

Fresh Ink

2016

Bringing together
the most talented
writers, poets,
and artists at the
Galvin Middle
School



-Robert Frost

"Poetry is when an
emotion has found its thought
and the thought has found
words."

Carl
Abramam Lincoln Sandburg

J. K. Rowling
Harry Potter
and the
Deathly Hallows

Sharon
Draper
Out of My Mind
Jules
Verne
Mysterious Island

-Carl Sandburg

"Poetry is an
echo,
asking a shadow to
dance."



Fresh Ink Art and Dedication

*This issue of Fresh Ink is dedicated to
Barbara Edson, Pat Falcione,
and Elaine McCarthy.*



***Thank you for all of your years
of hard work and dedication!***

By Anna Reilly, Grade 7

Poetry: Thank you to Ms. Kaminski for reading the poetry and assisting Mrs. Canavan with selecting the winners.

Short Stories: Thank you to Dr. Conard, Ms. Kaminski, and Mr. Noble for reading the short stories and selecting the winners. The student work were given to these readers without the students' names on it in order to ensure fairness in what work was included in the magazine.

Cover Contest: Thank you to English Language Arts department for assistance in selection of the winners.

Fresh Ink Literary Magazine

Galvin Middle School

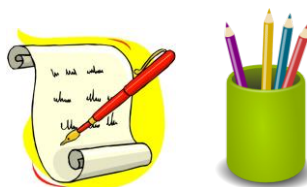


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page – by Kaitlyn Sullivan (<i>First Place Cover</i>)	Cover
Artwork/Dedication Page Design by Anna Reilly	Page 2
“Beyond Our World” by Emma Cunningham (<i>First Place Poetry</i>)	Page 4
“The Eyes of a Lion” by Natalie Keppler	Page 5
“56 Harrow Drive” by Holly Canavan (<i>First Place Short Story</i>).....	Page 6
“Sheep” by Dylan Coyne	Page 8
Digital Flower Art by Kyle Taylor	Page 8
“Boots” by Declan DeRossette (<i>Second Place Poetry</i>)	Page 9
“One Day Here, The Next Day Gone” by Grace Nourse	Page 10
Horse Painting by Frejya Wiley	Page 11
“Sneak Peek at Dragon’s Crest” by Emma Doherty (<i>Second Place Short Story</i>)	Page 12
Dragon drawing by Kaitlyn Sullivan	Page 13
“The Snowy Dream” by Aaron Mar (<i>Third Place Poetry</i>)	Page 14
“Snake” by Megan Winkler	Page 15
“Blue” by Ana Kurchak	Page 16
“The Seasons” by Maribeth Sullivan	Page 17
Girl drawing by Aleyah Rada.....	Page 17
Slak drawing by Aiden Toy	Page 17
“The Dark New World” by Danna Sanchez (<i>Third Place Short Story</i>)	Page 18
“Guardians of the Forest” by Cooper Ashcraft (<i>Honorable Mention Poetry</i>)	Page 20
Butterflies drawing by Kylee Sheehan	Page 20
“The Forest” by Lizzy Usher	Page 20
“The Hidden Stream” by Corinne Stevens	Page 21
“A Nation in the Trees” by Ali Kabbara	Page 21
“Soldiers” by Peyton Murphy	Page 22
Cover Submission (<i>Honorable Mention</i>) by Angela Elias	Page 23
“Untitled Short Story” by Lydia Prendergast (<i>Honorable Mention Short Story</i>).....	Page 24
“Painting Admired” by Ciara O’Connor	Page 26
“Art” by Stella Lempert	Page 26
“The Bunny” by Kylie Callagee	Page 27
Back Cover by Amanda Duffin (<i>Second Place Cover</i>)	Page 28

Beyond Our World

Shining brightly through the air,
reaching everything everywhere.
Making life for you and me,
but also for everything you see.
Sometimes it's lost, but always is found,
it will brighten you up if you are down.
The sun is our solar system but also our soul,
so you may never let it go.

Dark but bright,
it peeks into the night,
making waves crash
and people thrash.
Sometimes shining bright,
it makes a beautiful sight.
When day's at its end,
the moon comes out to lend
a helpful light, to see all night,
so the day won't have to end.

Twinkling in the sky so bright,
they let us know if it's day or night.
Almost as bright as the sun,
looking at them is so much fun!
Thousands and thousands with differences galore;
maybe it's time for us to explore,
the world outside of ours...
Where the sun towers
over all the things around,
like the moon and every star
that live in the world afar.
We see them like they're near
and wish we could hold them dear.
So being apart has to be
the best for our heart.

By Emma Cunningham, Grade 8: First Place Poetry

The Eyes of a Lion

I can't move,
As if I'm paralyzed
In a lifeless state.
What did they do?

I feel like I'm dreaming
Except I know I'm not.
I'm dreaming of falling;
I'm dreaming of darkness.

Awake now,
I look around,
Lying weak on the ground.
I don't know where I am;
I don't know what to do.
This must be a zoo.

Someone comes down
the dark lifeless stairs.
He gives me food.
I'm hungry, but there's no taste.
I'm thirsty, but the water's dry.
He tells me to eat
Right as we meet.
Will he ever say anything else?

I remember the freedom,
Space,
Light.
I remember the happiness I once had
In the dry savannah,
The savannah I'd do anything to go back to
for even just a minute.

The routine gets normal.
Every long day
That looks so great
But is actually very boring.

All they see is me sleeping,
Eating,
Surviving,
Definitely not living.
I can see, but no colors.
I can move, but there's nowhere to go.
All I see is the glass.
All I see is the cage,
The invisible cage.

Nobody hears me.
Does my voice matter?
Is it really so small?
I think I'm fierce,
But they still get close.
One day I'll snap.
One day they'll see
That they never should have imprisoned me.

By Natalie Keppler, Grade 7

“56 Harrow Drive”

“This is a bad idea guys,” Ella muttered, slowly trudging behind her group of friends. Ella Stevens was strongly contemplating whether or not to ditch their plan or stay with her friends. After all, she was extremely frightened. They all planned to look in the old abandoned house on 56 Harrow Drive. She was accompanied by her friends Ross, Katie, Liam, and Shauna.

“Don’t be such a baby. No one has been in this house for decades since the old woman who lived there disappeared and never was to be seen again.” Ross replied with a spooky tone.

“That’s just some old wife’s tale your crazy grandfather told you,” Katie smirked as she gave Ross a playful punch in the arm.

“Are you insulting my grandfather?” Ross shot back.

Katie simply rolled her eyes and whispered something to Shauna with a devious spark in her eyes. They all proceeded to walk farther and farther down the dark street, getting closer and closer to the old house by the second. All five teens came to an abrupt stop when the shock of how daunting the house hit them.

Scratch marks were embedded in the grimy front door. Many of the weathered shingles that were once on the roof were scattered along the length of the dead grass. The windows were boarded up with rotted wood and sketchy “DO NOT ENTER” signs. The most peculiar feature was a black statuette, its shape an intricate raven. The statuette was perched on the lining at the top of the door. It almost seemed to be watching them.

