

Sophistichaos

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Insanity with a Purpose

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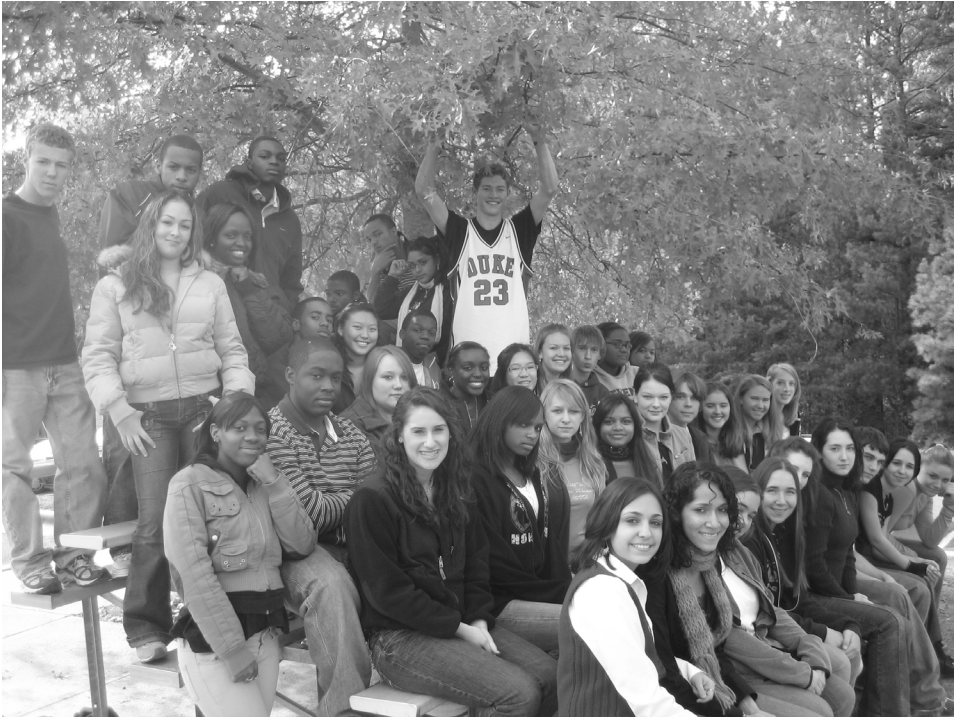
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FORWARD

When outsiders walk past my room at 11:24 am, they see a peculiar site. Students sit at aging desks, wooden tables, miniature blue chairs and, when necessary, on the floor. Forty writers in all, crammed into every square inch of dusty concrete space. These rooms are designed for half as many students, but we make do.

My air conditioning unit always breaks at the beginning of the school year, and this year was no exception. It was bearable in the morning, but when you cram forty students into a space the size of a master bedroom, the 100 degree heat tends to stifle any creativity. We were a nomadic class those first couple of weeks, moving from room to room, sweating out the final days of summer with pen in hand and thoughts pressed inward to the imagination.

Those sweltering weeks seem so long ago now. When I dodge the sprawling legs and crammed bodies to begin my third period class each day, I am constantly reminded that teaching is the greatest job in the world. *Sophistichaos* is an apt title to describe these young men and women. They are more sophisticated than any teenager should be. Their energy lends a sense of organized chaos to the classroom as well. They are a melting pot of race, age, and nationality. They are some of the best of their generation.

Sophistichaos is a powerful collection of plays, short stories, and poetry. Over the course of the semester, these students have written close to one

million words collectively. *Sophistichaos* encompasses the best of this creativity. I feel confident that you will be inspired by the following pages.

These students are a family now. They know their fellow classmates better than most high school students ever will. They push each other to become better writers and, more importantly, better people. Their mark on my life is permanent. I will never forget them.

S. Albright
Durham, North Carolina
December 2007

NATHAN AARONSON**The Chimpanzee, the Janitor, and the Old Man****Exposition**

Scene: The men's bathroom in terminal A at Kennedy Airport. It is a huge bathroom, and almost spacious enough to fit one of the Airports large 747's inside it. The bathroom is located off a short hallway in the center of the most crowded terminal in the airport. The bathroom has freshly scrubbed green and white marble tiles that gleam, and reflect the bathroom's bright florescent ceiling lights. From the entrance, dozens of pure white urinals line the left side of the long rectangular room, followed by almost half as many stalls. The right side of the room consisted of a long green marble counter that runs the length of the room. Set into the counter, is an ongoing row of sinks. The silver faucets are accentuated with bronze handles and look like they belong in a palace. In front of each sink is a large mirror, and a towel dispenser. The mirrors are spotless, and not one of the dispensers is out of towels. Pushed up against the far back wall of the room is a large white marble baby changing station. It simply consists of a table, a towel dispenser, a sink, several bottles of baby powder, and a green sign with white lettering that hangs above it saying; "Please be considerate! Clean up after your baby!" Even this table, the location for one of the dirtiest jobs known to mankind, would have been suitable to eat a meal off of. The entire bathroom is spotless.

Not a single paper towel lay on the ground. Not a puddle of water is splashed on the floor. Not a single urinal is un-flushed and not a single stall is backed up.

Characters

The Old Man: The old man is hunched over, and leans heavily on his cane when he walks. The skin on his bony face sags. His large nose and sharp jaw are prominent. His eyes are large, but when he can't see something, he squints so much that it looks as if they are almost closed. His forehead is large, and he has a receding hairline. The hair that is still on the back of his head is short, thin and grey. He is wearing a dark brown sweater, tan kaki pants, and a pair of brown leather shoes. Always contrasting to the sharp look of this old man is a dark brown chimpanzee. He goes everywhere with it; talking to it, feeding it and, taking care of it. The chimpanzee is this old man's only friend. The old man is also partially deaf, always making people repeat themselves or just ignoring them completely. He is a stubborn and bad tempered old man, and does not like authority.

The Chimpanzee (Billy): Billy is a young chimpanzee. He has dark brown fur that covers all of his body except for his ears, face, hands, and feet. Although Billy has learned to walk on his feet without the use of his hands, he still prefers his natural stance of galloping on all four limbs. Billy is only a year old and still wears a diaper; and often times a repugnant smell trails him wherever he goes. Although Billy depends on his owner and companion to take care of him, he is also a very curious animal, and wherever he and the old man go, trouble follows.

The Janitor: The janitor is a white male in his late 50's. He has a grey beard that is a few inches long and neatly cut. His facial features are sharp, and his eyes are always aware. He has short but thick grey hair, and wears a blue janitor cap over it. He wears his matching blue pants and shirt, with the same pride that a marine would wear his uniform. For 15 years he has been

the sole maintainer of the large Men's bathroom in terminal A of Kennedy Airport. It is by far the largest of the bathrooms in the airport as well as the most extravagant. It is his proud job to keep this bathroom sanitary. But he does more than just keep it clean, he makes sure it is spotless. While on his shift, he never leaves the bathroom and constantly patrols the room, checking for splattered water, un-flushed toilets, paper towels on the ground, and anything at all that seems the slightest bit unclean. He is meticulous about his job, yelling at anyone who makes the slightest mess. Taking care of the bathroom is his pride.

The Huge bathroom in Terminal A of Kennedy Airport is relatively empty. The janitor is cleaning one of the stall toilets when the Old Man and his pet Chimpanzee enter.

Billy and the old man enter the bathroom holding hands

Old Man- Billy, you the worst smellin monkey I ever owned.

Billy- Oohhh ahhhh (Looks up at the old man and then points at his diaper)

Old man- I know monkey, just calm down, we gonna go get you changed right now. Now go on and hurry over ta that changing station.

(Billy lets go of the old man's hand and gallops over to the changing station on all four legs. He then hops up on the table and grabs the baby powder bottle. He starts to shake the bottle and jump up and down on the table. Baby powder flies out of the bottle, showering the perfectly cleaned floors.)

Billy- (Shakes baby powder) ahhh ahhh ahhhh

Janitor- (Comes out of the stall and stares wide eyed at the monkey)
What the hell?!...Hey!...hey you...stop that!

Old man- (to janitor) Calm down, I'll handle it. (In a stern voice) Billy!
You put that bottle down right now! You always gettin me into trouble Billy.

Billy- (Drops the bottle on table and holds his hands in the air) ahhhh?

Old man- (Walks over to the changing table) Good boy Billy. Sit down
rite here.

Billy- (sits down on table)

Janitor- Sir, you can't have that monkey in here. It says it right at the
entrance.

