stacked line of trees.

"And watch out for snakes—" Jake yells rushing

forward! He suddenly stops seeing Lilly's foot is on a giant snake. Jake grabs Lilly's arm keeping her still, while she stands on the long, thick black snake. **Never Step on a Snake is Number Three.**

Jake lifts Lilly's chin up to draw her attention away from the snake; she trembles less. He opens his pocket-knife and holds it up.

Lilly sneaks a look down moments later, "Ahhh!" The big black snake lifts his head looking at her!

"Breathe, your comfort will calm him," Jake suggests.

Jake takes Lilly into his arms (tilting the pocket-knife away) and carries her, up-off and around the snake. "Lilly thanks you very much," Jake smiles passing by. He sets Lilly down on a tiny knoll of rock-hard mud above the stream.

"Oh Jake, thank you," Lilly wraps her arms around Jake's muscular neck. He picks her back up and hugs her tightly.

"You did great." Jake gives her a thumbs up.

Meantime, the snake slithers over and settles directly beneath Jake's feet. "It's okay—he'll guide us now," Jake says.

Moving deeper into the forest, we are Lilly and Jake, the big black snake, singing birds, an occasional croaking toad, Charles, me—Nina, and of course the deer in the hidden meadow behind rows of trees. And somewhere, there is a secret path to them.

"Why don't you name him?" Lilly takes a few steps back. "You don't have to be scared." Jake bends over tapping his calf. The big black snake rests his head against Jake's leg. "I'll call you Racer." Racer taps Jake's leg with his head in agreement.

"Why?" Lilly blinks at Jake.

"Didn't you notice how fast he is?" Jake shrugs.

"I did!" Charles says.

Racer rubs the side of his head around Jake's calf, and we all look toward the hidden deer. "Let Racer lead!" Jake gently strokes Racer's head. And so, Racer bends forward unraveling his very long body into the water, winding around rocks and rushing deeper down



through the stream.

Jake hastily tracks Racer. As Jake sets our pace, he promptly closes his pocketknife and slips it into the leather case at his side.

"There seems to be no way in there," I sound off, keeping my distance from Racer, while balancing on rocks in and around the stream, near an endless line of trees.

"This way," Jake stands on a giant rock, after Racer slithers around it. And at that moment, to our surprise, birds sing louder, the hooves of prancing deer are closer, and Racer raises his body up and forward toward a wide heart-shaped opening (about three feet above ground) between two curved tree trunks.

When we step through this passage between trees and into the once hidden meadow, every deer stops to look at us. We stand completely still, watching each deer, grateful at last, to be there with them.

Then, as if we had been together all along, we leap, run, slither or fly: birds, reptiles, deer and kids. One deer even nuzzles her chin on my arm and lets me pet her soft coat before prancing away.

In a little while, we hear a booming bari-tone sound over and over. The toad's ongoing croak, deep and throaty, is our signal that the sun is setting, and we should return home before dark. There it is, we see a giant toad in front of us. Number Four: **Rhythmic Repetitions from a Croaking Toad is a Timekeeper.**

Charles stumbles over a rock and lunges forward in front of us, "Follow me." When Racer veers off, I run past Charles and we compete for the lead all the way through the forest until we pass the very last tree. Out of breadth, we keel over, looking back in tempo seeing Jake and Lilly holding hands. They let go and catch up with us.

We decree to respect the space of every creature, and to always be ourselves since animals, reptiles, and birds act naturally in the woods.

—Nicole Borgenicht, traveler and writer, California.
Art on page 15 by Daemion Lee, Oregon.

Wonders of Wilderness

These pages feature nature scenes seen through the photographic eyes of Paul Dix. He is a friend of mine who has captured over 20,000 images showing the incredible beauty of the world we live in. He has traveled far and wide from Antarctica to Alaska, from Chile to China, from Japan to Norway, and from Amazonia to Kenya. He is fascinated by the beauty and diversity of cultures, traditions and life-styles of the people he encounters while traveling.

Paul was born in the southern U.S., and he spent several years in Chicago area as a teenager. His dream was always to be close to mountains. He was ecstatic when his father got a job in Washington state where he could be close to both the Cascades and the Rockies.

As a young man he joined one of the early expeditions to climb Denali, the highest peak in North America. The ascent lasted 45 days and included 90 miles on skis to reach base camp. Later, he would continue climbing in the Andes (Peru and Chile), and other mountain ranges.

He says, "*My photography grew out of the mountaineering: documenting the climbs and wanting to share that alpine world of glaciers and granite peaks, blue sky and wild mountain storms. It also grew out of my interest in peoples of other cultures and the social justice issues they faced. I witnessed how people struggled to overcome their poverty and bravely organized to fight the political repression they faced. This led me to a career in photojournalism.*"

In Glacier Bay National Park (Alaska), Paul kayaked extensively photographing calving glaciers and areas that were recently under tons of ice, but are now lush green forests (see pp. 18-20). In Hawaii, he visited the area devastated by the volcanic lava flow of 1990 on the Big Island (p. 18).

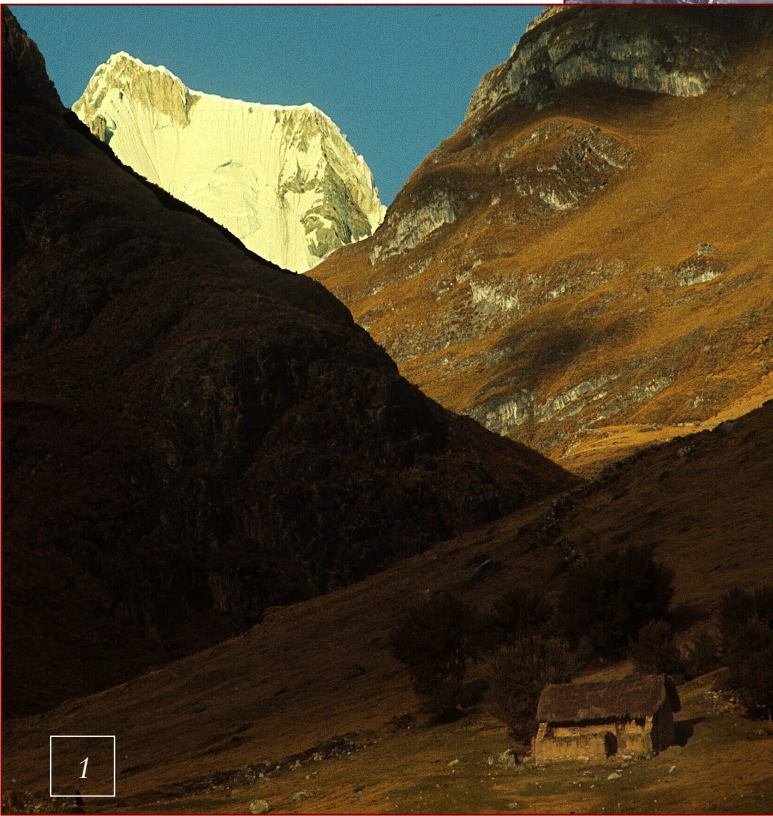
Mountains and natural areas allow wilderness to flourish on our planet. High mountains offer an environment for snow pack to accumulate, and thus provide a steady source of fresh water even during dry, summer months. For hikers and visitors, they offer a place for reflection, rejuvenation, and a time to appreciate nature.

Paul made Livingston, Montana his home base for about 30 years. His exquisite images have been published in many publications and books over the last four decades. *Skipping Stones* has featured his photos of people—young and old—from Nicaragua, Mexico and other parts of Latin America.

Currently, Paul lives in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. He and his partner, Pam Fitzpatrick, live simply; they grow and preserve much of their food (for use during winter months). At the age of 84, he continues to enjoy gardening, camping, hiking, and skiing in the Northwest. —A.N.T.

Wonders of Wilderness

Photos by Paul Dix, Oregon



1. Yerupajá Mountain, Cordillera Huayhuash Reserved Zone, Perú
2. Mt. Huascarán, 22,205 ft. Huascarán N. Park, Andes, Perú
3. Poás Volcano National Park, Costa Rica
4. Chamonix, near Mont Blanc, French Alps, France
- 5 & 6. Pahoehoe lava flow, Jan. '90, Hawaii Volcanoes Nat'l. Park
7. Hawaii Volcanoes N.P. Visitor Center destroyed by the lava flow
8. Crater Lake (formed after Mt. Mazama blew up), Oregon
9. Whitebark Pine snags, Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area, Montana
10. Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve (GBNPP) forest, Alaska
11. McBride Glacier & 12. Riggs Glacier, in GBNPP, Alaska
13. Three Hemlocks on Maxwell Butte in the Cascades, Oregon





