

The mission of Lighthouse Writers Workshop is to provide the highest caliber of artistic education, support, and community for writers and readers of all ages in the Rocky Mountain Region and beyond. We strive to ensure that literature maintains its proper prominence in the culture, and that individuals achieve their fullest potential as artists and human beings.

We conduct workshops for young writers for students 8-18 in-house and at local schools with the goal of fostering creativity, confident self-expression, and interest in the power of language and story.

This is the program's tenth published anthology.



And We Created Worlds

A Lighthouse Writers Workshop Young Writers Anthology | Volume 10



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Young Writers Anthology
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Connor Rodenbeck, Editor

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**A LIGHTHOUSE WRITERS WORKSHOP
YOUNG WRITERS ANTHOLOGY
VOLUME 10**

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CONNOR RODENBECK, EDITOR

Introduction

I was a participant in the Lighthouse High School Writing Workshop in 2017, the summer before my senior year of high school. It was an enlightening yet intimidating experience; I found that there are many young writers like myself with talent and drive, and in some ways, I felt that everyone had found their writerly voice before me. In retrospect, that wasn't true at all. In fact, everyone probably felt some sort of doubt creep into their minds as they wrote amongst their peers.

This past summer, two years later, I returned to Lighthouse, this time as an intern. I was able to aid instructors with camps, work with campers to hone their skills, work as an editor of this anthology, and (possibly most importantly) deliver snacks to the porch during snack times. I was nervous walking in as an intern because I am still just an aspiring writer trying to edge my way into the literary community. I had no idea what to expect.

There was that doubt again. It followed me like a ghost at every moment as I walked through the house for the first few days. Yet, it disappeared when I actually started working with the young writers. They were joyous, teeming with enthusiasm. And it wasn't just a general excitement that children seem to possess; no, they were in love with the idea of *writing*. It fascinated me. For weeks I couldn't decipher how they could harbor such an appreciation and excitement for writing at such a young age.

I had the opportunity to lead an activity with one group of kids. It was essentially an exquisite corpse game where they would write a line and pass it the next person where they would write another line. It was a simple game meant to be fun, but when they shared some of the wildly absurd stories they had created as a group, I realized something important about creative writing: it's freeing. As they erupted into laughter at every insane line and plot twist, I saw that storytelling is a way out of the room we are sitting in. Even

these young kids knew that writing could move a person from harsh realities and into a comforting, creative place. Writing is a serious art form, but the magic is that it literally transports you somewhere else. On my drive home that afternoon, I sat in one-lane traffic on Colfax and thought about my past experience at Lighthouse as a participant. I recalled the doubt. I also recalled why I loved writing in the first place: it is exciting to utilize the endless bounds of imagination, to build impossible worlds, to create better places to exist in.

I still have a long way to go as a writer, and it's easy to let uncertainty get the best of me as I continue to learn and grow. Being at Lighthouse—that creaky, old, beautiful oasis for creativity and imagination—this summer with all of the campers reminded me of the importance of writing. To have that spark reignited in me by the lovely staff, instructors, and campers at Lighthouse was a gift that I will always cherish. Thank you, young authors—it was truly a pleasure.

SEBLA ABBADY

10TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

A Verse to Vulnerability (extended)**(INTRO)**

As a little girl growing up in a huge family of immigrants, there was a lot expected of me. Being that I was going to see and experience so many more opportunities than they could have visualized in their minds, they had a set images of exactly what I would be like. The general thought was the design of the all too famous and glorified American Girl.

The American girl is a portrayal of all things precious and cherishable. She's smart, caring, innocent, passionate, and only knows how to obey. She's initially someone whose whole journey is for and by the people. It was something advertised to them when they came to this country. So it became a constantly elevating pressure that was and still is inescapable.

And when pressure is inevitable from a young age, it takes a huge toll on you. But the beauty of facing such things from a young age is learning and growing with them. The moment you are at the comprehension stage, your creativity and imagination is at it highest point. This had lead me to become a highly (then turned moderately) innovative person, making it routine to replace and renew everything right before it was due. And it all started when I first connected with the sky.

(POEM)

When my hands used to be as delicate as french truffles, I believed I
held the stars.

That when golden light hues invaded cool blue skies to then rosey
pinks, amethyst creams, and
deep navys, finally resting on knighthood,
I was the guardian of cherishing.
Cherishing untouchable cumulus cottons.

Cherishing all the flames the night had to offer.
So, I admired the sky
The color reflection
It's ability to submit to the world
Unwillingly
A victim.
Later when I looked at the sky
A strong pigment, my skin couldn't win
I let the dunes of my sight sparkle
My body only craving to be more than a false imitation
But now
Now the sparkle's lost
My bodies lost
My head wondering
No more guiding stars.
My minds more engulfed in the clouds
But it's more static than fluffy
My hands straining to create calligraphies of false spiritual rhythms
The old names I passed out like hidden bias in the news, now
Spewing like dust out of my pen
Hidden tears finally revealed
Marking a map to my thoughts
Unteachable cartography
Deliberately bridged to my page
Smudging my prayers to illegibility
Mutilated art.
I still admire the sky
Entangled in its gray like cigarette smoke
Fogging my ivory innocence.
And I think happy thoughts
Stay ignorant to its true tone.
Stay ignorant to its cries of mercy
Believe in the speks of fire
Believing I can still hear their twinkle torture my ears
Carving it into the ground to enforce a truth
Ignoring
I'm at fault.

EMILY ASPER

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Drowning

These thoughts in my head
Obliterate
My sanity
Splintering me
Into a thousand pieces
That float away
Into the ominous ocean
That I am drowning in
I try to swim to the surface
But
Everytime I see the light
The demons pull me back under

The Tulip

My father once brought home a flower,
A gorgeous pink tulip

Picked fresh from the courtyard,
Soil still smeared across the stem

My mother cleaned it
And placed it in a tall clear vase

A week later my father left,
He left my mother and me

My mother's love for my father
slowly withered

Along with the gorgeous pink tulip

CAROLINE AVRAM

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

The Tale of Cotton Bows

Many don't know
This tale of woe
By the name
Of Cotton Bows,

She lies by the window
Chilling from head to toe
And listening to the cawing crows,

He awaits her arrival
Day by day
Wishing upon her star,

However no amount of wishing
Pray by pray
Can bring her back to his arms,

How he misses the way she sews
The way she comforts his lows
Waiting for the other to join
In their corpse black Cotton Bows.

MATTAE BACA

12TH GRADE • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • MASTER CLASS • GAIL WALDSTEIN

The Conversation Days Before

You were in so much pain, scratching at the sores that invaded your skin. It was putrid and stingy and everything to make someone miserable. With no means of a real cure, you and I were left wondering what in the world went wrong. Something that was eaten or drunk? Maybe some place that we visited not too long ago. Or even the clothes on your back. All we knew was that there was no way of escaping it now. “Are you comfortable?” I asked, my tone juxtaposing with just how awkwardly it came out.

“Fine,” you croaked, hand to a throat that itches every time a violent coughing fit reared its ugly head. You made grabby hands for the edge of the blanket that was just out of your reach. You were too weak to even sit up properly.

Quickly, I pulled them up to lay snugly over your skeleton of a body. “Are you sure there isn’t anything that I can get for you?” I wanted to find something, anything to make this more bearable for you. But all I got was a shake of the head.

“No.” You muttered weakly. “I’ll be fine.”

EMERSON BARNES

6TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Another World is Possible

Another world is possible
Shaped out of our world today
Where much better things happen
And no one is ever heard saying,
“I’m better because of my skin!”
“I’m better because of my religion!”
No
A better world would not discriminate
For reasons such as race
Or the shape of your body or the shape of your face
Or your height
Or your width
Or your opinion inside your head
Another world is possible
A world full of possibilities
And hope
And equality and life and peace
And a good home
Where we love
And where girls and boys
Get the same amount of respect
And pay
And girls aren’t expected to go through life
Doing it the “proper way”
Everyone should be able to
Wear what they want
Whether that’s dresses, pants,
Overalls, headbands,
And no one can say I can’t
No one should be judged by who their family is
Maybe my mother is a thief

Maybe my father is in jail
But I am not
And that should be respected
Another world
Is possible
Shaped out of our world today
It's completely doable,
We just have to work together
To make it that way

MACKENZIE BASH

6TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CATLIN PLANTE

Mad Lib Poem (Fill in the Blank)

You are the _____ noise in my _____!
Descriptive Word *Part of the Face*

Your _____ amazes me in many ways.
Personality Trait

Why you _____ me, I don't know but you just do.
Any Word

You might _____ what you do,
Questioning Word

If you ever _____, all I can say is _____.
Questioning Word *One Word to describe him/her*

I say this because you are the _____ to my _____.
Night Object *Day Object*

You are the light to my _____.
A Word to do with light

And If you ever ask anything,
 I will respond with, I _____ you.
Romantic Word

I _____ you _____ ♥!
Romantic Word *His/Her Name*

NELSON BELANGER

12TH GRADE • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • MASTER CLASS • GAIL WALDSTEIN

The City at Night

I walk through the city at night, pacing fast from where I was. Where was I? Was I at a party, or an event, or maybe a battle? There is blood, thick cold blood. It pours from my hand. Was I stabbed or shot, or both? I can't think. Then stop. I can't. No I won't. I'll die. Die, like Barbra, oh god Barbra. She is gone, no there, her body is there. I left her, why? Why did I leave? Help was coming, wasn't it? I heard sirens, no I heard bells, ringing bells, in my head, was I hit? Yes, no. I was shot, yes shot. The blood is slowing. The blood is not all my own, others, the others are gone. Some, or most. My mind is lost, lost? How do you lose what is not there, what is abstract?

I can still hear the screams, not of fear, of fun before the fear. The voices that had been wrung out of the dead, when they were alive. A carefree cheer that now chills me to the bone. A reminder of the sudden veracity in which the attack began. My mind is spinning; my knees are weak. The blood is now thick like a scab over my clothes, feeling like a suit of armor.

The night is cold, though it feels warm under the street lamps. This night has left me courting with death. I have to walk to the phone, one step at a time. One, two, three. One, two, three. My body sways in the wind. Is it windy? No, breezy, that's why I'm wearing this jacket. Though with all this syrupy blood seeping into the seams of the cloth, my body is as heavy as my head is light. I hear the sirens echo loudly in the distance, slowly fading. I fall like a sack of potatoes. I'm left watching helplessly as the red and blue lights fade into black.