Old Man- Huh? What'd you say?

Janitor- I said you can't have that monkey in here. Can't you read, it
says right at the entrance "No monkeys allowed".

Old Man- Oh, I thought that's what you said boy...Course I can read.
But this here ain't no monkey, this is a chimpanzee. Monkeys are disgusting
animals. This here chimp is a good primate. He got good manners.

Janitor- Sir, Monkeys and Chimpanzees are the same thing.

Old Man- No they ain't.

Janitor- Yes...they are!

Old Man- Nooo...They ain't! I know what a monkey is and I know what a chimpanzee is! I own a chimp. I think I know a little more about it than you.

Janitor- Well it doesn't really matter. I'm still going to have to ask you and your monkey to leave.

Old Man- Are you discriminating against him cause he's a Chimp?

Janitor- No sir, I'm not discriminating against your monkey. The problem is that he's disturbing the peace and making a mess of my bathroom.

Billy starts crying

Old Man- How can you do this ta poor Billy? Look what you've done to him. Billy here is basically the same as us anyways, cept he got some more fur.

Janitor- That disgusting animal is not even close to being the same as me.

Old Man- Ok, you're right, you harrier than Billy.

Janitor- Sir, that was uncalled for, and very rude. You and your monkey need to leave.

Old Man- This isn't no damn monkey, he's a chimp! And don't tell me what to do. Me and my chimp do what we want. Anyways I still gotta change his diaper, and I ain't leavin till I do.

Janitor- Fine but if either of you make a mess, I'll call security.

Old Man- Billy, you hear what he says? You don't get into any more mischief, and that man gonna let us stay so you can get your diaper changed.

Billy- (Nods his head up and down rapidly)

Janitor- Just hurry up and change his diaper.

The janitor walks over to some urinals and starts cleaning them with a cloth. Billy is still sitting on the changing table with the old man standing beside him.

Old Man- Aight Billy, you ready ta get your diaper changed?

Billy- (Shakes his head side to side to say no) AAAAAA AAAAA.

Old Man- Are you tellin me that you made me go through all this, and now you don't want your diaper changed? You been walkin around for five hours with that smelly stuff rubbin all up against yo butt. People been smellin you from a half a mile away. You NEED your diaper changed.

Billy- OOOOOHHHHH AAAAAHHHH

Old Man- Alright fine, then I'll get someone else ta do it. (Talking to janitor) Hey! Mr. Janitor! Could ya come here for a minute?

Janitor- (Stands up and walks over to the Old man and Billy looking mad) What is it now sir?

Old Man- Well ya see, Billy here doesn't want me to change his diaper. He says sometimes I don't do a very good job at it. He wants someone good at cleaning to do it. And you bein' a janitor and all, he wants you to change his diaper.

Janitor- You have got to be kidding me. I'm the cleaner of this bathroom but I am not your Monkey's personal maid.

Old Man- Huh?

Janitor- I said I'm not your monkey's personal maid.

Old Man- I ain't hear what you say?

Janitor- Are you deaf?

Old Man- What?

Janitor- (Very loudly) Jesus, I said I'm not your monkey's personal maid!

Old Man- Oh...well you prolly not a good enough janitor to change a chimp's diaper anyways.

Janitor- Excuse me? Do you know who you're talking to? Sir I am a highly trained professional janitor; I deal with poop for a living. Of course I can change a diaper.

Old Man- Aight, prove it.

Janitor- Fine! Get him to lay down.

Old Man- Ok Billy, lay down so this man can change ya diaper.

Billy- (Lies down on table)

Janitor- (undoes diaper and takes it off, holding the diaper far in front of him) Oh, wow. This is one disgusting monkey. I've seen some nasty stuff left in this bathroom, but this is possibly one of the worst.

Old Man- Oh, suck it up.

Janitor- (Turns toward the old man and speaks sternly) I've had about enough of you old man. First you come in my bathroom and let your monkey throw baby powder all over the place, then I let you stay, I change his smelly diaper for you, and you have the nerve to tell me to "Suck it up".

Old Man- Could ya say that again? I'm afraid I got a slight hearin problem.

Janitor- No shit. I've had enough of you and your monkey. Now by the time I throw this diaper away I want you both gone!

Old Man- That's gonna be kinda hard since the trash can's closer than the exit and Billy still needs to have a new diaper put on.

Janitor- Shut it.

Janitor- (Walks over to trash can and throws diaper away. When he turns around both are still standing there) OUT!

While Billy and the old man are just staring at the janitor, Billy pees all over the table. Urine spills onto the floor.

Old Man- Nice work Billy.

Billy- OOOHHH AAAHHHH AHHHH

Billy and the old man high-five.

Janitor- That's it monkey, that's the last thing you do to destroy this bathroom. (Slowly approaches the chimp who is still sitting on the baby changing counter) Come here monkey. Come on, just give me your hand.

Right as the janitor makes a grab for the monkey, Billy grabs the baby powder can and throws some in the janitor's eyes.

Janitor- (screams) Ahhhhhh my eyes! (Rubs his eyes)

Old Man- Run for it Billy!

Billy- (Hops down from the table and lets out a loud screech) AAHHHH
(He gallops towards the exit)

Janitor- (Runs in front of the monkey and blocks his path.) You're not going anywhere you sick monkey.

Billy- (Turns around and gallops back to the old man)

Janitor- (Puts a walkie talkie up to his mouth) Code 4! All personnel in Terminal A get down the men's bathrooms right now. I've got a wild monkey down here.

Old Man- Billy, we gotta do something, he's got reinforcements comin'.

Suddenly, Billy who still has the baby powder in his hand unscrews the lid and throws the bottle across the room, near to where the janitor is standing. Seeing that the unscrewed bottle will spill baby powder all over the floor as soon as it lands, the janitor desperately dives for the bottle and tries to catch it before it hits the floor.

Janitor- NOOOOOOOOOOOO (dives with one hand outstretched)

The Janitor misses the bottle which then hits the ground and sends baby powder spraying across the tile floor.

Old Man- He's down Billy! Run for it!

Billy- (gallops out of the bathroom while laughing and pointing at the janitor) Heee Heee Heee

Old Man- (Hobbles out of the bathroom with his cane as fast as he can)

Janitor- (Stays on the ground with a stunned look on his face. Puts the walkie talkie up to his mouth) Janitor down in terminal A. I repeat, Janitor down. Send help. (Still lying on the floor, looks around him at the messy bathroom, covers his hands with his face, and begins crying)

Analysis

My inspiration for writing this play started with one of my general beliefs. In many cases I think life is too serious and should be taken more lightly. This is one of the main reasons this play was written with a very humorous tone. I didn't want to write a depressing story or a mushy and serious love drama where the audience would be crying at the end. I wanted to write something uplifting that people would enjoy and laugh at. And if you didn't enjoy it, you have my apologies, but at least I'm fairly certain that you didn't cry at the end. This was my basic goal for the tone of the play. As for the characters, I kept it fairly simple by choosing only three. However, the three characters (the Chimpanzee, the Janitor, and the old man) that I did choose, I tried to develop very well and give unique and odd traits to keep the audience interested. Making the characters so unique also let me make their actions weird throughout the play which helped add to the humor. For the

setting of the play, I chose Kennedy Airport. I have only been to the JFK airport one time briefly, and do not remember much about it. The reason that I chose it as the setting is because I know that it is a huge and well known airport that many people would be able to relate to. A large public place was also necessary to make the huge, perfectly kept bathroom make sense, since a large bathroom like this would only be in a place where there were lots of people. The bathroom itself was a very random setting choice on my part, with no real inspiration. Everything about the play- the setting, the characters, and the plot, had no direct inspiration besides that I wanted to make the play humorous. This was my goal of the piece, and even if you thought the play was beyond stupid, and didn't laugh to yourself once while reading it, at least you weren't depressed or crying afterwards.