5



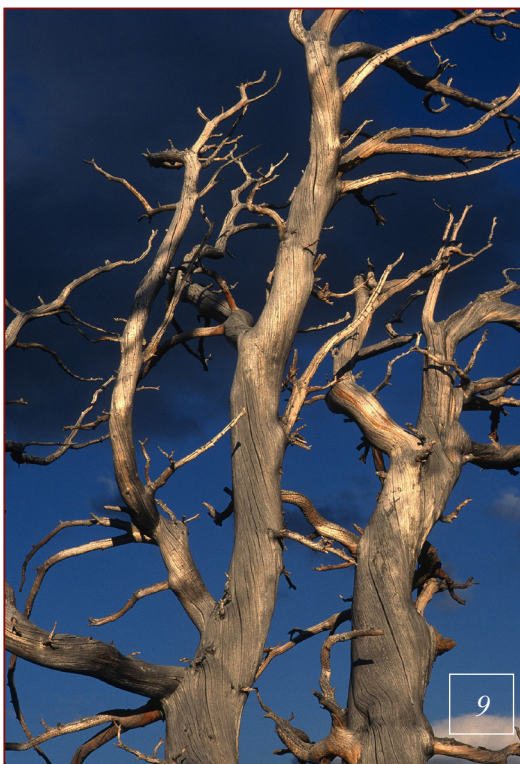
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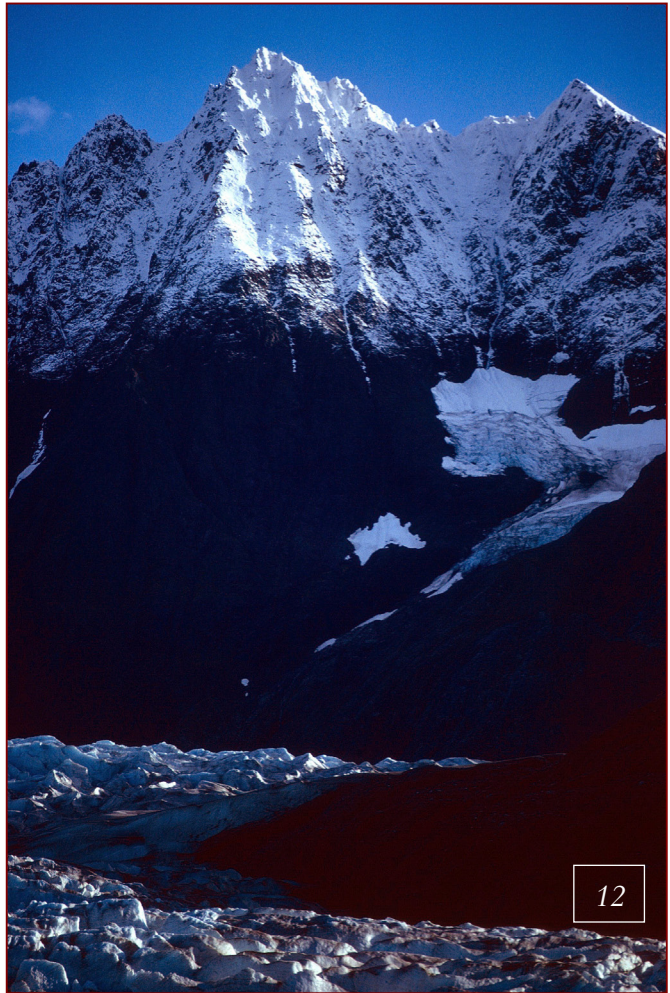
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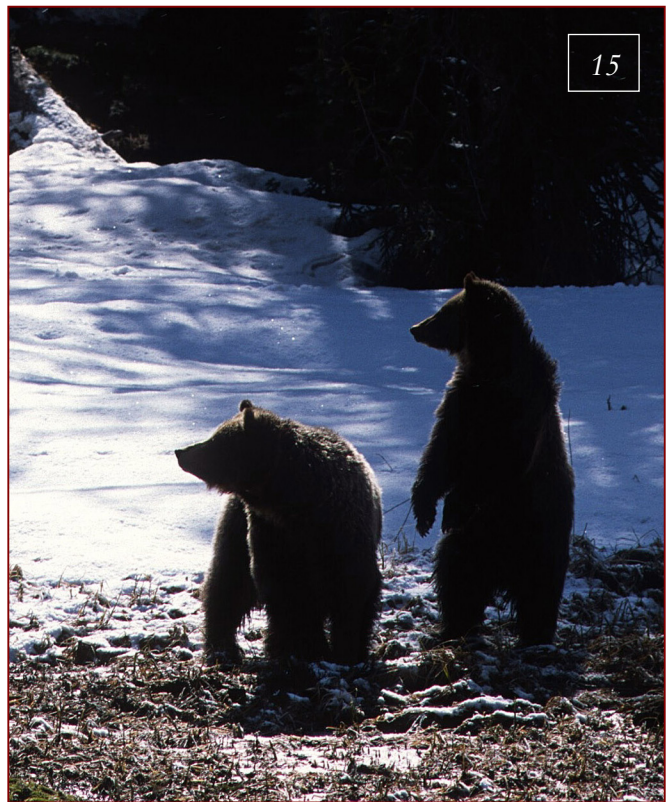
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10



14. West Boulder River Valley, Montana
15. Two Young Grizzlies in Yellowstone National Park
16. Mt. Moran, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming





16



Kayaking in Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska



The Tetons Viewed from Idaho Side

An impending sense of doom hung in the air along with a stifling blanket of humidity. Upon descent, the serene fog of the mountains has deceived Asbah into the belief that the heavy humidity and scorching sun had since given way to cool fogginess, but alas, the plane was not a very accurate vehicle of weather prediction.

The crowd spread thin outside of the airport as men lounged on architecture, waiting idly as a new batch of returners and pilgrims spilled out of the seams of the gray building. Only a few feet away, Asbah could already catch a glimpse of the police force, running halfheartedly through drills and making jokes with their comrades. It had only been two summers ago when the police had barricaded the roads, strutting imposingly along the streets as though at any second a rogue rebel boy would happen to skip by and provoke them, and here they were, acting as though a new summer had brought upon them a new chance to forgo the brutality of their daily occupation.

Any minute now her uncle would show up after inching through the mandatory airport traffic and exploding out of his generic white Suzuki to sweep her into an engulfing bear hug, tighter and tighter until she would have to reprimand him for cutting off her only airway.

There was always the fear of an awkward reunion (though that never seemed to happen with any of her uncles); the first moment of uncertainty as to whether they remembered her name or simply thought of her as Aasheen's younger sister, or Ariful's *angrazi* daughter. It was even more humiliating when they would speak to her in Kashmiri, as though forgetting for a moment that she wasn't brought up to be another one of the *koshur* little girls in the valley.

"You're going to Roohi Khala's house, okay?" Mama turned to face Asbah as she slid her sunglasses down from her glinting dyed-red hair to shield her eyes from the blinding glare of the sun. "I have to visit their graves."

The words fell from her lips, increasingly quiet until they had become mere whispers of grief and pain. It has been only a few days since the death of her mother, and even so only a few months since that of her father. The freshness of her wounds had made Asbah increasingly meek, until the trademark quips and snappy remarks ceased to fall from her lips.

Asbah knew how hard it was to keep it together; she understood the aching wound that death had ripped within her mother's heart, but separation was not something she handled well, much less in a foreign country, regardless of how much of her blood hailed from the very valley she was currently trapped in. Nevertheless, she kept her mouth shut, replacing what would have been instant verbal panic with a firm nod.

With the chime of a phone, Mama suddenly jumped to attention. "They're here," she explained with a vague gesture to the packed road, voice breathy with elation and a tinge of dread as she gathered half of their luggage to trek across the stuffy airport road. In a hasty attempt to collect each suitcase, Asbah ventured into the congested road, almost losing sight of Mama each time a man conveniently jostled the one suitcase she barely had a grip on. Just as she had been about to stumble a loose piece of gravel, Asbah halted in front of the familiar white Suzuki at Mama's side, both comfort and unease pooling within her heart as she stared at her uncle as he attempted to shove in each piece of luggage until a wall of suitcase Tetris towered over her from the trunk.

As soon as her uncle came to face her, Asbah braced herself for the consuming hug she knew was on its way, and only a few seconds later was wrapped up in the arms of her mother's baby brother, musky Arab cologne wafting through her nostrils and thickening the haze that had fallen over her brain.

"Abbu!" he exclaimed, withdrawing to pull down a pair of sunglasses off of his curly head of hair in a familiar fashion to his older sister. Asbah shrunk back a little at the embarrassing nickname, but a small part of her relished in the familiarity of her younger self being called to memory. "What's going on?" he asked, the attempt to be smooth disenfranchised by his struggle to pack each suitcase into the trunk.

She replied sparingly, a wide grin overtaking her face as she slid into the back of the achingly familiar car. There was years of history held in this back seat. Summer after summer of cruising with a wedding party or stuffing herself with fried street food flooded back into her mind as Mama and her brother spoke in rapid Kashmiri, firing away with questions of wellbeing and family drama. They spoke with the familiarity only siblings could have, as though it had only been a couple of days since their last meeting instead of a couple of years.

It was only when the prolonged screech of an exasperated driver's horn somewhere along the road withdrew them from their discourse that Mama pulled away from the car.

"Okay," she released a deep breath, adjusting her purse strap and adjusting her hair clip. "Khaloo is here now, so I have to go. Be careful, okay?" She looked to Asbah one last time.

"We will," her brother responded, glancing back at her in reassurance. Again, Asbah nodded, the familiarity of her place in the back seat doing little to calm her anticipation for the eventual family reunion that was sure to consist of hearing loss-inducing screams and childlike treatment from her plethora of aunts and uncles.

Without much ceremony, her uncle pulled away into the traffic, the car jerking and swaying along with the bumps in the road as Asbah clutched the car door with a sudden need as her uncle started to ask the mandatory catching up questions, and the dread in her heart started to rise along with car as the bumps in the road only increased.

—Isra Qadri, grade 9, Maryland. She writes: "Ever since I was a little girl, I have been intrigued by the geopolitical conflicts in Kashmir, the homeland of my parents. As one of the longest ongoing political conflicts in history, and one of the most

heavily militarized areas in the world, Kashmir has had its fair share of issues... There are many struggles that the Kashmiri people face, and that was part of the reason for my parents' move to America. Both of my parents immigrated to America after pursuing their college education in India, and while I am thankful for their decision to give their family a better life in the free world, I have always felt a strong kinship with Kashmir. Because of its complicated political history, I grew up with a strong pull to study government and international relations, which influenced my interest in Model United Nations and a potential career in politics or government.

As I read novel after novel, I took notice of the lack of representation of not only the identities I held, but also the identities held by my friends and classmates. Eventually my love for writing stemmed from just the love of creation, but also the yearning to see myself within the many stories I had read. Writing not only allows for me to express my thoughts and emotions, but also my identity through the countless worlds and characters that go through my mind. I hope that my writing inspires those that also struggle with both their identity and their want to see themselves in the stories they love, just as I did."



Skippping Stones Stew: The Bicycle

Blue sky. Pink balloons. Cotton candy spinning towards the hands of children.

Mother gave her the bicycle on the girl's seventh birthday.

It was pink, of course, with shiny metal spokes.

They took a picture of the bicycle at the birthday party.

It stayed on the mother's desk for the rest of her life.

Three years later, the bicycle had gotten too small for the girl.

The mother put the old thing in the basement and bought the girl a new one.

It was blue this time, of course. She couldn't be seen with something pink.