KATE BESTALL

9TH GRADE • Lighthouse • High School Summer Writing Camp

Tricycle Red

Grass in summertime and picking strawberries,
Popsicles and apples,
the scent of sunlight.

You remember it—

when the world seemed so beautiful,
when you could see nothing else.

It's your old favorite song,
a faint memory at the edges of your mind.

Roses and poppies,
riding your bike up
the driveway that was once your whole world.

You remember
the sound of birds chirping and laughter,
unexpected and uncontainable.

You look through old photos
and reread old journal entries.

It doesn't mean much now,
but it was everything then.

Nostalgia personified,
whispering to you in the wind
and reawakening
that longing in your chest,
that

aching
for childhood
and echoes of simpler times,
for golden ages
that never existed.

But it's time to let go.

You begin again,
and the world comes back to life.

MEERA BIPIN

6TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

The Sky

The sky is blue and clear,
The sun shining brightly.
It covers the entire world like a blanket.

The sky can be cloudy,
Pillows up in the sky,
White puffs cover the blue.

Dark clouds hover over land,
Waiting to unleash a storm,
Big bangs come from them,
Big shards of light, too.

The sky, home to many birds,
Hundreds fly through it every day.

The sky, blue and clear,
The sun shining brightly.
It covers the planet like a blanket.

CHRISTIANE BOREE

9TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Beelzebub's Assistant

Observe:

A bullied young man,

A human punching bag, if we're being honest.

The boy collects every bruise in a pocket of his brain

Saving all the broken promises

He's been told.

But the pocket can only hold so much pain.

Go ahead, push him around a little.

Break his glasses,

Tear his clothes,

He's too scared to hit back.

Some day he'll

★snap★

And when he fights back,

Stabs back,

Shoots back,

You're to blame

Because you've turned a boy into a killer.

QUINN BRUSH

4TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • JUMP INTO YOUR STORY • SARA ALAN AND SUSAN KNUDTEN

Green

When a flower blooms, it opens into the world and it sees the sun and the bees flying and buzzing. But when Astrid was born the sun and the bees weren't there. She entered the world and opened her eyes to her mother's smiling face. When Astrid looked around the room she saw cracked ceiling and walls painted a banana yellow. That was all they knew about Astrid's birth.

Astrid awoke to the sun shining through her grimy window. The birds were there to greet her just in time. At six o'clock she got dressed in a long mint green sundress and her worn out slippers. She ran upstairs to the smell of cabbage soup breakfast wafting through the house, but there was no time to ask questions, she grabbed her basket and ran outside.

Astrid knew the way by heart, she walked through daisies then clovers, soon she reached red and white roses. She took a step closer to the red rose right in the middle of all the white ones. It stood out, bloomed a different way. Astrid closed her eyes and blew on the petals causing them to flutter in the wind. Astrid watched as the roses opened to a circle of green lush grass and fallen petals all looking up to the flower in the middle, the green delicate petals holding the weight of the glistening emeralds. Astrid picked up her watering can and splashed a little on the glimmering emeralds. They gleamed in the sunlight. Then she saw it, the leaves fluttering to the ground. They were dead, black and burnt. She turned around and it was gone, the emeralds along with their petals had been picked, torn from the earth like a weed.

She ran to the first sound she heard, a rustle by the stream. And there he was, a boy holding a flower in his greedy hands. She took it from him but it was too late, everything was dying. She struck him across his face and he yelled, "What was that?" "You killer you devil

why can't you see it?" She shouted. " See what?" He replied. Tears welled up in her eyes. She ran. She didn't know where, she just ran.

Her feet took her across plains, deserts, jungles, swamps and even to the North and South poles until she finally stopped running. She was far from home. She stopped running at a small puddle of water. She folded a leaf and took a sip. It was sweet, tasteless water. She felt scared. Her rage took her this far, maybe it could take her to the dry ocean, a dead cold dry bloody ocean full of mistakes, greed, pain, death and tears. It hurt to think of her father so clueless, so painful. It was cold, dark and daunting. She loved so much and she had lost so much.

MASON BURNS

6TH • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Breakfast

The smell of the buttery, fluffy, pancakes
The sight of the hand covered in blood
The chirping of the beaks outside
The first piece comes to my mouth
The rich, sweet, and savory taste of wood,
It gives meaning to my lack of ability to finally place a finger
 on what that was
My final decision to give up.
Embodying the feeling of this seat.
The seat of the bus I've been on for years.

MANUEAL CASTENEDA

11TH GRADE • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • MASTER CLASS • GAIL WALDSTEIN

Considering Dying While Conscious

As you think to yourself, confined, incapable, immovable yet lax. Sharp pain dives between your ribs, you don't flinch, of course, that would mean you're capable but you are not. Within this same exact moment, maybe even sooner than that, it stops altogether. All of it stops. Your heart, like everything else now, lax and still. Listen to it closer, maybe even a bit harder, you cannot. The moment of a beating heart drawn out a second, now two, and another. The anticipation of a beat, a feeling and yet still, still it does not come. That, how can you call that the worst part? The worst part is you can't tell anyone, you can't panic, not even open those eyes and let out, in the most primitive form, a call for help to let someone know while they look in your wide eyes pulled tightly open by the horror that boils your blood that you, you are afraid. You can't tell how long it's been since that last beat, you can't do anything, but you can think in these last moments, no matter how long it actually is, really doesn't matter. No one outside can tell if you are alive, but you can think.

FRANCESCA CASTILLO

12TH GRADE • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • MASTER CLASS • GAIL WALDSTEIN

Summer Surprise

It began with that metallic sound. A sound much like a silver ring falling upon a floor of marble, yet so clear, I could swear it was in my ear. I perked up, looking around to see if it was noticed by anyone else in the quiet room. No one paid any attention, the other students were either talking or too focused on their phones to pay any attention to the teacher who wore herself down, trying to find a method to engage her students. The dimmed lights matched the coldness of the room, but no one minded as the sun outside was blinding and only created waves of heat. I look back towards the book in my hand, trying to find the page I stopped on. It was only once the silence returned that I realized the echo from the sounds was still ringing in my ears, very subtle yet attention grabbing.

“What’s up?” I looked up to see my friend staring at me like a mother to a confused child. Her words jerked me out of my own thoughts.

“Nothing, I thought I heard something but it was probably just my imagination, I need more sleep,” she giggled and twirled a bit of her hair.

“We’re seniors, you think we have time for sleep?” Nodding in agreement, I focused on the silence once again, but it seemed that the ringing ended along with the sound of her voice.

It was a pretty insignificant event, especially since I was running around trying to please people everywhere I turned. But I never understood why that memory was so clear. Nothing changed that day, nothing should have.

Later on that night, I found myself sinking slowly into the couch as the smell of pasta emanated from the kitchen. The world is always trying to evolve as people find new ways to show everyone that they’re welcomed. The TV displays another ad for another summer camp, sorry ‘getaway’ for teens. Always finding another way to kick

teens off the video games and make them spend some time outside. Summer camps are the new trend, each one for a different purpose.

"Le feast hath been served," my father comes in with a wide grin and an awkward dance as he smoothly places the plate on the dinner table. Turning my attention away from the TV, I walked over to the table, noting a cut on the back of my father's arm.

"Ouch, what happened there?" I wince as I noticed how deep the gash actually is. He turned back, unsure of what I was saying. I pointed it out, he just laughed and started telling me a story about a ladder and some glass. He always came home with new wounds, I became used to it.

"So, uh . . . what would you think about going to one of those camps?" He asks just loud enough for me to hear.

"They seem boring, stuck with a bunch of people who don't want to be there, doing the same activities as every other kid in the country. I don't get what the big whoop is." I let the annoyance at the thought show through so he doesn't even consider it. He turns with a slightly unsettling grin.

"I kinda sorta signed you up for one," he laughs a bit to himself, then turns back to the counter to avoid my eyes.

"What? Why would you do that? You know I have to get ready for college and get a job and get everything else ready, I can't do anything if I'm stuck in the mountains with some kids that don't know their butts from their heads," I involuntarily throw my hands up, there was no hostility in my voice, more shock and panic.

"You need some more sun, all you do is stay in your room, you don't talk to people, how do you expect to get anywhere in life if you can't even answer the door for the pizza delivery man?" I couldn't find a way to respond, unfinished words and cut off sentences were the only thing to escape my mouth. "Couldn't you do this like a year ago, or something? This is actually the worst time you could have chosen to send me off to some dumb camp."

"I think you'll like it. I know you and once you get into the groove of things, you'll really enjoy yourself."

"Not if everyone else is complaining the entire time," I said defeated. He didn't respond but instead laughed in a smug way.

"Trust me, no one is going to complain at this camp," I looked

over waiting for him to continue as he seemed to almost re-enact something he saw in a movie. He turned to me arms folded then pushed his glasses up with a small 'sha-shing' escaping his mouth. "I know you always wanted to travel, so . . ." he raised his hands up in the air and with a lot of energy, he shouted, "You're going to travel with the club to Europe!" he smiled and stared as if waiting for applause.

LEYLA CASTILLO

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

To my Late Wife, From the Widower

We never listened.
We never laughed.
I never cared.
I never loved back.
She was the glimmer of hope in my life,
in which I threw away.
Wasting the moments,
hours,
days.
Then the months,
Then the year.
Never truly expressing the fortune she brought into my life.

Of my spouse that I never called
“My darling”
She was the one that made all stare.
The velvet dress that attracted men
I was one-in-a-million to be fortunate enough to have her,
But I was bored.
Oh,
My love,
My love,
You are now gone.
I could have cared,
I could have mourned.
Now I sit here alone for the rest of my days,
Torn,
And because you’ll never know how I adorn.

Power and Cause

The insides are
Drowned by the spectacle
Of
Sticky ooze.
The
Weakest don't survive.
If it shows any
Signs,
The goop,
That gives it
Love and warmth will retreat.
Like clouds after a storm.
The strong are rewarded
With what many ask?
That invisible gift:

A purpose.

JILLIAN CHILDS

9TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL WRITING SUMMER CAMP

Untitled

Within days I was dying. By the fifth, I was dead; my fire burned out before I went to bed one violet evening, the last of my material having been surrendered to the flames. I counted the effects with which I was sure to die. My meek tent, my torn, ragged clothes, two days of water and a handful of food, and a few more precious things, like my journal of research and Darci book. But I hadn't prayed in three days.