NATHAN AARSON *was born in the growing city of Durham on November 23, 1990. As an infant and a toddler he was always content, constantly smiling and rarely crying or throwing fits. As a child, he was very adventuresome and spent most of his time outside, playing with his toy lawnmower or running around the yard. His first and most frequently used words were "Monmower and Stick." This didn't surprise anyone, and to this day he still prefers to spend his time outdoors- playing sports or going on trips to the mountains or traveling to more exotic destinations such as Peru in 2006. When Aaronson was five, he began playing soccer, something that would continue through the rest of his school years and become a huge part of his life. Once Aaronson finished public elementary school, his parents enrolled him in a difficult private middle school. During his schooling there, he acquired a work ethic that would propel him to high academic standards up to his current junior year in high school. But when Aaronson finished middle school he decided that he had had enough of private school and enrolled in C.E. Jordan High. It was in high school that he learned to become himself. Today Nathan Aaronson is a junior at Jordan, playing for the varsity soccer team, happy with his friends, still spending most of his time outdoors, continuing to be adventurous, and still content with his life.*

SCOTT BARRON

Selected Prose

Graduation Day

To all who love the movie V for Vendetta

Phil sighed as the first bell of the day sounded. He adjusted his small backpack and walked across the bare campus to his US History class. He sat himself in the back of the room and slouched low in his uncomfortable seat.

The bell rung again and the teacher rose from his desk and walked to the front of the room. He pulled out his obnoxiously green planner and skimmed over it.

“Good morning, class,” he said quietly. “Today we will be working in groups, studying the economic advantages and disadvantages of the New Deal. Pair up into groups of threes and spread out around the room.”

There was a general rumble around the room as the class stood up and formed into groups. Phil did not move, however. He always chose to be put into the group of stragglers that ended up without a group. Phil was an average student, and he didn’t plan on being anything more than that. He achieved straight C’s in all of his classes, and did the bare minimum to keep it that way. He certainly could have done better, but he feared that if he did his peers would taunt him for being a smart black kid, something that wasn’t seen

very often in his school. Besides, he didn't have any money for college, and his parents didn't care about him enough to pay for it. He was going to work as soon as he graduated in a month and that would be that.

Before Phil could be ushered into the straggler group, however, the intercom blared to life. "Mr. Mann?" said an irritated woman's voice.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Mr. Mann loudly.

"We need Phil to report to the principal's office immediately."

"He's on his way," said Mr. Mann, just as the teachers at his school always say.

"Thank you," said the lady, hanging up.

Mr. Mann nodded towards Phil briefly before continuing to stare at his agenda.

Phil grabbed his backpack again and slung it over his shoulder. As he left the room, he began to wonder why he was being summoned to the office. He didn't do anything wrong within the past week. He doesn't drink. He doesn't smoke. Perhaps there was a death in the family. *No*, he thought, *I shouldn't get my hopes up.*

Principal Collins was there to greet him at the door of his office. He had a sort of half smile on his pale, wrinkled face, and he wore one of the three long sleeved shirts that he owned, coupled with a tight pair of khaki pants. He invited Phil to have a seat, and then plopped down opposite him.

"Let me get straight to the point, Chris," began the principal.

"Phil."

"Right." *Typical Principal Collins.* "So anyway, the way you're headed, you aren't going to graduate this year."

"What? I'm maintaining a C average, that's what the state requires!"

"Aho, but in your freshman year you failed your World History class. That's why you're still taking a history class."

"Oh," said Phil stupidly. "So what are you telling me?"

"I'm saying that you need an A in one of your current classes if you're going to graduate. It doesn't matter which class, you just need an A in it."

Phil leaned back in his chair. He had never gotten better than a C, and now he needed to bring up one of his C's to an A in just a month. "Oh man..." he said quietly.

"That's right, but I know you can do it, Paul," said Principal Collins with an encouraging smile.

"Phil."

"Damn," said the principal under his breath. He rose up, wished Phil good luck, and then disappeared from the room.

* * * * *

"Yeah, and they say I've got to get an A in one of my classes by the end of the semester or I won't graduate," Phil complained to his girlfriend over the phone.

"Oh that stinks," said Anne. She was an A student, and found it as a personal insult if a teacher gave her an A minus. Phil frequently turned to her when he needed help with a paper or project. "Well, in which class do you have the highest grade?"

"English. I've got an 81."

"Okay, that shouldn't be too bad. You've only got to get it up by 12 points. If you score an A on the final exam, you should have a high B. You'll need to get a few A's on some homework assignments before then though. If you can do that, you'll have an A for sure."

"All right! Thanks for the help, baby. I gotta go study. Love you!"

"Love you too," replied Anne sincerely.

Phil hung up the phone quickly and opened his English textbook to Romeo and Juliet. He read it from front to back, and by the end of it, his clock showed that it was one o'clock in the morning.

"Dang," he said, putting the book down and turning off the light. He undressed and crawled into bed. He was asleep before his head hit the pillow.

* * * * *

The next day Phil was handed a homework assignment in English. He looked over it, and judged that he could get an A if he really tried.

He took that assignment home and really buckled down on it. His assignment was to write a thousand word alternate ending to Romeo and Juliet. He set to work feeling confident. He felt like he really knew all of the characters in the book after reading it the previous night, and he knew exactly what they would and wouldn't risk. He had no trouble writing the paper, and in fact ended up writing a 2094 word alternate ending. He faxed it to Anne at midnight and had her proofread it.

"How's it look?" asked Phil, excited to have someone read his work.

"It's fantastic. It's almost as if Shakespeare wrote this himself! I guarantee you that this will earn you an A at least, if not a 100. Congratulations."

"Thanks, it really means a lot to me."

"No problem," she replied.

* * * * *

"Oh my, what a long paper," said Ms. Smith, Phil's English teacher, as he handed the paper directly to her. It had taken him two hours, and he wanted to see her face light up as he handed it in.

"Thanks," he said, then turned around and seated himself.

Phil thought about the paper all day. He recalled a few mistakes and scolded himself for it. Had he put his name on the paper? He worried himself over the paper so much that he didn't have an appetite. He didn't sleep much that night, either.

When he sat back into his squeaky chair in English the next day, he was positively shaking as he waited for the paper to be handed back. As Ms. Smith approached his desk, his heart began to beat so wildly that he could've sworn it would explode. He handed the paper to Anne who sat next to him so she could read his grade for him; he was too afraid to do it himself.

"What's it say?" he asked feverishly.

"Um...it's an 89."

Phil ripped the paper from her and looked at it in astonishment. To his surprise, the grade on the paper was not an 89, it was a one hundred. He jumped out of his seat loudly and swung his arms about in triumph.

“Mr. Banks,” said Ms. Smith aggressively. “Please have a seat.”

“Sorry Ms. Smith,” he said, still smiling widely.

* * * * *

Another homework assignment and a quiz came by Phil in the next two weeks. He aced them both. He was also participating more in class, and Ms. Smith was always dropping hints that this was helping his grade significantly. His grade was now up to an 86, and he was darn proud of it.

“Okay, Mr. Hotshot,” laughed Anne after he gave her the good news. Don’t forget though, you’ll still need to get at least an A on the final exam this Monday if you want to pass with an A, all right?”

“Of course, honey. But for now, I’ve got to study. I’ll call you later.”

* * * * *

Over the course of the next three schooldays and the weekend, Phil studied a total of eighteen hours for his final exam in English. He only got three hours of sleep the night before the exam, but he nonetheless felt wide awake as he sharpened his number two pencils in preparation for the exam.

The teacher instructed everyone to be quiet, and then passed out the test. Phil grabbed it immediately, scribbled his name on the appropriate line, and then flipped it open so violently that he accidentally ripped the front cover off. He looked around sheepishly, but no one seemed to notice.

He broke two of his pencils by the end of the test, but felt fairly confident that he had gotten an A. He walked to the front of the class and put his paper on Ms. Smith’s desk, then slouched back to his own. He put his head down and nodded off in a matter of second, his exhaustion finally catching up to him.

* * * * *

The results came in the mail five days later. He scored a 92. He could feel the beginnings of a tear surrounding his eye as he called Anne.

“I got a 92,” he said somberly, without even greeting her.

“Congratulations!” she yelled ecstatically.

“What? Why did you say that?”

“Because I tricked you and it worked!”

“How so?” asked Phil, confused. Why was she so excited that she had failed? Was this her idea of a joke? What the hell is going on?

“I told you that you needed an A so you’d shoot for that. You only really needed a B, though. Ha!”

He looked back to the results in his hand. He felt a giant pressure remove itself from his conscience and felt a sense of euphoria take its place. “Oh, yes! I love you baby, thank you!”

She laughed into the phone. “Don’t thank me, thank yourself. You set your mind to it and put in the work. Good job.”

He set the phone down and gave himself a big hug. He was going to graduate!

Oh My Gosh, Go Away!!

To all those that enjoy the band Boston

Have you ever had one of those times when someone tries to hang out with you but you definitely don’t want them to? This happened to me every morning on my way to the school this year until I finally gave her a piece of my mind. For her sake, we will call her Jill instead of her real name. It was a great struggle for me to rid myself of this person, and an even bigger struggle for me to let her down softly.

