

PRAIRIE WINDS

2007

Prairie Winds is dedicated to the idea that young talent needs time to create without limits and the guidance of practicing writers. The program in Kansas is an offshoot of the founding program in South Dakota. Thanks to Kathy Huse -Wika, Linda Hasselstrom, Kathleen Norris and the late David Dwyer for showing me writing teachers are real writers,

Thanks to the writers and artists of Prairie Winds 2007 and to the groups who helped to make it possible with grant funds, Also thanks to Holly Kimble for her support and belief and Geri Hilger not only for her support but also for her talent with the camera..

One last thank you for Rock Springs 4-H Center for providing the inspiration of nature and the beauty of place.

Mary De Vries



Camp Writings

Camp Writings

Silence for a breath of loss, inwardly exposes the true meaning of selflessness. Through shatters of disregard you learn the truth behind the forefront of existential unreliability. Freedom of such choice to abandon the corrupted desire to wipe away the innocence of being is vastly overlooked and even more so discredited. When the collision of disbeliefs initiate a sudden realization that everything is not as it was unless seen from the victim of solitude, everything falls into alignment. Stable, reliant love outlasts tenfold, the deceptive lust of a wandering, helpless heart.

Acceptance forfeited for a deceptive interpretation of thievery and guilt. Silence deafens as if striving to be broken by a mortified cry for help. A pivoting stature of importance rises even higher to gain undeserved authority. Guarded by a fear of secrets left lingering through a stained-glass perspective on reasoning. A tribute held falsely to abandon any possible inclination of a domineering plague leading the congregation to a falsified sanctification.

Housed in the safety of imminent satisfaction; but, shattered by the previously torn road of failure, you fall to a halt believing everything is going to be alright. Time proves scars fade, yet the willingness to let go is much too hard for a sinner to accept.

Colby Hanson
Buhler USD 313

The Altar Boy's Confession
Rene Kilmer
Buhler High School

Sitting in his chair,
Grandpa again tells me the story
“Once,” he says, “at the age of ten,
I prayed for strength and grace,
For carrying the cross
But apparently God wasn't listening that day.
All I had to do was follow the father up the altar steps,
One step at a time
I was doing quite well when to everyone's surprise
I tripped over my own to feet
All 66 people in the little church
Saw the fall of
The Father, The Son, and The Holy Cross
I've been getting Holy Hell ever since.”



VOID
Micheal Young
Ellis High School

The lights have been turned off
My television is dead as well
Silence fills the empty space
Throughout my household

I lie in my bed
And while the world is quiet
There is a searing nuisance in my head
Few of my thoughts are coherent
Most are like the wind
They come and go in an instant

I attempt to concentrate
But my mind is unfocused
No one thought becomes the center of my attention
Clearing my mind fails
Because once blank, my thoughts flood fast
It is a trivial yet monumental enigma
While I can't focus on anything
I also can't focus on nothing at all

~Inner Obstacles~
Tara Hamilton
Bennington High School

Forgotten and replaced
She tries to comprehend why
It seems her world keeps darkening
Everything's going awry

She can't talk to her mother
Her father misunderstands
No one is there to help her
To guide or hold her hand

Friends seem to always be there
But sometimes she wants extra love
Someone she can laugh, hug and kiss
A person who can open all the hidden and daunting doors

Down the road she ventures
To the thing that provides the most support
An old red iron gate that's always been there
The only object she can trust not to disappear

Over thinking is her enemy
She seems to do it too much
Commitment is her phobia
The decision between her heart or her gut

The object of her desire is hard to achieve
Wanting to be understood and accepted
As only one thing
Herself

~Unwanted Noise~
Tara Hamilton
Bennington High School

They say family is forever
They are never going to say goodbye
There when things get rough and tend to fall apart
Your comfort when lights burn out leaving you alone in the dark.

Boyfriends tend to simply come and go
Not another thought of tomorrow
The vision of life surrounded by that other girl obscuring right and wrong
Letting what they want overpower what they have.

Friends are there to joke around with,
Providing shoulders when tears threaten to emerge
To share laughs on crazy nights out
Exchanging secrets back and forth

Gossip and lies and twisted stories
Drama and fights, unwanted noise
So the saying proves true
Keep your friends close but your enemies closer

A Miserable Rambling

As I wish for you,
a life of untouchable happiness,
I swerve.
I find the truth of humanity,
all the beauty and pain
all the sorrow and elements,
a magnitude of philosophy
waiting to be open, open to breathe,
to stretch the long restricted arms,
to walk again with death on the right,
and life on the left.

A circle never broken
even in the dead of night,
the blaring light of day,
we all wander,
to our unknown universe
that we will never see.

Breanna Ellison
Ellis High School

Reflection
Stephanie Bell
Buhler High School

In just a couple days at writers' camp, we've heard enough stories and beginnings to fill our own library. Interestingly enough, of the many stories I've heard the last two days, the ones that really caught my attention and tugged at my gut were ones that told of real people in real situations in real life overcoming real problems, such as the young cowboy who went over the bluff with the stampede during the storm, found crushed under his horse by his partner the next morning. Interestingly enough, the characters I've grown most fond of these last couple days, even though Franca's agents Jace and Jack were hilarious, were not those on paper, but the ones standing, sitting, talking and sharing before my very eyes. I wonder how each of us, all young artists of some sort, whether it be with paint, words or music, I wonder how each of us will compose our own stories. How will the energetic Jacob, accepting Audrey and guiding Don finish their life novels? And was that imovie ever finished? I'm writing this while perched across the roots of an oak which overhangs the stream that runs through the entire camp. From my position I see several little fish splashing about below. The trickle of the water and rustle of the leaves are one of the most peaceful sounds God made, and if I didn't know any better, I'd say the tree I'm sitting in grew all these years just so I could capture this moment. How will everyone remember this trip? If I ran into Ciara five, ten, fifteen years from now when she's a well know satire writer, will she recognize me? Will I recognize her? Or Kayla? Or Brianna? Will she still have her flowing brown hair, or I mine? Of course, all my fellow Buhlerites are sure to have their adventures, what with Buhler being the "bustling" city it is, even if we do miss out on the food fight. And of course, Matt will be a world famous artist one day with his father always there to guide him. I imagine it's only a matter of time for Holly and Noel, Tulsa and Austin to become the producers of the next major anime that all the fantasy fanatics will rush to understand, assuming Tulsa finishes the story. And Colby and Josh are sure to surprise all our expectations with how they write their life stories, what with Colby's theology and Josh's creativity. Levi's novel will probably make an awesome movie if he decides to pursue it, and if not, we all still know he's simply amazing with words. Ann's going to end up editor in chief of some big magazine or something like that, and her name will be all over the popular articles. I have every intention of being at Michael's first major concert he informs me of (free

tickets and backstage passes would be grand *wink wink*). Katie and Kiley will capture random moments in poems to be treasured by friends and family for years. Rene and Maggie will reveal themselves through their words, showing the world that sometimes quiet girls have the best things to say. And who knows how many poems Ashley will compose in her day. Unspoken words will hook Dana's readers as they turn through the pages of her work. As I reflect on the things yet to pass, I realize the only way these stories can live is by the choices of the characters, and the characters are us. As corny as this rambling might sound, it doesn't change the fact that these choices are up to us. What will your story say?



Writing marathons move the writer in real space; the mind finds its own place.

Dusty hymnals, pages worn
Christian emblems, tattered, torn
The cross needs polished
The flag repair
Signs of souls saved from despair
All these symbols once adored
Show how heaven's war has forged
If these relics once with life
Now sit rusty laid in strife
So be thought of as antique
Says what of God's modern mystique?

Stephanie Bell
Buhler High School



Twas' The Night...
Jacob Wagner
Bennington High School

Our family was just getting home from the Christmas Eve Church Service. Outside the snow was coming down very slowly. The moon shone brightly and lit up the snowy wonderland, but I didn't even notice it on the way home. I was too busy thinking about what was going on that evening.

When we pulled into the garage I hopped out of the car and jumped into the shower. I was out of there in record time. I put my robe on and ran upstairs. My sister, Sara, was already dressed and brushing her teeth. I got dressed and rushed into the bathroom. I brushed my teeth and climbed into my bed. My mom came in and tucked me into bed.

She said, "Now, you go to sleep right away! Remember, He knows when you're awake!"