Nothing really seemed worth it anymore, even my walking, for all I ever did was wander aimlessly, the sun baking my neck, my mouth and throat gone stale.

Sand, sand, sand.

But I could not surrender myself to the desert. What did I have to live for?

What career, what person, what destination did I have left? I was no prophet. In the desert night, I laughed and scolded myself for ever believing that. Darci disappeared and probably died a long time ago. Maybe I was too afraid of death; death, that question that I had flown off to the desert to escape.

And so, with only these dark thoughts in my mind, I sat beside my cold little fire pit, staring hollowly into the smoldering ashes. I was restless, that night.

Impatient. All the thinking about death and why I just couldn't let go was driving me mad, wanting an answer. There was no point in searching for Darci. I was not going to find them. Maybe, I could just convince myself that it was all just a dream in the first place.

And, if I gave up, and returned home, what awaited me there? A family I had let down. There was no career for me there. What a fool I'd been to ever think I could unite the Darci people again; my own exile had proven it was pointless. I could not repay Darci for allowing me to live the night I almost died, I could not prove to

Grigory that his actions had really been worth it, in the long run.

So, the night my fire went out, was the night I decided to die.

I wrote a brief letter to my parents telling them how very much I loved them. In it, I lied, and told them that I was dying with peace and understanding of the Truth. I couldn't destroy them with the whole truth.

I kicked my shoes off, and, barefoot, walked away from my campsite. There was one more ritual I had to perform before I was too delirious. I had to pray, and I had to burn the Darci book so no evil hands would ever find it. Above me, the sky was a dark violet, star-spattered backdrop, the full moon shedding its pale light across the landscape. I closed my eyes to it and I chanted my prayers aloud, first reticently, as if someone might hear me. But my voice steadily rose. The rhythm of my low, dry tone was steady, but wavering, my eyes shut tightly.

I still hoped Darci would appear before me. I didn't want to die with that little bit of doubt, nagging, nagging, that question if perhaps I was really right or not. If I was mistaken, I could die with that. But if I truly had seen a vision, that could only mean Darci had lured me to my fate, and I just couldn't think of That . . .

Perhaps it was merely a whisper of the wind. Some brief, alien sound, out of place in the calm of the night . . . I turned to look, about to shed frustrated tears, and I gave a cry and held up my book.

The blade made a deep laceration in the back cover. Darci's tome is a hardy book, and it had probably saved my life, but more important was that the sword was coming for me again. It was a short, very old blade, with a slight curve to it that added a certain deadly flair as it made its arc. I ducked, and finally spit out a word; "Gregar!"

He swung wildly as I staggered backwards. When I put a hand up, instinctive, to protect myself, the tip of his blade split open my palm, and I screamed in pain. In a vulnerable moment as I was nursing it, he slashed across my side, and I fell to the ground. I glared at him past the hair hanging in my face. I was angry that he interrupted my final sacrament, angry that he had ever dared to approach me again after I'd promised myself I'd rip his face off if he had ever dared to approach me again. But I was defenseless. So my rage only built as he stood over me, towering.

“They gave me the privilege of ending you,” he said quietly. I expected that to be it. Instead, he continued, “I followed you. Dreaming of how I would rip you limb from limb.”

With a feral roar, I leapt at Gregan, clawing at his robes, trying with my weak, underfed body to do something.

But he was easily twice my weight. Gregan simply threw me back, and kicked me until I lay still. Still, I lifted my face. My nose was bleeding.

“Bastard,” I whispered.

I gazed up at Gregan in fear and revulsion. Teeth bared, he raised the sword.

And I thought briefly of what a cheap friend he’s been; and then I thought of my family, who had sent me here with such hope, imagined them waiting for a message that never came. That was a mistake, because I started to cry.

Unlike my brother I don’t cry easily, not unless it’s really warranted, and then, most of the time, when I’m afraid. Just ten minutes ago I’d been preparing my own death. But now I really, really faced it; now that I stood on that fragile line between my precious little existence and the endless black I faced, I wanted so badly to be with my family, to be what they dreamed me to be.

I wanted to be the next prophet!

But now I didn’t even get an afterlife at all.

JOSHUA CORN

8TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MYSTERIES AND SUSPENSE • ALISON PRESTON

Well

Well, that's a hell of a wreck!" The whole field was empty, except for a big black object that was sitting lifelessly on the ground, smoke coming out from it like a cigar. The side of the object had the words printed THE LONGTON EXPRESS. This was a train a few hours ago. This massive machine had lost its steering, went off the rails, and crashed. Unfortunately, none of the passengers survived the disaster. Quickly engulfed in flames, the train was burnt fairly bad, but the firefighters were able to extinguish the fire before the cigar completely decomposed into ashes. I, Dave Dickens, am here to investigate what happened.

"Lurvey, come on! We're going in this piece of metal, and let's figure out how this bad boy messed up."

"Everybody get on! We're going to head out before the sun sets!" Bill shouted as everyone got their bags on board. Thank god we're leaving this place, it was horrible! I hated to perform here in such a dirty place. There's no shower long enough to make me feel clean.

"What are you waiting for Anna! Let's get on the train!"

"Okay, Cap!" Gosh, I hope the next city is cleaner.

"I see... a circus group that was headed to a new city. They called themselves *The Phantom*, riding on the Longton Express." *What could've gone wrong for such a successful circus?*

"Lurvey, let's go in that train and check out what's left inside."

"Ok guys, next we're headed to Chord City. Beautiful place, big population. Looks like we can get some good money out there." Bill looked up at us. "Great job last time guys, let's keep up the effort. Now get some rest until dinner." We all headed to our cabins, and I laid down dead tired on my bed. I took a peek outside and saw the endless fields stretching across the horizon. "Might catch a little nap..." I slowly closed my eyes.

"Nothing much in this room...nothing too weird besides his circus

stuff, not much more than that.”

“Hey Dave, Come check this out!”

“What is it, Lurvey?” I walked over to him.

“Two dead bodies...one with many knife wounds in his back, and the other, looks like she hit her head.”

“What a terrible way to die... Clearly looks like a murder to me.”

“Do you think this killer crashed the train?”

“Possibly...” I grimaced. “But there’s too much missing to figure out what really happened. Whose cabin was this?”

“Rodney Lewis,” said Lurvey. I took note of his name.

“Thanks. Now let’s move on.”

I woke up right before dinner, to a mysterious sound from next door.

“Ugh...” My body was all achy, and I got up slowly. Rodney must be in his room next door, wonder what he’s up to. I left my room, and knocked on the room next door.

“What?” I heard a weak voice from inside.

“It’s Anna. What are you up to?”

“Help . . .” I heard a small thud.

“Hepp? What’s that? Anyway, you should come out soon, we’re having dinner!” I didn’t hear a response, thinking Rodney wanted to be alone.

“Next, is the dining room”

“Alright, let’s see what we can find in here.” I looked around the car. “A bar, tables, and chairs. Nothing too extraordinary, except I’m mostly seeing dead bodies on chairs.” *This seems odd*, I thought. *All the dead bodies are lying perfectly around the table. When the fire spread, no one seemed to run away. It’s like they died before the crash . . .*

NADIA DEBICK

5TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • BUILD YOUR WRITING PORTFOLIO • ALISON PRESTON

I Am...

I am Nadia
Daughter of Andi and Frank Debick
Who needs my cat and family
Who loves writing and being creative
Who sees opportunities and life
Who hates homework and veggies
Who fears death and sharks
Who dreams of being president and becoming a cat
Resident of Denver, Colorado, USA, World
Universe of a trillion stars
Debick.

LILY DEFNET

9TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

cardboard

I remember that summer as my last. There was something exhilarating about it; the large expanse of time laid out for me. It was the taste of lemonade nestled on my tongue and the languor following a night without sleep. I remember walking across the boardwalk of the city, gesturing to every pontoon in sight and marvelling at its grandeur. Belting out the lyrics to songs in litany as we tossed our hands in the air. We wasted hours staring at the plumes of light in everyday things and turning our backs on the hell burning behind us. We convinced ourselves we could heal raw wounds with honey, and murder the cardboard cities all around us.

I can still feel those threads of memory sometimes. I think we were waiting for our sins to catch us by the throat. We were waiting until the motes of night shed into dawn. We were waiting until the day that those cardboard cities caved in on us.

KENLEY ELLIS

7TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Untitled

Hot words poured on me.
 Boiling
 Blistering
 Yet unnoticeable
 The words inside bubbled louder.
 Why
 Why
 Why was this happening?

What choice was given?
 There was no explanation
 Just anger
 Fear
 Shame
 Why was this happening?

I slunk away
 Flush with embarrassment
 Eyes down
 Vision blurred
 But I was stopped
Forgive me
 What was happening?

I lurked in shadow
 As he was accused of what I had done.
 A smile crept in me
 Hidden
 Sinful
 Yet my stomach churned still
 Guilt
 Why was this happening?

His cheeks flamed
 Yet the smile within faltered
 Guilt crashed like waves inside of me
 My ears
 My chest
 Why was this happening?

My body moved without control
 Footsteps sounded
 My footsteps
 Pat pat pat.
 Guilt spoke.
Forgive me
 What was happening?

ELLIOTTE ENOCHS

12TH GRADE • JEFFERSON COUNTY OPEN SCHOOL

A Letter to Dysphoria:

Dear Dysphoria,
Thank you.
No really, thank you.
Thank you for making me hate so much of who I was,
Making me change so much of what was essential to my identity,
All so I might have been able to escape some of your wrath.
You reign over my body,
Choosing my outfits,
My haircut,
My name,
All while I watch.
Not knowing why I feel this,
But knowing that the changes,
That running away from you,
Felt nice.
At least it felt better than those moments that felt feminine enough
for you to hit me like a truck.

It all started a year ago,
When I no longer felt like myself,
This feminine person,
The princess of my childhood became,
The fairy of elementary school became,
The want-to-be badass goth girl of last year,
And they didn't feel right.
But also,
Masculinity wasn't right either.
I knew I was a girl,
I had established that.
But that night,
I knew that you had somehow made your way inside of my head.

And I no longer had any grasp on who I was.

From there you managed to take over my life.
 You were hell and Euphoria was heaven,
 And the two of you had the same idea for me.
 You sat on my shoulders like an angel and devil,
 And you worked together to lead me somewhere,
 But whenever I was close to there,
 To masculinity and being male,
 You would decide to give me a day to be feminine.
 And still, every time I feel sure and confident in my gender,
 It changes enough to start a new cycle.
 And I hate you.
 You have caused me so much pain,
 And now,
 You rarely show your face to me.
 But I fear your return.
 So now when I look back,
 All I can see is different versions of myself,
 And many of them feel better than the one I see in the mirror.