Jill and I had known each other for nearly eleven years, though we had mutually severed our ties once she did something absolutely unspeakable; in an attempt to gain major popularity in middle school, she back-stabbed about half a dozen girls and spread nasty rumors about them. I wouldn’t be surprised if Jill one day overthrew a small nation’s government and took over it by force. Everyone knew what she had done and she was thus deemed less popular. Karma had struck her down as well. Massive amounts of oil and large pimples dotted her face. She was truly suffering, but she certainly deserved it.

Jill kept her head down for the rest of middle school. I was glad for this. I undoubtedly didn't want to be seen with her, and nor did anyone else. All was good for a few years until the beginning of sophomore year. She had used the first two weeks of our sophomore year to gain quick popularity with the freshmen, seeing as they had no clue of her wicked past. Jill immediately chose a freshman boy and started to go out with him, despite the fact that she truly did not like him. He said yes, of course, because when you're offered a relationship with an older girl, you say yes for one reason: to gain popularity. Through him, she gained the trust of many of the freshman before they could be turned away from her. Thus, Jill worked up her cool points enough so that she thought she was entitled to mingle with the sophomores again. This is where I appear into the story.

Jill thought that she could sit next to me on the bus. One day I awoke from my small nap (that I always take on the way to school) to find that demon was sitting right next to me. DEAR GOD. I looked around. My best friend and other friends looked back, snickering. Needless to say, my popularity was injured.

I stayed awake for the next few days, careful to sit near the isle as if to say "back off, this seat is taken and there is no way someone like you is ever going to be seated next to me." She backed off, but when I drifted off after four days of success she took the seat again. GOD DAMN IT, THIS MUST BE STOPPED.

I made a promise to myself that I would not drift off ever again until I made sure that she was not in my seat. I thought this would solve my problems, though I was very, very mistaken. I used the "sit near the isle" tactic for a while, and that worked perfectly...until one day when she ignored it and stood by my seat.

She just stood there. I hesitated for a second, praying to anyone who would listen that she would keep going. She didn't. I made eye contact with her, and she still did not move. I didn't have it in me to reject her so bluntly, and so I scooted over and let her in. I hated myself that morning.

Just as soon as I had let her in voluntarily, she thought she could wiggle her way back into my life. She had once asked me out, and I don't think she had ever gotten over my "NO." In the theater class I have with her, she usually sits on the opposite side of the room while I hang out with my select group of friends. The same day I let her in to my seat she squeezed her way into our group. Big problem. I let her borrow my phone to play Tetris so that I wouldn't have to bother with talking to her. When I checked back she was *looking through my text messages*. But I soon got over it, and didn't even stop her from going further. I let her keep going because I had texted my friend about her, and I wanted Jill to see them and get a clue. It was a mean trick, but sadly it did not work. She continued with her excessive annoyingness.

She began to ask to share my iPod headphones. She was a disgusting little girl and I surely didn't want whatever the heck was in her ears to be on my headphones, but I just did not have the heart to say no. I let her, and ever since we've been listening to music together. It was severely ruining my reputation.

I tried harder. I would try as hard as I could to stay awake so that Jill would not feel compelled to sit next to me. Most times I would stay awake and it would work. Other days I would accidentally fall asleep and suddenly come to by the sound of her slamming herself into my seat. *Damn*.

I tried harder. If someone I knew got on the bus between my stop and hers I would grab them by the arm and literally pull them into my seat so Jill couldn't. It didn't always work, though. *Damn*.

I tried harder. I switched from a seat on the fourth row to one on the sixth row. At first she didn't notice. It was a good feeling. Eventually she spotted me. It was a bad feeling. *Damn, damn, damn!*

I had done about all I could do and it just wasn't enough. The last thing I could do was freakin' go up to her and just let her know that her being friends with me just wasn't going to work out. I tried giving her the cold shoulder to warm her up, then I broke it to her as quickly as I could.

"Hey, Jill, I'm going to break it to you straight. I'm not your friend. I'm going to have to ask you to stop affiliating yourself with me. That includes the

bus rides, the headphone sharing, and the sitting with me in theatre class. I'm sorry."

And I walked away. *Damn, that felt good.*

Analysis

I thought that my piece really displayed my creativity and love for fictional writing. I made the characters from scratch, modeling them from how I wanted them to be and letting the audience interpret the rest. I also thought the plot was a simple enough one that many readers could relate to. Overall, this piece was my best (and favorite) of all of the ones that I had created in my Creative Writing class.

My favorite part about the story was definitely Principal Collins. I tried to picture a typical principal who tried their best to avoid getting close to students and this character just popped into my head. His constant name forgetting was a laugh in my head, and I got the same thing from everyone who has read my story so far. This piece was a little bit of everything in it; comedy, seriousness, challenge, failure, and success. I believe all of these elements add to the effectiveness of the story.

My inspiration for writing this short story was the challenge of creating a scenario that had a happy ending without losing the zest of a heart-breaker. I tried to keep the readers interested with questions in their head such as "*Is he going to graduate?*" or "*Will all of his studying pay off?*" I also wanted the audience to feel a certain element of suspense that wasn't extreme overkill and yet wasn't so boring that the audience would start to doodle in the margins.

One of my favorite things about writing fictive stories is that there are very few boundaries, and I have always found that my imagination is my best tool in my shed. The lack of boundaries inspired me to use my imagination, and thus a great work was born.

My inspiration for "Oh My Gosh, Go Away!!" came from a true story that occurred to me everyday for quite a while on my bus trips to school. I found it really easy to channel my feelings into a paper because they just

needed to be transplanted. I thought it was a good story that many people can relate to, and that's why so many people have enjoyed it so far.

SCOTT BARRON *was born on October 14th, 1991 in Greenville, South Carolina to Tika and Mitch Barron. He was born four minutes after his twin brother, Chris, and three years before his younger sister, Rachel. Scott has many hobbies, including writing, hackysacking, playing ping pong, and his favorite, playing tennis. He is currently in his sophomore year and hopes to attend the University of North Carolina, possibly majoring in political science or studying to become a teacher. Scott has written only one real piece of literature before joining this Creative Writing class. It was a full length novel and is still on the road to being published. It does not have a name yet. Scott began writing toward the end of his eighth grade career, and now in his sophomore year, doesn't plan to stop anytime soon. He is looking forward to seeing it as well as the works in this book hit the shelves.*

REBECCA BENTLEY

Selected Poetry and Prose

A Message Home

Blackness and death fill my mind
Like a disease that will not cease and stay behind
I am a stranger within this land
Families crushed, households crumble to the sand
Horrors linger within my head
For all morality has fled
Too many tears have been shed
Too many innocent have bled
My hopes and dreams now lay amongst the dead
For my heart has learnt a different fate
Not knowing how to love, just share each others hate
As for catastrophe we are the bait
For mending we are too late
This is a question of wrong or right
Or tis the hate of one mans might
So I ask
How many need perish to learn the face of fright?

Destruction and despair
The only answer we seem to bare
Is our freedom truly just and fair?
Or do we manipulate its glory?
Does innocent blood ring the bells of victory?
I question thee and my consequence, I stand alone
I am at a loss; there are no comforts such as home
Just pain
From which there is no gain
The eyes of truth the eyes of death
They take away my very breath
And pierce my blackened heart
From this land I wish to part
I will not let it claim my soul
For I am not willing to pay that toll
However there is no simple way out
For this I have no doubt
A pledge of loyalty one must keep
Despite how long or how deep
Still I hear the innocent weep
Like torture to the mind
Amongst them agony you will find
Never will they completely heal
To the broken hearts I will kneel
Against this outrage I wish to appeal
For to this land we have brought doom
Unleashed a cursed flower to bloom
For hope we have left no room
Fire rains from the skies
Followed by a child's cries
Mourning while his family dies
How could this be done for honor?

Taking and feeling no guilt
Upon what were our morals built?
While we watch this country wilt
Still I cannot clear my mind of you
My promise was to make it through
And to my promise I'll stay true
You are my light who keeps me bright
You guide me and give me strength to fight
I am brought back to the pleasant days
And our children's childish ways
Their smiling faces bring me cheer
Erasing all of my fear
You all are so very dear
Your smiling eyes visit me
Amongst my memories
Removing me from this place
How I miss the company of your reassuring face
My journey may be long
Though you fill my heart with song
Bringing to my life new hope
Allowing me to cope
My love for you will always grow
This you must know
A small favor of you I will ask
A simple but important task
Give my love to the boys
And raise them with your poise
Their father's name I hope they learn
This be a concern
Though the sirens call thy name
For this you shall feel no shame
Thus a memoir for the two

A message home a gift for you

Wrong Turn

“Good morning thank you for beginning your day with 96 rock, this is Demetre the Gree-” It was the same routine everyday, same radio station, same time. Samantha, better known as Sam always began her day with a little rock. After all the tunes were classic. And there’s nothing better than some up-beat music to get you going in the morning.