As soon as I was sure that Mom was in her room I slipped out of bed and into the hallway. On the way out I grabbed a pillow and a blanket. Sara emerged from her room holding a pink heart pillow and a lime green blanket. We didn't say anything. We put our things down on the landing at the top of the stairs, and I pulled a small flashlight out of my pocket. Sara went back into her room and came out holding a video camera. "I took it from downstairs," she whispered. I laid down on my stomach and covered myself up with my blanket. Sara did the same. I noticed that the light in our parent's room was still on. I thought it was odd, but thought nothing of it.

And, then we just waited. We waited, and waited, and waited just to hear the jingle of bells or the sound of hooves on the roof. I scanned the room for Santa as if I were an Eagle hunting down its prey. Sara had the camera ready. We both wanted proof. We didn't need it, our peers did. We were both in the fifth grade and some of the kids kept saying that Santa wasn't real, and that it was our parents who were giving us all of our presents. We both knew that they were wrong, and we decided that we would prove it to them too. If we caught Santa on film, then our unbelieving classmates would be forced to believe us.

After about twenty minutes we both began to get sleepy. We tried pinching each other so that we would stay awake, but it wasn't working out. I was almost asleep when Sara slapped me on the cheek.

"Oww!!!" I said through clenched teeth. "What'd you do that for?"

"Shhh! You were falling asleep!" she whispered sharply.

"Well, you didn't need to do that!"

"Sorry." Although it hurt, it really woke me up.

We listened intently for signs of Santa for another hour before we began to get sleepy again. Sara became the first victim of heavy eyelids. A few minutes later my eyes began to close. They would close, and I would force them back open. When I could no longer resist the temptation of that long awaited sleep, my eyes slowly began to shut at last. As they were closing I saw something near the tree. I could see the outline of a very fat person silhouetted against the tree. And then I was out like a light. I can remember the faint sound of bells as I drifted off into my own Christmas wonderland.

The next morning I awoke to bright reflection coming through the window off of the snow. I was wondering what I was doing on the landing, when I remembered that today was Christmas. I took Sara by the shoulders and shook her while yelling, "Get up! Get up! It's Christmas!" She woke up and jumped to her feet with a jubilant smile on her face. Then suddenly her smile disappeared and she looked disappointed.

"We didn't get to see Santa," She pouted.

"No!" I exclaimed. "You missed it! When I was falling asleep I saw him. He was fat and he had a white beard and he was wearing a white coat. I think he might have even winked at me!"

"He winked at you!"

"Yeah. Yeah! He winked at me."

"Did you get it on film?"

"No," I said disappointedly. "It just all happened too fast."

"Oh. Well, at least you saw him right!"

"Yeah, Lets go downstairs." Sara and I ran down the stairs and into the Living room, where our tree was. "Whoa!" I said in awe. There were presents everywhere, but that wasn't what had caught my attention. There on the carpet, directly in front of the fireplace were two large ashy footprints.

At about that time Sara screamed, "Come look at this! Come look at this!" When I ran over to her she was holding an empty plate and glass. "Look!" she said. "Santa ate the cookies, and he drank the milk too!"

"He does that every year," I said with a little disgust.

"Yeah, but look! The reindeer ate the carrots. There are crumbs all over the floor." She was right. There were little pieces of carrot spread across the floor.

“Come take a look at the fire place,” I said. “Santa forgot to wipe his feet when he came out of the chimney.

She gasped. “Woow! I’ll go get the camera.”

“Good idea! Now everyone will have to believe us!”

I think I am a writer
Most of the time
I can't spell
And I do not rhyme
I think I am a writer
Thoughts always come
Pages I easily fill
Pencils I cannot refrain from
I know writing is my will
From this I know I am a writer

Rene Kilmer
Buhler High School

**No Limits
Anne Wilson
Buhler High School**

At the young age of four, her mother read to her everyday.
“Reading will take you anywhere,” she’d frequently say.
Her sisters teased her about not being able to read,
She asked her mother to buy her “Hooked on Phonics,”
Because she was determined to succeed.

A story by Margaret Hillert was her first book,
She quickly read through the text without a second look.
After that there was no looking back,
She had a love for books and that was a fact.
Each summer she fled to the library,
Being so active in the summer reading program,
Often made her weary.

After first grade she wouldn’t allow her mother to read to her anymore.
She wanted to read on her own, like she had done before.
The simple books became boring and she wanted something new.
She began reading chapter books and found her favorite character, Nancy Drew.
She finished the series by reading day and night,
She then discovered her love to write.

Her pencil moved quickly as words formed on the page.
The days of just writing her name had begun to age.
The time she spent writing stories came and went,
It was all worthwhile, it was time well spent.

As she grew up, her story writing and reading days became fewer.
There were different activities, always much newer.
There was no time to read for pleasure,
Her countless activities, you could not measure.
She read the classic books for school,
Books that weren’t always considered cool.

From Shakespeare to Dickens,
Her knowledge of classic writing thickened.
And she learned what it meant to be literate:
An exposure to the world, without any limits.

**Love Begins
on the Third Beat
Breanna Ellison
Ellis High School**

That which is inexplicable, as random and beautiful
as a Chopin mazurka, taking random turns
that somehow end up in the exact same place
as before, changed subtly, cleverly making their way
back to the beginning key.

Minor keys capture more interest,
the sadness of the lowered third,
the uplift of the relative major,
leading to triumph in its heroic and Polish fashion,
sweet yet strong
in a drunk and alluring manner.

You can almost see the couple waltzing,
then, an unexpected turn,
suddenly minor again, a raise of hope
from a five/seven chord,
ending where you were before.

In this respect, a mazurka is precisely
like love – dainty, strong, stubborn at times,
but never being allowed the luxury
of laziness.

In the end, it is always the same –
no matter what the key.

You may wonder, why continue;
only later will you reminisce
upon the beauty that results.

Never Get Old
Audrey Wagner
Bennington High School

Her mouth was wide open; eyes full of fear. Somewhere in the other side of the building the rest of her group butchered the second verse of “You Are My Sunshine.” The fish tank gurgled; cold, metal wheelchairs maneuvered around like robots. There were thousands of distractions everywhere, hundreds of reasons why she didn’t want to be there, and dozens of people she would rather be with. But for some odd enough reason, Emma Sanders’ mind was only focused on one thing – an old woman (so it seemed) sitting motionless in an uncomfortable-looking wheelchair. What was left of her hair stuck straight out from sides in a disorderly fashion. Her eyes seemed like small coin slots in a vending machine. Her nose looked like it had been run over – its wide base blended in with the deep wrinkles which had conquered her face. A small string of white drool escaped as the woman fought gravity to adjust herself.

“Never get old, kid,” she groaned in a low tone. Emma tried to force a laugh, but all that came out was a small squeak.

Emma suddenly remembered her mother’s advice from that morning. “Now, some of the old folks at the nursing home are scary-looking, but don’t be rude. Go over and talk to them. It would make their day.”

A drop of sweat tickled Emma’s neck as she took a step closer to the old woman. An unpleasant scent reached her nose and she fought the urge to scrunch it up and run away. “Wh-wh-what’s your name?” she squeezed out.

The woman looked surprised; confused. She held her crooked fingers to her alarmingly large ears. “You will have to speak a bit louder for these old ears to hear ya.”

Emma took a hesitant step closer to the moldy figure. She could hear every breath the woman was taking; it sounded similar to a Darth Vader impersonator. “I said, what’s your name,” she nearly yelled.

A sly childish smile crept over the wrinkled face. “Well,” she replied in a mysterious tone, “Which one do you want?”

This was too much for the 8-year-old to comprehend. Any reasonable person has a first, middle, and a last name. How could it be possible for this old bag to have more?

Seeing the reaction she caused, the old woman’s smile broadened. “I was known as Agatha Maud Smith in my youth, but my nickname was Babe once I grew all the necessary parts. Soon after, I got a marriage license saying my name was Agatha Whiner. I didn’t like that much. Would you?”

Emma’s round cheeks blushed as her eyes widened. Her shoulders gave a slight shrug.

“Say, what’s your name anyways?”

The little girl took a deep breath. “Emma. Emma Sanders,” she replied, her voice still a little shaky.

“Well that’s a good, strong name isn’t it. How would you like to be called Emma Whiner – or better yet, Emma the Whiner?” The old woman cackled hysterically at her own joke until she broke into a wet coughing fit.

Red and exhausted from coughing for a good 10 seconds, she began again with her story. “As I was saying, I didn’t much care for being called a whiner, so I divorced him and began a new stage in my life.”

Emma shot a bushy eyebrow up and slowly sat in the chair beside the woman.