You caused me to change so much of myself,
 You may have created a completely different person.

Cutting off huge parts of myself,
 In some cases literally.

I cut off two feet of my hair,
 My hair: once half of who I was,
 Curled down to my waist,
 It turned from a long pain in the ass,
 A part of my identity,
 A joke,
 Something once lovely,
 Into an arrow pointing to me labeled “girl”
 An arrow in my heart when I looked in the mirror.
 Only not a problem when wrapped under a hat,

Every. Single. Day.
To the point where everyone thought I cut it.
And then I did.
And I fucking miss it.
I wish I were still able to hate it.
But it caused me so much pain,
And I don't know how to fix this.

You were such a monster that much that I loved about myself
became painful.

My name no longer felt beautiful,
I loved my dead-name.
And I may still.
But you blurred my vision,
Caused for me to see that word as an attack,
So instead of hearing the familiarity of it,
I only see knives,
Stabbing my gender.
Stabbing me.
So I cut off two letters,
And added another 5.
I love my old pronouns.
My old gender.
My old style.

But you,
Dysphoria,
A monster living in me,
Altered my vision,
Now I've seen much of what I loved about myself turn into weapons.

Dear Dysphoria,
Fuck you.

Sincerely,
Your victim

DAPHNE ERSKINE

7TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Eyes

Eyes are everywhere.
Every day, we see through them.
Every day, we see into them.

We're in such a complex universe,
Yet an eye can show you the world.

My eyes tell me of life.
My eyes tell me of death.
My eyes tell me stories,
Stories of the world around me.

What do your eyes tell you?

My Guardian

2 counts of three years ago,
A ghost had visited me.
I know not her name nor her age,
For she just stood there, staring at me.

A scream and a quick set of steps followed,
Though when I returned, she was gone.
And now, full of sorrow, I regret it.
Because I didn't hear her song.

If I had stayed and listened,
I would have heard her question.
Dark eyes, and long black hair.
A pristine white nightgown, without a tear.

If I had stayed and listened,
I would have heard her answer.
As beautiful as an angel, perfect in every way.
I would have met her, if only I had stayed.

If only I had stayed.

Another Ode to Silent Poets

There are simple thing in the world.
Simple things that bring me joy.
And so I call a toast to these simple things:

To new words every day.
To childhood cartoons.
To bright colorful papers.
To chocolate on a bad day.
To visits to a far-away father.
To puppies named Dave.
To new friends at new schools.
To a mother's hug every day.
To a good book on a lonely night.
I owe these things my entire life.
I owe to them my happiness,
My honesty, my integrity,
My confidence, my love.
I owe these things what I have become.

ANDY FRENCH

8TH GRADE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP

Why I Want Scars:

He feels like red.
He fills in the cracks with his blood.
His name does not belong to him
And his chest is swollen
With the absence of his desires.
He feels like grey .
When they tell him
花の少年
Does not exist.
We won't do it for you.
We're afraid.
His world is his body and home,
But neither are really his.
In another world:
He feels like purple skies over Tokyo
You made it.
Refrigerators with your magnets and
Scars on his chest.

Flowerboy pt.2

Plants on the windowsill
Hang out above the street
He's doing his part
Metal straws in the kitchen.
A man in his bed
The curtains are yellow,
Right Isak?
I am in your other world.
Alt er love
愛してる
Fingers pressed tightly together.
I once had dreams of becoming a
Beautiful poet
And I did.
I am in your other world.

GABRIELLE FRENCH

10TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Shades of Pink

Start with pale linens, fresh. For a new child, cradled in her precious innocence. Gaze at her, admire her soft milkiness. Compare the curl of her pudgy fingertips to the roughness of your palm. Placid, fragile, naive. She makes you feel the same vulnerability.

So you teach her. Nurture her and guide her towards something. Sew her a light chiffon dress in pale pink, a birthday present. Watch it get dirtied and muddied by play. Easily sway her on to the side of protection. Lecture to her your rules and your morals. Take the time to double tie her laces and triple check the locks. She picks up on the edge of worry starting to peel from your smooth tone, and this is dangerous. You teach her shame. Her fists curl and tighten. She learns to blush.

HUNTER GROGAN

12TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

The Witch

The woman, Nix, was a first-generation witch. Her grandmother was a corporate lawyer and her mother had a violently utilitarian personality that couldn't comprehend delight in the mystic and mysterious. Nix—on the other hand—saw the magic in everything. Nix saw the magic in the crisp winter air diluted by the soft smell of pine breeze, ancient glacier coated by the first light blanket of snow, the taste of bitter coffee after emerging from a tent to the freezing light of the mountain morning sun. Nix could not help but taste the magic, the mysticism, in the air which yields to the throes of longing, hoping, yearning at the scent of a girl's perfume, at the taste of cheap cherry chapstick, at the soft murmurs of lovers underneath street lamps in vacant parking lots. She mixed these small magicks into her herbs and with those herbs, she was able to create small miracles and small kindnesses for the descendants of the end of the world.

SALEM HANSEN

9TH GRADE • Lighthouse • High School Summer Writing Camp

The Night Sky Tells Stories, Too.

There is ease in the
Twilight;
A dawn of new ages,
Preachers
Bellowing from the streets below.
For in the city that never sleeps,

The stars are merely witness.
Our humanity is held in idle hands.

Midnight is the hour for
Observers,
Lovers,
Passion-projects,
Conspiracies,
And thoughts that knot too tight for comfort.
In one docile sweep,
We are the same,
Just as we differ.

Alive.
The city, filled with boundless curiosity
And light

Light

Light.

Terraces laced

With twilight-hued blacks,

Every shadow

Merely the outline of flame.

Electricity crackles and passes between circuits

In one continuous,

Connected heap.

We are one,

Just as the light.

CLARA HROUDA

7TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • JOURNEY INTO THE SUPERNATURAL • CAITLIN PLANTE

Hail Colorado

It was a full moon in Berlin, Germany on the night of July 22, 1864. Children hid under their beds, for it was storming. Lightning crashed, and one tall man shouted at the clouds, “Begone foul rain.” The rain stopped. The clouds momentarily parted, revealing the cold, pale giant of Selene, the moon goddess, as she rode her moon chariot across the sky. The tall man shouted joyously to his wife and two children, “Come out, for I have stopped the rain. I have more power in my blood than even Selene herself.” Children sang, wives hummed, men laughed. “All hail!” Cried the townspeople. All were happy. All, but one.

A priestess in Selene’s temple heard whisperings from the moon. “If this moral continues to brag that he is greater than me, I will deliver upon his children, and his children’s children a curse. No matter where they live, they will be plagued by my fury.” This, the cold goddess whispered in the priestess’s ear. The priestess warned the tall man, but he just laughed. “Selene cannot hurt me, for I have done nothing if not served my people.”

For a week, the floodgates opened. Many starved. The tall man shouted at the sky to stop. On the 8th day, it did. The tall man returned to the villagers. He cried, “Bow to me, for I have kept the town safe. Am I not more powerful than the moon’s weak glow?” The town did as the tall man ordered.

Selene was furious. She gnashed her teeth and tugged her hair out. Then, Selene had a horribly wonderful idea. She ripped parts of the moon chariot off, and she shaped cold, hard balls of moon. She smiled cruelly. “This young man doesn’t know what’s good for him. Well, it’s my job to teach him.” She cackled maliciously.

The tall man now had throne of gold, and the praise of the people. Yet, he continued to treat Selene like a mortal, powerless and weak. He had been drinking too much one night, and was laughing about

the gods. When he started to laugh about how Selene was only the goddess of a chariot that shines little light, he felt a “thunk” on his head. Selene was dropping cold, hard balls of the moon upon his town.

The tall man tried to get it to stop, but it never did. He moved towns, travelling from place to place, but the moon balls followed him everywhere. The children called them hail, for that is what people said to their father after his greatest triumph and worst nightmare began.

The tall man soon died from hunger, thirst, and exhaustion. His children cried for joy. Selene shouldn’t have held a grudge against them, for they had done nothing wrong. But as she was a goddess, she could.

The children moved to a new land, a place called Colorado. It is said that all Coloradans are descended from the tall man. So, Colorado has many hail storms and unpredictable weather, and the moon is now scarred forever.

Let this be a lesson to you. You are powerful, yes, but are you more powerful than the moon itself? Than the mother of magic? Think reader. Think.

RYAN HUITT

12TH GRADE • DENVER ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL • LIGHTHOUSE WRITERS WORKSHOP • JESAKA LONG

A Bad Writer

I'm not that great a writer. I think mediocre would be a stretch. My short stories are too long they ramble on in an incoherent fashion meandering till the end. The morals are always too preachy like a nun trying to beat the fear of god into you. I remember the first time I shared one of my stories with anyone, my sister sat in the living room reading some book I don't remember (I chose her because I wanted an easy audience.) She was always so kind and supportive of whatever I chose and I wanted some "light" criticism before I went all out. As she sat there I handed her the freshly printed 5 pages of my story (the contents of which I've long since forgotten) and asked her to read. She, in a sweet melodic tone, replied that she would be happy to. As she began to read, her gentle easy-going smile began to fade. In its place was a puzzled expression, which soon melted into a frightened scowl, followed by a stream of emotions in varying degrees of intensity and positivity. When it was all through, she gently set the pages on the coffee table and turned to me with a look of pity and spoke. To this day, I have never forgotten the words she spoke to me. "Maybe painting is more your forte."

CLAIRE JANSEN

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Untitled

And I am asked,
What I miss most from existence,
And my breath,
Shuttering,
Gives out before I can reply.
Falling,
Is this heaven?
Have I lived in hell?
For so long?
Breath,
After,
Breath,
My lungs filling,
With the briney air,
Ripping themselves apart,
And the small pieces,
Of my soul,
Scattered around my static shell,
Shift into tragedies,
And sins.
If only I could take,
One
Last
Breath
Just breathe again,
Until life is mine again.

I am not all knowing
I do not know the world
I cannot comprehend,
What my life will mean.

Yet,
I know
Simple things,
Will be the end of me.
A simple poem
That I cannot write
A single flower
Hidden, within an absence,
A small favor,
For an old friend.
I do not know
I cannot speak
I will not tell
Of my life
To the smaller
Smarter
Generation to come.
How can I say
To those with wider eyes,
And open minds,
That the small things,
Are what got me.