Five years after that, the girl turned fifteen. She was in high school now.

She hadn't touched a bicycle in years now. It was too uncool.

The mother dragged the second bicycle into the basement next to the old pink one.

Three years after that, the girl is packing for college. The mother has given her old bicycles away to a family friend. She often looks at the photo on her desk as a reminder of what life once was. Or what it could be.

—Stella Prince, age 15, grade 10, New York. She is a young writer and poet. Her works have been published in a number of magazines. Stella was the winner of the New York City Children's Theater Playwriting Contest.



Turtle Troubles

Imagine what it might feel like if you had a rubber band wrapped around your finger for several minutes. What would happen to your finger? The blood inside would flow into your hand, pressure would build up, and your finger would begin to throb with pain.

Did you know that fishing line that gets tangled around a sea turtle's neck or its flippers can have the same effect as that rubber band on your finger? In fact, any kind of fishing line floating loosely in the water can get wrapped around a swimming sea turtle. And they usually cannot free themselves from the entanglement. If the fishing line is bound to a sea turtle's flippers long enough, it can tighten to the point of cutting off circulation to the flipper, rendering it useless.

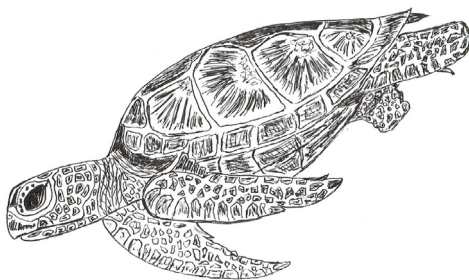
Trash such as plastics and aluminum in our oceans kill millions of marine animals and sea birds every year. Sea turtles have been found with plastic straws and forks stuck inside their nostrils. Torn aluminum cans and broken glass can cause serious cuts to their skin. Fortunately, sometimes caring people find these animals and take them to local animal hospitals so the debris can be extracted safely. In fact, if you or anyone you know finds an injured sea turtle, do not try to remove anything from its body. It is better to call your local animal hospital and let a professional deal with the sea turtle's trouble.

Have you ever heard of longline fishing lines? This type of fishing line is used by commercial fishermen to catch large fish such as tuna, swordfish, and halibut. In order to catch them, fishermen stretch these longlines for miles underwater. The lines are filled with thousands of huge hooks. When a sea turtle is attracted to the bait on these hooks, it eats the bait, but these deadly hooks can get caught in its mouth. If the turtle becomes hooked, it can hang on for so long that by the time a fisherman checks the line, the sea turtle could be dying a slow, painful death or already be dead.

Fish hooks can shred the lining of a sea turtle's esophagus if it swallows the bait and hook, then swims away. If this happens, the ingested hook will interfere with the turtle's ability to digest food when the food reaches the intestines. Improper digestion of the foods a

sea turtle normally eats can cause it to eventually starve to death.

Longline fishing lines pose other dangers to sea turtles as well. The hooks attached to the line can snag a turtle's flippers, head, or whole body. Its eyes can be gouged out or its body tangled so badly it can't free itself. Since sea turtles are reptiles, they have to frequently swim to the surface of the ocean to breathe air. Getting tangled up in anything that holds them underwater too long will deprive them of oxygen and cause them to drown.



Plastic bags blowing around on beaches can also wind up in the oceans. When these bags are floating in the water, sea turtles mistakenly assume they are jellyfish which is one of their favorite foods. When a sea turtle ingests one, the bag stays in its digestive tract which clogs its intestines. This

can also cause a turtle to die of starvation. Sometimes a plastic bag can get wrapped around the turtle's head which can suffocate or strangle the creature.

Although some things people do can harm or kill these beautiful animals, the good news is that there are many organizations working every day to help save, heal, and protect this endangered species.

How can you help? Many plastics are not recyclable; avoid buying these. Minimize your use of throw-away plastics, such as shopping bags, straws and containers by using cloth or paper bags and metal washable straws instead. Buy products already packaged in recycled materials or reusable glass and metal when possible. Look for the little triangle recycle symbol on the bottom of everything you buy. If you don't see one, try to find another product that displays this symbol. Then when it comes time to dispose of these items, place them in recycling bins instead of your other garbage. (In many regions, only #s 2, 4 and 5 are collected for recycling.) You can also put drinks and food for the road in glass or metal containers which can be washed regularly. Lastly, when you eat out in public, clean up all of your garbage, and pick up trash you see on or near beaches you visit. Let's clean up our environment together to keep our sea animals safe.

—Patsy H. Parker, author and artist, California.

Black Blizzard: Dalhart, Texas, 1935

Sunlight streaming through the window, illuminating the dusty floor. A shadow fell across the boards as I stepped to the window and surveyed the dreary landscape. The ground was brown and flat, except where dunes of dust rose out of nowhere, lending an eerie, desert-like appearance to the scene. It was hard to imagine that this was once a lush green prairie.

That dust—it was everywhere: muddying our water, peppering our food, burying our poor vegetable garden before it had time to grow. The wind caught it up and dumped it on the roof, on the wheat fields, on the tractor and various other farm equipment, on our clean laundry hung out to dry. Everyone and everything was covered in dust from top to bottom—It couldn't be helped. It was simply part of life for us now.

It hasn't always been like this. When we first arrived here, nigh on seven years ago, the land surrounding our house was a sea of thick green prairie grass, a dramatic yet wondrous change from the noisy, crowded streets of New York City, where I had spent the first six years of my life. Of course, after Pa had plowed up the fields, the sea of green turned to brownish-yellow; which, in my opinion, wasn't half so pretty. But, then, wheat could be sold for money. Grass? Not so much.

I don't know if we could have been called rich— but we certainly weren't poor. I had a collection of dolls, three older brothers who never thought of themselves as too old to play with me, a mother who sang whenever she was happy (which was always) and a Pa who tossed me up in the air and tickled me with his beard whenever he came in from the fields. I was the happiest girl in Texas, maybe even in all the world.

Then those beautiful days ended.

It had started out as a few weeks without rain—a dry spell, as it was called. It didn't bother me much. Dry spells weren't uncommon out here on the prairie—the rain didn't fall for a while, the crops didn't grow as quickly as usual, then—hey presto! The rain clouds rolled in early one morning, and life returned to its normal cycle.

This, however, was different. The rain clouds didn't come.

And now, here I was, five years later, with the

ground as dry as a dog's well chewed bone, the sun beating down on the wheat until it shriveled into nothingness, and the strong prairie winds sweeping across the ground, picking up acres of topsoil, tossing it about for a bit, then scattering it as dust over everything. Miserably depressing, it was.

At first, I couldn't understand it. Why did we let the sun and wind control us? Why didn't we leave? I had heard rumors that things out east were a mess, that banks and businesses were closing at an alarming rate. But how could it possibly be worse than this?

That was the question I put before Pa one evening several months ago.

Pa was silent for a moment. He looked me up and down thoughtfully—he always took his time to say something. “Well, Irene,” he replied slowly, “I suppose it's because leaving would, in a way, be admitting defeat. And I've never been the sort to admit defeat—especially when my only adversary is a bit of a dry spell. Besides, it has to rain sometime or another—it always does. It's really just a matter of who can stay here the longest. And I'd prefer for it to be us.” And that was all he would say on the matter.

Pa's answer seemed reasonable—and I disliked his alternative of being a coward and admitting defeat. So why didn't I have his determination to wait things out? Why was I so ready to give up when Pa and everyone else I knew seemed so ready to wait for the rain no matter what the cost? What was I missing that apparently everyone else on the prairie had? Whatever it was, not having it was making me miserable.

I continued to stare grimly out the window, saddened by the memories of those better days and wondering if they would ever come back to the prairie, like Pa was so determined to believe. I scanned the horizon, searching for anything that could hint that rain was on the way, rain that would pour down on the thirsty ground, patter on our roof, shoo away the dust and replace it with thick, oozy mud...

And that was when I saw it. A cloud was forming on the horizon—a cloud not filled with rain but with dust, a high prairie wind that had scooped up harmless dust and transformed it into a rampaging beast, intent on flattening our wheat fields, thrusting dirt down our

Some hole that I hadn't known was in me suddenly seemed to fill up, and I felt happier than I had felt in five years.

throats, destroying anything it could reach. I opened my mouth to scream—not in fear but in overwhelming fury. The dust storms were becoming frequent—we had suffered through five of them within the last month. How much longer would it last?

“Mama!” I called out. “There’s a duster coming!”

Mama stepped out of the back room where she had been airing out sheets. Lines of worries creased on her forehead as she stepped to join me at the window. “All right.” She said in a listless tone. “I’ll go fetch your brothers...I suppose they’ve already seen it, being out in the open and all. Irene, will you go and fetch the rags and air masks?”

“Yes, Mama.” I replied quietly. Her melancholy attitude had wiped away any bit of anger that had lingered in my thoughts and left only a great hole where my heart had been.

“Oh, and Irene?” I turned and looked at her, standing in the doorway, with a weak smile planted on her thin face.” Everything’s going to be all right.” She said. “Really, it is.”

I wasn’t so sure.

I sighed as I stepped to the corner and picked up a handful of grimy rags which I submerged in a bucket of water and began stuffing in every nook and cranny I could. Around the window frames, between several of the loose boards on the wall, even a few up the chimney. Once I ran out of rags, I ran over to a cupboard and pulled out six air masks—bulky bowl-shaped pieces of metal that fit on our faces. They were supposed to filter the dusty air so we could breathe while a storm blew over. They were hot and uncomfortable, but at least we weren’t breathing in so much dust.

The rest of my family came filing in through the doorway and slipped the air masks on. Pa shoved more wet rags under the doorway, to keep out at least a little of the dust. It was a routine now, and we all knew it like the back of our hands. That hurt—the idea that a life like this could become routine. But it had.

I had just slipped on my air mask when the storm hit.

At first, it was like fingers groping at the walls, searching for cracks to squeeze through. And they found

them, all right. Soon the room was filled with the swirling dust. I tasted it in my mouth, heard it in my ears, felt it in my hair, on my arms, up my nose. Nothing could keep it away—not the rags, not the masks, nothing. The dust was slowly but surely burying everything we held dear, including us. We were trapped in a never-ending cycle of dust storms and withering wheat fields and the hot sun drying everything up. We couldn’t get out of it. Everyone was too determined to stay here to wait things out. But how could we win if all of nature was against us?