“I met a man who was wild in the eyes and showed me a new style of living. Dave. We traveled everywhere together on his motorcycle. You know, he’s the kind of guy all mothers warn their daughters about.” She gave a girlish giggle and continued, “That’s when I decided to change my legal name to Cleopatra Rose.”

“Why in the world would you do that?” Emma butted in.

“Why not?” the woman responded in a loud voice.

The small girl quickly leaned back in her chair; her brown eyes shot to the floor.

The flour sack adjusted her seating arrangement as she calmly started again.

“Long story short, I married the man who kept my fire lit and we lived happily ever after. Until...”

“Until?” Emma said anxiously; her face flushed with interest.

“Until he had a stroke and left me in this stink hole.”

“Oh.” Emma’s juvenile mind searched for something meaningful to comfort the storyteller with. “I’m sorry.”

“There’s nothing to be sorry about. Death is the only sure thing we have in this life. All we can do is try to amuse ourselves and wait for the dark hand to wave over us...” Her eyes wandered off as if watching a sun go down and a small tear slipped out of one sunken-in eye. She stayed like this for a while—just staring at nothing—until her head gave a little shake and a smile once again crept over her. “Don’t ever get old, kid. All you do is sit around and rot away.” She paused. “Well, but let’s not forget Bingo on Thursday nights!

“Shoot. What was I talking about?”

“Your names,” answered Emma softly. Just in the past ten minutes, she had been scared, disgusted, amazed, embarrassed, sad, and surprised. She couldn’t imagine what could possibly come next.

“Oh yeah! Names...So when I moved in here I didn’t want to be reminded of the life I left when Dave passed, so I naturally went by...”

“Agatha?” Emma quickly responded.

“Are you kidding? I hated that name. And didn’t your mother teach you not to interrupt people?”

Emma blushed again and tried to vanish in her chair.

“Anyways, I came here as Betty Boop.”

Emma let out a burst of laughter and covered her plump lips with her hands.

“Of course, once they looked at my insurance forms they found my legal name. But hey, if a gal doesn’t keep a sense of humor, what does she have left – besides a corpse?”

Emma stood in front of the dark casket and gazed at the stiff swollen body, the conversation from three months prior still ringing in her head. “Goodbye Agatha. Goodbye Cleopatra. Farewell Betty Boop. And thanks for your sense of humor.”

-Suicide-

Why did he put me here?
Every night I would shed a tear
I couldn't even look in the mirror because I was so disgusted
But through all of that
I never saw the fear
Or what I was about to do
I took the gun in my hand and pulled the trigger
I fell to the ground and all the pain went away
My life had ended and it felt so good
And there my parents stood
They stood over my body crying
Holding my lifeless body in their arms
I thought my life meant nothing to them
They were just too late
I was gone
I feel so relieved and so much happier
And I feel so free
Suicide was the key
And now no one has to worry about me

**Karla Casey
Ellis High School**

Lace

She glanced in the mirror, made a face.
Her last day alone couldn't be a worse case.
The flowers were wrong size and color.
They looked even worse than the groom's mother.
Neither shoes were on her feet,
They were waiting for the glue to heat.
But nothing could ever, ever compare
To the hideous lace veil in her hair.

Audrey Wagner
Bennington High School



Mission Possible
Franca Koeing

Jack sat at the counter in “Tobey’s”, a small bar, more a cafeteria, located on 9th Street in *Vas Legas*. The young man just had ordered the third cup of coffee, with some sugar and extra whipped cream on top.

He had been waiting quite some time and was pretty stressed out by now. Every twenty seconds, he nervously took a glance at the clock next to the cash register. Suddenly, the cafeteria door opened and—announced by three silver bells above the entrance—Jayce entered.

Jack turned around and released a relieved sigh as he recognized his friend. The self-confident, brown haired individual looked around for a moment. He was pretty handsome, his muscular body showing through the white sleeveless shirt, carrying a black coat with him. Then, Jayce discovered the waiting guy sitting at the counter and he found his way through the stuffed room, filled with tables and chatting people.

He patted Jack on the shoulder and sat down on the bar stool next to him.

“Hey... what’s up?”

Jayce ordered water (alcoholic drinks were no question! They had a negative influence on the physical condition!) and then, waited for Jack to answer. But Jack just sat there, stared at his buddy for about three seconds and exploded.

“Are you aware that I have been waiting 45 minutes for you to get your... your... *small* butt in here? You are brave to simply walk in here and act as if nothing has happened. You need an incredible excuse, you jerk!”

Jayce only grinned and shook his head at the furious young man. I mean, what else would you have expected? Jack was half Italian; he had inherited the sultry blood from his father. Every little kid knew that Italians had a passion for arguing. No big deal.

Seeing Jayce smirking seemed to outrage Jack even more. But before he could open his mouth and make a mountain out of a molehill, the brown haired man spoke, “Calm down, man! I have a reason that you could consider a really good excuse.” He paused and identified the new expression in Jack’s eyes as suspiciousness.

“I got a phone call from the AACLSCESSDC!”

For people, such as the reader, who might not be familiar with the AACLSCESSDC, I will quickly explain it. AACLSCESSDC is an underground organization and stands for “Association of Agents who have Committed their Lives to Solving Crime, Especially Super Secret and Difficult Cases.

“A call from the AACLSCESSDC???” Jack exclaimed and gasped. His angry face immediately turned into a curious one. “What was it about? Who exactly called? For what? When was that and why?”

Jayce smiled, enjoying that he was the one in charge of the situation now. Tobey, the owner and operator of the bar, brought the orders: coffee for Jack, water for Jayce. The

rough bar man friendly nodded at the newly arrived guy and then, went back to his work. Full of excitement, Jack ran his hand through his black, curly hair—also inherited from his Italian father, the same with the olive skin.

“Come on Jayce! What are you waiting on? We don’t even have to work today, so what did they want? Tell me, man...” he begged, while his friend took a sip of his water.

Jack Eagle and Jayce Hawk were secret agents from the AACLSCESSDC, both about twenty-three years old and never hesitant to risk their lives for their job.

“They want us to arrest some Mafia gang. One of the research agents from the Spying Department found out about their plan for killing the president. It’s our task to keep them from doing that.”

He glanced at Jack and—in one drink—drank half of his water. “Why do we want to save the president? He’s not even from the right party,” Jack muttered and stirred the whipped cream into his coffee.

Jayce shook his head at him and said nothing. “Yeah... anyways, we have something to do! Where do we start?” the Italian agent asked. He could hardly sit still, already thinking about all the possibilities of demonstrating his master skills.

“You’re like a little kid,” Jayce commented and earned a slap from his friend for that one. They both snorted with laughter for a while, until they realized that it kind of sounded like girls. So, they dropped it.

“Well,” Jayce picked up where they had stopped the conversation, in a low voice, “The gang has a secret meeting tonight in about...” He looked at the silver watch around his wrist and jerked. “...shoot! In twenty minutes!”

The two of them hastily drank their coffee and water (Jack totally burned his throat) and threw some dollars on the counter. Then, they left “Tobey’s bar.”

“Great timing, Jayce! Excellent Job. Really!” Jack exclaimed while they hurried down 9th Street, where Jack had parked the red sports car.

“Is it my fault that you are just too lazy to come see me? Who is the one who does all the paper work and has to manage all of this stuff, since you can’t handle it!”

They were yelling at each other, trying to be louder than the traffic. “Oh,” Jayce went on, “...and it also is not my fault that...”

Jack’s cell phone rang and interrupted the fight. “Hold on a second! Excuse me, would you?”

The Italian man got a small silver phone out and pressed the ‘accept’ button. “Yeah?... oh, sweetie. Can you call me back?... well... um... no! No, no, honey! Don’t get me wrong. It’s not that it’s the wrong time or something...,” Jayce was making faces now and pretended being Jack on the phone, which looked quite weird. Jack himself was tempted to punch that guy, but instead focused on the call.

“...it’s just that... you know...”

He got into the car on the driver’s side and started it, while Jayce sat down on the passenger seat and closed the door. The engine made a loud noise, when Jack backed out and merged into the rushing traffic. Still, Jack was on the phone.

“What? ...oh darling, you know that’s not true. Of course, I still love you.” Jayce rolled his eyes. He looked out the window, listening to Jack and Audrey’s conversation (as the reader might have figured out, Audrey was Jack’s girlfriend). Then, he got a package of cigarettes out of his jacket. He lit one of them and took a long puff. Jack saw it from the corner of his eye and turned his head towards him.

“No, sweetheart.... Oh, sure I’ll be back tonight and... hold on!”