AL KUCERA

12TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Untitled

Twenty-nine years ago. That's twenty-nine damned years I've been alive and I've been as cautious as an alley cat. For twenty-nine whole years, I slipped past the radar. After all those years, I reduced myself to a dirty coward: running away from a problem that will catch up to me no matter how far I run. Scoffing at myself, I couldn't help but wonder if he too would be disappointed in me. Laying a breathless, pathetic heap on the old, mossy tree roots. My mind rushed with thoughts, my body ignoring the elbows of wood giving me an unpleasant massage.

I feel warmth nip my icy cheeks. Tears. Something I haven't felt since my age was still in single digits. It had taken exactly twenty-nine years to build my life and only thirty seconds for it to be torn apart. Why did I ever think I could keep this up? They'd taken him away so why are they only after me years later?

"I'm sorry." I croak out to someone who wouldn't hear.

The distant sound of multiple sets of hooves hitting dried mud interrupts my thoughts. Quickly, I scrub my tears with my tattered cream tunic. Now was not the time to cry.

CROSBIE LACASSE

6TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE • ALISON PRESTON

All Roses Have Thorns

The girl on the stage had perfect posture as she sang, and every word in the melody was a song on it's own. Whoever her partner would be would surely be put to shame, and everyone in the vocal group knew it.

"Bravo," cheered the kids when the girl was done, and she curtsied prettily. Now all of the group had performed; it was time for them to get paired up for duets.

"Miss Alexandra," the teacher started, then getting interrupted by the girl.

"Alex," she clarified. "Call me Alex."

The teacher obediently dipped her head before continuing. "Alex will be performing with Q."

A boy in the back of the group gasped quietly, biting his lip so hard it turned white. Pink painted across his cheeks as he found he couldn't sing half as well as Alexandra. Still, he reluctantly rose from his seat when he noticed her swiveling her head this way and that she was waiting for him. The boy brushed off his jeans and stalked up to Alexandra, who had a look of recognition on her face. It soon turned to dismay when she remembered his performance.

"I refuse," she said defiantly. Those two words were fatal blows to the boy known as Q.

He was addressed as that because he told no one his real name, and so it was easiest. Then Q remembered the pin and saw it placed on the top of Alexandra's dress, delicate as ever. He had some leverage over the beautiful girl. She hadn't intended for him to find out, but when Q had removed the pin that day in the courtyard, he knew her secret. Not that he'd had motivation to tell anyone until now, embarrassed beyond belief.

"Wait, do you see that pin on her dress?" Q asked innocently, catching the teacher's attention. Panic filled Alexandra's eyes, but it soon returned to confidence. No one would believe Q. Much less about something like this.

Sarah crept quietly down into the basement, vocal exercises written neatly on an ivory sheet of paper. The stairs were carpeted and made it much harder to hear the girl's feet padding softly, descending into the dark. Sarah didn't need light to sing, but she had still surreptitiously grabbed a flashlight out of the upstairs closet. She flicked it on with one swift motion, and the beam of light illuminated a small coffee table. Newspaper upon newspaper was piled atop the wooden surface, and beside those was an envelope. Sarah's curiosity struggled with her common sense for a while, and eventually curiosity won. The girl slowly walked over, guilt and fear mingling together inside her chest. She gently slid the first paper off of the stack and glanced at the headline. It shocked her so much that she dropped it right onto the shag carpet. **SINGER ANNIE KENT MISSING**, it read in bold black lettering. Sarah's eyes fixed on the picture of an olive-skinned girl smiling youthfully. She was beautiful, and Sarah couldn't bear to look at it any longer. It might make her sob. Instead, she took the next newspaper with trembling hands. **PIANIST MURDERED** read the next headline, and a little cry escaped Sarah's lips. This time, a man with a focused face and black suit sat behind a piano. Sarah felt his passion for the instrument, the language he truly spoke expressed only in the keys. A tear slipped down Sarah's cheek, rolling off and falling onto the newspaper about Annie Kent. She somberly placed the papers back onto the stack and picked up the envelope. It was invading her father's privacy, seeing as his name was scrawled on the back, but Sarah was desperate. She slid her thumbnail under the seal to open it and then removed a piece of parchment. And a pin. Sarah had been hoping for some report on how to stop these terrible incidents, since her father was a police officer, but the letter was a bit different. 'Mr. Sentry, we have reason to believe that this pin is connected to the strange events taking place around town. One was found pinned to the lapel of Mr. Trent's coat, another on Annie Kent's dress, and more on the other victims clothing. The original was found in Alexandra Carlyle's old bedroom. It was preserved in a glass case. Please keep this pin safe. Talk to you soon, Officer Candilmire.' By the end of the letter, Sarah's mouth hung agape. Without thinking, she slid the paper back into the envelope, dropped it into the trash can, and stalked back upstairs with the pin in hand.

CLEO LOCKHART

12TH GRADE • DENVER ART MUSEUM • PERSONALITY AND PLACE • AZAR KOHZADI

Marlow's Vesuvius

The man on death's edge contents himself
with a study of the sublime;
the mountain is grotesque and angry red
like a fresh wound, heaving its last sigh

before the city. *cave canem*, he thinks—
beware of the dog-shaped spaces
that will be left behind in ash,
the frescoes set to be buried like bodies

twisting torsos upon red in a Bacchian rite,
or a right in the eyes of any other hungry god
(that of a sacrifice, a villa of the mysteries,
things unseen and pondered and all too clear,
alight in the last moments).

The man thinks, looking out
upon the memory he does not have,
that perhaps he will make telescopes.

He delights, after all, in things at a distance
and cannot bear the ones close enough
to hold, as the earth holds its fire, the god
his night-dark wine

Perhaps, he thinks,
he will be a painter.

CATALINA LONG

6TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • SCREENWRITING WORKSHOP • JESAKA LONG

Runaway Creatures “Pilot”**TEASER****EXT. SWAMP IN AUSTRALIA/DAY**

You are unable to see the sky because of the dense trees over your area, and unable to see the ground because of the dense underbrush you are walking on. Everything around you is green excepting the olive brown pond you are fishing in.

From Hannah’s POV.

ACTON: (Still fishing and not really paying attention to Hannah) Hi.

HANNAH: (Talking very fast and hurriedly not wanting to miss dinner and with a stutter.) Mom says no dinner for anyone who isn’t home by six.

(Hannah runs away)

End Hannah’s pov.

ACTON: Hannah wait!

HANNAH: Yes?

ACTON: (Pointing at fish on his line) Tell Mom I almost have this fish—

HANNAH: Can’t—

ACTON: Why—

HANNAH: Mom’s in a hurry—

ACTON: Fine!

HANNAH: (As she runs away for a second time) I’m leaving.

ACTON: (Getting up) Wait!

HANNAH: NO!

ACTON: (Yells as he runs away towards Hannah) Coming!

A baby alligator crawls into Acton's forgotten backpack.

Acton comes back for the pack and runs toward Hannah.

End of teaser.

ACT I

INT. ACTON'S HOUSE KITCHEN/DAY

Clean white farm kitchen black sink where mom is washing dishes.

Cherry wood table and white tile floor and silver taps.

MOM: (Preoccupied by washing a dish that was a frog's home.)

Hannah, would you please set the table.

HANNAH: Really?

MOM: Yes. Go ahead.

HANNAH: OK!

Hannah walks to the silverware drawer pulls out the silverware and closes the drawer on her finger.

HANNAH: Ou! Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ouch! My finger! It hurts!!!

MOM: Come here and get some ice. That must hurt a lot, you have to be more careful. I'm going to put some Neosporin on your finger.

HANNAH: (With a stutter) OK.

GRACE MCCLUNG

10TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Electric Blue

We are electric
Dining on blue joy
As we shiver
Cliffside chills
The cove below
Collecting tidal waves
And surf spray
Our skin shining
With little boy excitement
We push to the front
Toes curled over edges
Then jump
Falling
Falling
Into Carribean mist

KAHARI MCLEAN

6TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Relive Me

I ask for a blessing,
For cinnamon branches, and lavender roses
To commemorate me,
For my future and past ghosts to bear my chains,
For my specimens to fall to foreboding,
To recall me,
For each blessing a curse,
For satan's cruel hands to grasp my neck,
To reminisce me,
For moonlight dousings,
For cosmic obliteration,
To elicit me,
For ancestors of the future, know your disfigurement is mine,
For the King of Hell to bow his head in sorrow,
To revoke me,
Chandeliers shatter,
For you.

HELEN MCLELLAN

9TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Tied to a Lamppost

Gypsies are a funny thing. They wander. Some might call this searching. Some might call it ungrounded frivolity. The lifestyle habits of children. But in reality, we are the ones searching. They act like children because that's when we are our truest selves. They stopped searching when they realized who they were. They stopped searching. When we think of the perfect life we think of living in one place supposedly stable while our souls wander. The gypsies search on the physical plane but their souls never wander. We are balloons tied to a lamppost, anchored but always trying to get away. They sleep with dreams of past lives, remembering. We dream of new lands where we want to go searching for things we can never have. When the gypsy sleeps with the lion, it does not bother her because both of their souls are here. The lion attacks us trying to keep our souls from leaving. They play their mandolins with a steady rhythm. When ours play, they race along the sand trying to catch up with the sun.

LUCA MCMURRAY

7TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • JOURNEY INTO THE SUPERNATURAL • CAITLIN PLANTE

The Legend of Royllaneus, the God of Palaces

Royalleaneus was the god of noblemen. At first he had great interest in rocks, so he decided to make great things out of rock. He made giant buildings that he called palaces. These would be for grand people like him. He called these humans-above-all-the-others “royal,” in honor of himself. The royals made sacrifices to him, and soon he was great in wealth and riches. He bought himself Gucci sunglasses, a Queen of England gold and velvet crown, and a staff accompanied by rich, flowing robes of soft fur. Every day, Royalleaneus ate well, and soon he developed a double chin and became fat.

Royalleaneus soon sat upon a throne on a mountain that reached the sky, which he called Mt. Olympus. He was too lazy to build himself a palace, so he sent a messenger to the humans asking for their help. He soon had a wonderful palace of gold and marble, with a fountain of crystal-clear water engraved with the words “Royalleaneus is King.” Royalleaneus lived in great luxury until the Titans came. One summer day, he was relaxing in one of his twenty pools when the sky grew dark and thunder rumbled. Lightning flashed and a now-great Zeus descended from the sky.