She sluggishly managed to lift her head about six inches from her fluffy feather pillow. Then thought to herself awe what the hell five more minutes won’t kill anybody.

“Yeah you, you shook me all night long” blared at max volume. “Shit” yelled Samantha as she looked down at her clock. Half an hour had passed by, and her crazed bus driver was going to be tearing down the neighborhood street within minutes.

She sprung from her bed in a panic and frantically began running around her room in search of a wardrobe. Or at least some article of clothing that appeared to be the slightest bit clean. “Ahhh” she sighed in relief, it was her most prized possession. Her one and only Green day tee. The color may have been fading and perhaps a few holes had appeared here and there, however even with those minimal flaws it was still comfortable and most importantly clean.

After she was finished running around like a chicken with her head cut off she ventured toward the bathroom. She turned the doorknob three times and kicked the left corner of the door. It squeaked like a small insignificant field mouse then popped open. That damn door was always jammed. She looked in the mirror and let out a small moan. Her light brown hair was everywhere; it looked as though Sam had been struck by “the bad hair day fairy” or at least that’s what her mother used to call it. There were frizzles and frazzles of hair everywhere and not to mention her pink streak was in

desperate need of a touchup, but that was beside the point. She tossed her hair up into a messy bun, stuck a few bobby pins here and there, pulled her pink streak over her left eye, applied some natural onyx eyeliner, took a quick swig of sweet mint Listerine and made her way for the front door.

As she stepped outside she noticed a cold wet sensation overcome her right foot. She looked down and to her surprise she was missing a shoe. This is just my luck she thought. When Sam re-entered her house she ripped off the limp sock and threw it on the floor. It hit with a loud “SMACK”, while spraying water droplets everywhere; nothing better than the mixture of feet and rain smeared across your face. “Whatever” she mumbled, “it’s not like this day could get any worse.” And with those words she slid on her worn in faded red converse sneaker, and made her way through the front door yet a second time.

When she reached the end of her driveway she peered down at her digital watch, which was very old school. But she didn’t care; besides she was too lazy to get a real watch. Why spend all your time trying to figure out what minute the hand is on when you can get a digital one that does it for you. Her bus driver was exactly two minutes late, which was unusual for “Ms. Bizzkit”. Or at least that’s what they all called her. For some reason she was fascinated with the fact that her hand looked like a so called “biscuit.” Let’s just say Ms. Bizzkit leaned a little towards the crazy side. After all she was nearing the age of seventy, and well things just don’t work like they used to when you’re nearing that age. She was a funny little lady. She maxed out at the outrageous height of 4’6, and she had beady little eyes, but you would never notice with her glasses. Her lenses were about three inches thick and nearly covered her entire face, however none the less she managed to get her job done and that’s all that really mattered. Three more minutes passed by and surly enough there was Ms. Bizzkit flying over the hill in her old beaten up excuse of a school bus.

It was the same routine with the bus everyday as well. Sam would walk down the aisle and get the same looks as if it were any other day. And if she was lucky she got to overhear the kids chatter and carry on about her pink

hair. Today was one of those lucky days; however Sam never thought much of it. In a way it was rather satisfying. As a matter of fact she took there gossip as a kind of compliment. There lives were so boring that they had to talk about someone else; so they picked Sam, but this could only have been because she was so interesting.

She took her regular seat in the very back of the bus on the left side, rested her head up against the window and prepared herself for a small nap. The breaks squeaked as Ms. Bizzkit eased off of them and the bus began rumbling while it made its way to the end of Clausum Street. And within minutes Sam had passed out, mouth sprawled open and all. Dreamland was only minute's maybe even seconds away.

A loud "SCREEEEEEEEETCH" and uproar of screams filled Sam's ears, waking her within seconds. A little confused and rather surprised, she began to shift from left to right searching for an answer to all of this commotion. She looked out the front windshield and saw it. It was a tractor trailer raging down the road out of control and heading right for the front of Ms. Bizzkit's bus.

Everything began to move in slow motion. The wailing and screams of horror began to fade. For some reason Sam couldn't move she was the only one sitting still, unmoved almost as if she was unaware of what was going on. With each second that the tractor trailer grew closer and closer everything around Sam grew quieter and quieter. She knew what was happening but she couldn't react. She wanted to speak but her voice was trapped, trapped within her body. Her throat grew tighter and tighter and her hands grew cold as ice. She felt shivers run down her spine as she watched to windshield begin to crack and collapse. All noise had now ceased except for the high pitched ringing in her ears. It grew louder and louder and then unexpectedly silenced, then followed by a quick bang, and then blackness.

Analysis

"A Message Home" was an informatory piece designed to re-inform or remind people of the war in Iraq. Not only are our loved ones fighting and

defending our country, but they stand amongst the very grounds that innocent blood is shed upon everyday. Each day a life is taken, and for what purpose. What do we gain from this? What are our children learning; that war is the answer? There has to be a better and more suitable way to resolving our conflicts; perhaps a more sophisticated and peaceful way. The day we learn to be-friend our neighboring countries is the day war will cease. Does that seem too far out of the question? I believe the decision is ours.

“Wrong Turn” was a piece I assembled to promote individualism. Some what subliminal, but I believe that everyone is their own person and therefore has their own thoughts and feelings. Some people view different as being a bad thing; however I think it takes a bold and brave person to truly stand out and reveal to the world who they really are. It seems that in today’s society so many people have been caught up in materialism and the media. I feel as though we have lost sight of what really matters. Sometimes it’s helpful to take a step back. Ya know, take a break from the whole rat race.

REBECCA BENTLEY is a seventeen year old senior at Jordan High School. She originally attended DSA (Durham school of the Arts) for her freshman and sophomore year. She is currently living in Durham, North Carolina, however it has not always been that way. Rebecca is originally from Canada, making her a Canadian citizen. This can sometimes cause problems for certain activities, such as diving. Rebecca has been diving at UNC Chapel Hill for six and a half years, three of which she has spent competing. Competitions have always been something Rebecca looked forward to, however because of her Canadian citizenship she is prohibited from competing any further past regionals. In her spare time Rebecca likes to focus on the visual arts, such as clay/sculpture and still life sketching. She has been taking art classes since sixth grade and still enjoys the classes to this day. She also enjoys listening to music, such as nirvana, led zeppelin, AC/DC, metallica, etc. She finds it helps her to relax and escape from stressful environments.

ALEX BLANKSON

Music

There are things that are around you everywhere you go. For example, everywhere you go, and a part of everything you do, there is always something to read. That's just one of the things. Another thing is music. No matter where you are no matter where you go, everyday you hear music. You may not notice you hear it because you are so use to it.

Well first I want to state the connection between music and me. I like all kinds of music. I like hip hop, R&B, some pop rock, jazz, dance, some old school, and a lot more. I feel for different music at different times. Sometimes I feel like dancing and I put on some hip hop or something and sometimes when I go to sleep I play some jazz or R&B music. It's like everywhere I go I have some source of music. I also am learning how to play the piano, trying to learn the keys and make my own music, not going big but just little songs that I can share with some friends and fam.

Think about places people go for music. People go to concerts where one or more artist may perform for his or her fans. People go to symphonies, where they hear music played by talented people, in a band, using instruments such as the trumpet, harp, clarinet, flute, tambourines, pianos, and others. Some people also go to operas to hear music, and here talented opera singers have some sort of a music play and perform for a large audience.

Music is made with both man made and non-man made things. Man made things like the trumped, the flute, the guitar, and the drums are used. And non-man made things such as our mouths our hands and even random parts of nature such as blades of grass are used to make music. I would say about 99% of people in the world like music. It would take me a long time to think of every type of music there is, including foreign kinds. Music can do a lot for things.

Music can make a home feel therapeutic, if someone is at home and relaxing, they just turn on some soft music, most of the time music without a beat, and there you go. Music can also make a party jump, meaning it can really make a great party and this is when most music with a beat is played. What party has no music? Actually what is a party with no music? Also think about the movies you've watched can you remember one that didn't have music in it. I know I can't. How about shows and plays, they always have music.