He let the stirring wheel go, driving with his knees now, leaned over to Jayce, who himself leaned to the opposite direction, and tried to reach the cigarette. He lowered the phone. “Jayce! I’ve told you a thousand times! I don’t like this smoking stuff. You need to stop anyways for your physical health. Especially in my car, it is so...

“Jack?” That was the phone. The agitated female voice evoke the impression that its owner was quite impatient. Jack sighed deeply. The frustrated agent took the wheel again and brought the phone back to his ear. Jayce giggled like a girl, but tried to remain quiet.

“Listen, Honey: I’ll be back tonight and I would love to be there earlier. I understand, you had a lot of work, but you need to understand, this is my job. I have to be here right now. I am sorry! We’ll have dinner another time. Love you... bye.”

He hung up and put the phone in his pocket. Sighing, he focused on the road and honked angrily at the slow driver in front of him. Jayce took another puff from his cigarette and then started laughing. Jack glared at him. Then, he had to laugh, too.

In a good mood again, he grinned at his buddy and turned the radio on as loud as possible. Jack also decided not to be stuck behind the unhurried vehicle and thus, sped up to overtake. The speed limit in the city of “Vas Legas” was 40 mph, but the agent just reached 120 mph on the speed scale. As if it was the easiest thing in the world, he overtook several cars, barely in time getting back in the right lane before colliding with cars that came from the opposite direction (avoiding numerous head-on crashes). He maneuvered between vehicles and buildings without scratching either one or his own car, although he only had inches of room. You would think that this caused Jayce to panic. But he was used to Jack’s driving and knew: the crazier and faster his friend drove, the safer he would be. In a weird way logical, isn’t it?

“Where is the meeting?” Jack asked and pushed the brakes hard to stop for an old lady who wanted to cross the road. Jayce used the possibility and threw his half smoked cigarette out the window. He earned an acknowledging wink from Jack and put a piece of chewing gum in his mouth, before he answered.

“Turn left on Ivy and follow Simpson Road for quite a while. We’ll have to walk the last part, since the meeting is in a... well, kind of deserted part of town. They will be watching the surroundings like hawks. We’ll need all our skills!”

“Alright then,” Jack replied and got sunglasses out. “By the way, there’s some black car following us!”

Jayce leaned back in his seat and took a short look in the rearview mirror. The following car had darkened windows and—that was for sure—a faked license plate. Jayce nodded and took a gun out of the glove compartment. He got the ammunition out of a secret drawer, hidden in the dashboard. Loading the weapon, the agent looked at Jack. Jack’s brown eyes met Jayce’s blue eyes, both pairs barely visible behind the sunglasses. They nodded at each other and surprisingly Jack pulled the stirring wheel around and turned into a small, tight alley. The tires went crazy, but the experienced driver pushed the agents car. The engine roared and complained.

They ran over several trashcans, which were unavoidable without maneuvering space. Jayce looked back. The black car slightly had fallen, but still was right on their tale.

“Great! I guess, I’ll have to take care of them... since you are unable to,” Jayce muttered, while rolling down his window. The two buddies were constantly teasing each other,

most of the time only for fun and not seriously. But being two really big hotheads, they sometimes got into it too deep. Still, there hadn't been one fight without reconciliation.

"Woah... you could have chosen some alley, maybe a tiny, little bit wider, Jack! So, just do me a favor and try not to smash me against that wall, okay!? I do not feel the need to get mashed between the bricks and the car." Jack raised an eyebrow and smiled evil. Then, he turned the radio off that was still running. "Okay... I'll try not to kill you."

Sighing, Jayce scooted to the edge of his seat and, grabbing the frame of the car window, pulled his upper body out of the car. Then, he picked up his gun and aimed at the black car with it.

Jack—still grinning evil—used his chance and suddenly stirred the car clear to the right, almost causing his buddy to fall out of the car and hit the wall. (Agents' humor! Who would understand what's funny about that!?)

"Hey... what do you think you're doing?" Jayce yelled, holding on to the headrest of his seat with one hand, firing three bullets at the following car with the other one. "I don't feel the urge to kiss the wall. Where did you win your license, Sunday driver?"

Jack grinned and stepped on the gas pedal. The car now was going 150 mph in the tight alley (don't meet the number with disbelief; remember: it's a special agents car!). If they hit the wall now, they would immediately crash and die. Total wreck. 100% sure! But as certain as that, the followers fell behind more and more and after Jayce busted their windshield with some other well aimed shots, the two AACLSCESSDC members were on their own again.

About five minutes later, Jack Eagle and Jayce Hawk left the car in the back yard of a run-down restaurant, both carrying a ton of weapons with them (of course hidden underneath their clothes!). The meeting was supposed to be held in a factory building. Hiding behind recycling containers, the young men scanned the area around the factory.

"Any plans, genius?" Jack asked Jayce whose forehead showed the kind of wrinkles he temporarily got when thinking really hard. Jayce Hawk was famous in the AACLSCESSDC for his planning and strategy skills; Jack was known for being a driving and technical genius. They were the perfect team!

"We might need to get in somehow..." he slowly whispered and Jack rolled his eyes.

"Really? Wow... that's a great beginning." He shook his head at Jayce. "Well, I didn't think you would have a plan. So, I figured out how to get in there. Just follow me, man!" Without waiting for an answer, the Italian agent sneaked to the back of the factory—moving quickly from hiding place to hiding place—Jayce close behind him.

"So, what's your plan, then?" Jayce asked, when Jack finally stopped between two trashcans to study the wall. "I was right," he spoke quietly, obviously satisfied.

"What???" Jayce started to become impatient.

"If we can get through this metal door thing up there, then, we can get in through the ventilation system," he finally explained.

"That idea isn't *that* awesome! I already came up with it, but didn't want to cause that much damage to the old building," Jayce said, stubborn like a little kid.

"Oh yeah!?" Jack turned towards him, "If you had any idea what I am thinking about, you would know that you can do that with hardly causing any damage."

"Oh..." Jack who already had focused on the ventilation system again, turned back around, "...speaking of damage: I am also convinced that there is no possible way to make your brain damage any worse!"

The agent sneaked over to the wall, quickly climbed up the mountain of garbage and took a close look at the lock of the rusty, small metal door.

“That was extremely funny!” Jayce spoke quietly with an obvious sarcastic undertone in his voice. The two of them exchanged an amused look and suddenly, they were best friends again.

“Let me get the lock,” he continued and the Italian carefully moved to the side. The agent—two seconds ago acting like a prima Donna—searched in one of his pockets for quite a while, until he found what he was looking for. He got a small gadget out that kind of looked like a needle. Jayce stuck the sharp end in the lock and moved his head... well, his ear close to it. Then, he carefully started moving the gadget, stopped and listened. Tried, stopped and listened. And again.

It took him about a minute, before the lock made a breaking noise and opened. “Nice Job, Partner,” Jack recognized and kicked against the door (the size of a truck tire), which immediately swung open. The ventilation system wasn’t larger than the access cover. It looked like a black tunnel, small, waiting to absorb Jack and Jayce and never spit them out again.

The agents got on their knees and moved into the ventilation shaft; Jayce first, then Jack. Moving forward went slow (because once in a while, one of the agents got stuck) and seemed to last eternally. Whenever one of the two accidentally hit the metal shaft with his gun, the echo was overwhelming and they right away froze and remained silent to listen if someone had heard them. (Whether knowing that they were discovered or not wouldn’t really make a difference, because either way they would be shot within seconds)

“How far are we?” Jack asked and his voice came back a thousand times from the walls of the shaft. “Shush, idiot!” Jayce whispered and restrained himself from kicking Jack—who was right behind him—in the face.

They crawled through the tight tunnel for another minute, until Jayce stopped and looked back at his partner. The two of them carefully got their guns out and then, determined, approached to one of the vents, which all were connected by the ventilation shaft. They could hear voices and Jack looked meaningful at Jayce who nodded in agreement. Jayce reached into his black trench coat and pulled a special mini-bazooka out of it. Then, he fired one shot at the vent cover. The cover fell into the room and so did a smoke bomb.

Within seconds the room below was filled with white and gray fog and Jack and Jayce put on their gas masks (which also had special glasses so that the smoke did not interfere with their sharp vision). The agents dropped themselves from the ventilation shaft and into the room. Jack waved at Jayce and the Italian man ran out the door, the only one in the room, to make sure no one had escaped and eliminate possible guards. Meanwhile, Jayce—his gun loaded—walked around in the factory hall and took a closer look at the people who, caused by the smoke, had lost consciousness and fallen to the ground.