The wind around the house began to blow harder. The dust stopped creeping into the house—instead, it roared. Something fell off a shelf with a crash—it sounded like a metal soup pot. I squeezed my hands in fists and clenched my jaw tight as I crouched on the floor. Pa was wrong—we couldn’t win—we couldn’t. There was too much against us. We were all going to stand here and wait for some rain while our wheat died and we slowly starved. That was all there was to it.

The storm slowly subsided, and we rose from our knees, dusting ourselves off. Mama stepped to the corner and picked up the soup pot off the floor. In her eyes was that same look of fierce determination that I had seen on Pa that evening I would remember for so long. And, with a start, I realized that the same look was in my eyes—we were going to stay, continuing the struggle, no matter the cost...and we were going to win. The dust wasn’t going to beat us. I was going to make sure of that. Some hole that I hadn’t known was in me suddenly seemed to fill up, and I felt happier than I had felt in five years. I didn’t know what this feeling was, but I knew one thing—I was content to stay here and wait for that rain. After all, it had to come sometime or other.

Perhaps this was what people called “Hope.”

—Anastasia Brown, grade 9, Pennsylvania. She adds: “I love writing essays, poetry, and stories—not to mention reading other people’s masterpieces.”



Other Birds' Songs

By Carmen J. Taveras, Canada

Justin went to bed at sunset and stayed awake after his mother read him a bedtime story, to listen to a bird singing. He went to the window to see the bird singing. "What a beautiful bird!" he said, peering at the tiny bird through a gap between the curtains. It was the first time that he saw it. The olive-green coloured bird came to sing at the same time in the warmer seasons, perched on the maple tree that stood on the street. It had white eye rings, white and black wing bars and a red crown patch.

"You're supposed to be sleeping," said his older sister, Azar, approaching him.

"I love to listen to this bird singing," he said, joyously.

"Do you know what bird it is, Azar?"

"No," she whispered, standing next to Justin. "This bird usually comes to sing on this tree in mid-spring and summer time."

"The songs have soft notes that go high and then go fast with many changes of short sounds," Justin added.

"I brought a book of birds from the library," Azar said a few days later. "You might be interested in seeing it, Justin."

"Oh, yes!" Justin said, sitting next to Azar at a table where the book lay in front of them.

In the book they saw photos of colourful birds. "The cardinal is a finch as well—one of the big finches," Azar said.

"Why are some birds called finches?" Justin asked.

"They're songbirds that eat seeds and have strong bills," Azar read.

Azar turned the page and a picture of a bird perched on a branch caught Justin's attention. He stared at it and his eyes opened wider. "This bird looks exactly like the one that comes to sing here!" he said delighted.

"I wanted to give you a surprise," she said. "The bird is a Ruby-Crowned Kinglet."

That autumn, the wind roared and blew very hard, beating buildings and trees. One day when Justin woke up, the old maple was on the ground, toppled by wind.

Crestfallen, Justin told his mother, "That maple has fallen and the bird won't come back to sing in the spring."

Hugging her son, mother said, "It was a stormy night. Soon another tree will be planted."

"But the bird might not like the new tree," Justin said. "It won't be the same to sleep without the songs of that bird, Mom."

"I also enjoy very much listening to that warbler, Justin," she said gently. "Just be patient."

In the spring, the city planted a smaller maple tree. Justin waited for the beloved bird to come to sing in late spring, but at the beginning of summer, he gave up.

While Justin and Azar were on the balcony, two crows perched on the maple tree and screamed very loudly. "It's irritating to listen to noisy crows,"

Justin complained. "Mom told me that one day a crow took away her key and dropped it on the sidewalk."

"I've read that the older brother and sister crows help their parents to raise the newborn chicks - like I've baby-sat you since you were a baby," Azar said, and looked Justin in the face. "You're six now—I'm older than you by six years."

Justin cocked his head, agreeing. "Would you like to keep a crow as a pet, Azar?"

"They make good pets, but they belong in the wild." She added, "I've seen robins singing in the new tree."

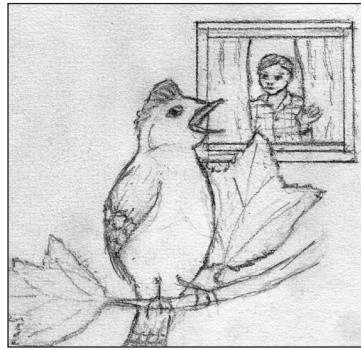
"But the robins don't come at sunset like the olive-green bird used to," said Justin sadly.

A few days later Justin went to a park. He suddenly stopped riding the seesaw when he heard robins singing from the cherry blossom tree nearby. "I like to listen to other birds' songs too!" he said, loudly. Other children, his mother, and other adults joined him to listen to the choir of robins.

One summer, just as Justin was about to fall asleep, he heard a familiar voice.

His heart pounded and he ran to the window. He gaped when he saw the small bird singing in the new maple tree. "I'm so happy that you've come to sing again, Ruby Crowned Kinglet," he told the bird. "Other birds' songs are nice—but yours is special!"

—Carmen J. Taveras, was born in the Dominican Republic.



Helen and I were on a mission—to find one of Germany’s oldest traditions. I had been visiting Helen and her family in Germany for the past three weeks, and today was Fronleichnam, the Feast of Corpus Christi. This year it was in June.

“When I was a little girl, our village would always make Blumenteppeiche out of wildflowers to celebrate,” Helen’s mother, Frau Schermutzki, said at breakfast.

I quickly translated the word in my head. Blumen meant “flowers,” and Teppich meant “carpet or rug.” Apparently, it meant “flower carpet.”

Frau Schermutzki went on to explain. “We would all go out into the fields and gather as many different flowers as we could find—chrysanthemums for white, nettle blooms for beige, broom flowers for yellow. For different shades of green, we would pick the leaves of beech trees and needles from spruce trees. Sometimes we needed colors we couldn’t find in the fields, such as red, so we used rose petals.”

“But I’ve never seen a Blumenteppeich here in the city,” Helen pointed out. “Wildflowers are hard to come by in the city.”

“True,” Frau Schermutzki answered. “Unfortunately, there aren’t as many flowers here in the city, and that’s not good for bees and insects, which get their food from flowers.”

“What about in the mountains?” Helen asked.

Frau Schermutzki nodded. “They still make flower carpets in the mountainous region where I lived, especially in smaller villages, where there is still a lot of open space for flowers and trees to grow.” She turned to me. “Rebecca, have you ever seen a flower carpet?”

I shook my head. “No, but I’d like to.”

An hour later, the three of us were heading up into the Eifel region of Germany in search of flower carpets. While Helen and I kept our eyes peeled for flower carpets, Frau Schermutzki explained more about how to make one.

“The village decided what it would look like every year. Sometimes it was a picture of a holy chalice with a cross or a portrait of the Blessed Virgin. We divided the village into four sections to make one big flower carpet together. We children would turn it into a competition to see which team could gather the most flowers.”

The further we drove from the city, the greener the scenery became. The first open field we passed was

teeming with blue and white wildflowers. Bees and insects hovered around the flowers in search of nectar for food. It was a stark contrast to the city, where I had seen neither wildflowers nor bees. I wondered if it would be possible to plant patches of wildflowers in city parks or in flower pots to make cities more welcome for bees and butterflies.

We drove by houses surrounded by tall, elaborately-trimmed hedges, some with flowers, but I still hadn’t seen a flower carpet.

“Sometimes children from another section would try to steal our flowers,” Frau Schermutzki continued. “Once, we threw manure at them as they were running away.”

Helen and I burst out laughing. “Did you get in trouble?” I asked.

“Of course we did!” Frau Schermutzki said. “But we still met together at the end of the game and made our part of the flower carpet for our village.”

We passed through a forest of trees that reminded me of something in a fairy tale. Tall beech trees made a tunnel for us to drive through. Red squirrels scampered through the forest, chasing each other among patches of yellow wildflowers. So far, we had seen enough wildflowers to make a flower carpet.

Up ahead, I spotted a roadside shrine surrounded by bunches of flowers.

“Blumenteppeich!” Helen exclaimed suddenly. The car screeched to a halt.

(continued on p. 29)



Forevermore

Perhaps it is because I was in foster care before being adopted, that I am telling this story in a fashion colored by trauma.

His name was Ivan. He was one of my brothers.

It was like a lonely puppy meeting another lonely puppy. He was so warm, so loving. His father had died a few years earlier, he became completely dysfunctional. When he pulled himself together, he reached out to my mother for company and comfort. It takes a lot of effort to pull yourself out of trauma, and Ivan's trauma must have run deep.

I should know.

Ivan had complained of stomach aches his entire life. He was missing work, and couldn't eat. He would constantly argue with my mom about his health. My mom, experienced in the health care world, insisted that Ivan get some specific lab tests.

One day he was there, the next, he was gone.

I was always thinking about Ivan. I think everyone was after he disappeared.

I loved him.

He loved me, too. He always made time to talk to me, relate with me, laugh with me, love me. He may have had no romantic relationships, or children, but he was able to keep a job at a hospital, and a loving relationship with us.

When other people saw him, they felt sort of uncomfortable, the way that one feels when they don't know if they should point out that someone has their fly open. The area all around his eyes was bluish-grey, and shadowed, as though bruised. He had eyes that would just stare at you. Like he was hyper-focused or something. His eyes would follow your every move, and if you didn't know him, it would be a little spooky. One could just faintly make out the handsome teenager that Ivan was.

I could feel Ivan. I knew him from the moment we met. But, unlike him, I refuse to let my traumas show when I walk out the door. I could see right into him, even into his pockets. Similar to mine, his pockets were heavy with I assume, junk such as lost keys, marbles, little sticks, a special rock, the squeaker of a dog toy

(though he had no dogs) and a tuft of hair from his last haircut, tied nicely with a rubber band. Stuff that other people see as garbage, yet we see as treasures.