Zeus zapped Royalleaneus and Royalleaneus was transported to the world of humans. Then he blacked out. When Royalleaneus awoke he was in a feather bed in a palace. There was a golden sink and tub in a screened-off corner, and the door was also made of gold. Royalleaneus got out of bed and went to a closet in one corner. He opened it and clothed himself in his usual suit, and then grabbed his staff and opened the door. Royalleaneus was on a catwalk that overlooked a grand hall with a great oak table and chairs. There were animal heads mounted on the walls, and huge crystal chandelier hung on the ceiling. Royalleaneus walked down some stairs and was greeted by a servant.

The servant said, "Hello Mr. Royalleaneus. The King will be happy to see you. Right this way." The servant ushered Royalleaneus down a hall and opened a pair of great oak doors. There was a human man seated on a throne in the middle of the room. Royalleaneus recognized him easily. "Hello, Arthur," Royalleaneus boomed.

"Hello to you, too," Arthur responded.

Royalleaneus immediately got down to business. "I seek vengeance against the gods," Royalleaneus declared. "I need an enchanted sword and armor along with a bow of endless arrows."

King Arthur said, "Come with me, my friend," and led the way out a side door.

Royalleaneus entered a room full of armor and weapons, and Arthur selected a sword in a sheath and handed it to Royalleaneus. "A sword of strength and speed!" declared Arthur. Then the King pointed to a suit of armor. "That armor will never break," said King Arthur. Royalleaneus put on the sword and armor. "And, lastly, your bow. Here it is." Arthur handed Royalleaneus a bow.

"Alright, then," said Royalleaneus. "Assemble your armies. We attack as soon as possible."

Three hours later, a vast army was seen marching towards Mt. Olympus. Brometheus spotted this army from the palace and swung his gold chain. The entire army vanished to Tartarus. Twelve hours later, they came back, but again, for twelve hours, Brometheus's chain whizzed back and forth, and the army disappeared. And that is why night and day happen. Night is the time that Brometheus's chain is swinging back and forth, and day is the peaceful time when the army is regenerating from their latest defeat down in Tartarus.

INGRID MERKNER

6TH GRADE • SAM GARY BRANCH LIBRARY • WRITING LAB • WHITNEY GAINES

Welcome Home

She leaps through the fields of candy. “Best. Dream. Ever!” She yells. As she begins to stop laughing to swallow candy, it suddenly turns to night. The candy turns stale, the sky turns black, the butterflies that once fluttered around transform into fat, hairy spiders. A spider taps her back as he transforms into a man and says, “Welcome, welcome, welcome home to your worst nightmare.”

Interviewing a Pencil (a podcast)

Q: Hello, Mr. Graphite, I am honored that you have come to this interview. I'm Henry, and this is my Podcast, *A Day in the Life of _____*! I hear that travel is hard for pencils. I wasn't sure that you would make it. Would you like to tell us a little bit about travel for pencils?

A: Yes, 'course mate! I'm Mr. Graphite, I'm from Australia, and I live in a Preschool! Now, 'bout the travel. Basically, I wait for some youngster to me up and steal me, then, I just hope that they are vacationing to the place that I want to go to, in this case sunny Cali, and drop me right outside your studio!

Q: Wow! That sounds rough! I'm sure glad I found you! Now, tell me more about this preschool.

A: Well, it's basically torture. My eraser's been bitten hundreds of times, I have more boogers on me than I can count, and I have experienced one too many toilet accidents.

Q: Yeesh, that's intense! Well, how would you like it if you stayed here permanently?

A: I would really like that!

Q: Great! Well, folks, that's it for tonight, but please stay tuned for next week's interview with a paper bag! Over and out.

PAIGE MORRIS

12TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Untitled

Time races like a comet
Here on this beautiful planet
Our paths here are never ending
Since we occupy this everlasting space.
Many often ask the stars “what is our purpose”
To which they reply your choices are infinite.

Here on this spinning planet our adventures are infinite.
You can barrel and rush through life like a comet
Or you can take your time to discover your own personal purpose.
No matter what you do this will always be your plant,
You’ll always be remembered in this space
For your legacy is never ending.

My time in this town may not be never ending
But the memories I made along the way will be infinite.
Once I return into the vast empty space
The heavens will rain down fireworks as fierce as the comets,
Showering my loved ones still on this ghastly planet
Sharing my stories and giving my life a purpose.

KARA MORROW

11TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Hibakusha

The dust never settles here.” Her voice breathed blue into the overcast sky, this grey that infected the ground and air around her. It soothed like a blanket covering all the other colors to cushion the blow, and seemed to pay homage to what had been done. From broken lungs, the shattered Earth sighed and a wave of air rippled through her coffee bean colored hair, which was cut to follow down her narrow jaw. Upon her jaw a rosy pink, outlined in faded crimson, traced jagged movements across the majority of the left side of her face and neck.

Here she is, Shihiro Kinura, home after nearly a decade at age eighteen. People say home is where the heart is. If that is true, then home is two feet under the ground in the green dusted prairie with her beloved Hibakusha, Shihiro Tatsuchi, whose small and tender purpled hands would hold her pulsing heart to his chest. However, if home is where love and rice bowls and favorite red ribbons were kept, than this was hers. It stood between an eternity and a moment, the distance between Shihiro and the day the sun crashed into the Earth. Gold glared, the ground crumbled beneath her feet, even from such a distance the force brought Shihiro to her knees. It was so bright and then so dark. Clouds of black rained, the sun must have sunk through the Earth and passed on to the other side. Then it was red. Red like the day lily in her brother’s hand and the ribbon in her hair. The color became more common with days. Crimson, the color of blood as the fire melted skin like wax and she remembered his soft voice afterwards. “I even forgot to cry.” The very same shade from her brother’s mouth as his gums began to bleed, it must have been a curse. A curse for surviving. Scarlet, the blood that dried though the wounds didn’t heal. Shades of carmen and hibiscus blooming over their skin in patches, soon turning maroon with the purple consuming them inside and out. The little boy didn’t care whether

the dust would settle or not, but his dust, her little brothers, still stirred within her, his grave, this town once filled with fire.

FARITHYO MUGASA

11TH GRADE • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • MASTER CLASS • GAIL WALDSTEIN

Untitled

Whenever I think about us I see storms, beauty, sadness, anger, rushing seas, deep oceans, sunny days, cool breezes and poetry. To me, you're like a king who searches for their lost queen. Your attractiveness is so rare and I still don't know how I found you. You once said, "I gave you a key and you opened my heart and made yourself a home in the corner."

My love, that space I made in your heart is going to be my home for a while. Speaking of your heart, I want to talk about the rest of you. Your face is like art, everything about it is beautiful and even though sometimes I do grieve like I have lost you, I know that you live inside me even on the darkest days. Your arms are like my bed. The way you hold me—well, there are many ways to describe how I feel, but one thing is for sure—you're like a cure.

Roses are red.

Violets are blue.

I have three words just for you.

I love you.

CECILIA NEMETH

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Immortality

Immortality, would it be so nice
Never dying
Losing who you love
Never seeing them again
Forever alone
Making friends and losing them.
One day to see them again
That is death
Knowing one day, you will see who you love once again
Be there with them.

EILISH PADGHAM

7TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Teddy

The car's headlights shone in his face. The intensity of the lights flashing in Teddy's eyes didn't seem to faze him one single bit. Anyone could tell that something was seriously wrong with Teddy just by a quick glance. Not because of his bloodshot eyes, dirty clothes, messy hair, or even all the bruises on his arms and legs and rashes on his face. But because of the undefinable trepidation displayed in his eyes. You could almost tell what he was thinking. He scanned his surroundings as if searching for someone. Rather something. Teddy looked away from the headlights of the car and cocked his head to the side. He saw something...when he looked back in the direction of the car, the lights now screamed in his face, he fell back. The pain swept throughout Teddy's whole body. He let out a tremendous howl of pain, agony, and anger. It drained him. Every last bit of energy he had was put into that scream. The car's lights turned off. The driver saw Teddy lying in front of its path. They stepped out of the car and slammed the door behind them. They cautiously made their way over to Teddy. This person was wearing a ski mask that covered everything but their nose and eyes. Then they pulled off the mask. The driver was a short and slim woman with fair skin and long, light brown hair. She looked as if she would be at least in her mid-twenties. The woman had a long narrow face, the expression of fear showing very clearly. She let out a sigh of relief when she saw that Teddy was out cold. She seemed relieved. Almost overjoyed. Makes sense though, since Teddy was a dangerous risk to himself and others. Who knew that she of all people would be able to catch him. Much less live to tell the tale.

"You got him alive. Congratulations, Blythe."

ANNA PALMER

8TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Humanish

She waits for me
Even though she doesn't want to.
To her, everything is *black* and *white*.
Black dresses, *white* sheets.
Black heart, *white* love.
Her mind lives somewhere else.
I remember a time when we would have been similar.
She sits in bars like she sits in window sills.
Alone.
She smokes cigarettes like she writes songs.
Miserable.
She looks at me like she looks at the world.
Broken.
Her dress is ripped, and that's not her fault.
She wants to leave, and that's not her fault.
I watch her get up.
I watch how her expression changes.
I watch her blink.
Her eyelashes are speckled with tears, but to me
They look like they're encrusted with diamonds.
Her lips are red
Because she never takes off her lipstick.
Her knees are red
Because she doesn't know when to stop.
And I think that's beautiful.
Her name is stained red in my mind.
Maybe it's just because I can't picture her
In any other color.
She takes pills instead of chances
Because she doesn't have a choice.
She's desperate

And now, so am I.
But she won't change
And I won't make her.
We both want more
But we need just what we have
Does that make us selfish?

Or just humanish?

RIVER PARANTO

6TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

The Painting

The smiles
are bigger than a whale's.
The eyes
let you dive in further than you've
ever gone swimming before.
The hands
are like a secret window into the past.
The pants
have been worn with love,
and compassion.
The shirt
has been ironed,
so perfect for the art.
The shoes
are the most perfect combination
of colors.

The most perfect painting,
to me.

To others,
it had flaws greater than any.

But I know,
that under the layers of oil paint,
there was an artist with more
compassion than any.

But remember,
when
the smiles, eyes, hands, pants, shirt and shoes
are washed away,
they will be remembered.