Ella started to tear up and said, “I-I’m too scared to go inside a-and...”

Before Ross could make a sarcastic remark Liam gave Ella’s shoulder a brief squeeze and said in a comforting voice, “I’ll be by your side the whole time. Nothing will hurt you while I’m here.”

“I’m sure you’ll be by mine as well,” Shauna flirted, wrapping Liam’s other arm around her side, until Liam slightly nudged her away.

Ella allowed herself to relax a bit. Everyone was in silence with their own thoughts stirring in their heads.

Katie looked the house up and down and said in a small voice, “I guess it’s time to go check it out.”

“56 Harrow Drive, here I come!” Ross shouted into the still air.

Ross and Liam gave each other a fist-bump. Katie, Shauna, and Ella just exchanged reassuring looks. Ross led them up onto the creaky porch.

“AHHHHH!” Ella shrieked at a loud noise that surrounded her head.

“Calm down, you sissy. It’s only a woodpecker, and *you* scared it away!” Ross snarled impatiently.

Liam gave Ross a serious look and patted Ella’s shoulder as she attempted to calm down her fast-paced breathing.

Shauna tapped her foot and remarked, “I’m going to open the door. I don’t feel like watching Ella and Liam flirt...again.”

“I’m with Shauna on this one. If we don’t get over ourselves, we’ll never know what’s inside.” Katie nodded in agreement at Shauna as she always did.

Shauna feverishly grasped the rusted door handle and started to turn it when a blood curdling scream burst from inside the old house. Without a second to spare, everyone was screaming in reaction to the sound of commotion from the inside of the old house.

“I’m out of here!” Ross dashed down the street, and his cell phone flew out of his pocket. He didn’t turn back for it, but what he did do was disappear within the darkness of the street.

Ella’s fear boiled into anger as she muttered, “Who’s the sissy now?”

Everyone gave a nervous laugh, then stopped when Shauna said, “Someone is in there, and they must need help. I’ll do it myself if I have to.”

Shauna yanked open the door and ran into the house.

“Oh my gosh, Shauna!” Katie frantically flew in after her.

That left Ella and Liam alone on the creaky porch. Ella was frozen in panic as was Liam. After a moment, Liam reached into his back pocket and pulled out a small flashlight.

“They need us and this is better than nothing,” Liam said with doubt coating his words.

Ella didn’t respond, but she caught his gaze and slowly entered 56 Harrow Drive with him. Liam’s flashlight flickered to life, and he handed it to Ella to hold. They froze when they saw that everything was covered in dust and crime scene tape. Ella examined the room and saw a doll without a head resting on an antique sofa, along with a boarded up fireplace with smashed picture frames in front of it. A disturbing stench filled her nostrils and she had a

small coughing fit. Ella almost threw up when she saw that an abundance of blood stains were located throughout the room.

“Where did Shauna and Katie go?” Ella managed to choke out.

There was silence. She turned to see that Liam was gone, nowhere to be seen. Ella burst into tears and dropped the flashlight.

“Liam!” she yelled into the painful silence.

Ella collected her bearings and quickly picked the flashlight back up. She fought back tears as she braced herself to search for her friends, hoping that they weren’t hurt, or even worse...dead.

“ELLA!” shrieked a voice.

“Help us!” shrieked another. It was Shauna and Katie!

She followed the repetitive screams down a mucky hallway to a steel door that looked much newer than the rest of the ancient doors.

“We are going to die!” Ella heard Liam’s deep voice scream.

The screams became muffled and broken, but she knew this door lead to the ultimate danger. Ella reached for the handle and, to her relief, it was unlocked. She slowly and quietly stalked down some creaky wooden stairs that led to a door, the door that would lead to the source of her friend’s pleas for help.

This was it. Open the door and risk getting killed, or escape now and be safe. Ella knew what she had to do. She turned the small handle and thrust the door wide open to discover a dimly lit basement.

“Interesting...another victim,” giggled a maniacal voice.

Ella quickly darted her gaze to see that Shauna, Liam, and Katie were gagged and tied up with a rope against the damp basement wall. The voice led to a creepy clown, who had a bloody axe in his grasp.

“Errrghhh!” Liam attempting to warn her through the gag, as Shauna and Katie had tears running down their cheeks.

“You’re mine now!” the axe wielding clown cackled.

Ella dashed across the basement, resulting in getting herself trapped in the corner. The clown gave another one of his maniacal cackles. When the clown lifted his axe, Ella didn’t cry. She simply sank to the floor and closed her eyes.

“and... SCENE!” an unknown voice echoed.

People began to pour into the room, giving high-fives and exchanged handshakes. A man with a name tag that said “Director William’s” gave Ella a sudden handshake and walked over to another man.

Liam, Shauna, and Katie easily shook off the ropes, pulled out their gags, and laughed. The creepy clown pulled off his red nose and tossed his axe to the floor. To Ella’s shock, it didn’t make the expected clanging sound. The axe bounced.

“It’s okay, kid. The axe is rubber,” the clown laughed in a non-creepy tone.

A few people with clipboards and cameras shook Ella’s hand. She was too astonished to speak.

“We signed up for that TV Comedy *Friend Scares*,” Katie said, giving her a brief hug.

Shauna remarked with a smile “This is payback for how much you pranked us on April Fool’s Day last month. You’ve been being recorded with secret cameras throughout the whole house, which will soon be broadcasted on TV. We asked your mother first, for her permission of course.”

“We were supposed to be pranking Ross, too, but he fled as soon as he was hit with the first scare.” Liam laughed, and Ella couldn’t help but laugh as well.

The four friends continued to laugh and hug until Ella questioned, “So...this house isn’t haunted?”

“Of course not,” Katie replied with a smile.

“Let’s go, Ella. Maybe we can go out for ice cream,” Liam said.

They pushed through the TV crew and Ella grabbed the door handle.

“Oh, my gosh!” Ella cried.

“What’s wrong?” her friends asked in unison.

“It’s locked!”

By Holly Canavan, Grade 8: First Place Fiction

Sheep

As I close my eyes I see white sheep in the countryside.
Yawn yawn yawn
The sheep are in the green, grassy hills of Westmeath.
The sheep look like cotton balls.
I hear bleating in the distance; it is making me sleepy.
Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa
I can't resist counting in the field to 43.
One sheep....two sheep....three sheep.....
All I can think about is a cozy wool blanket.
Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa.
The ram leads the herd, jumping ditches.
The grass is always greener on the other side if you are a sheep,
Especially when Sam the sheep senses a shearing.
I am knee deep in sheep and I need some sleep.
38 sheep.....39 sheep.....40 sheep.....
Yawn yawn yawn
The ewes are getting chatty tonight,
They are gossip queens at tea time.
Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa Baaaaa.
I toss and I turn until I twist right out of my own bed.
Sleep will not come tonight.