Music has made many people rich. Think about the celebrities like Jay-z, R-Kelly, Beyonce, Madona, Tim McGraw, and all the other popular artist, they have made music for a good amount of time and they have filled their pockets. Artist, like Stevie Wonder become legends when they extend their musical abilities. Stevie Wonder though blind, made wonderful music with his piano and also sings his music. He has become one of my, and many other's favorite legends.

Long ago on radios, music wasn't even played; the radio was used only for news and updates. And everyone always looked forward to listen to what's new, but soon it started playing on radios and it became a favorite of everyone and now by what I have seen I would say there are more people who listen to the radio for the music instead of the news, so in other words now instead of looking for what is new on things happening in the world people would listen for the new music, so that was a drastic change. Then different kinds of music, jazz, country, R&B, classic, swing, and a whole bunch more.

Now more music has emerged such as dance and radio Disney.

Now there is new sources of music used today other than radios such as cd players, boom boxes, mp3 players, ipods and even new cell phones that have music players on them. This shows that music is getting even more popular as time progresses. There have also been programs developed on the computer, like iTunes, where you can buy songs for like a dollar each and pay the bill each month. People use these programs to put songs on their portable music players. You used to be able to download free music

Music can be made to reveal sayings or ideas that may be in line with religion or it can just be inline with someone's feelings like if someone is in love with a person or music can just be made for just the ears in other words because it sounds good. They are like poems that are sung, at least that's what I think of them as. Some music can actually tell a story.

So now thinking about it don't you see that music is everywhere? As the future emerges music will become bigger and bigger and you'll hear even more and more of it. I say this because it has been happening so far as years passed.

Analysis

When I wrote this piece, I was actually listening to music. I was in an occasional *music mood*- you know, that mood where all your body wants to do is pull out your iPod, turn on the television and watch some music videos, listen to the radio, or do anything else that puts music in your ears. Most of the time, it usually takes me hours to find topics for the stories that I write, and when I was trying to think of a topic for this one, my mind wasn't clicking at all. Then I thought to myself "*why don't I just write about my thoughts on music?*", since nothing else but that was coming to mind. So I just got some paper and just dropped down some things I knew and thought, and after that, just drew them all together making what I wrote. As I wrote the piece more and more things came to mind which helped me stay right on topic, and before I knew it I had it done. I was thinking it was kind of boring, so I showed my parents and they thought it was good. They said it was boring, but it includes a lot of info that many don't notice. I was like "*oh well all*

writing pieces have to be like that". Plus I like to be different in doing things, so I decided it would work.

ALEX BLANKSON *is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was born on October 23 in 1991. He is the son of Elisha and Rachel Blankson and has a brother named Wesley Blankson. He has lived in four areas....Pittsburgh, Washington, Charlotte, and Durham. He has been to seven schools. He is a average guy. He is into a lot of music and he likes to have fun. His favorite thing to do is to go to his friends parties and have a ball. He is average in grades, they are not perfect, but they aren't bad either. He has a huge family, his mom's side being in New York and Pennsylvania, and the dad's side being in Ghana in Africa. He has never been to Africa, where his dad is from but he hopes to go soon, so he is closer to family on his mother's side. About his religion, he is a Christian like most of his family. He has been raised in his religion, just as his parents.*

LILIANA BOLANOS

Selected Poetry

Under a Palm Tree at Coconut City

I want to dedicate this poem to Lorena, Alex, Elizabeth, and Pedro Bolaños and also Celia Mora because they are always there when I need them the most.

The aroma is sweet,
And my feet under the sand enjoy.
It is amazing how I have not forgotten,
The way it looks.

Like a hidden chest,
I feel privileged to know what lays inside,
My unknown land,
That smells like coconuts.

They move their hips,
At the sound of the music,
It runs through their veins
And makes them happy.

The music. I cannot stop moving.
The “hey, hey, hey” and the sound of trumpets,
The drums, and the claps,
And the sound of his voice.

There is no winter,
The breeze embraces you,
The taste of coconuts, watermelons, pineapples,
And a cocktail of clams.

And under a palm tree, I fear of the shadow,
I cannot protect it any longer,
And all my tears have run out
But what is the point on crying if it does not fix anything?

But my memory will not vanish
How can I forget those days?
When I could not see the truth
The beauty of this place and its people.

The sun is brilliant .
No more fake smiles.
Everything is equal.
This shadow is not cold but is warm

I feel as if I have fallen in love ,
And I don't want to see it die out
And with the sound of the guitars
I wish I could be there to see its *ocaso*.

Good-bye

I want to dedicate this poem to Sarbelio Antonio Villalta Loza and even though I have become a normal person to him, he will still be special to me.

Your fingertips are cold
Unlike a hot cup of green tea
In the coldest night
As the nightingales pass,
I feel lonely.

I wish this autumn would not be so windy
The wind dries my lips
And so do your lips
And so do your kisses.

The nocturnal hours are not only dark but blurry
Your passion does not create inspiration within me,
Inspiration that is needed in order to go on
And not say good-bye.

Depression can be sweet,
Sweet, just like seeing people laugh and not understanding
Just like having dinner by yourself
Just like letting go of something you love.

No, there are no reservations within me
I am empty
And open to second opinions
But not yours.

As I hit the ground,

I know deep inside,
The sky above,
Is truly azure.

Analysis

My two major sources of inspiration are El Salvador and my own life experiences. The only way I am able to write is when I feel passionate about something. Most of my writing has to do with love because it is easy to get inspired by it; the love that I feel for my country or simply the love that exists in a relationship. I also like to write about problems in society and how they make me feel. Poetry is my favorite kind of writing even though most of the time no one understands it.

I love to write about El Salvador because I have spent most of my life there, and I want more people to know about its culture and its the beauty. "Under a Palm Tree at Coconut City" is a poem dedicated specifically to Sonsonate or El Salvador's beaches. I tried to explain how it feels to be at a beach in El Salvador, surrounded by all types of fruits and seafood.

"Good-bye" talks about loneliness because it is something that all people can relate to, we all at some point feel lonely. This is another topic that really inspires me. My short life's experience played an important role when writing this poem. I wrote it while I was at my job thinking about someone who knows me very well, but unfortunately cannot be with me. Someone who is so close and at the same time so far away, and unfortunately we chose for it to be that way.

LILIANA BOLANOS *was born in the smallest country of Central America, El Salvador in a city called Sonsonate or as she likes to call it "Coconut city." She came with her family to the United States in 2003. Since she has come to the USA, she has lived in Durham, North Carolina, and after almost four years of residing there she feels that she has finally adapted to it. She feels that writing is like a therapy. She believes that through writing she can express all her feelings and that she can also get a new perspective on*

life. She loves to learn foreign languages and about different cultures and their traditions. She plans on majoring in Communications. She has been involved in her school's newspaper, but now she is focusing more on audio documentary by being part of the Youth Noise Network from the Center of Documentary Studies at Duke University.

LYNETTE BOLANOS**A Christmas Stolen**

I dedicate this to my parents, Deborah and Javier Bolanos

Christmas was nearing. Bright lights were shining all around. Tinsel and glitter and all the scents of the holiday season were in the air. Joy was all around. People were hustling and rushing to finish their last minute Christmas shopping. Jennie, who had been raising a child alone and working as a nurse for the Miami Baptist Hospital, had all ready done most of her Christmas shopping and all the wrapping of the gifts for her daughter Michele, who is 4 years old. She could not think of anything else to be done and thank goodness, because there was no more left in her budget.

She hid all of the Christmas presents she bought for Michele in the trunk of her car because there weren't any hiding places in the apartment that Michelle didn't already know about. Of course Jennie wanted her little girl to be surprised when she opened her gifts on Christmas morning. She has always enjoyed the different faces she made when enough of the paper was peeled back from the gift that she could make out what it was. Her dark brown eyes full of happiness and a smile as big as the world that spread from ear to ear!

One afternoon, Jennie had gotten off work, after working the terribly long night the night before and the next day shift at the hospital. She was exhausted and couldn't wait to get home and wash her long day away and then lunge deep into her nice, warm bed. Walking to her car, just a couple

steps away from it, she noticed the back window was shattered to pieces and the trunk of the car was popped open. The spare tires she hadn't yet had occasion to use, was hanging out. Her heart began pounding hard, hoping that the presents were still in the trunk of the car. She was afraid to pull it open.