At night, he would hover in the darker parts of the room. His voice was soft, unsure, with an occasional stutter. He was a hoverer. That's something we do, we survivors of trauma—hover.

I remember, clearly, most of the time both hands were in his pockets, and he would sort of stand in a slouch. He would often shift his weight from one leg to the other, sort of uncomfortably. He would stand and just observe, and stare around at everybody, just listening.

For my birthday, he gave me a Hendrix poster, because I appreciated old stuff. I would have kept it, if I had known that that was the last thing that he would ever give me. The last thing that I ever gave him was a hug. I would have hugged him tighter if I had known.

I repeatedly asked mom where Ivan was. She didn't know. I could see the worry in her eyes. I started to get really scared. I started telling myself that everything was going to be OK, and that Ivan was OK, and that we are all just nice and peachy. But I knew that wasn't the truth. I knew that I was just lying to myself.

I knew that Ivan was dead.

As the weeks went by, I began to get more and more insistent. Then, for about two weeks, my asking began to die down. On the last Friday of my silence, over dinner (salmon, I vividly remember) I asked again.

"Mom," I said sternly, "Where's Ivan?"

A silence fell. No one moved. Everyone looked at mom, waiting for an answer.

"Do you want me to tell you now? Are you ready?" she asked, monotone.

"Is...is it about death?" I asked, voice wavering.

Silence.

"Yes."

I shook my head. I didn't want to hear it. I wasn't ready.

That night, I imagined that Ivan's ghost was in my bedroom, sitting on my bunk bed, silent and comfort-

ing. When I fell asleep, I dreamed of my brother, Ivan. I dreamed of the many conversations I had with him.

When I woke up the next morning, I knew I had to hear the words, make it official.

We were sitting in the City Bakery.

The coffee smelled strong, and was thick with cream. I decided that this was the right place. This space was a comfortable place to hear about tragedy. In that space, everything seemed far away. It was like a Cone of Silence.

"I'm ready to hear what happened to Ivan." I announced.

And mom and dad told me.

Ivan was dead.

He had colon cancer. It could have been treated easily. But he refused to get it treated. He let it spread to his liver before getting help. But, he was already dying. Dying, but he refused to tell mom. My mom, equally as worried as me, found out through an obituary online, posted by his birth mom who was jealous of the fact that Ivan loved us so much.

I never got to say goodbye to Ivan.

What trauma does to people like Ivan and me is very deep and personal. It weakens; there becomes a threat upon our mental health. We are unable to drag ourselves to do the things that we have to do. Even things crucial to our survival. Sometimes it is out to fear. Other times it is out of anger at the perpetrators of the trauma. That is where Ivan and I connect, the point at which our two lines meet; through trauma. Ivan lives inside me forevermore.



—Angel R. K. Chenevert, an emerging African-American writer and a college student, California. He is a proud survivor of the Child Welfare foster care system. He loves super hero characters and movies, and all the ideas that help him survive his early years.

In Search of Flower Carpets, *from page 27*

There, in front of the roadside shrine, was a long, rectangular depiction of a chalice with the sun above it. We got out of the car to take pictures.

"They didn't use wildflowers," Frau Schermutzki said, "but it still looks nice." It was made of regular garden flowers and tree leaves. The colorful heads of the flowers had been removed from the stem to create a picture as bright as a stained-glass window.

"I like it," I said, laying out my own design in my head. "I think I'll try this next year at home in America."

*** DO IT YOURSELF! ***

You can make your own flower carpet just like they do in Germany.

First, you have to decide what type of picture you're going to create. Start by sketching it out on paper. Remember, it doesn't have to be as large as the traditional flower carpets. After that, you have a few options.

- If you have a large yard, gather flowers for a traditional German flower carpet and fill in each part of your picture with a different color, just as if you were using crayons to color a picture.
- If you don't have lots of flowers near your house, gather different colors of stones or tree branches and fill in each part of your picture with a different color.
- If the weather outside is too cold or rainy, you can always make a flower carpet out of construction paper. Cut up tiny bits of each color and glue them together like a mosaic. The best part about this "flower carpet" is that it will last all year!

Your flower carpet doesn't have to be made of flowers. Have fun thinking up new ways to be creative!

—Rebecca Linam, German American author, Alabama.

Justice for Victims of Lynching Act passed unanimously in the U.S. Senate in 2019. Now the Congress is expected to pass and the president to sign this law making lynching a federal crime. From 1882 to 1986, Congress failed to pass anti-lynching legislation 200 times. Lynching was used as an instrument of terror and intimidation 4,084 times during the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Noteworthy North.East. West.South & Taking Action

Record-Setting Ocean Warming Continued in 2019: Our oceans reached the highest temperatures and warmed at the fastest pace since record-keeping began, highlighting the urgent need for global action to address the climate crisis before it's too late.

A study was published in *Advances in Atmospheric Studies* found that the oceans have warmed by 228,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (228 Sextillion) Joules of heat. The study's lead author Lijing Cheng, associate professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, puts it in context: "The amount of heat we have put in the world's oceans in the past 25 years equals to 3.6 billion Hiroshima atom-bomb explosions." And the warming is speeding up.

"We are now at five to six Hiroshima bombs of heat each second," said coauthor Prof. John Abraham of the University of St. Thomas. He adds that the public needs to be aware how fast things are changing. The oceans are the place where a vast majority of the heat gets stored. If we want to understand global warming, we need to measure ocean warming. The ocean warms slowly, said Cheng, but due to its vast size has dire consequences. The results of oceans warming are many-fold: reduction of ocean-dissolved oxygen, harmed marine lives, strengthening storms and reduced fisheries and ocean-related economies. However, the more we reduce greenhouse gasses, the less the ocean will warm, according to Prof. Cheng.

The temperature on the **Seymour Island off Antarctica reached 69.35°F. (20.7°C)** on the 9th of February 2020, a record high! And NOAA reports that January 2020 was the world's hottest January on record! Also, at NOAA's Mauna Loa Observatory, an atmospheric baseline station in Hawaii, the daily average of **CO2 levels on Feb. 10 was 416.08 parts per million (ppm)**. Scientists have estimated that 350 ppm is the safe limit. In recent years, soaring rates of CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere have signaled that the world is not ambitiously addressing the climate crisis.

Over 150 students gathered at the U.S. Capitol on the President's Day to demand the senators tackle the climate crisis. "Instead of leaving our classrooms for our day off, we are bringing our classroom to the capitol because our **government is failing to protect our generation**, and we're terrified," said 17-year-old John Paul Mejia of Miami. Twenty teenagers were arrested

as they took part in this Sunrise Movement action demanding senators back the Green New Deal.

"Humanity Risks 'Global Disaster' as our material consumption passes 100 Billion tons annually! We must urgently adopt circular economy solutions if we want to achieve a high quality of life for people by mid-century without destabilizing critical planetary processes," reports *CommonDreams*. Currently, we have high rates of material extraction, ongoing stock build-up, and low levels of end-of-use processing, and recycling. These trends are embedded deep within our "Take-make-waste" linear economy. And the outlook for a circular system looks bleak under the business as usual. We desperately need transformative and correctional solutions. Circle Economy advocates for use of renewable energy and asks for zero material waste and no pollution.

Plastic is everywhere—from rainwater, to the peaks of the Rocky Mountains, to the farmland soil that produces our food. Recent reports estimate that on the average, we ingest a credit card's worth of plastic each week. Not only do these plastic products, and the microplastics that form when they are broken apart, pose threats to our bodily health, they're also jeopardizing the health of our planet. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon says that if we have the creativity to invent a million uses for plastic, we should also have the creativity to design better alternatives. So he has proposed two pieces of legislation to clean up our plastic acts.

"No single country in the world is adequately protecting children's health, their environment & their future," says a new report from UNICEF and WHO. It calls for greater investment in child health and development. In addition to the climate crisis that's undermining children's hopes for a livable planet, children are under a "commercial assault," which is linked to the obesity epidemic and poor health outcomes. Children are targeted by those who promote sugary drinks, fatty foods, and a lot of salt. Children worldwide are also highly exposed to advertising for products made for adults only, such as alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, the report says.

Millions of Women in Mexico Protested Gender-Based Violence with "Un Día Sin Nosotras" or "A Day Without Us" strike on March 9th, staying home from work and school to protest the country's high rates of femicide and gender-based violence. Violence against women is an issue in many countries.



The Generous Fish by Jacqueline Jules, illustr. Frances Tyrrell. *Wisdom Tales*. A touching story of a young boy, Reuven, and a golden fish named Nissim. It captures child's innocence and love of nature. Ages 4-8.

Nature Did It First: Engineering Through Biomimicry by Karen Ansberry, illustr. Jennifer DiRubbio. *Dawn Publications*. A beautiful picture book that introduces biomimicry by first showing how nature has come up with different ways for doing various tasks. Ages 5-11.

Child of the Universe by Ray Jayawardhana, illustr. Raul Colón. *Random House Kids*. A gorgeously illustrated book for children that shows the deep love that parents have for children, and also the interconnections we have with everything in the universe. Ages 5-9.

Environmentalist Wangari Maathai by Jen Cullerton Johnson. *Lee & Low*. This chapter book introduces an African woman activist who helped plant millions of trees and won the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Ages 8-11.

Be Kind by Naomi Shulman. *Storey Publishing*. A kid-friendly book that gives young kids 125 kind things to do to make the world a happier place for all. Ages 6-9.

Fossils for Kids: An Introduction to Paleontology, by Dan R. Lynch. *Adventure Publications*. An excellent, easy to read guide for beginners. You can learn about ancient life forms preserved in rocks. Lynch has written many other rock and minerals field guides. Ages 9-13.

You Are Eating Plastic Every Day: What's in Our Food? by Danielle Smith-Llera. *Capstone*. Learn about how plastic gets into our food, even if we are vegetarian. What does it mean for our health? What can we do about it? Chapter book with many visuals. Ages 9-12.

Just A Kid, by Rie Charles. *Red Deer Press*. Many of us—both young and old—feel helpless in the wake of loss of nature and climate issues in the modern world. Meet a nine-year-old girl who is determined to act when her community park is under threat. Ages 9-12.