By Dylan Coyne, Grade 7

Digital Flower



By Kyle Taylor, Grade 8

Boots

Those boots over there on the floor,
Those boots by the door,
Over in the corner.
They've been worn by a man;
They've been worn by a fan.
Worn by the man's boy,
And the dog has chewed them like a toy.
Those boots have been to war
And they are going back once more.
For the man is a soldier
Even though he has gotten older.
Now on the beaches they land
Running, running on the sand,
But the man and his boots they do not tire
And now on the tower someone set fire to the spire.
Now the battle has ended
And the man has been winded.
The boots have worn out more
A little more than before
Now back go the boots home on the floor
Back on the floor in the corner by the door.

By Declan DeRossette, Grade 7: Second Place Poetry

One Day Here, The Next Day Gone

One day here, the next day gone
I now glance at the stars each night at dawn.
I watch as they dance,
Shining down on me, I see you twinkling at my last glance.

Each time we were together was taken for granted;
Looking back it was pretty enchanted.
Although I lost each game by a landslide,
It was an honor to play them by your side.

Your words spiraled from your tongue;
The way you spoke was like a song being sung.
Click! The camera sounded,
Your award winning photos so well-rounded.

Your presence was like a rainbow on a cloudy day;
You'd bring joy to others whenever you had something to say.
I miss having you in view;
Now all I do is hope to be like you.

The memories we share will never fade away;
I will be with you again someday.
One day here, the next day gone,
I now glance at the stars each night at dawn.

By Grace Nourse, Grade 7

Horse Painting



(Photograph taken of original painting)

By Frejya Wiley, Grade 7

Sneak Peek at Dragon's Crest

Flying was the most terrifying thing Aiden had ever done. Or at least, it was for all of thirty seconds.

When Feolus leaped into the air, Aiden's stomach lurched, and he was glad that Leto, his fellow dragon rider, had insisted that he skip breakfast. Through his new mental bond with Feolus, Aiden could tell that the flame-colored dragon was bursting with excitement and joy to share the experience of flight with him. However, Aiden felt uneasy ever since Leto had told him that he was ready to fly on Feolus' back.

Both Rider and Ridden had practiced flying separately and then together, but now they would be doing it for real. Feolus welcomed the challenge, and he saw it as an opportunity to reach a new level of trust. In this way, Aiden knew that flying would help strengthen their bond, as trust was a serious and important matter to dragons. However, it seemed like a literal giant leap from practicing riding on a hay bale when he was on the ground to Feolus when he was in the air.

Feolus flared out his wings, bringing them up above their heads and then driving the wings downward, saving them from smashing into the ground where he opened them to their full extent and tilted them upward. This caused the fifty foot long dragon to glide upward. Aiden felt Feolus' strong mind send rolling waves of joy into him, making his skin prickle and a shiver run down his spine. With that, his uneasiness and worry melted away, and only joy and a sense of thrill remained.

Grinning, Aiden pressed his stomach into the long leather saddle, now laying in the low riding position that he had practiced. His chestnut brown hair was blown back by the wind, cool air rushing by him as Feolus flapped upward in a spiral. He was positioned in such a way that Aiden was almost sitting upright, and he clung tightly to the horn of the saddle as Feolus continued to climb. Then Feolus flapped his wings once more and then opened them, allowing a warm wind current to lift them even higher and move over the mountains of Ivozar Island as Aiden took in the view.

They were flying in front of a narrow strip of clouds, and there was more of the same thin clouds below them. They glided over a small break in the oak and maple trees, Feolus' massive shadow scaring any small rodents that might have been living in the small grassy field. The tree-covered mountains were mostly different shades of green; however, there was the rare patch of yellow, brown, orange, or red. Feolus let out a happy roar, and birds flew from tall trees, fluttering away from the dragon and the boy.

In all of his sixteen years of life, Aiden had never experienced such an amazing feeling of freedom before. He raised his arms up in the air, imagining that he had a shield on one arm and a sword in his other hand. He could almost see the terrified faces of his enemies as he and Feolus flew into battle. Feolus, picking up on Aiden's thoughts, let out another roar, and Aiden could sense that he was pleased. Aiden let out a joyous laugh.

Then Feolus' head turned ever so slightly as he sniffed the air, and, after sending a quick warning to Aiden to hold on again, he flapped his wings and turned his neck to the right, pulling them out of the wind current. Aiden felt slightly colder now, but he did not mind as he saw the glittering emerald scales of Eydis. As the green dragon flew closer, Aiden saw the shape of Leto, his fellow dragon rider in the saddle, waving a hand at him. He lifted an arm and waved back as the two dragons flew towards each other. Feolus and Eydis opened their wings to slow themselves, then they seemed to hang in the air, held up only by the steady beats of their wings.

Over the sound of the dragon's beating wings, Aiden made out Leto's voice call out to him. "Follow us!"

With that, Eydis twisted and dove below Feolus, disappearing from Aiden's view. Aiden barely had time to process Feolus' warning and gripped the horn of the saddle, squeezing his legs together before the flame colored dragon flipped upside down. Feolus dove after Eydis, plunging downward before the emerald green dragon flared out her wings and leveled herself out, flying over the treetops. Feolus did likewise, and then he flapped extra hard, bringing them next to Leto and Eydis. Leto glanced over at Aiden from her low position, and Aiden saw the small smile playing upon her lips and the competitive gleam in her deep blue eyes. Then she turned her head and her thin hair whipped in the wind as Eydis pulled in front of Feolus, as if her hair was saying *Try to catch us*.

Aiden understood what she wanted - a race. It had been years since the last time Leto and Eydis had raced another Rider and Ridden, since they had been the last two until Feolus and Aiden showed up.

If it's a race they want, it's a race they'll get. Aiden told Feolus, and the dragon agreed. Feolus drove his wings upward, and they soared up above Leto and Eydis. They entered a strong wind current and suddenly zipped past the other Rider and Ridden. Leto looked up, and then Eydis drove her wings upward and they entered the wind current as well. Eydis flapped her wings hard to catch up, but the effort tired her and she slowed. Feolus let out a roar of triumph, but Aiden knew that Leto and Eydis would not give up so easily.

Just as luck might have it, the wind current died, and so Feolus tried to find another. He found one, but it was blowing in the opposite direction, and so he immediately pulled out of it. But the wind current had moved them back- and now they were flying side by side with Leto and Eydis again. Feolus and Aiden had the energy advantage. But Leto and Eydis were flying in familiar territory, and they had the advantage of experience.

Eydis dived, this time heading straight towards the rocky coast on the south eastern side of Ivozar Island. Feolus dove after her. The two dragons accelerated downward and at such a speed that made Aiden feel a bit uneasy again. Eydis flew past the shore, out towards the massive pillars of rock that jutted out of the sea. Feolus knew what she was doing and he dove faster, trying to get to the pillars of rock first. The dragons entered the maze of gapped rock, weaving in and out of columns, and up and under sea arches.

Feolus flew under the last sea arch, and they were again out on open sea. Aiden glanced over at Leto and saw her eyes locked onto the rocky shore. Now he knew where the finish line was: the beach. Both dragons beat their wings as hard as they could, and the Rider and Ridden entered a feeling of focus and determination.