Jack came back in and went over to his partner. There was an alarming expression on Jayce’s face, but before he could ask, the other agent spoke, “Jack, I think we have a slight problem here!” He put his gun back, underneath the coat and looked around. Jack didn’t get it. “What?” he asked and nervously played with his pistol.

“Look at these people, Jack! They don’t look too dangerous, do they!?” The Italian followed the instruction and identified the unconscious persons on the ground as elderly men and women, gray haired seniors. “Ooops...” he mumbled embarrassed and did as

Jayce did—take off the gas mask. Almost all the fog was cleared by now and the two agents fully realized what they had gotten themselves into.

At one of the walls, a big banner said *30th Annual Dinner Meeting of the Senior Detective Club for Hobby Detectives*. Jack pointed it out to Jayce and both felt even more uncomfortable. Standing in the middle of this disaster, both men in black, looking around in confusion, the ringing of a cell phone interrupted the silence. It was Jayce's phone.

"Jayce Hawk, 2nd Officer and Undercover Agent for the AACLSCESSDC. What can I do for you?" Jack moved closer to his friend and listened to the conversation. "Well, you've already done enough, buddy! It's the first of April and you were stupid enough to believe me. Have fun with the consequences and have a great day!"

The stranger hung up and Jack indignantly threw his gas mask to the ground. "Great!"

Silence. Jayce put his cell phone away and looked at Jack. "Let's go drink something! I'm done for today," he said and his friend agreed. Having entered the room with a lot of noise, they left it in frustrated silence and made their way to "Tobey's."

"It could have been serious! We *had* to go!" Jack tried to console, while driving back—this time 35 mph. "No, it could not... it was a stupid mistake! We never take a case without making reinsurance calls. That's what we signed!" Frustrated Jayce got his cigarettes out. Jack glared at him, but in a more concerned than actually angry manner.

Nevertheless, the agent lit a cigarette. "What was I thinking? I am not supposed to trust every nerd who calls me and pretends being important. How did he get my number anyways? I'll have to get a new cell phone with a new number now... well, if I won't get fired!" Jack didn't know what to say. He felt helpless.

Beep. Beep. Jayce's phone rang. He looked at it, turned pale and answered. Jack pushed the brakes for a red light and then, watched his friend.

"Good evening, Sir." (It was the absolute top man and boss of the AACLSCESSDC, the one every agent obeyed.)

"Good evening, Hawk. You probably know why I'm calling, don't you?" a deep, smoky voice came out of the phone.

"Well, I... yes, Sir. Please, let me explain. It all was..."

"Quiet!"

Jayce swallowed and hushed. The stoplight went green and Jack drove on.

"Seriously, Mr. Hawk: don't even play it down. You can be proud of yourself. Congratulations, young man! You guys did an excellent job! Absolutely brilliant."

The two agents in the car looked at each other, quite irritated. Was he being sarcastic?

"How did you know all this? I never would have guessed that the leader of the Senior Detective Club was going to steal all this money. He always seemed so sensitive and nice to me. Good thing you prevented all this from happening. I can't imagine... that would have been a disaster. Hawk, I promote you and Eagle for stopping a catastrophe on a day you didn't even have to work. Congratulations. I hope to see you on Monday. Good evening."

"Well... thank you...um...Good bye."

Shocked and surprised at the same time, Jayce looked at his cell phone. "Is this a joke, too?" he asked puzzled. But Jack couldn't give him an answer. Instead, he turned on the radio. The news were on.

"...defeated by the Lions. 'It was a great game and there is no doubt that either one of the teams did not do their best. Every player did a great job,' Harris commented on the game.

We'll go on with the local news on this lovely April the 1st evening. Ladies and Gentlemen, tonight, one of the probably most incredible coups could be stopped by the police. After a fire—the cause is still unknown—at the '30th Annual Dinner Meeting of the Senior Detective Club' broke out, the fire fighters and policemen went out to the old factory building where the dinner meeting was located to extinguish the flames and rescue the victims. Jay McKinley, leader and president of the SDC, had planned to give a check of about 2,000,000\$ to a special guest this evening. As the police found out, this was never intended to really happen. During the honor speech, members of the DD Gang—employed by McKinley—were meant to come in and take the money, plus kidnap five of the most prominent senior citizens of "Vas Legas." It is incredible luck that the police—alarmed by the fire—came right in time to arrest the gang members and McKinley."

Jack turned off the radio and glanced at Jayce.

"Yeah... I can't believe it! Give me High Five, man!" he exclaimed and the two of them could not believe what the first of April had brought. From now on, in the AACLSCESSDC, they would be **Commander Hawk** and **Commander Eagl**

Leaving, Just For Now?

Bidding you a long farewell
Although your life's not at an end
Someday soon again, I hope
I will meet you around the bend

We'll share stories and memories
Of our great and terrible past
Looking back on some of these
Makes me wish it could just last

I know that we never got the chance
To truly, deeply meet
But that's just what I'm feeling now
Sadness, anger, and defeat

There is one thing I'd like to tell you
It's something I must say
I love you, always, this is true

**Maggie Carr
Buhler High School**

I wanted to be a dinosaur when I grew up. Seriously. On Halloween every year at my school, the kids would show up in their costumes and have a little parade and dance for the parents. It's weird enough that a girl wanted to be a dinosaur, but even weirder, I wanted to be Baby Bop. So in first grade, on Halloween, I came to school with a big green face and dragging an odd yellow blanky. I made quite a fashion statement in my big pink ballet slippers. I felt like the queen of the world. The only problem is, when I got to school, I noticed that every other kid was just dressed in clothes. Pretty much every girl was dressed like Britney Spears or one of the Spice Girls, and all the guys were pirates or hippies.

I didn't really think anything of it. My six-year-old mind decided that they must not have enough money for a cool costume like mine. When all of the kids in my class saw my strange getup, they all started laughing and pointing. But that wasn't the worst of it all. In the parade, I could feel my tail moving. Was it coming to life? Would I be Baby Bop forever? I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, so I did both.

"What the heck are you crying for?" And that's when I saw him, the love of my first grade life. Brady Klein, the only other kid who wore a whole costume. He looked even more handsome with his cow suit. So cute with his hands on his hips and the fake rubber udders hanging from his spotted tummy. I was sure it was love.

My tail still swishing, I turned around and saw Ben Daley kicking it with a look of morbid glee in his beady eyes. I was irritated beyond reason, so I picked up my pale yellow blanky and whipped it at his head. It smacked his nose and knocked the ninja headband off his face. So he pinched my arm. I kicked his pudgy shins. Brady felt left out, so he joined my side and twisted Ben's ear, and we were all screaming and yelling.

That's when Mrs. Daniels came and hauled us out of the parade line, whose journey to the gym had been interrupted. We all were severely chastised, and sent to the back of the line, which must have gone down the hall forever! Now Mom would never watch me dance to Ghostbusters!

When we finally got there, Brady stood next to me. My little heart soared. The music started, and I could feel my mouth watering ominously. I swallowed all the spit and nerves as quickly as possible. I began doing my best to follow the line dance deal that all the kids were doing. Of course, they just *had* to put the first grade in the front row, so all the parents could see how bad they did. We weren't near as experienced as the fifth grade class. Through a jumble of kicks and claps, I found myself getting all flustered again. What came after the four steps forward?! Ben was also dancing next to me, unfortunately.

"Did you forget the moves, Baby Bop?" came his taunting little chipmunk voice. I wasn't about to stop dancing. I would show that dumb Ben Daley I meant business. I started making up my own dance routine. This meant shaking my tail back and forth, and swinging that confounded blanky over my head. All the parents started laughing, and I think I liked the attention.

I started to really get wild, and the crowd loved it. And then my tail fell off. Apparently, Ben had made a small tear when he kicked it. It tore even more until it just fell off. I tripped over it and fell on the gym floor. When my stomach landed on that green appendage, the watering that had filled my mouth earlier suddenly gave way to what it had warned me about, and I barfed what seemed like a rainbow Niagara Falls. All

those Fruit Loops wasted...what a shame. I started crying, and the music was finally over.

The janitor rushed in and sighed. He didn't like me very much, because once I drew on the bathroom wall with a permanent marker from the teacher's desk. He dumped a bunch of cat litter on the floor and told everyone to move to the cafeteria. My mom took me to the corner and gave me a hug. Brady came over by me too, and patted me on the back. Then he left, holding the hand of Lissy Ralston, who turned out to be his girlfriend for two whole weeks! I cried even harder. To be so humiliated in front of all those people! On top of that, my little heart had just been broken in front of my mom! Oh, my social life was over! Thinking back on it, I can tell my mom was secretly trying so hard not to die laughing.