The Science of Weather and Climate by Julie Danneberg. *Nomad*. Yet another educational and informative book in the *Inquire and Investigate* series, this volume is of special mention because its subject matter impacts us everyday. We learn the science behind why it snows, winds, rains, storms, and more. A great introduction to meteorology and climatology. Also available, a volume on **Rocks and Minerals**. Ages 12-15.

The Big Buna Bash by Sara C. Arnold, illustr. Roberta Malasomma. *BrandyLane publishers*. Buna means coffee in Ethiopia. Learn about the Ethiopian Buna Ceremony and how it brings people together. Ages 6-9.

My Mom, the Lawyer by Michelle B. Coughlin. *Butler Books*. This book introduces the law profession as viewed by kids whose moms are lawyers. Ages 5-8.

Cub by Cynthia L. Copeland. *Algonquin Young Readers*. A graphic novel set in the early 1970s, **Cub** weaves together the tale of social issues of the era—gender inequality, environmental movement, political unrest, etc.—as seen by a seventh grade reporter. Ages 8-12.

Brave with Beauty: A Story of Afghanistan by Maxine Rose Schur. *Yali Books*. Learn about an extraordinary monarch of the 15th century, Queen Goharshad of Afghanistan, who was ahead of her times. An artist, poet and designer, she designed and built many places of incredible beauty—gardens, mosques, libraries, and a college for women. A heart-touching book! Ages 8-12.

Living on the Veg: A kid's guide to life without meat by Clive Gifford and Jacqueline Meldrum. *Free Spirit*. A vegetarian diet is good for your health, animal welfare, the planet, and it's also tasty, says this illustrated guide. It might help you take that first step to go Veg. Ages 8-13.

Larkin on the Shore by Jean Mills. *Red Deer*. Larkin, a messed up 16-year-old, is spending her summer with her grandma in seaside Nova Scotia. She figures out the best way to heal herself. A beautiful story. Ages 12-18.

Mindfulness for Teens: In Ten Minutes a Day by Jennie Marie Battistin. *Rockridge Press*. This book offers exercises to feel calm, stay focused and be your best self. Also available is **The Mindfulness Journal for Teens**.

Être: Girls, Who Do You Want to Be? *Wise Words for World-Changing Girls*, by Illana Raia. *Être Press*. This book helps girls develop their identities with words of wisdom from scores of role models—over 40 women and 50 girls. Find your passion, and become your best self while staying true to yourself. Grades 6-11.

Maid by Stephanie Land. *Hachette*. **Maid** is an engaging autobiographical account of the author's experiences as a single, low-income mother. It brings to focus the struggles of poverty, living without a safety net, and gives a voice to the millions of hard-working poor in our country. Highly recommended! Ages 13-adult.

Our 2020 Asian Celebration Haiku Exhibit

Forest

Breezes and bird calls
Fresh pines and proud, aged redwoods
All thrumming with life

Blossoming

Petals flutter, soft
They glisten with morning dew
Lovely and alive

Constellation

Stars appear like points
in a map, tracking a path
Throughout the night sky
—Claire Zhu, grade 10, California.

The Sky

See the beauty
The soft winds in the morning
Bright sun during the day
—Cayla Hodges, grade 12, California.

Summer nights were fun
Loved hanging out with my friends
Spontaneous nights
—Donatela Peric, grade 12, California.

Crepuscule Moth

My wings flutter with
The ebb and flow of bloodtide
Fish in twilight stream
—Amehja Williams, gr. 10, Pennsylvania.

Fire vs Ice

Burning but chill, cold
Fearsome but strong, exploding
Break through, battle for life
—Bella Laudiero, grade 4, California.

The waves bring delight
swooshing and whooshing so tough
Crash the sand castle
—Mahika Kapoor, grade 3, Virginia.

A water droplet
Embraces tips of fresh grass
To welcome the spring

—Oshadha Perera, grade 10,
Invercargill, New Zealand.

Who is Taller?

Two trees together
back to back stretching their branches
to be the tallest
—Elisa Kim, grade 8, California.

Endless Nature

From the deep ocean
to the vast lands of desert
Nature is endless
—Taeho Kim, grade 8, California.

Listen to music
See turquoise and lavender
Smell mint and flowers
—Jiwon Paik, grade 6, California.

Mayfly doomed promptly
Living moments with purpose
While we miss chances
—Leo Park, grade 7, California.

Magnificent Leaves

Multi-colored leaves
gentle, exquisite, swaying
Descending from trees
—Naya Budhiraja, grade 4, California.

The Shore

Shells get swallowed by sand
Giant waves bring seaweed to shore
Crabs scurry along
—Owen Snyder, grade 4, California.

Calming is nature
With birds chirping and flying
Quiet and peaceful.
—Aydin Ali Malik, grade 3, California.

Climate Change

Temperatures rise
Bumble bees disappearing
Climate change takes over
Some think it's the past
Losing species by the month
Extinction is real
Scorching heat on fields
Farmers' crops do not arise
Where will our future lie?
—Tanisha Gunby, gr. 11, California.

Melting Sunset

Sun falls, snagging clouds
Leaking melodious hues
Dipping into stars
—Cherie A. Putman, age 17,
homeschooled, Guyana.

majestic mountain
resting like gentle giants
Fujinomiya
—Jennikah Mackley, h.s. senior, Utah.

Sunset

Chalk smudged across the sky
A burning ball of fire
Meeting the horizon
—Madi Novack, grade 4, California.
The sea talks to us
Please no more trash, garbage
Yes, sea, no more trash
—Dylan Frank, gr. 4, California.

Buzzing city lights
Giant, loud concrete forest
Welcome to LA
—James Esser, gr. 4, California.

Honeybees

Smell of sweet honey
Buzzing through the wild garden
Working through the hive.
—Elizabeth Silva, grade 4, Iowa.

Koalas

Fuzzy and round in arms
Fleeing their home from the fire
They rest in peace now
—Grace Silva, gr. 10, Iowa. Art below.



A special "Thank you" to all the students and their teachers for sending us their haiku entries!

After Spring

The branch is alone,
His water is below him
There are no blossoms
—Inès Van Crayelynghe, gr. 7, California.

Ode to the Dawn

Goodbye my bright friend
You let the lonely night begin
But you will rise again
—Jada Gowan, grade 7, California.

Sweet Autumn rosettes,
Came soaked in blood, memories
Of war, pain, and grief
—Holly Minjoo Kim, gr. 7, CA. See p. 35.

First flake of winter
Feeling the chill frozen air
Snow falls silently
—Marla Perrier, grade 7, California.

White tears falling down
Take comfort on the cold ground
White heaps fill the space
—Maia Kilinski, grade 7, California.

First Star of tonight
Waiting to be wished up on
A beacon of hope
—Ashlyn S. Wilson, grade 7, California.

Howling in the night
I hear the sound of your cry
Like a lullaby...zzzz
—Marley Tubach, grade 5, California.

Frosty and chilly
Snow sprinkling on the roof
reindeers' feet tapping
—Emmie Klaus, grade 7, California.

Blue ocean roaring
While twinkling stars sparkle
Warm sand covers toes
—Jasmin Tatla, grade 7, California.

Delicious smells roam
Amazing tropical fruits
Smile on my face.
—Grace Helen Guild, gr. 7, California.

Icy Fondness

White saplings catch Z's
Glistening azure is glazed
to charm seemly eyes
—Catherine Nguyen, gr. 7, Illinois.

Lake Tahoe

Crisp air surrounds me
My skis pierce the fallen snow
Flakes twirl in large gusts
—Eleri Swanson, grade 6, Illinois.

Trees and their beauty
Animals and their children
The nature made them
—Rishi Chundury, gr. 5, Nebraska.

Hi pretty nature
Are you always that green?
Just answer me please!
—Reeya Chundury, gr. 4, Nebraska.

The Black Abyss

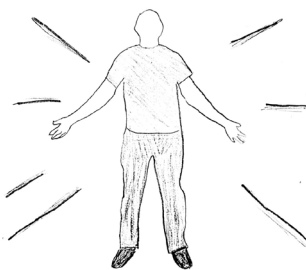
The void of darkness
luminous dots everywhere
The planets surround us.
—Jack Nortman, gr. 4, California.

Stream

Go downstream O fish
Or upstream too, as you wish
Relish the journey
—Jaimi Nam, grade 10, California.

She ruffles the grass
At night lullabies she sings
She is the calm wind
—Arya Praveen, grade 3, California.

Food fills the body
it refuels the spirit and
satisfies the soul



Anthony D'Urso, gr. 10, New York.

I'm Earth

The wind pushed the grass
The field sometimes sways right here
Earth is the best thing
—Paige Platz, grade 3, Oregon.

Butterflies

I'm a butterfly
I flap my wings in the sky
Beautiful am I
—Chenoa Spezza, grade 3, Oregon.

Cats

Beautiful best friends
Cute, fast, night vision hunters
Black, white, striped, spotted
—Hayleigh Usedom, grade 3, Oregon.

Dark in the forest
Restlessness in the blackness
stillness in the trees
—Lucas Gavrilescu, grade 5, Florida.

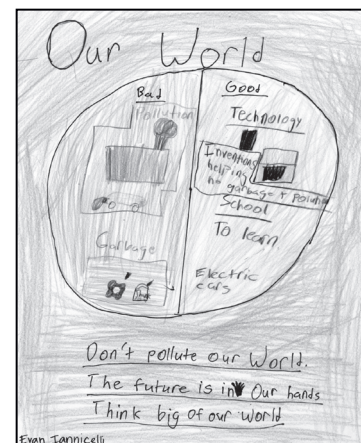
Fall

Red, Orange, yellow
Colors flying down gently
Pieces of trees gone
—Lolu Nzombola, grade 5, Virginia.

Wolves

Fearsome, majestic
Blazing through the dense forest
Howling at the moon
—Myles Neil, grade 4, California.

On a lovely hill
You sit and watch the beauty
with peace in the air
—Rithvik Burki, grade 3, California.



Evan Iannicelli, grade 4, California.