The rocky shore was so close now. Aiden could not tell who was going to win. The dragons were snout to snout. Then they both landed - or rather, crashed - on the shore at the same exact time. Aiden looked at Leto, who was smiling, a very rare sight indeed.

"Go again?"

By Emma Doherty, Grade 7: Second Place Fiction

Dragon



By Kaitlyn Sullivan, Grade 7

The Snowy Dream

Snowflakes are angels from heaven,
Disguised as millions of white flowers,
Snowflakes dancing in the sky,
Like billions of white butterflies.
Drifting on the midnight air,
No two snowflakes are alike.

Silently, the world is transforming into a crystal dream.
The fields are covered with fluffy cozy blankets,
The trees are decorated with feathery trims,
The houses are dressed in white coats.
If you listen with your eyes closed,
The snow whispers like a gentle lullaby.

When thick snow covers the ground,
All animals are gone.
Except the lone wolf standing high,
Under the silvery moonlight in the night sky,
Howling to the moon with great pride,
The wolf is the prince of the snowy night.

Snowflakes are angels from heaven,
Disguised as millions of white flowers dancing in the sky,
The silvery snowflakes silently swirl,
Under the shimmering moon,
Snowflakes suddenly swing in the sky.
You can hear the lone wolf cry.

By Aaron Mar, Grade 7: Third Place Poetry

Snake

We have all seen it once before;
Don't lie saying you have not.
A boy or a girl, sharp as a snake,
Quick to try to take all that you've got.

You walk down the hallway on a normal day,
Small and innocent, just a young bird.
Until you catch her sharp eyes and she opens her mouth,
A hissing you have more than once heard.

To people passing by she's so innocent,
A perfect picture in its frame,
And it's only to those she's intimidated by
Would she ever show her fangs.

She's like a copperhead snake, small and quite pretty,
But there's a secret to a passerby's surprise.
For if one comes too close, it's poison she spits,
Her diamond back, a simple disguise.

Enough about the predator and now about the prey;
Yes, sir, I'm talking about you.
'Cause though they may seem scary and some run away,
Your advantage is *you* know the truth

Against a big, strong snake,
What are you to do?
A small, little bird, defenseless and scared,
But you don't have a clue.

When you grow, you'll have wings and above them you'll fly,
With the sun smiling on your wings they will shake.
For you are an eagle, beautiful and strong,
But the bully is a garden snake.

By Megan Winkler, Grade 7

Blue

Blue is the color of the stream,
Cornflower trickling through a patch of thriving thorny ferns.

Blue is the color of hydrangeas,
Pantone fresh and new with an enveloping aroma.

Blue is the color of sadness,
Blue-gray when you don't know what to do.

Blue is the color of the blue birds,
Sapphire singing back to you.

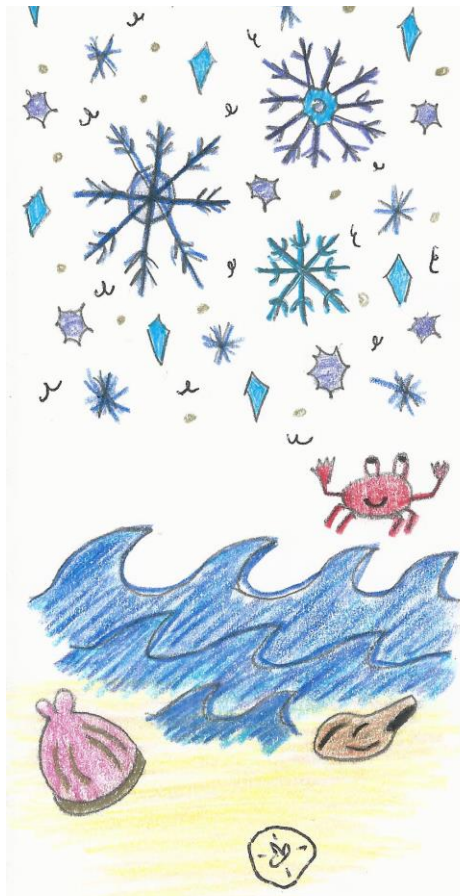
Blue is the color of freedom,
It's as blue as the limitless sky.
Cerulean speckled with birds conversing freely
And clouds dancing all around.

Blue is the color of the ocean,
Indigo bottomless and filled with mystery.
Blue is the color of mornings and nights,
Azure with beginnings and ends

Blue is the color of the breeze,
Periwinkle bringing new ideas to freshen your mind.

Blue is the color of life,
Shades of the sky, water, and light.

By Ana Kurchak, Grade 8



The Seasons

Children playing in the snow
Parents wishing it would go
Snowflakes glistening all around
Gently falling to the ground

The sun is shining in the sky
Now the snow is saying bye
The rain is like a giant shower
Watering the bright pink flower

Finally school has come and gone
Children are playing all day long
I watch the waves crash on the shore
I see sparkling seashells, crabs and more

Colors as far as the eye can see
Leaves are falling from the tree
Crackling leaves all around
Like a blanket across the frosty ground

Round and round the seasons go
When will they stop, no one will know



By Maribeth Sullivan, Grade 8

Girl



By Aleya Rada, Grade 8

Slak



By Aiden Toy, Grade 7

The New Dark World

A boy, no older than 14, sat on one of the highest oak tree branches looking out into the dark blue sea. The boy liked to come here when he was stressed or angry. This was his hiding place where he could enjoy the light touches of the wind and the singing of the Charmixes.

If you're wondering what Charmixes are, they're big beautiful birds the size of a horse; it's feathers are razor sharp at the touch as well as its beak. What mesmerized the lad was the color of their feathers and eyes that seem to change every day, but that was not what the boy loved most about the creatures. He loved when they sang their enchanting songs to him before the world enveloped itself into darkness. Their delightful voices could lure a mortal man into their dark cold caves and end them right then and there. People may say that these creatures are harmful, but he just thinks that they're beautiful in their own dangerous way.

Sometimes though, he felt lonely. He would welcome nature with open arms. There were so many things the boy liked about nature like when he lay down on the soft grass it felt like a bed made of clouds. Or when the hot rays of the sun enveloped him in its warmth, and the feeling the soft caresses of the cold wind while it whispered to him soothing words. This made him forget about the bloody war, the innocent blood spilling, the children's cries for help, and the royal houses fall. The boy shook his head, pushing those thoughts to the back of his mind, not wanting to taint his place with crushing thoughts and hopeless dreams. Anyway, it wasn't like he could do anything about it.

Sometimes it wasn't easy for the boy to forget all of these horrible thoughts, but when he couldn't he went down to the sea and dipped his feet into the cold water with mushy dark sand. He loved mother nature very much, but he also liked to spend some of his free time in town (when he wasn't working at the shop with Myriam or with her husband, Robert, a famous blacksmith). The village he lived in was on the west side of the County that had the umbra sea in reach. The sailors could go fish and bring food back to the town, but they never stepped over the boundary lines that marked the start of a dangerous path and the end of a safe one.