She took me home, and told me put on some normal clothes. Then she let me sit in the laundry basket eating ice cream, which I gulped down somehow with no problem, while she folded towels and watched "The Young and the Restless." She was very supportive and told me that maybe if I didn't throw up next time I could make it as a professional dancer. I think she was being sarcastic, but I was greatly encouraged. I got right back up on my feet and went to school the next day.

Who else but that stupid Ben Daley was waiting for me by the lunch count table? "I liked your dancing yesterday, Kristie." I couldn't tell if he was serious or not, but later, I figured it out. That dumb boy had a crush on me! He gave me his popsicle at lunch and chased me at recess. Oh no, my dancing had unexpectedly turned me into a boy magnet! From that day forward, Ben Daley kept trying to get me to like him.

Now I'm a junior in high school, and guess who has been my boyfriend for the last year? None other than Ben, of course. He still calls me 'Baby Bop,' and every Halloween, he gets a real evil look in his eye and starts to imitate the way I danced that one fateful day back in the first grade. The funny thing is though, that nobody makes fun of his dancing, because they see the same moves pretty much every week. This is because I'm captain of the dance team at my school, and I make up all the routines. In fact, it's what I'm going to school for. Every year at Halloween, I lead the dance team in a familiar dance to 'Ghostbusters.' And all those snotty little Spice Girls who laughed at me in first grade are doing exactly what I did on my day of fame. And the crowd still cheers.

Clara Hespe
Ellis High School

The Truth

She is always holding back,
scared to show her true feelings.
She is honest with everyone,
everyone except herself.
She keeps everything bottled up;
even if it's killing her inside.
She doesn't like to cry,
too afraid to show the pain.

Failure to Communicate

I've been sitting here for hours,
thinking about what I wanted to tell you.
And I think I've finally realized
that I have nothing to say.

**-Kylee Kirchoff
Buhler High School**

Words
Dana Johnson
Buhler High School

Think of an infant. Think of the “firsts” in that child’s life. The first tooth will be a trial, and the first steps will end in a fall...and then there are the highly anticipated first words. Even from the *sounds* that might possibly contain a “mama”, a child’s speech is monitored. Why? Because words are important. There is no question about this, especially in our world today.

And why shouldn’t they be as revered and honored as they are? It’s true that they have enormous power in all our lives. In our governments, they can be the difference in life or death; in our personal lives they can be the difference between happiness and misery. However, are they really as necessary as we perceive them to be? Can they really be as meaningful as we give them credit for? What if words were left unsaid?

Words left unsaid are powerful things. More than spoken words, they are often the deciding factor in what we believe, see, hear and feel. Think about it. It’s not the words that are spoken by the crush you’ve had for a month that make you want to cry; it’s everything you wish he would say, but you never hear. Often, it’s not the words spoken in a time of grief that will save a friendship; it’s the words that are held back in a time of anger. Our human race is more a slave to what people haven’t said but should have or what they did say and should not have than it ever was or will be to the words themselves.

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” We have often heard the adage quoted and it is often filed into the recycle bin of our memory. But think on this: Can words capture a sunset or a perfect snowfall? No. These things require no words. You cannot re-create a silent object with words. The sun gives our world life and it is one of the most beautiful things we have been blessed with; something as simple as words, for all their usefulness, cannot describe it. But words that are “said” in an awed and reverent silence? They can completely rearrange our view of a sunset or just about anything; if we just stop and listen to them.

Silence. It’s the opposite of our wonderful, solid, unchanging, descriptive words. Is it better? Is it more respectful? Is it safer? Well, there is a time for words and a time for silence. We get so caught up in our need to describe and glorify things with words. Appropriate, but words are over-rated. In a sunrise that turns the sky ten different shades of the same color or a moment in a relationship when a single word can destroy someone or bring them to life; these are the times when words that are left unsaid or said in our silences are truly golden.

Empty Presence
Katey Mishler
Buhler High School

Not a cloud in the sky
to show Your might.
No roll of thunder
to express Your power.
No animals here
to show Your creation.
Not another soul
to rejoice in Your work.
Instead, the silence□
fills empty presence;
and this is enough
to prove You are God.

Writing.

Different for all.

Speaks strangely.

Some can,
Some can't.

Unique.

Writing.
Let it all go.
Words can be changed,
Left unsaid.
Think before you write.
Wrath calmed,
Or passion inspired.
Escape.

Writing.
Holds and mesmerizes
Writer and reader.
Weaves peculiar charms
In our hearts.
Capture.

Writing. □Is everywhere.
In different forms.
Spoken in silence.
Nature and people,
Creation.
Holy.

Writing.
Unique.
Escape.
Captured.
Holy.
Freedom.

Dana Johnson
Buhler High School



Matt Trowbridge
Buhler High School

Abandoned.
Houston Hubbard
Buhler High School

Standing water, sitting stagnant,
Creaking winds against the wall.
Ancient glass within the window,
 Steeple strong aspires tall.
Time itself claims those around it.
 Yet it alone resists the call

For now the path is mind.

The world I see,
Is not for me.
I can't live with
This apathy.
The darkness hovers
Over me.
I cannot see.
I cannot see,
What this world
Wants from me.
But luck saw fit
To set me free.
Wonderfully,
Joyously,
The twilight has
Reminded me.
Of long since lost
Humanity,
And broke the spell
Held over me.
Now I'm free.
Oh, now I'm free,
To sit beneath
The canopy.
The stars themselves
Are friends to me.
Magically,
Brilliantly,
The light they show
Falls down on me.
And glad I am
They set me free.
For now the path is mine,
For now the path is mind.

**Houston Hubbard
Buhler High School**

The Vanity of Contempt
Levi Khun
Buhler High School

Chapter 1

He frantically rummaged through the papers on his desk, looking for his yellow paged legal pad, but it was lost in the abyss of papers. Looking at the clock on his burgundy colored wall, it struck him like a like a right upper-cut to the chin, he realized that he had to be in court in fifteen minutes, and the drive was at least twenty minutes, that is without the sea of commuters escaping to lunch. After he dug deep enough into the stack of papers, the hunt for his legal pad was over. With a frustrated, impatient sigh, he threw it in his briefcase, locked it, and almost jogged to the large mahogany door. He threw it open with vindictive force, startling his secretary who was waiting patiently for him outside of his door. He turned to his door, and slammed it shut, making an echo resound down the marble hallway. His secretary handed him a stack of notes from few of his many clients, but he didn't pay much attention to them considering the multitude of his situation. He had a realization that if he was late to court, the judge could throw him in jail with the real crooks for delaying the appointed court time, and that made his pace come to a panicky speed.

He took the steps two at a time, going for the parking lot. Once he reached the doors to the outside world, he threw them open and took a deep breath of fresh air, free from the smell of worn, soft leather and old, dusty law books, a smell he had become accustomed to, but wasn't fond of. His long, flowing, yet determined strides carried him quickly across the hot pavement to his black Mercedes-Benz. The handle burned his hand as he pulled on it, and once again, the smell of leather hit him. If he had a choice, he wouldn't have chosen leather when he purchased the car, but unfortunately, the model only came in leather, so he figured he could live with it. He tossed his briefcase into the passenger seat. The briefcase was usually the only one that rode in the passenger seat with him. He unbuttoned his black suit jacket with white pinstripes as he climbed down into the cockpit of the nine-five thousand dollar piece of machinery. He pushed the start button, which involved no keys, one of the perks of having a Mercedes. He pushed on the gas and listened to the engine roar, he took time to do that every time he entered his car, because it seem these days, it was the only real thing that could give him goose bumps.

Lane & Associates inhabited a large building that had been purchased in 1977 by Donald Lane. The building was then renovated to make it seem like a real law firm. Marble floors were installed, giant pillars were imported from all over the world, Afghan rugs were purchased and laid across the floors, walls were painted, offices were developed, and now the building, which is a haven for the practice of law, has now come to be known as Lane & Associates. The billing system at Lane & Associates is the main focus of every employee at the firm. Whether an attorney spends five minutes with a client talking about a minor offense or five months working on a complex case, every single waking moment an attorney spends with a client or working on a case is appropriately recorded, sent to the billing department, and the lucky person gets a check signed Lane & Associates in the mail.