ELLA PETERSEN

6TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

The Lazy River

I am, as humans say, a lazy river. Now, everyone would float inside of me and I had to carry them. ALL.

But recently, I've noticed humans come to the pool less often. Pool and I have been very confused but also happy because there is less weight on us.

One day, I noticed a nervous-looking human reading a piece of paper. The back of the paper said "Contagious Injury Found" on it. I had no clue what these words meant.

Eventually no one came to the pool, not even lifeguards!

So I sat up. "What are you doing!?" Pool bubbled.

"No one is here!" I bellowed, "and there is plenty of New York to go around!"

I began to crawl across the floor of the pool, towards the door.

"Wait!" yelled Pool, but I was already headed towards the outside world.

The locker rooms were messy like people left in a hurry, not bothering to clean up. Then I felt my water start to slip out the door. I was in the main room of the pool. How long was this going to take?

BEATRIX PETERSON

3RD GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • JUMP INTO YOUR STORY • SARA ALAN AND SUSAN KNUDTEN

Park

The cool morning air brushing against my face,
the beautiful blooming flowers,
the busy buzzing bees,
the gentle laugh of children playing,
the swishing autumn leaves,
the slippery slide, way up high,
the high, swishing swings,
the grass that tickles my toes,
my picnicking blanket that I lay stretched out on,
staring up at the clouds,
thinking, thinking of what I've seen,
Just a walk in the park,
but yet, so, so beautiful.

AARON PRATT

8TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Another World is Possible

To dance among the life that thrives,
to smell the flowers
and feel the earth radiate with peace.
To sing the song we were born to sing
untethered and free of our chains.
To speak a language only of love
one that is eternally pure and kind.
To display the light we wish to shine,
our luminous glow not blocked by ominous clouds
hanging low.
To be the Captain of our own ships,
out on a sea full of life
fresh with the sacred water which has been here
for eternity.
To thrive within a world of colors
all equally bright,
A world where our falls
are cushioned by the softness of the words we speak.
To be where we all care,
To let the sweetness of our hearts flow freely.
To rise above the bar they set.
To fly into a brand new world.
Yes.
Another world is possible.

GRACE RABINOWITZ

7TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Twenty Words

Twenty words I want to be
Twenty words I want to see
Twenty words about the future
Twenty words in twenty years
Kinder, together, I really do see
Everyone in a democracy
All in the world, all to explore
We live and play out of doors
Friends laugh together
Books and notebooks belong to Heather
Life is good and so is existence
Hope and joy are embraced without resistance
Playfulness and family go hand in hand
History and love exist on land
So, all in all
This is worth repeating; it's not small:
Twenty words I want to be
Twenty words I want to see
Twenty words about the future
Twenty words in twenty years

NEVAEH RUGGIERO

12TH GRADE • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • MASTER CLASS • GAIL WALDSTEIN

Skateboard Ride

Maddy!" My brother Joseph yells from downstairs, causing me to groan and stomp my little feet down the stairs. "Yes?" I ask.

"Come with me," he says shortly.

I roll my eyes and follow him outside. Why? I ask myself. Once we walk down, he turns right, and I turn with him to see his friends standing with a skateboard and leaning on a car. I stop. What are we doing?

"You want to ride on the back of a skateboard with me while they drive?"

"Yeah !" I yell excitedly.

My frustration instantly turns into excitement. Another adventure, I say in my head. My adrenaline instantly sky rockets as they start to get ready, my stomach churns as I stand there. There is no way that this will go bad, I silently chant in my head, what's the worst that can happen? Just maybe a couple of broken bones but that won't stop us. That never does. My hands start shaking in anticipation once they start tying the skateboard to a rope.

"You ready Madeline?" Joseph asks, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"Let's do it!" my seven year old voice yells.

"Well then get on," my older brother murmurs.

I look up at him and smile widely. Once he smiles back, I look at the skateboard and get on. He gets on right after wrapping his arms around my shoulders and pulls me on his lap as he sits criss cross.

"You boys can go now!" he yells at them.

I close my eyes as they start to drive, wind instantly blowing on my face. The feeling of being free flies through my veins. I open my eyes and make the decision that they aren't going fast enough.

"Faster!" I yell out as loud as I can, hoping that they can hear me.

My older brother chuckles from behind me and clutches me tighter.

The breeze starts blowing faster, my medium length hair flies back, my brother clutches onto me even tighter when the car goes faster and the skateboard starts wobbling. A feeling that usually doesn't happen when I'm doing adventures with my brother comes over me. I close my eyes and wish that feeling away. After all, no one likes the feeling we call fear.

"Stop!" My brother yells.

"Why?" I ask him

"Something's going to happen!" He yells back at me, clutching me so tight that his arms could cause bruises on my stomach.

"Stop the car!" He yells at them louder.

"We can't stop!" one of his friends yells back.

My breath hitches. Even my seven year old brain could see that that's bad. I squeeze my eyes shut as I engulf the feeling of fear.

"Why the hell can't you stop?" He yells at them urgently.

"He won't stop, he literally punched one of us because we tried to get him to stop!" Another one of his friends yell back.

I close my eyes and am engulfed in my fear so much that I don't even hear what they're yelling. The next thing I know, I'm flung off of the skateboard and pain overpowers fear. I scream as I feel my skin scraping against the cement. Then, everything goes black.

NOA SACHS

7TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL WRITING CAMP

A Moment Frozen

Another day and I'm still alone, the empty tables in a circle with my desk by the window.

Broken glass sits under the windowsill on the opposite end of the room. Carefully folded paper planes lay untouched by the waste bin. Doubtful anyone else will ever be back, I was lucky, lucky to be in the bathroom when time stopped.

Everyone had been dead or dying when I ran from the room. I was barely better off than those dying. Finally, I reached the first bathroom I saw and ran inside. Grimly, I sat down, my back against the wall, waiting for those . . . things . . . to find me. Hope had crawled into a dark corner of me when I hadn't been found for hours. Intrigued, I looked at my watch and my mouth fell open. Just when I thought hope was lost, time stopped.

"Kathy, Kathy!" Maya had called my name that fateful morning. Later, later she's gone, never coming back. My tears fall, the only sound in the deathly silent room. Now I make my way across the room, just to the teacher's desk; dust rises with every footfall. On the blood stained desk rests my sword. I grab it and walk to the door. This path so well used that no dust rises.

Pacing in front of the door, sword in hand, waiting for the class bell to ring. Ring like it always does for the one moment I fall back into my former reality. Quietly, I open the door and come into the hall where one of... them... waits. It looks at me, then pounces. Ready for the attack I raise my sword of metal pipes and glass shards and stab the creature in its gooey center. It shatters like china, like it couldn't have killed a species.

Slowly I turn back into the room, carefully closing the door behind me. Turning back to the desk, I lay my sword upon it. I've been killing creature by creature for what feels like an eternity at this point. Useless, that was how I used to feel about myself; I couldn't

save anyone. I can fight them now and win. Voices fill the room, voices trapped in a place where I am the only living thing... Voices of all those who died, all those I've cried for.

What twist of fate had left me the only one alive? Examining the facts I know only leaves me further confused. I can't even find a logical hypothesis for why time stops, it just happens.

Yelling fills my ears. I stop, my mind racing. I look at my wrist and my watch is working again.

Zipping my backpack quickly and grabbing my sword, I left the room. I would save them. I would save them all.

JULIA SAVIDGE

8TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • SCREENWRITING LAB • CANDACE READ

Institution

Summary of story: Sometime in the future when the government tries it's hardest to wipe out all terrorist attacks, casualties, and crime by covering up the real world with an institution placing fake memories into the minds of kids and creating fake neighborhoods and communities, two students pass the memory wiper undetected and unfazed. As the two kids, Jennifer and Lewis, try to figure out what happened through testing their so-called family and friends and breaking back into the facility to figure out what the government's goal is, they are faced with challenges and difficulties along the way. Jennifer and Lewis meet allies and enemies whilst trying to solve the case of the way the government used to work.

INT. INSTITUTION IN WASHINGTON STATE—MORNING

The institution is very bright and white. There is a big skylight on the ceiling the rain is pouring down on it. There are four lines of kids (14-16) with about 50 kids in each line. Each kid looks unhappy and miserable. There are security guards standing at the front and end of each line.

Dr. Reynolds (mid-50s, tall, powerful-looking, stern and serious) enters the room from a staircase and then stands at the front of the room.

DOCTOR REYNOLDS: Congratulations, Class F. You've all made it to your final year. Today is your last day here, enjoy it.

Doctor Reynolds walks to the side of the room.

SECURITY: Everyone stand in your lines. Do not leave the line unless instructed to. Walk through the metal detectors and wait at the end of the room.

The kids start walking through the metal detectors. After every kid walks out, they look much happier and walk with a straighter posture.

Shot of direct look on one kid's face. Two bars go over the kid's eyes.

METAL DETECTOR ANNOUNCER: Do not blink. Stand still.

A light flashes and the kid steps out of the metal detector.

JENNIFER steps into the metal detector.

The two bars close over her face.

METAL DETECTOR ANNOUNCER: Do not blink. Stand still.

As the light flashes, Jennifer blinks out of surprise. She walks out of the metal detector, seemingly un-phased. She walks and acts the same way.

Jennifer makes eye contact with LEWIS, who looks concerned and nervous, unlike any other kid.

The line starts to move and the kids walk out of the room.

INT. TRAIN—DAY

Two kids are sitting across from each other on a train. Three other kids sit near them laughing and talking. The train has no color in it other than the silver of the metal. On the right side is Jennifer (15, shoulder-length, curly brown hair, determined).

On the left side is Lewis (16, curly black hair, cautious).

Pano shot to other sides of the train.

Kids (14-16) are laughing and talking loudly.

Music is blurred.

ERSEL SERDAR

6TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Another world is possible

I see another world.
 A world in which rights are *rights*,
 In which equality is the law of the land,
 In which racism, sexism, and the other -isms exist only in the
 history books,
 In which war is as bad a word as the other bad words,
 In which peace reigns supreme,
 In which the environment is clean,
 In which everyone has a home,
 In which people are treated like people,
 In which prisons are as bad as other crimes,
 In which we fight with words,
 In which we really don't need to fight,
 In which money problems are pushed to extinction,
 In which living spaces are safe and secure,
 In which global warming is annihilated,
 In which we pursue our dreams to make them a reality,
 In which reality is like a dream,
 In which we all live in peace and harmony.
 I see all of these things,
 And so I say . . .
 . . . another world is possible.
 . . . another chance is in our faces...
 . . . another reality is in the near future...
 . . . another chance, another life, another world.
 Let's face it, our world isn't too good, or too bad,
 But we need to fix it.
 We need to take action.
 We need to replace problems with solutions,
 Replace questions with answers,
 Fix society,

And effectively make sure we are all together, standing in unity.