Our 2020 Asian Celebration Haiku Exhibit

Swirling down slowly
Colors dancing in the wind
The bright leaves fall

—Joshua Goodwin, grade 8, Indiana

The moon glaring down
Over the vast sea water
Reflecting my dreams

—Peyton Burris, grade 8, Indiana

Towering brown trunk
Rays of sun gleaming through leaves
Reaching for the sky

—Kennedy Brown, grade 8, Indiana

Vibrant leaves falling
They design giant mountains
Making bright landscapes

—Hailey Harris, grade 8, Indiana

My dream started to quiver
My stone skipped across
As the water rippled

—Lucas Day, grade 8, Indiana

Lovely burning sun
Bright, powerful, all in one
Shining on earth always

—Jace Stuckey, grade 8, Indiana

The trees dance around
Wind whistling through their leaves
As I play outside

—Ayden Nufio, grade 8, Indiana

1. The breeze blew the leaves
Across the beaten down road
Last night as I drove

2. Water sprinkled down
Hitting ground, scattering around
Drip-drip is the sound

—Melody Dodds, grade 8, Indiana

Seeing all the birds
Hearing the sound of their chirps
music to my ears

—Brooklynn Bailey, grade 8, Indiana

Red leaves all around
Crisp wind blowing them by you
They crackle below

—Talan McCormick, grade 8, Indiana

The Bees are dying,
Australia's on fire
Is this not dire?

—Barry Ostrom, grade 8, Indiana

The ice is melting
Like snowman when it gets hot,
Let's save the planet

—Barry Ostrom, grade 8, Indiana

Rain drops start to fall
The bright sun is still out there
Now shines a rainbow

—Maliya Tucker, grade 8, Indiana

Leaves are descending
Making a colorful coat
On the solid ground

—Sam Kemper, grade 8, Indiana

The sun is blinding
Warm against my tan forehead
No clouds in the sky

—Lucy Spall, grade 8, Indiana

Snowstorm running down
Designs the faint tinted ground
Making bright white rugs

—Hailey Harris, grade 8, Indiana

A beautiful bird
Feels free and proud in the sky
Flies like an angel

—Brendan McCurry, grade 8, Indiana

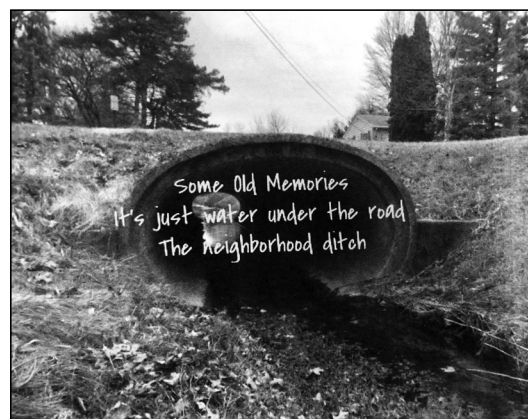
Feel the flowers grow
The petals it sends flying
Gracefully it sways

—Niveda Balan, grade 3, California

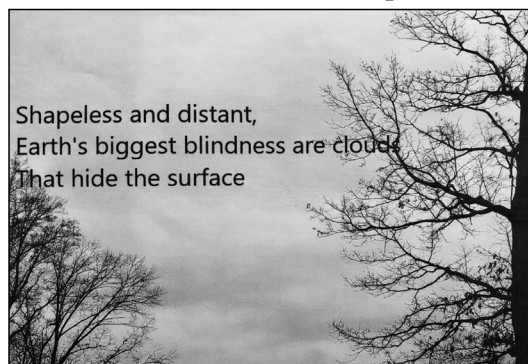
A garden of life. A garden of death. A garden full of music and song, sprouting from its roots. A garden of flowers. Beautiful flowers that rise from the ground, as springs golden light washes over them. A bee buzzes with delight as it collects the sweet pollen from Flower. It returns everyday to see Flower, but, one day Flower is gone. All the other flowers are gone. what was once a garden, is now a mass grave. The bee leaves, sad, but it knows...

Flower can be killed
But it will bloom again
Now, even stronger

—Max Cragin, gr. 8, Ohio.

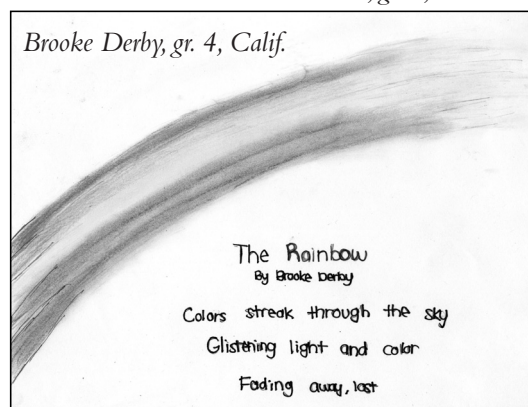


—Phoebe Schocket gr. 8, Ohio.



Shapeless and distant,
Earth's biggest blindness are clouds
That hide the surface

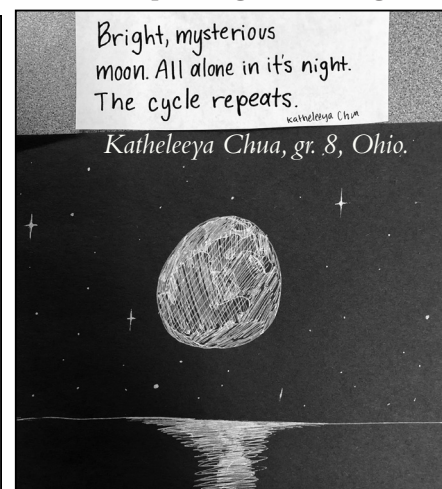
—Vadim Vorontsov, gr. 8, Ohio.



Brooke Derby, gr. 4, Calif.

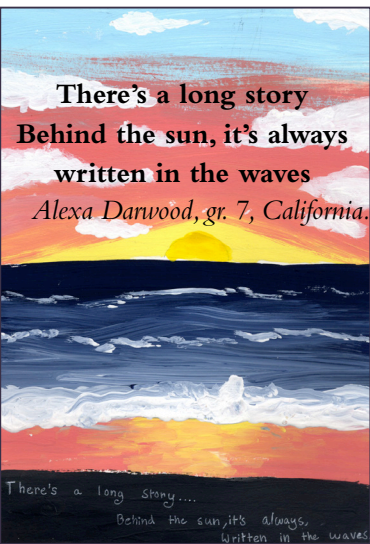
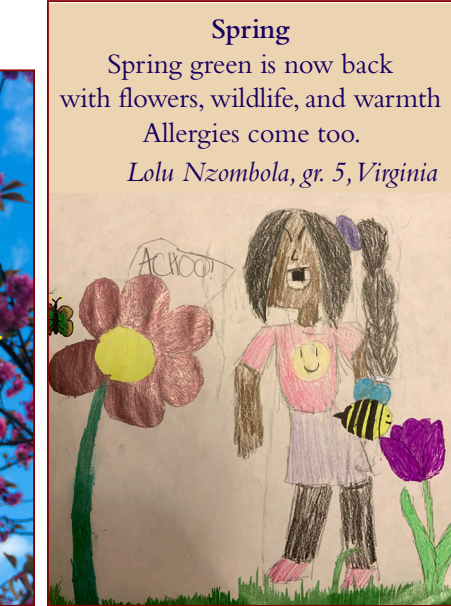
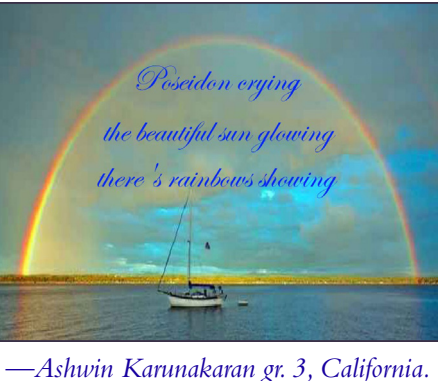
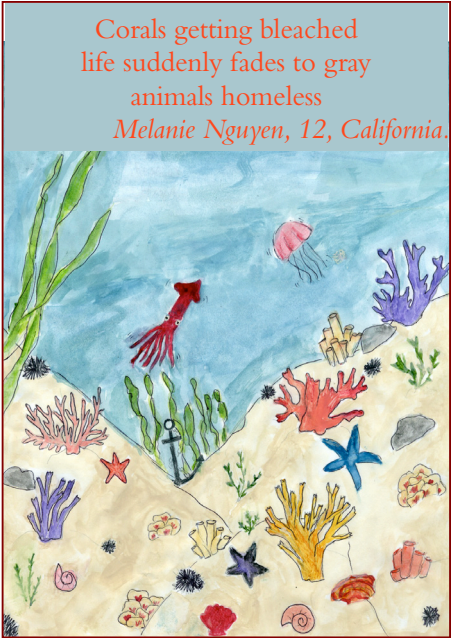
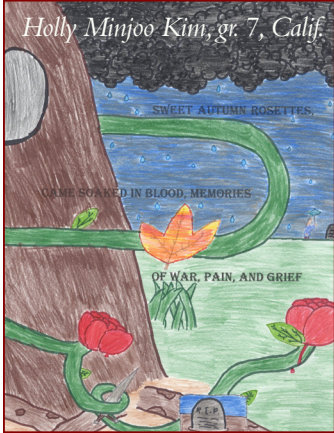
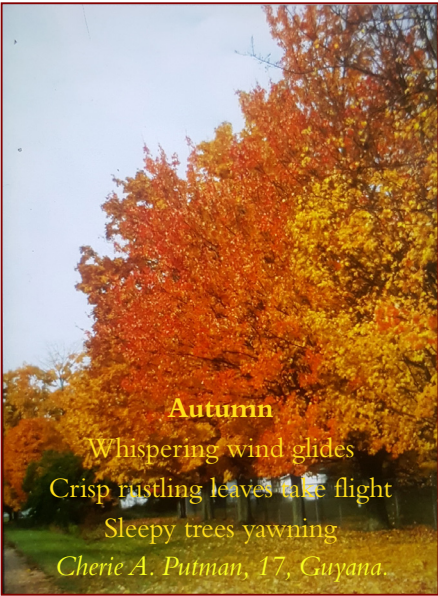
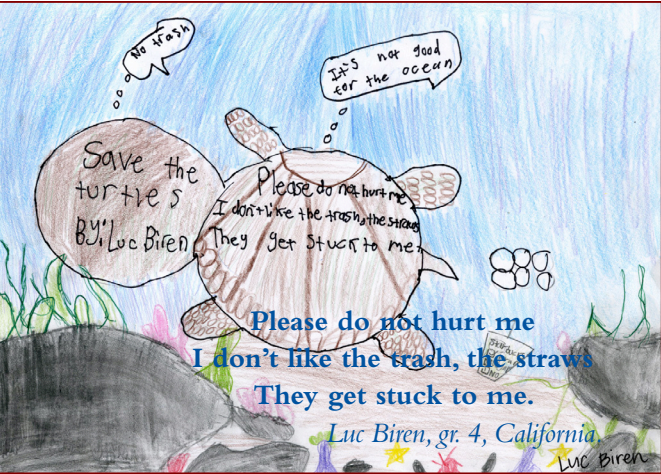
The Rainbow
By Brooke Derby
Colors streak through the sky
Glistening light and color
Fading away, lost

Fire, water, wind, earth
The elements of nature
They make this world home
—Felicity Call, grade 2, Oregon.