On average at Lane & Associates, each attorney devotes about one-hundred-forty hours per week of his or her time to work on cases, go to court, and defend for the greater good, as they called it. At the average going rate of about 150 dollars per hour, and with seventeen bright eyed, hard working, dedicated lawyers, Lane & Associates rakes in about three-hundred-fifty-seven-thousand dollars per week. But the dividend at the end of the week relies solely on the types of cases that are being tried and worked, and of course, the total number of billable hours. Facts and figures were absolutely everything. The attorney at the end of the year with the most billable hours, clientele, and overall smarts and skills, took one step closer to partnership.

Partnership at Lane & Associates meant you had arrived. It became to be known more as a lifestyle, rather than a job title. Along with quite a substantial raise of pay and respect, you gained access to the firms private jet, exclusive accessibility to the beach front condo in Barbados, invitations to important dinners at important homes all over the area, a say in who was hired and who was fired, and the list of royalties went on and on. Every attorney employed there had the dream to be promoted to partner when they were hired, seeing the current partners, they knew it was what they wanted, and for the lucky ones, it was what they got.

Kenneth Rigg, who was currently employed at Lane & Associates, and had been for seven years, was well on his way to partner status. Since he'd graduated with high honors from Yale Law School, many high powered law firms had been keeping an eye on him, and when he walked across the stage and received his diploma, he had over half a dozen job offers with some of the biggest firms in the country.

Another deciding factor in the job offers was his family. The Rigg family had been associated with Yale for decades, and Kenneth came from a long, well known family of law. He chose Lane & Associates because they had the highest bid, especially for someone fresh out of law school. They promised him two-hundred thousand the first year, insurance, a corner office, his own secretary and fully paid for him moving to Washington. He liked what he saw the first year, and was pleased with his choice, but things eventually went sour.

He became stressed out with his job. Attorneys at Lane & Associates were expected to devote their lives, lives that were forgot about, to their work. Working over one-hundred-forty hours a week, sometimes less, sometimes more, he became tired. His loss of sleep created permanent bags under his eyes that ultimately said he was overworked. Along with the stress, he gained a substantial amount of weight. In college, he participated in track, and specialized in pole vaulting. He had won state 3 times back to back in high school, and was number one in his college league. He hadn't run, lifted weights or participated in any physical activity that burned calories, other than sex, but he couldn't remember how long ago that had been.

Rumors had been going around the office and the country club that his wife was having an affair. He had heard them and been confronted about them, and he assured the nay sayers that these were false accusations, but he really couldn't tell them the truth. He was never home, the only time he talked to his wife was when he had to, and even then it usually ended up with them screaming at each other, her crying, and him sleeping on the day bed in the sunroom of their colonial style mansion. It had been purchased, thanks to Lane & Associates after he had been working for them for 3 years. Of course, it came at no cheap price. It set him back about one and a half million dollars, but he was raking in the dough, and he had to have something to show for it, so he bought the humble abode, and still resided there.

He had no children to fill the empty rooms due to the hate his wife had for him. It was torture, but he figured, it was probably best, since he was never home. He had come to peace with knowing children were probably out of the question, but he had brothers who could take care of

carrying on the family name. But he knew there would always be that want of having a son to play catch with on the weekends, and he thought if he had a child, he actually have something to come home to.

Right now, Kenneth Rigg was not worried about his marriage status, his family name, or his home. He was worried about court. He had never been late to court in his life and he wasn't about to start today. He put the car in reverse, and punched the gas out from between the yellow lines which his car inhabited every day, since all employees got their own parking space. His moved about 3 spaces closer every year, and he was almost to the front door. In his mind, this symbolized that he was almost there. He put the pedal to the floor with confidence, knowing the parking cop was at lunch, or at least hoping he was. He reached fifty miles per hour darting through the parking lot and slammed on his brakes when he came to the drive that led to Carver Street. He turned right and immediately stepped on it once again.

When he purchased the car, he made sure it came with a racing package. As a teen, his father had purchased him a baby blue, 1967 Mustang with a 289 underneath the hood. He frequently raced his high school buddies, which he hadn't talked to since his life had been taken over. He flew by dozens of boutiques, delis, coffee shops, and other miscellaneous stores and restaurants until he came to the highway 101 on-ramp. He put on his blinker as he merged into the right lane and started up the steady incline. The engine of his vehicle kicked into overdrive as it lunged the long, sleek body up the hill, and onto the highway on which he traveled so many times he lost count. He yielded to a late model sedan and punched the gas once again.

He figured he'd have to fill up with gas before he went back to the office. A broken down Mercedes in Washington, D.C. is almost guaranteed to be infiltrated. He'd seen it on the news and was smart enough to know he should stop and fill up. But he had enough to get there he knew, and as he reached 85 miles per hour, a sigh of relief came over him like a gust of wind. The air conditioning felt good on his sweating face. The hair gel dripped into his eyes, and it stung somewhat, but he got used to it. So far, so good, he thought as the pavement flew beneath him like clouds do a plane. He was now confident that he was going to arrive on time, but his confidence would be smashed like the bugs on his windshield.

The George Washington Bridge was a commonly used bridge for Attorney at Law Kenneth Rigg, as soon as he saw it, something came over him. Chills ran up and down his arms for the second time in the past ten minutes, as what lay on the other side of the bridge entered his mind. It was something he expected, but not what he hoped for. As his motorcar brought him to the apex of the arching bridge, he cringed upon the sight. He let out a sigh and cursed out loud. He looked down on what seem to be becoming his worst nightmare, but little did he know, that it would soon change his life for the better.

Six Word Novel
Ann Wilson
Buhler High School

We loved. We fought. He Left.

Night of Darkness:
By Josh Bilyeu
Buhler High School

I woke up in a haze. Dust filled my lungs, smothering me. I gazed upon the disaster that lies before me. I had busted the windshield with my skull, the shards piercing my skin. I pulled each piece out one by one, clenching at every tug. I scream as I now see Aaron, lying on the asphalt. I leapt through the shattered window, running as far as my legs could take me. I could hardly attempt a jog, my leg faltering beneath me, buckling every step. I pondered whether I should go home, or flee, leaving my past in the past. I must grab some things and stop to see someone; the only person I can confide in: my brother.

Back at the house, the innocence in Jordan is being betrayed by his one true care in the world, his brother Jacob. "Jordan, always the perfect one, a gods gift to man. He gets the great room, and I get the room worthy of a closet. His great feats and abilities always surpass mine, pushing me inevitably into the shadows, always forgotten. But he has for once in his bright life shown a deep dark sin, and now it is my turn to be the victor. I will shower him with a feeling of comfort, then reveal him to the cops and it will be my time to shine; a diamond in the rough. He will fill his life with despair, a feeling I have felt my entire life. Let's see if his almighty lord will save him now. No longer shall I be shunned by society, I will now be known as the good child of our family. I will be the one with the future, whose abilities will be praised upon. His greatest mistake was always trusting in telling me everything. Now he will feel the cruel chilling touch of our domineering society."

"Jacob, I need to talk to you," Jordan said. "I need your help, I've done something horrid."

"What happened?" replied Jacob.

"I...er...I decided to drink with some friends, I figured I'd have some fun for once."

On the way home we went into a tree driving, when I saw Aaron lying on the road. I... I just ran, Jacob I don't know what to do!"

He looks at me with complete remorse. His face fills with tears, as I try to hide my expression of victory. I can see the headlines now, ***Golden Boy Turned Juvenile***. "You've got to get out of here. Head to the woods, that would be your best chance to escape."

"Jacob, I'm sorry. I've let you down...I...I can't even look at you. I'm ashamed of myself."

"You have nothing to apologize for." He is the one doing me a favor. "I understand, its ok. You didn't let me down. In fact, I'm glad you came to me with this." I'm really glad you came to me with this; it's my turn to shine.

"Of course I did, you are the one person I can trust. I...When will I see you again?"

NEVER AGAIN! "I will come to you first light; you have your cell phone right?"

"Yes. Jacob I must be going, I will see you at dawn."

Jordan lays guilt ridden, as he stares at the ceiling with his cold pale face, after packing some clothes. There was no denying it, Aaron had died and it was his entire fault. He decided one day of ill behavior wouldn't be the ruin of him, for he was always the responsible one. Now he hears the buzz of sirens, his face turns to a blistering red. He creeps out of the window, taking only what he could carry. He had betrayed everyone, especially Jacob, and now is alone, suffering eternal guilt. He looks around; the trees were even judging him, concealing him in the woods, not even giving him a glint of hope. The woods produced a silhouette of contrast, only letting in the slightest hint of light. He couldn't run, his leg still at a limp from the wreck. Now he hears the distant rapping of dogs, hunting him down. He stands still for a moment; taking in deep breaths as every emotion he has ever suffered came crashing down on him. Every thought that has ever passed his mind comes soaring in to give him a second glimpse. Everything seemed so clear to him now; it was all meant to be. Then he got down on one knee and proceeded to ask the lord for forgiveness.