He went to the town's library, which was located at the center of town. There he read books about Thornlea (the village's name): the history and the dark ages that swept over the town and drove people into hungry madness that drove the sailors to step over the boundary lines and search for more fish to bring back home. Every time he went to town, he asked the sailormen about what lives under the dark blue waters, and he asked the townsfolk about what happened on the other side of the green hills that separated Thornlea from the outside world. They shiver at the thought of it, but he doesn't. His body bursts with excitement, curiosity, and new found energy to know about what lies beneath the deep dark veil of water layers and what dwells beyond the Morgenstern Hills that are like a barrier protecting Thornlea from the Unknown.

The lad knew that he wasn't like the other kids who always being disobedient, making noise wherever they went, and acting like if they were animals. The lack of respect the kids in Thornlea showed their mothers surprised him for he would never raise a hand to Myriam or talk to her like if she was an inferior. He respected and valued women no matter if they're nobles, commoners, or supernatural. He was taught from an early age to accept people as they came. He should only worry if his actions were hurtful to people but at same time to be kind and generous to the people in need.

The boy closed his eyes and took a deep breath, smelling the scent of dirt mixed with the moist salty sea. He felt something touch his shoulder lightly and startled, he jumped. For a moment, he forgot he was sitting on a tree branch feet above the ground, but small, strong arms gripped his shoulders and brought him back to reality, saving him from his near death. He turned to his side to see a middle-aged woman.

The woman seemed to be in her twenties; she had black hair that twisted into curls and stopped at her waist. She had grey eyes, pale skin, small pink lips, and she seemed to be wearing a long silk red-gold dress, gold feather earrings, a very pretty necklace made of white pearls, and a golden circlet with a ruby stuck in the middle, marking her status of being a Seer.

A Seer is someone who can perceive the spirit world with his or her own eyes. They can see things from the "unseen realm" or the "spirit realm". Broadly speaking, a Seer is someone who receives spiritual revelation visually: things in the spirit realm are being revealed visually. They are seeing the "unseen realm" or the "spirit realm." They may see through visions or dreams, and what they see appears as real as anything the rest of can see. When they speak what they see, they are speaking prophetically. The seer gift is also related to the ability to discern spirits.

The boy almost didn't hear the woman calling his name, until she was practically shouting at him: "Raine!!!" the woman shouted.

Raine remembered that the person talking to him was Myriam, his adoptive mother.

"Um...sorry, Myriam," the boy muttered the apology so quietly the woman almost didn't hear him.

She sighed. "It's okay...I just wanted to tell you that dinner is ready and Aaron is dying to see you. He says that he got a new pair of magical cards to show you," she said softly to the kid, giving him a genuine smile.

"Yeah, okay, I'll go down in a second," the boy said giving her a small smile.

She sighed again and said, "I sensed something wrong with you...so I came to talk to you," the woman frowned, destroying the view of perfect white skin and leaving in its place wrinkles that had come with passing years.

"Why am I not surprised?" the boy replied back almost sound sarcastic.

"Maybe because you know that I am not like the other people that you always meet in town," she said, while sitting down next to the boy.

After a moment of just sitting there watching the brilliant sun in its mighty glory, Myriam said, “We need to talk, Raine, about what’s coming. You shouldn’t be surprised by what I’m about to tell you because you of all people should have seen it coming.”

The boy did not reply; he just sat there, staring straight ahead, waiting for Myriam to start their inevitable conversation. “The war is getting worse, food provisions are getting scarce, and people are losing their jobs,” she said calmly. “I know you’re too young to understand what’s happening, even less understand politics and the ‘Hierarchs’.” The “Hierarchs” were the rules the keep order/balance between the mortal and supernatural world.

“I know...but why me, Myriam? Of all the talented, powerful people in the world, why me?” Raine asked.

“It was written down for you by the Fates themselves - I heard them you know – and, even though we sometimes want to change fate, we can’t even if we try.” she said giving him a small smile.

“I know, I just wish that for once our lives could be normal,” he said

Myriam chuckled, and Raine looked at her, confuse. She said, still smiling, “Sweetheart, our family is anything but normal.” He, too, chuckled a little, because it was true his family was anything but normal.

“You and your friends will embark on a journey like no other, but it is not today... You’re too young for that and not to say the parents of your friends would be hysterical if they ever found out what you all are going to do,” she said seriously.

“I don’t suppose you would tell me from out of the goodness of your heart?” Raine said hopefully.

The woman laughed, her laugh like the chirp of the birds the boy hears every time he wakes up. “If I told you it would be no fun, would it now?” she said teasingly. He smiled.

Then, the boy’s face turned serious in the next instant “I am worried, Myriam. I feel that when we’re closer to winning this war, we’re just getting farther away from victory.... And with the Royal Houses falling, it’s so much worse,” he said.

The Seer looked at him with sympathy in her eyes and said, “I know, but remember that we have to maintain strength even in the worst of times, but, you’re right, it feels like the dark ages again.”

“What if we don’t win? What will happen to Thornlea? What will happen to our family? Are we going to be separated like in those other Countries? What if the Shadows win?” the boy said frantically, fear clear in his eyes.

For a moment neither of them spoke. Awhile passed and Raine found it harder to breathe. This was not missed by the Seer.

She immediately wrapped the boy in her arms and started whispering to him soothing words while running her hand across his dark hair, trying to calm him. This had happened before, when he found it harder to breathe and then his vision started to blur until it went dark, but still the boy knew that he didn’t pass out. Instead he was in kind of a state of shock and couldn’t do anything but cry and try to breathe the air that his lungs needed. When this happened he felt like he was drowning in the umbra sea, and he could not see anything but an empty void that chilled him to the bone. He hated that feeling - feeling powerless and vulnerable when he had panic attacks, because that’s what they were. These attacks constricted the boy’s lungs not letting him breathe and flooding his mind with overwhelming feelings of fear and anxiety.

Minutes passed and Raine became calm. The attack had subsided and there was no threat anymore. “Am sorry...” he murmured.

“You do not have to be sorry, Raine,” she said taking his face into her hands “It’s okay to feel fear once in a while, because it reminds us that we’re still human. Those that aren’t scared will be considered monsters or creatures that they had their humanity stripped away from them,” she said calmly.

“But, Myriam, everything is falling apart and the ‘Luna Folium’ House is losing the battle against the Sanguinem Luna Umbra House. Everyone knows that and we also know that we may have no more time to wait and see what happens,” Raine said with a shaky voice.

“Look, Raine, when things start going downhill, it doesn’t mean it is game over,” she said, but the kid looked at her with a confused expression, a frown had now formed in his face. She sighed. “Look at it this way,” she said and taking her hands off the boy’s face. She brought her palms together and started chanting in Latin. Raine loved when Myriam did this; he admired her and her work - how she could manipulate people and do spells as if was as easy as breathing. When she was done chanting, she opened her hands to let him see what she had created. There in her hands were...broken pieces of glass. The frown that boy was wearing deepened.

“What do you see, Raine?” she asked.

“I see broken pieces of glass,” he said. The woman hummed, and he asked, confused, “Myriam, what does broken glass has to do with the topic we were talking about?”