Bright, mysterious
moon. All alone in its night.
The cycle repeats.

Katheleeya Chua, gr. 8, Ohio.

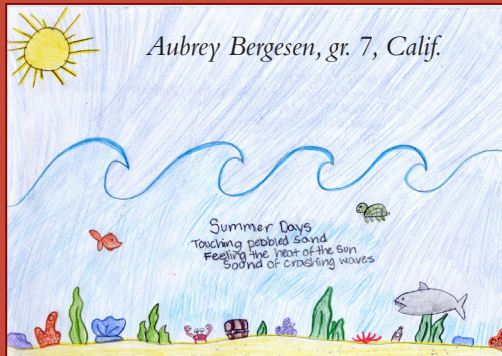




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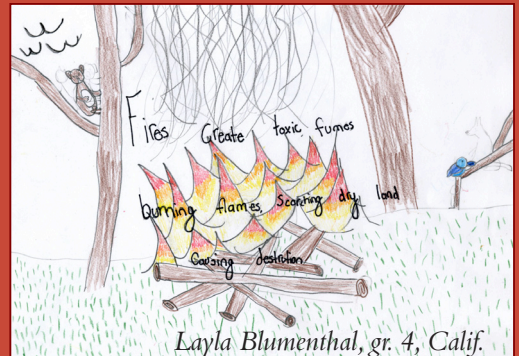


Rain on the tin roof
as I try to go to bed
Keeps me up all night
Evie Lehrfeld, gr. 7, Calif.

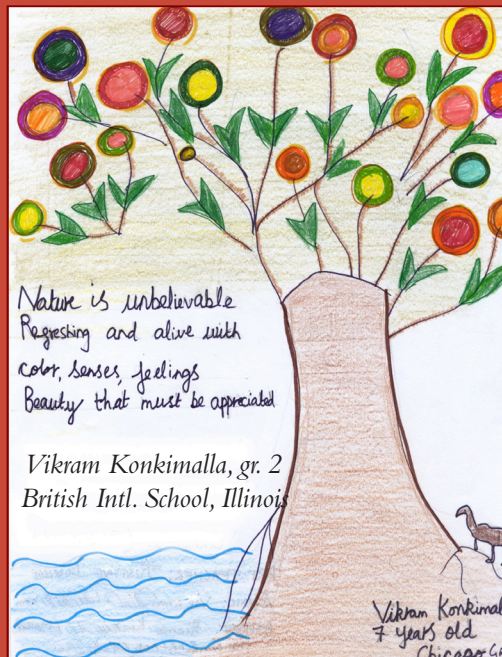


Aubrey Bergesen, gr. 7, Calif.

Summer Days
Touching pebbled sand
Feeling the heat of the sun
Sound of crashing waves



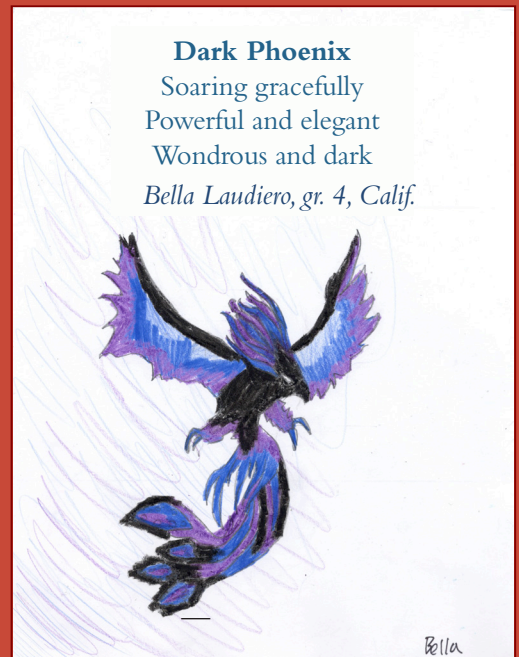
Layla Blumenthal, gr. 4, Calif.



Nature is unbelievable
Requiescing and alive with
color, senses, feelings
Beauty that must be appreciated

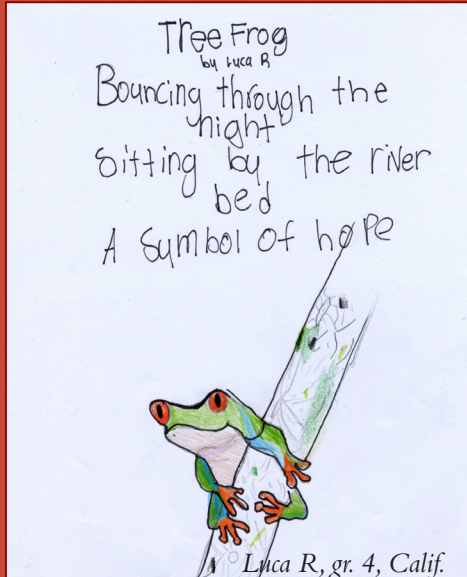
*Vikram Konkimalla, gr. 2
British Intl. School, Illinois*

*Vikram Konkimalla
7 years old
Chicago, IL*



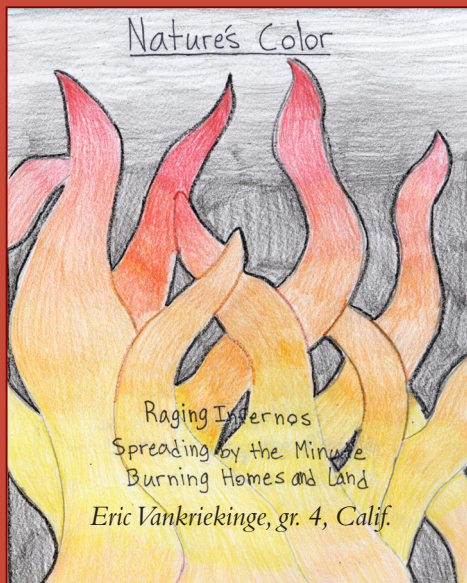
Dark Phoenix
Soaring gracefully
Powerful and elegant
Wondrous and dark
Bella Laudiero, gr. 4, Calif.

Bella



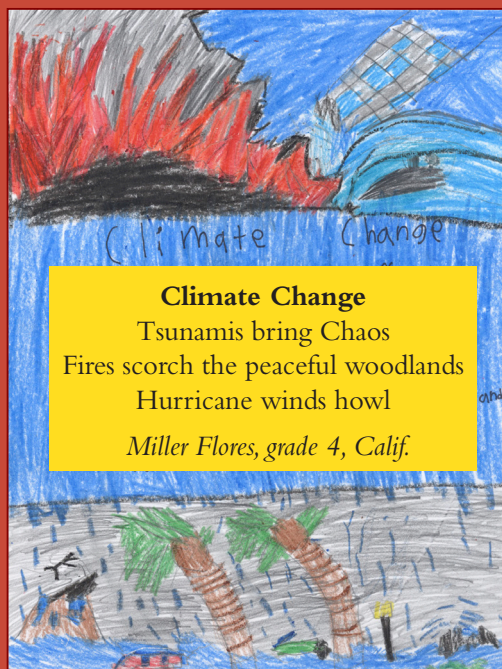
Tree Frog
by Luca R
Bouncing through the
night
sitting by the river
bed
A symbol of hope

Luca R, gr. 4, Calif.



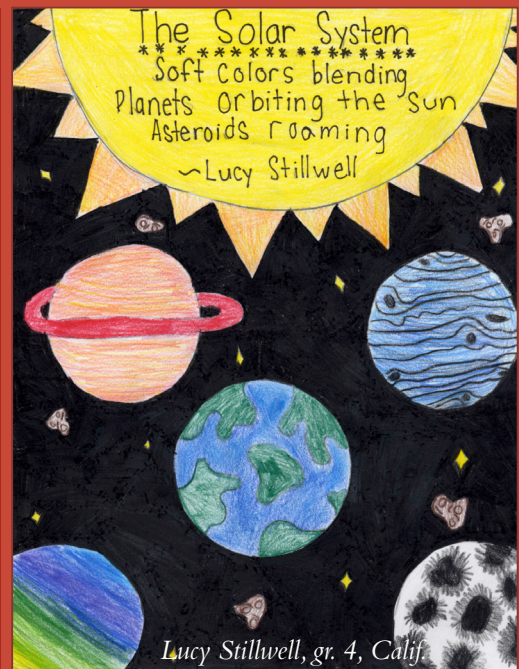
Nature's Color

Raging Infernos
Spreading by the Minute
Burning Homes and Land
Eric Vankrieking, gr. 4, Calif.



Climate Change

Climate Change
Tsunamis bring Chaos
Fires scorch the peaceful woodlands
Hurricane winds howl
Miller Flores, grade 4, Calif.



The Solar System

Soft Colors blending
Planets Orbiting the sun
Asteroids roaming
~Lucy Stillwell

Lucy Stillwell, gr. 4, Calif.