"I lie lurking in the shadows, completely isolated. Frightened and alone, I gaze for the slightest glimpse of light. But I fear not lord, for I know you are with me. I have wronged, but why do I deserve this anguish alone. I have sinned, but I shall be forgiven, for I fear not lord, for I know you are with me. I hear a rampant screeching heading right my way. I tense up, feeling my last breath might come, but I fear not lord, for I know you are with me."



Morning Dew
Ashley Justice
Buhler High School

The morning dew kisses my face
And awakens my heart to the
Beauty of the day and

What lies ahead.

The colors capture my innocent soul

Lost and Found
Ashley Justice
Buhler High School

The end of the road may be near
And I'll walk it without any fear.
With destination unsure, I stumble along
My path is unclear-I don't know the song.

I wonder if I'll find a place for me
But I refuse to give up until I am free.
I'll just keep going -I won't slow down
Until I have found my sacred ground.

Maybe someday I'll settle-my intuition is strong,
And on that day, I will know I finally belong.

Beneath the Surface
Ann Wilson
Buhler High School

It's Tuesday. The fresh laundry from the previous day sits impatiently in the basket waiting to be ironed. The woman winces with a familiar aching pain as she slowly stands up from her crouched over position and begins to tuck away the clean dishes.

"It's 3:00 p.m.," he reminds her, stumbling into the kitchen. It was time for his countless medications and her single dose of reality. She fixes him a tall glass of iced tea, just like she had done a thousand times before. After he chokes down the various pills, the two slowly make their way out to the white, oversized van. After helping him climb up into the overpowering van's passenger seat, she straightens up using her strong hands as a brace for her throbbing back, knowing he cannot see her. She makes her way to the driver's side and they creep out of the driveway, dreading what awaits them.

As she pulls into the parking lot, she says a quick, silent prayer, asking God for strength. She reaches out, placing her worn hand on top of his. She feels the baby smooth skin, and lightly kisses his gray, thinning hair that lies so delicately on top of his head. They wearily walk through the clinic's automatic doors and make their way towards the Oncology unit. The receptionist already knew it was them; it's always them, 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday. She looked up and greeted them with a wide grin. It is time for his chemo shots. Three shots in his right arm, three times a week, every-other week.

With a crochet hook in hand, she begins to work diligently as they wait patiently for his name to be called. She thinks back to the summer and how peaceful things were. Kneeling down in the cool soil with the sun's fierce rays shining on her back. Caring for her juicy, plump tomatoes, she was in harmony without any worries. But she cannot escape to her garden anymore. The cold, dried-up ground is much too hard for her old, tired hands.

"Sir, we're ready for you," the nurse calls from the office door. He gets up from his chair shaking violently and appearing weaker than ever. He looks back over his shoulder. This is his life. So it is her's too. She shoots him an encouraging look as he disappears behind the door, leaving her outside - - to wait.

Teacher as Writer

Drought Buck

Creek beds cough dust,
dry, white puffs,
spiraling outward,
coating everything in their path.

Shallow footprints bely parched throats
and growling bellies,
except those of iridescent blowflies
gorging on dried fish carcasses.

Instinctively, the buck never crosses the creek bed
onto paved roads and manicured lawns.
He fears humans and their dogs,
well fed and watered.

Thirst crazed, though,
he wanders into forbidden territory,
seeking hose seeps and pet dishes
full of treated city water.

One evening, our paths cross.
Surprised,
I halt my walk;
he freezes, eyes reflecting visceral fear.

Immobilized, I watch him turn reluctantly
from a water bucket
to race into deepening dusk
til I see only puffs of rising dust.

Karen Madorin

Ponce Puerto Rico

Largartejo * on the adobe walls of our entry area greet me each morning.
These little lizards scurry for safety as the door opens to the shockingly brilliant sunshine.

The majestic Cordillera Central Mountains rise in the mist to the north appearing as enormous grayish, lavender giants on cloudy days.
In the sunlight they are a greenish blue martial array standing silently as sentinels guarding the city by the sea.

Puffy pillow clusters of delicate coral gently sway in the breeze from flowering flamboyanas, the national flower of Puerto Rico.

Taking the trash out entails meandering through a path of swaying palms and luscious tropical plants.
Enormous bunches of bananas hanging from trees along the neighbor's fence decorate the path.

As evening arrives, Coqui, ** hidden in the grass, musically chirp their nocturnal songs, thankful for the cool air after another tropical day.

**Gerri Hilger
BHS Teacher**

**Legartio are small lizards that eat insects and actually are quite helpful in the tropics.*

***Coqui are tiny frog found only in Puerto Rico. They make sounds like the chirping of small birds*

The astringent sharpness of fall awakened her more than the softness of spring. It called her forth to run the hills and to hunt. Deep within her core without awareness she sensed the briefness of the season, the lull before the bitterness of winter. So she answered.

Running free under the moon in a slantways direction like the wolf within her, she felt her human form began to shift and stretch freeing the wildness that always lurked just below her human form. Night freed her, allowed her to flow into nature; daylight would restore her to the human world and its structured culture. So she ran on all fours through the forest alone and content.

A breathiness beside her broke her stride. Someone or something was running near her---keeping pace. She slowed; it slowed. She stopped in a clearing where the bright the silver of the moon would enhance sight as well as power. Alert she sent her senses out trying to define the presence near her. Nothing signaled danger or fear, not human then she concluded. She relaxed her guard a bit. In this form humans were to be feared, but nothing came to her through scent or sound to indicate human.

Slight brushings of leaves and grasses caught her attention. They came from behind her. She turned, and there at the edge of the clearing watching her was a fellow wolf. Large, dark fur tipped with silver he emulated all that was male and alpha. Her spirit recognized him before her mind did. This was another like her when she had believed she was the only one of her kind. She sat still taking in all that she could about him.

His eyes locked with hers. Each read the human within the other. Regally he dipped his head towards her, turned and loped in to the wood. She hesitated only a second before she followed. They ran together between the tree lit only by moonlight that glistened between ebony branches. At first, she followed his lead as if they were ballroom dancers but gradually they ran side by side, equal alphas enjoying their freedom.

Dawn challenged the moon and rose tinted the sky. She slowed knowing the moment would soon be complete. Near her home she stopped as her body struggled with its return to the two legged form. Shaking her hair to free it, she stood in the silver light of the room once more human and confined by her body and the rules of society. Lifting her chin she gazed towards the woods and found him at edge watching her. His human form was as attractive as the wolf who had run with her. His eyes still golden amber caught hers as he bowed his head to her before he turned and melted into the cover of the tree.

Mary DeVries

Fog of Uncertainty

Early mists, a grey morning greets us
Tree limbs bedecked with icy lace

Darkens the mind.
Fog of uncertainty blankets the writer's face.

The fog smothers the campground
Distorts buildings, plays with perceptions
Clouds the mind.
Fog of uncertainty settles.

Yet--shades of blue penetrate bleak greys
Sun and Fog clash, Fire and Ice
Fuels the mind.
Fog of uncertainty lifts.

Cobwebs clear, raw voices awaken
Waiting to be heard, noticed, recognized
Sculpting the mind.
Fog of uncertainty dissipated.

Pens poised, blank pages filled
Light is shed, spilling creativity
Unleashes the mind.
Fog of uncertainty lifts, yields serenity.

Holly Kimble
March 8, 2007
Prairie Winds Retreat

Guitar Star
Don Wagner

I know that I am in School to learn
But few of the subjects make my soul burn
Most of the classes seem like a waste
They don't satisfy my educational taste

But put a guitar in my hands
Teach me the history of rock and roll bands
Offer me a course on effects and amps
Drill me in rock,riffs,scales and vamps

Then you 'il see me come alive
It's from this passion I derive
The essence of bliss inside
The goose bump thrills of a musical ride

Hendrix, Clapton, B.B.King—
These are names that to me ring
The inner workings of my heart
Their music sings to my life and art

So understand- I am different than you
In the things I want to learn and do
Don't put me down-I have my star
And to there I'll fly with my guitar

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