“Just because things are falling apart doesn’t mean things are coming to an end. It just means that the situation might be taking a new shape,” she said, putting a piece of glass together with another piece of glass, proving a point.

The lad’s frown softened, nodding in understanding. Then he said, “For the better or worse.” Myriam hummed in agreement. The boy saw as the sun was preparing to go under the lone umbra sea. “Am scared, Myriam, about everything,” the boy said to the middle-age woman sitting next to him.

“Aren’t we all?” she murmured wisely. She then joined the boy to see the beautiful sun set beyond the umbra seawalls and went beneath the cold dark blue sea. The boy watched the mesmerizing sunset while the Charmixes lulled him into a dreamless sleep with one of their enchanting songs. And he calmly embraced the darkness.

Guardians of the Forest

The Guardians of the forest,
they are strong and tall.
They watch and protect
all life on Earth.

Warriors of the forest,
they fearlessly fight
the mighty storms.
Old and wise, they have been
here since the beginning of time.

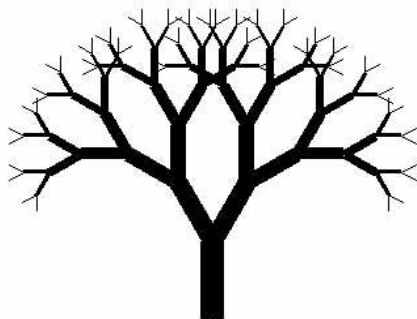
Elders of the forest.
The older they get,
the stronger they are;
wise and knowing, but quiet and mute.

Nourishers of the forest,
They produce the air we breathe,
but still
we kill them with ease.

They are gone.
No longer tall and strong,
their knowledge is lost.
Courageous no more,
but now they are silent and dead.

You probably know one.
You might even have some,
because to us they simply
go by trees.

*By Cooper Ashcraft, Grade 8
Honorable Mention Poetry*



Butterflies



By Kylee Sheehan, Grade 6

The Forest

Glistening dew drops form,
Content bees swarm.
Leafy plants flourish,
Hidden animals nourish.

Soft moss grows on trees,
Crunchy leaves blow through the breeze.
Subtle pink flowers bloom,
Angry clouds gloom.

Raindrops pour from the sky,
Thunder booms way up high.
Rainfall slowly gets lighter,
The dull sky gets brighter.

Golden sun shines brightly,
Moon shines nightly,
And another day passes
As slow as molasses.

By Lizzy Usher, Grade 8

The Hidden Stream

Through the forest a blue stream flows,
Where it's going no one knows.
It never stops; it never slows,
But in the sparkling sun it glows.

The surface gleams,
The small stream seems
To dance through the golden yellow beams
Of sunlight that shines on hidden streams.

Its lazy curves,
Around the large grey rocks, it swerves.
Its bubbling always calms my nerves,
This stream a sight everyone deserves.

By Corinne Stevens, Grade 8

A Nation in the Trees

Downy winds flood the dark,
Still, clawing shatters the silence of night.
Roving through the powdered frost,
A wolf's howl thunders through
And yet a soft purr emanates.
Five, no six, at mother's feet.

Towering wardens loom above
Guarding the nation, solemn and true.
Swiftly gliding through the night,
An owl's whoop is all the fright.
Mother and cub, sound asleep
Await the end of winter's wake.
Still, a crimson rose gushes through
A blanket of white is stained by red,
Bursting, flowering, for all's delight.

A nation in the trees awakes from slumber.

By Ali Kabbara, Grade 8

Soldiers

Semper Fidelis is what they say.

As they march right into the battle.

As the Navy-like squids dive into the bay,

They make the enemies want to skedaddle.

The enemies run at the speed of light.

Our flag flies and soars freely,

Just like we live freely.

All because of our brave soldiers protecting it and us.

We don't know why soldiers do it:

Some for us,

Some for God,

Some for that freely flying flag of ours,

And for our country, most important of all.

The real heroes are the ones who don't make it back,

The ones who died protecting our privilege to live free.

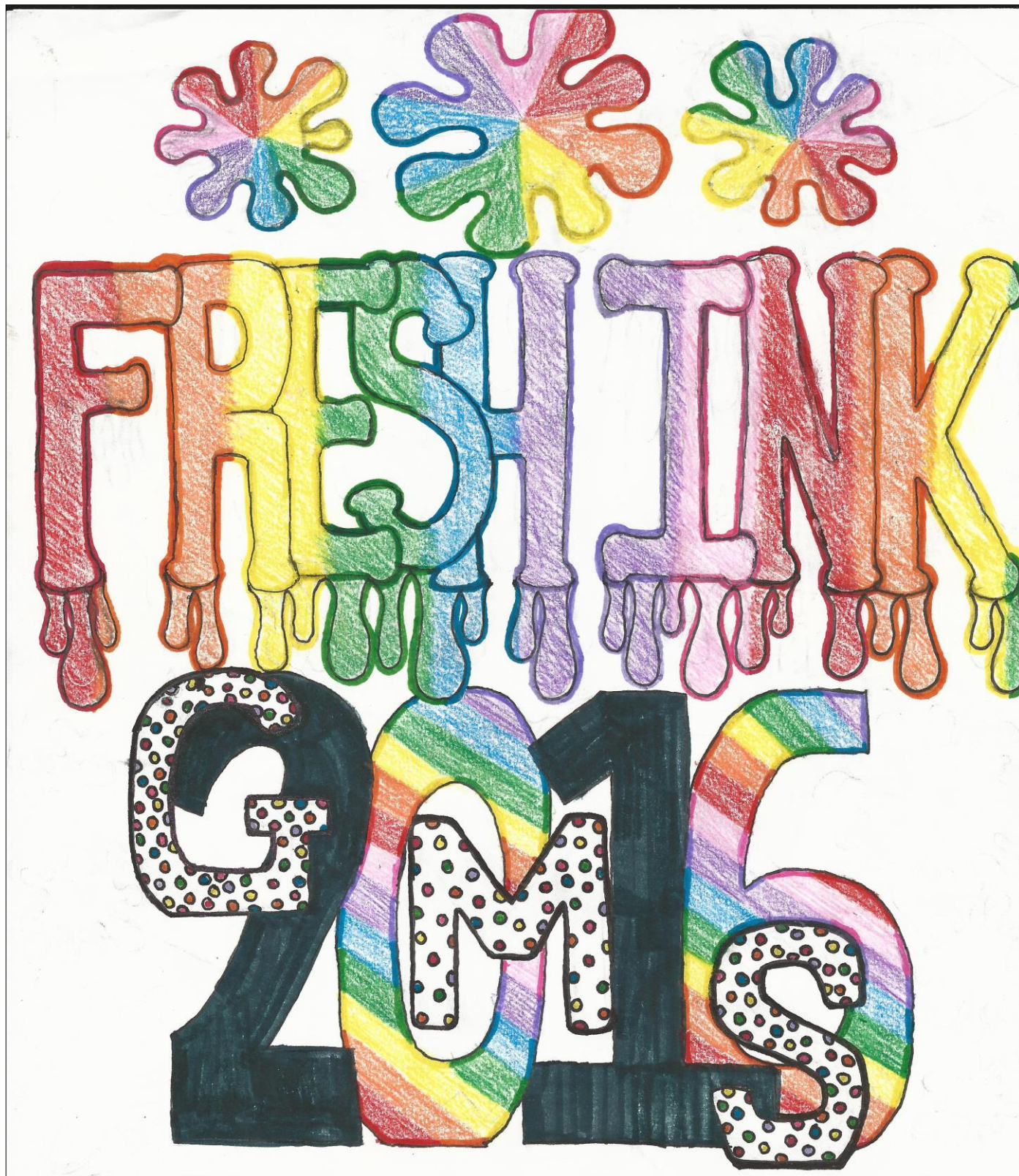
Semper Fidelis is what they say

As they march right into the battle.