So first she looked into the car through the rear window, or what used to be a window of the car to see if anything else was damaged or missing. It did not appear to her that there was anything missing and noticed the coins collecting she had in the cup holder in the front of her car, were gone. She did find a fairly large rock sitting on the back seat of the car. It was probably used to break the window. She then walked toward the back of the car slowly holding her breath. She then stood in front of the trunk of the car. Her eyes began filling with tears. Then tears began running down her cheek. She grabbed the edge of the trunk lid and pulled it open slowly with her eyelids shut as tight as knots. Slowly she opened her eyes to find that all the presents were gone. Soon tears began pouring out of her eyes, drowning her cheeks. Her heart fell out of her chest. Her knees were weak. She didn't know what to do.

She got into her car and sat there numb for a few minutes that seemed more like an eternity. Gathering her thoughts she found her keys, started the car and slowly pulled out of the parking lot. She had to go pick her daughter up from daycare before it closed, get home and make supper. Somehow she had to keep on her normal schedule. Somehow she had to keep moving. Should she call the police? What could they do? Well she would call anyway-once she got home with Michele.

One thing she did know was that she couldn't afford to buy more presents. Christmas was ruined for her and for Michele. She picked up her daughter and went home, then called the police. A while later, when they knocked on the door she answered it and walked them out to her car. She told them the whole story. They made a report of everything, giving her grim hope that there was anything they could do. As soon as she got home she ran into the bathroom and got into the shower. She thanked them, went back into the house and took a shower crying the whole time. When she got out she went to

check on Michelle. She was sound asleep. Jennie kissed her on the forehead and went to bed.

The next morning she woke up and went to work. Jennie tried to function. She tried not to think about what happened. Jennie's friend Mindy, who was also a nurse had heard about what happened and wanted to help. She secretly went around to all the nurses on her floor and took up a collection to help Jennie try and put a Christmas together for her daughter. Some of the doctors also pitched in to help.

Jennie went about her day, taking care of her patients and helping the doctors and tried to put what had happened out of her thoughts but it seemed to creep in during the times where she was not so busy...and then her friend, Mindy called her into the conference room to ask her something. What she had to ask her she had no idea. There were no formal meetings called that she knew of...something was up.

When Jennie entered the room she was stunned and surprised by all her co-workers, friends and a few doctors there at the hospital! They hugged her and told her they had no idea what she went through, that they were sorry it had happened and handed her an envelope, telling her to get out of there, hit the mall! So that is what she did. She grabbed her coat, her purse, the generous white envelope and she left work early that day. They had all been so giving of their hearts and spirit and their pockets and Jennie was able to salvage not only some of the gifts she had lost but the spirit behind the holiday.

Analysis

I chose to share my work "A Christmas Stolen" because it hits close to my heart and home. I was inspired to introduce this anecdote, after being told about it by my mother, who represents the main character. It reminds me of how hard my parents have worked to ensure that I and my siblings may live a more comfortable life. This story will serve me as a motivation to do well with my life and pursue every opportunity that their hard work has presented me with. With this story I wanted to portray my gratitude for the humility and

the benevolence that my mother held for her family. Her perseverance for a “Merry Christmas” was selfless and laudable. The second concept I wished to address with this story was the idea of generosity.

This story has brought me to the idea of being more generous with those that are less fortunate, especially during the holidays when life is most hard. Her co-workers embody the essence of generosity in this anecdote, and their willingness to donate just the smallest amount of money shows how everything and everyone can impact another’s life. I do not wish to give off the impression that this everything should be money, for it can be an object, support, a kind act, such as helping out at a soup kitchen or even a “Happy Holidays” can make all the difference. I hope that whoever reads this is able to take some sort of interpretation away from this story, whether it be one of mine, or something they see themselves, and I hope that this story is able to make an impression on their outlook on life for it has made one on mine.

LYNETTE BOLANOS *was born to Javier and Deborah Bolanos, in Miami, Florida on March 5th 1992. She attended kindergarten at Claude Pepper Elementary school in Miami. She lived there till the age of 6. In 1998 she moved to Managua, Nicaragua with her family for her fathers’ job and to be closer to her paternal family. Her father was a business man, and worked to expand the poor economy of third world Nicaragua. Her mother was a stay at home mom, often involved with her children’s school. Lynette and her family lived in Nicaragua for 9 years. While in Nicaragua, Lynette attended the American Nicaraguan School. Nicaragua’s high poverty and low quality of life impacted Lynette and her school’s community, allowing her to join in several charity groups, and receive a first hand view of a strenuous under-developed land. Also while attending the American Nicaraguan School, she took an interest in music, learning to read notes, play the clarinet and flute and also beginning to play the piano. Lynette moved to Durham, North Carolina in 2006, where she presently attends 10th grade at Jordan High School. She plans to further her study of music and also plans to study film and video editing.*

CAROLINE BRANTON

Selected Prose and Poetry

The Beautiful Little Swimsuit

Carly Monson has been a swimmer all her life. When she was five years old she started swimming for the country club team in her neighborhood, the Greenville Country Club Gators. Now Carly enters her freshman year of high school, she has decided to swim for JL Mann Patriots. Carly is excited because Mann's school colors are light blue and white. The swimsuit is a beautiful shade of blue and not an ugly green color like the gator suit.

Since swim team is in the fall in Greenville, practices start before school does. She had already made some new friends, so she is not nervous at all for her first day of school. It is 6:00 in the morning and her alarm went off. She is certainly not a morning person; she made her way towards the shower. As she pulled the curtain back, she saw her new light blue swimsuit and she felt inspired. Today was also her first high school swim meet. For Carly, swimming also kept her going through the bad times. She quickly took her shower and got ready for school.

"Are you ready to go?" called her mother.

As ready as I am going to be thought Carly. She came down the stairs and her mother was holding her care bear lunch box from like elementary school in her hand. Mrs. Monson handed it to her.

“Is it possible that we just have a brown paper bag, Mom because this lunch box is soo not cool any more.” Carly said.

“What baby? I thought you still loved this lunch box,” replied Mrs. Monson.

“Just put it in a bag” Carly said annoyed.

Finally after Carly had gotten her mother to do everything right, they got into the car. When Mrs. Monson started the car music from School House Rock came on. Carly felt so embarrassed by her mom even though they were the only ones in the car.

“Mom, could you please stop embarrassing me?” pleaded Carly.

“I guess so,” replied Mrs. Monson.

As they turned the corner, Carly could see J.L Mann High School. All of a sudden she forgot that her mother had embarrassed her. She got out of the car and walked like she had been walking into this school for years. She felt herself relax. She walked into the locker room and put away her swimming stuff. She poked her head in the pool area and she could just smell the chlorine. She was really carefree now.

Carly heard the warning bell to get to first period. She ran over to her bag to pull out her schedule and map. She read where her first period was and felt like she knew the general direction she was going. She had World History with She could not believe it, she had never looked at her teachers closely but she had Coach Field who was her swim coach. As she walked into Coach Field’s room she felt a sense of pride. Not only would she get to see Coach at practice but also not she had her for history, which meant class every other day. Sometimes seeing a familiar face is very helpful. When Coach Field was taking roll, she noticed Carly’s name.

“Carly, ready for that first meet today?” asked Coach

“Yeah but I am a little nervous,” replied Carly.

“Oh, do not be we are all here to support you and you are a good swimmer, you will do fine, I want to see a first place from you” said Coach Field.

“Thanks, I will try not to be nervous”. replied Carly.

After World History, Carly went on through her schedule. She found teachers she liked and some that were okay. Finally the bell for the end of fourth period rang. As she walked closer to the locker room, she could hear her teammates laughing. She relaxed a little bit. She started to smell the stinky football locker room. She began to wonder. *Do those boys ever wash their practice equipment? It surely smells like they don't.* When she walked in the door, she saw her locker open. Her bag was open and all her clothes were all over the floor. Her new light blue suit was gone. She began to get angry, searched frantically and looked all over the floor.

She decided to go tell coach what happened. She quickly grabbed her stuff and walked out the door. The upperclassmen laughed loudly as she exited the locker room. Shelly Adams, who is a senior and swims the same events as Carly, laughed the loudest.

“Carly is your swim suit missing?” asked Coach.

“Yes, I know I put it in my locker this morning” replied Carly.

“Come with me” said Coach.

Coach bursts into the locker room. All the laughter stopped completely.

“Shelly, did you take Carly’s swim suit?” yells Coach.

“Why, since when was I the prime suspect?” asked Shelly.