Another world is possible.

Let's stand up.

Let's face our problems head-on.

Let's not say mankind, but instead, let us say humankind.

Let's fix the world, and say that the other world,

The other possibility,

The dream,

The second chance,

The remaking,

The solving,

The answering,

The togetherness,

The everything . . .

Let's not say possibility.

Let's not just stand up.

Let's make this real.

No more dreaming.

No more problems.

No more inequality.

Another world is possible?

No.

The other world is now reality.

NADIR SHAKIR

ARAPAHOE RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL • SUZI Q. SMITH

The Colors I See

White

A canvas for creativity

The clouds that change ever so

The stars that humble and calm me

Black

The color of my skin and my people who I respect so

The future for which I cannot see and do not know

Blue

Water which keeps me alive and well

A source that all living beings fight for

Green

The grass that supports me

The color that gives us breath

Red

The blood that runs through all of us

The color that we shed for a cause by any means necessary

LIAM STEINBRRENNER

6TH GRADE • HULSTROM • POETRY TOOL BOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Death is coming

Death is something you can't avoid
You can't escape the pain
Nor your family
The pain of losing all your loved ones
No you can't avoid death or prepare for it
There's no way of telling when you lose the fight to
Dark black hole six feet in the ground
But there is a way of telling you lived through it
You can tell from the lessons you have learned
The sounds of people screaming of horror
But you can control how you live it

HARPER SHELDON

5TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • TOIL AND TROUBLE • JESSICA COMOLA

Dreams

I pulled out a bag full of the most bizarre things. I could see millions of lights and ideas that had flickered away into nothingness. Sadness collided with all the hopes and the dreams, making it hard to find the right one. Then I saw it, one that still flickered like a firefly that was taking its first glow. It was dim but real. I reached my dirty hand to grab it, but nothing happened. It slid right through my hand like a ghost. I tried again, but no use; it was not leaving, almost as if it was a person too. Maybe it wouldn't come unless it was the long lost owner who tried to turn it off. I imagined the possibilities of all these dreams, good and bad. Slowly but surely, I brought back each of these dreams as their very own, welcoming them to the real world where they wouldn't have to worry.

My job was done, I wasn't needed anymore, it was time to move on. I grabbed my cloak fighting back the tears. I started to walk when I felt a tug on my leg, then another and another until all the dreams were in me. I started to walk again, but this time in the footsteps of happiness and friendship. I started that path and left the sad path behind. Life would take a dramatic turn into the ways of life and the ways of the dreams. They gave me the thoughts and longings of others and myself. They rummaged through my deep down images that I had never taken into consideration. For ever since the days where I was unloved and unwanted, I had turned my broken heart to stone and my deserted brain put away in a long closet. But now these dreams unlocked the closet and let my thoughts free and mended the broken pieces of my heart. This feeling felt like a free bird that ran away with its amount of freedom. I wanted to be that free bird, but on earth no one is completely free from war and destruction.

I came to my same old crumpled alleyway where a cardboard box awaited me like it wants me to go and rest. I crawl in not caring about anything but sleep. I shut my eyes and the dreams start. A girl

wanting to play sports, a boy who liked to clean, and inventions that were never before thought of, it felt like I was important and needed to hold all these dreams. My next project was set, and it was changing the world to fit the freedom of others, but tonight it was time to sleep.

ZOE THOMAS

5TH GRADE • LIGHTHOUSE • FAIRY TALES RETOLD • CAITLIN PLANTE

Free*Prologue*

Four-year-old Lili tiptoed into that big room where all the redbarrs and bluebarrs and greenbarrs were. She clutched an icky mess of goopy plant stuff that got all over her too fancy, too pretty, too itchy nightgown. But she hated it, so she didn't even mind. She was looking for the greenbarr sculpture that her mother had caught her with that day and had told her (very strictly) that jewels were for jewelry. Lili didn't know what jewels were and frankly didn't care. All that she knew was that she wanted her greenbarr statue back.

She reached the doorway and tugged on the door with all her might. Locked. In a fit of rage, she hurled a glob of goopy plant stuff at the door. It oozed into the keyhole and got all over the fancy door. She sat down in the corner to sulk and stayed there for quite a long time considering she had the patience of, well, a four year-old. A while later, she got up and attempted to pry the goopy stuff out of the keyhole only to find it had dried. She tugged and tugged and eventually it popped out. In her hand was a key made of goopy plant stuff. "Oh!" she exclaimed. She stuck it back in and turned it. Click. She yanked the door open. She ran around the room, tripping over gold bars and skidding on heaps of coins. In the far corner she finally found a pile of greenbarrs. She plopped the goopy plant stuff on the ground and began to build. It didn't turn out quite how it had been earlier. In fact it looked like a..."Hmm, a drabble."

She raced back to her room, threw open her window, and held her greenbarr statue out the window. For a long time she watched him swoop around the skies, and she climbed on, too. Then she heard a knock on the door. She was suddenly back in her room. In surprise, she dropped her greenbarr statue. As he swooped away, Lili called out, "Please come back." He turned his head to look at her. "And

when you do, I'll be waiting for you. I promise."

Chapter 1

I've never left the castle. This is a fact I'm not happy about. All my life I've been dreaming of the world I see beyond the window. I've been wishing for a way to get out, but the knights guard the doorway and there is no way I could survive a fall from my window. Today I've made a decision. I am going to ask my parents if I can leave.

I am not allowed to leave my room until someone comes to get me. Now, finally, I hear a knock on the door. "Princess Liliana?" a voice asks. "It's Lili!" I call back in the same tone. "No, it's Princess Liliana!" the voice calls back. I don't want to spend the next few hours playing this game so I open the door. Voice tells me it's time for dinner and I follow him downstairs to the stupid fancy dining hall.

"Hello, Princess Liliana," my father says to me. "It's Lili," I mutter. My father shoots me a stern look. The very heavily bejeweled and heavy crown hasn't moved an inch this whole time. "Can I leave?" I blurt out. "The table?" my mother asks, "but you just got here." "No, the castle," I clarify. This time it's Voice that speaks. I really don't know why he's still here. "You're a princess." He says it like it's the most obvious thing in the universe. "So?" I ask. "The answer is no," Voice says. My parents nod in agreement. I know I shouldn't have gotten my hopes up, but I did. I turn around and run back upstairs.

I reach my room and flop down on the bed, which is stupid and frilly and pink. It was never my bed, only the bed. Same with the room and the castle and the kingdom. I open my window and stick my head out. I look out at the world. The world where I can't go. I wish I could leave the castle. I wish I could make my own choices. I wish I could be free.

I wish as hard as I can and decide to stay at my window and watch the sun set. It really is a beautiful sunset, very vivid and bright. So bright, in fact, that I can clearly see the silhouette of every bird in the sky, as well as...as well as...well, what is it? It is very large, it has a body shape like no aerial creature I have ever seen, and it is coming closer. No, it is aiming directly at my window! I wonder if I should duck or run or something, but I don't. I'm too mesmerized by what I see. Now that the creature has come closer, I can tell what it is,

which is good because I really need to stop calling it “the creature.”

It’s a dragon.

EVELYN VIGIL

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Lost Paradise

The ink is permanent
The sun is dead
Nothing will erase
Nature is wilting
The spill of ink
Everyone gone
The quill dances
No one is left
Across the paper
All alone
Once empty
Now, Full of Nothing

JESSA WANNINGER & LEYLA CASTILLO

8TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Moment by Moment

The coat arm slings across the glass
Hands cling defensively against fabric
Solemn glances ensue overhead
And time ticks by second by second
Minute by minute
Step by step
When finally a jolt is sent and time slows down
Inch by inch
Periwinkle floats, crimson fades as cool thoughts run amok

EVAN WEIDNER

6TH GRADE • HULSTROM K-8 • POETRY TOOLBOX • CAITLIN PLANTE

Untitled

1. Roses are red, silent as a mouse,
Your door is unlocked, I'm inside your house.

Violets are blue, I can see you,
Down the hall I go. You'll soon know what I'm here to do!

2. All around the mulberry bush, the monkey chased the weasel,
The monkey thought 'twas all in good fun. Pop goes the weasel!

At the hospital Urgent Care Ward, Jimmy's got the Measles,
Every night before bed. Pop goes the weasel!

Whenever I wake up at night, the monkey's on the table,
Don't touch, or look, or talk to it. Else, pop goes the weasel.

Ignore the writhing in my walls, it's just the infected weasel,
We don't talk about it at all. Else. Pop. Goes. The. Weasel!

Acknowledgments

First, deep gratitude to our talented and hardworking Young Writers Program faculty: Sara Alan, Andrea Bobotis, Connie Boyle, Sheree Brown, Jessica Comola, Kellye Crocker, Franklin Cruz, Julie Danneberg, Sydney Fowler, Whitney Gaines, Jesaka Long, Theresa Rozul Knowles, Susan Knudten, Azar Kohzadi, Kateri Kramer, Roxanne Banks Malia (YWP Co-Director), Karen Deger McChesney, Malinda Miller, Kimberly O'Connor (YWP Co-Director), Caitlin Plante, Alison Preston, Candace Kearns Read, Ralonda Simmons, Abby Templeton-Greene, Tiffany Quay Tyson, and Assetou Xango. Thank you to our many youth volunteers, including Denise Johnson and Trystan Popish for their help proofreading this year's anthology. And to our 2019 summer interns—Hunter Adcock, Claire Carroll, Herman Chavez, Jamie Kaufman, Callie Miller, Connor Roddenbock, and Ken Thompson—a million thank yous; your time and talent added joy and excellence to our program this year.

Extra special thanks to Connor Rodenbeck and Olivia Oksenhorn for their time and care in editing our anthology, and grateful shout-outs to the talented Sonya Unrein for designing this beautiful book.



Art Works (National Endowment
for the Arts)

Colorado Creative Industries

Denver Arts & Venues

Denver Office of Children's
Affairs

Grace US Foundation

Harvey Family Foundation

Karis Foundation

SCFD: the Scientific, Cultural,
and Facilities District

Sheila Fortune Foundation

Plus the generosity of many
individual donors