By Peyton Murphy, Grade 7



Cover Contest Entry



By Angela Elias, Grade 7: Honorable Mention Cover

“Untitled” Short Story

As I walked home from school today, the clouds were swirled in a spiral fashion, faded to a light gray color. The blue sky that had once been there minutes before had vanished. I glanced up in astonishment, as I had never seen this before. I continued to look up, puzzled, until I was right in front of my door. *Well that’s weird, I thought. The door’s open a crack. I wonder why? Mom and Rachel aren’t home. What’s going on?*

I entered my house, moving cautiously and as slow as molasses, maybe even slower, listening for any thumps or bangs. Nothing. I looked around and searched the entire house and nothing seemed different in any way. This would’ve made sense as I was supposed to be home alone, but the open door gave me some other ideas. I had no one home to help me or protect me from whatever spookiness was going on. My mom, sister, and dog were all at the vet. *Great. Looks like I’m on my own.* I thought to myself.

There was only one other place in the house that hadn’t been checked - the dreaded basement. Taking a gulp of air, I headed downstairs, feeling brave. I hadn’t come down here in years, not ever since the nightmares started. I would be dreaming about all my favorite things: ice cream, puppies, rainbows, you know, that kind of stuff. Then all of the sudden, they would turn dark, reminding me of my dreaded past that I tried so hard to forget about.

I was as quiet as a mouse on my way down there, my heart racing and my breathing short. As soon as I reached the last step what seemed like years later, the musty room was exactly the way it had been left the last time I was down there. I felt a shiver swirl down my spine. No one was in there, though, so I proceeded to the left, in what felt like a living nightmare.

All of the sudden I heard a *bang! crash! slap!* and some murmuring. Whoever was in my house was in the next room over. I tiptoed behind boxes, walls, and whatever else would hide my identity. Then I saw it - my nightmare right before me, except instead of me in that horrible chair like before, it laid empty, almost whispering to someone as to question if they dare to even step foot near it. There were two people in the room - one tinkering with the chair and one with his back turned to me. I tried to slow my hammering, screaming heart and quiet my breaths. As soon as I had calmed myself down, the mysterious man turned around to reveal himself.

Dad?! I thought. What is he doing here? Why is he here? Has he lived down here forever? I thought he left my mom years ago... She said something about him moving far away... These thoughts kept swirling around my head like a tsunami, destroying everything I thought I ever knew.

Suddenly, I heard him speak. “George, when will the chair be fixed? I’ve been waiting for years to fire it up again.” This voice only had a hint of anger, much less than I had ever known.

“Soon, Bob, ok? After years of just sitting here, it won’t start up again in an instant.”

He’s starting it back up again?! Oh no. Oh no, oh no, oh no. Suddenly, it was as if twelve tsunamis, twenty earthquakes, and a handful of tornadoes hit me. I had to get out of this house, this neighborhood. I fled upstairs on the verge of tears and packed a small bag, left my mom a note, and headed out the door.

I ran for what seemed like days, until I finally reached my best friend’s house. It was Friday, so I knew Clara’s mom would let me stay the night. I knocked on the door, out of breath and tear-streaked, when Clara answered.

“What happened?” she asked. I could tell she was genuinely worried about me by the look in her eyes.

“We need to talk.” I said, as we headed up to her room.

I told her every single detail I could muster that hadn’t gotten lost in the tsunami that was still rumbling in my head. She was the only one who knew about my past, my nightmares, my father.

“We have to do something.” she said, with a sense of urgency in her voice once I finished.

“I know. But I don’t know what. Does my mom know he’s there? My sister sure doesn’t. I can’t let him get anywhere near them, I don’t ever want what happened to me to happen to either of them. But they don’t know. They don’t know what he did. What happened... How even though I scrub myself until my skin bleeds, how I can’t get the feeling of it all off of me?”

“Well then what should we do?! No one knows but you, me, and him.” Clara stated.

“I know,” I said. “I guess I just have to deal with him myself. And I don’t want you to come, to get wrapped up in this. I don’t want him to hurt you.”

“But-”

“No. I have to do this on my own. But we need a plan.” And with that we got started.

The next day, Saturday, I woke up abruptly from yet another vivid nightmare, but this one was way worse than all the others. My whole body was shaking, every inch of me filled with fear. However, I had a plan.

The walk back to my house seemed to go by in a second. When I entered, my mom, sister, and dog were gone. A note on the counter told me that they were at a party and would be back in a few hours. Good. I didn’t want them to see what was going to happen. As I tiptoed downstairs as quietly as I could, it didn’t take me long to pick up the conversation. It seemed that the two people I had seen down there, one being my dad, were yelling, screaming almost, at each other. I crouched down in my original spot as a wave of anxiety crashed over me. *I can’t do this.* I thought. *But I have to! C’mom Lydia, be brave...* and with that I listened on.

They were talking about “using the chair” but what for? As I stayed crouched in my position for what seemed like forever, I found out that my father planned on setting our house on fire with all of us in it. Suddenly, I heard the door slam shut and my sister and mom talking quietly upstairs.

“Now’s our chance!” I heard my dad whisper as the man who had been fixing the chair just the day before jolted outside to start the plan. My dad seemed excited, giddy even, until I popped into view and the color drained from his face and it sagged in about five seconds flat.

“Why are you doing this?” I said as calmly as I could, emerging from my hiding spot.

“Lydia...” my dad gasped.

“Why do you hate us, torture us so much that you plan on murdering us as well?”

“Lydia I-”

“No.” I said, cutting him off with as much confidence as I could gather up inside my trembling body. “I still have nightmares. Six years later, you are going to come back to do more damage than was done before. No matter how hard I scrub at my skin, I still can’t get rid of the scent of this room, of you, and the feeling of that whip slashing across my skin. Does that make you happy? The fact that even when you aren’t here that you’re still torturing me? I hope so. Because I haven’t gone through all of this for nothing.” I laugh. “I just cannot believe you. What is going on up there that has caused you to do this?”

“I don’t know,” my dad said, a worried, tired look on his face. You could tell he hadn’t aged well, with bags under his eyes, wrinkles dispersed everywhere, and a permanently tired look plastered on his face. “I just don’t know,” he said.

“I don’t believe this.” I say, becoming angrier by the second. “You can think of huge elaborate plans like abusing and torturing your daughter and murdering your family, but you can’t think of one good reason why? Wow. I cannot believe you.”

Suddenly, he was clenching his fists the same way he used to before he would pull out the whip. I looked him defiantly in the eye with a fire kindling in my soul that had once been charred and empty. I said, “I dare you.”

Out of nowhere he hurled himself at me, the same old whip as before in his hand, slashing around. I, being way more quick and nimble than before, dodged him. I had been replaying my scene of victory where I was better than him in my mind ever since this all started, and now it was actually happening. Suddenly, just as quick as he started, he stopped, looked me in the eye with a real and truly sorry look on his face. He left something on the ground and walked out. A timer.

Suddenly I was dashing up the stairs, screaming at my mom and sister to get out of the house, which I would explain later. We all burst out the front door, my dog included, as the house exploded in a fiery mess. About 20 feet over, I spotted my dad.

He looked me straight in the eye and I could finally see just how mentally tortured he was. He mouthed a quick, “I’m sorry. I love you.” and jumped off the huge cliff we lived on just as my mom and sister turned around. I heard them scream as they ran toward the edge, but everything seemed muted to me.

“It was for the better,” I said in a broken, cracked whisper.

By Lydia Predergast, Grade 8: Honorable Mention Short Story

Painting Admired

The painted sky
Almost as if brushed with watercolors,
Stroke after stroke.
Burgundy, magenta, amethyst shines through,
Cerulean, turquoise, and peach
Hypnotize you.
The kind of painting
That reels you and makes you think
“Why haven’t I seen this before?”
You saw the radiant painting before
But never observed.
You watched it bleed colors
But you didn’t bask in the experience.
You saw its ray of coral
And its blinding beauty
But only until now did you realize
It’s more than an illuminated sky.
It’s a piece of art and now
It’s finally hung in nature’s gallery
And you are the first to admire it.

By Ciara O’Connor, Grade 7

Art

Art is a flower
Beautiful and blooming.

Art is a gift
From the gods.

Art is a box
Full of ideas.

Art has a soul
And a heart.

Art is a brain
Flooded with hope.

Art is the world
All around.

Art is the green trees
And the grass turned brown.

Art is an idea put on paper
Beautiful and sweet.

Having a world full of art
Is truly such a treat.

By Stella Lempert, Grade 6

The Bunny

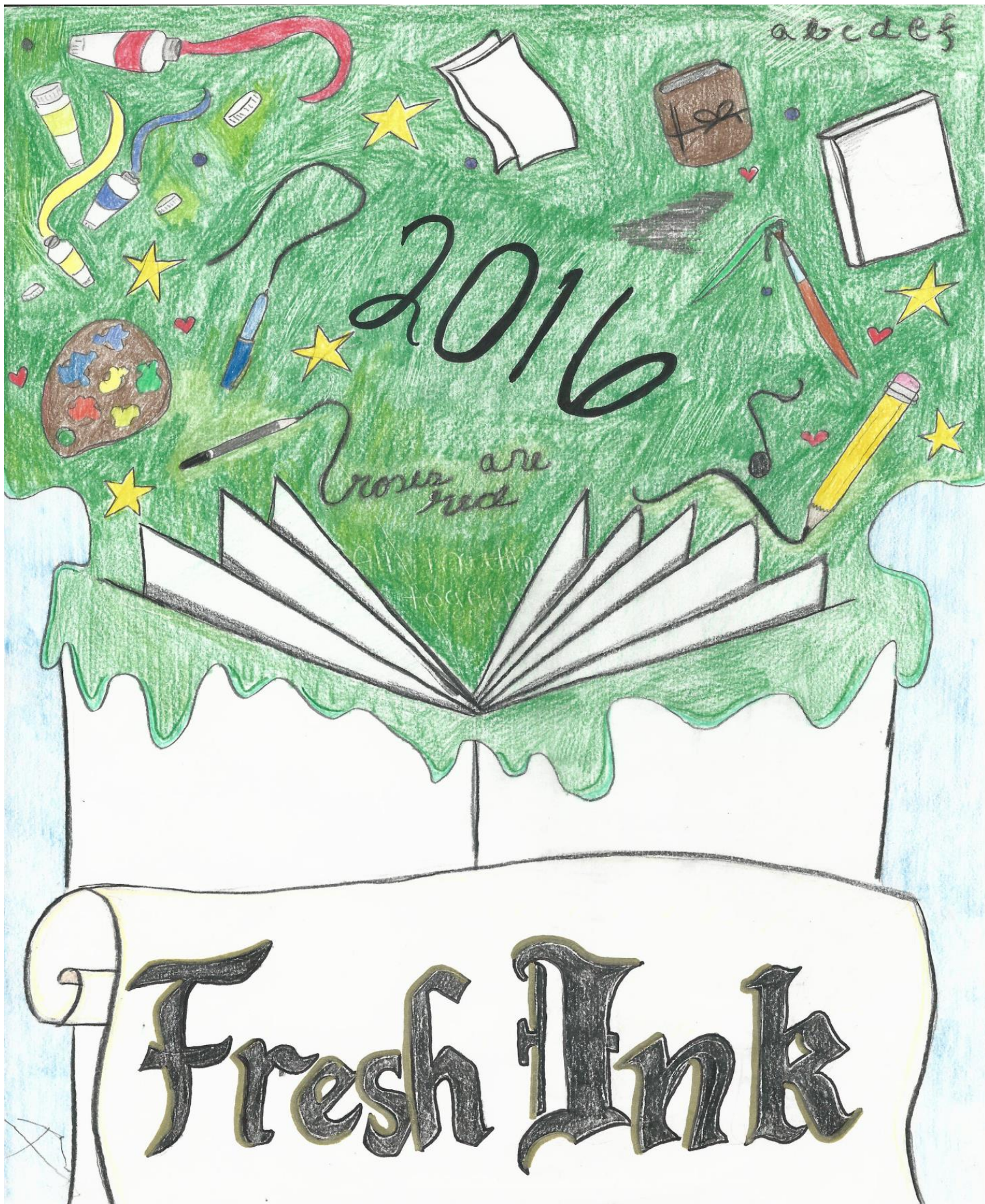
I silently stroll through the infinite field,
Softly ruffling the sunset-touched grass.
A whole other universe, if you ask me.
I find a perfect space, slowly sitting down
With a freshly picked apple clasped in my hand.
I lie on my back, eating the fruit,
Watching cottony clouds drift through a tangerine sky.

I hear the grass rustle and turn my head,
Spotting a small creature among the leaves.
A floppy eared bunny stares at me.
We lock eyes for a moment.
I sit up to offer him a bite of apple,
And he slowly hops over. He takes a bite,
Nibbles a little and quickly swallows.
He looks as if he wants another bite,
So I give one to the little animal.

After he fills his belly, he yawns
And curls up next to me. I yawn, too,
And quietly finish the apple as not to disturb him.
I lie back down and gaze at the sparkling sky.
I close my eyes, and we drift off together.

By Kylee Callagee, Grade 7





By Amanda Duffin, Grade 7: Second Place Cover