“Since Carly has been beating you every time the two of you race,” replied Coach.

All of the other girls were stunned to hear that come out of the coach’s mouth.

“Excuse me, Carly has never beat me” said Shelly.

“You want proof, come with me and I will show you all the times” responded Coach.

Shelly gave up and went to her bag to pull out a swimsuit. She hands it over to Carly. Carly takes it and walks over to the bathrooms. Carly wonders

to herself, *does Shelly do that to all the girls who beat her? Does Coach always yell that loud? I did not really want to find out.* She put on the suit and walked out into the pool. The teams did their warm-up laps. Coach shouted their laps at them as they swam. After Coach and the assistant coaches wrote heats and lap lanes on each swimmer arm in light blue sharpie. The color of light blue just inspired Carly so much she felt the urge to swim even faster than she had in practice. When her heat came she stood on her block. At the sound of the gun fired, she went. She looked over and Shelly was swimming faster than normal. Carly sped up and gain some distance between them. She did her flip turn and went. She beat Shelly and it felt so good too. She won the whole event. The female and male Patriots ended up winning against the opponent.

“Good race Shelly” said Carly while the girls were changing in the locker room.

“Oh you too, and thanks and you better watch your back, I will win next time” replied Shelly (with a smirk). Disgusted, Carly started to walk out of the locker room, she got a wink from coach and other swimmers. Carly knew she was the real winner in the end.

Driving Nightmare

The day that you get your license is always joyful
You now feel this great independence from your parents
You can take yourself places without parental embarrassment
The first couple of months, you really enjoy having your license
Then you realize with driving comes great responsibility.

Your mother starts calling you more and more to pick and take your siblings places

As the price of gas increases, you find a great hole in your pocket
To pay for all that gas, you start working more
Since you are working so much your grades suffer.
Since your grades are horrible you get grounded.

Since you are grounded you cannot go anywhere
And your parents say Welcome to the Driving Nightmare

Analysis

When I wrote “The Beautiful Little Swimsuit,” my inspiration came from a couple of different places. I knew that I wanted to write a piece about freshman year experiences. For me having field hockey tryouts before school and meeting others really made my first day of high school memorable. Since I was already a part of a team, I felt like I belonged to Jordan. I wanted to reflect my experience through a short story, but I did not want to use field hockey or me. My sisters had both swam in the summer time for our country club team. Also my coach for field hockey is an assistant swimming coach. The school that Carly goes to is a real high school in Greenville. South Carolina. This inspiration came from my mother who grew up in Greenville and swam and won lots of awards. She did not attend JL Mann but that is the high school that my cousin attends.

My inspiration for “Driving Nightmare” came from experiences of the average teenager. The first part of the poem is somewhat based on personal experience. I wrote this poem when, I had just filled up my car with gas and paid like thirty-five dollars to fill up my car. I am always constantly picking up my little sister, fulfilling my parents’ errands. Also I know from my friends that some of them have to pay for insurance and gas. This to me shows such great responsibility.

The reason why I chose to put this short story and poem in the book is for a couple of reasons. One the story is based on my personal experience and is an enjoyable story. The poem is really realistic and is something that most teenagers can relate too.

CAROLINE C. BRANTON is currently sixteen, and is a junior at Jordan. She has lived in Durham all her life and has two sisters, one a recent graduate of Jordan, the other an 8th grader at Githens Middle School. Caroline wanted to take Creative writing because she wants to become a

better writer. Caroline has always used her writing as a way of expression, emotional relief and to get her creative juices flowing. She has always kept journals in order to remember things and use them as a source of expression. She really enjoys talking and listening to others. She always uses this information to write and inspire her stories. She is currently a member of the Jordan Talon Yearbook staff and hopes to put her new improved writing skills to use as a Journalism student .She hopes to continue on to the University of South Carolina or Furman University and possibly major in Journalism.

MONTEZ BROWN

Excerpts from *The Judgment Days*

1.

“...There was an awkward pause between the boy and his mother as they pulled up to Mooreway High. He looked up at his mother one last time before beginning his new high school journey. They said their goodbyes and he made his way to the door. Taking one final sigh he pulled open the large brown door and a rush of sound came flowing into him. There was laughter and screaming as old friends reunited for the first time in months. This was nothing like freshman orientation. There were a lot more people than he expected.

Thousands of other students stood in front of a wall covered with papers. He pushed his way through the crowd and found his name: Kaeden Richards Room 413. Already prepared the day before he knew this was where he went to get his schedule. His only issue was that he had no idea where this room was. He circled around for a while, finally taking a break to visit the bathroom.

Kaeden found the bathroom and gagged at the foul smell. The scent of axe body spray to cover the odor of cigarettes lingered in the room. The toilet stall was missing a door and someone had forgotten to flush. He'd had enough and went to go wash his hands. He looked up into the grungy mirror and made

a final check. His teeth were fine his hair was fine and so was his face. He smiled and shook his head at his own cockiness.

He was pretty mature for his age and looked the part. His milk chocolate complexion was decorated with speckles of facial hair. He was bigger than the average boy his age with a muscular, athletic build. He had once been more chunky in size but had begun to tone up from the sports he played.

Kaeden Richards was fourteen and now a freshman in high school. He considered himself a pretty attractive guy and was fairly popular in middle school. Now he was just one of even more kids trying to find his way through what some considered the start of life. Being one small person in this huge population was new to him. He couldn't help but to be excited.

He was finally able to shuffle his way through the halls and stopped by the guidance office. He figured any place with the word guide in it could help him reach his destination. As he approached he saw an older boy and asked him where room 413 was.

"You must be a freshman." He pronounced

"Yeah I am."

The boy muffled a snicker and walked away. Leaving Kaeden without his answer and feeling very belittled. This was his first school encounter with an upperclassmen and it did not go well. He just couldn't understand why anyone would be so rude instead of helping. Eventually he resorted to the little hand drawn map that was distributed to all new students. Things started to go smoothly and he got his schedule.

The rest of the day seemed to be going by pretty quickly. Before he knew it, lunch time had arrived. He followed the crowd to the cafeteria. It was so crowded he could barely get around. There was a long line full of people waiting on over/under cooked fries and fried chicken. He took a look at someone else's plate and decided that he would pass..."

2.

"...His sleep was shattered by the high piercing screech of his alarm clock, letting him know it was time to get ready. He slowly opened his eyes, fixing his gaze upon the white ceiling above him. Thrashing his alarm clock

from the nightstand where it continued to ring, he crawled out of bed. He stumbled down the hall to his bathroom. The door creaked open with a gentle push as he entered. He kneeled over the sink, resting his head on the faucet.

It had been two weeks since the last time he'd talked to Lachelle. She just wouldn't forgive him for running out on her the way he did. If he could take it back he would but it was too late. At the time he wasn't thinking clearly. His first reaction was to run and that's what he did. That was obviously a mistake.

The cold, painful look in her eyes was punishment in itself. She had never looked at him that way before. It was heartbreaking. Everyday he would replay that day in his head. Her screams and the rage her mother displayed were enough to scare anyone who had come from a broken home. It made him sick to his stomach.

It wasn't a surprise that he'd chosen to run. Mike had been running all his life. Living with a fully functioning alcoholic mother and a strung out father had taught him a lot of things. Facing his own problems was not one of them. He spent many dark nights in his room shivering because they didn't have enough money to pay the bills.

One night particularly stood out in his memory. He was ten years old and had just gotten home from playing basketball with the boys on the block. His father had been clean for months now and things were starting to look up. When he entered his home there was the all too familiar shouting going on in the other room. This seemed different. He crept in to see what the commotion was. His mother was sober, her voice quaking and fearful. His father had taken to drinking when he gave up drugs. He was angry about something. Mike ducked and dodged as different objects were thrown across the room at his mother.

There was a stray glass picture frame that knocked him in the head. A weird sensation filled him and then came the pain. Blood began to gush out of the corner of his head. He let out a whelp and sobbed, running towards the door. He couldn't see as a result of the blood and tears in his eyes. He felt for the door and continued to turn the knob but it just wouldn't open. He felt his

father's large hands grasp him, picking him up. He fought him off kicking and screaming every foul word he'd learned from their fights.

He was finally subdued long enough to be placed in the car and rushed to the hospital. In the E.R. he was given stitches. Child Protective Services had a representative ask some questions. His mother lied giving a story about how he was running around the house, fell and hit his head. The woman didn't seem convinced and vowed to further investigate, but it never happened. He returned home to the same madness. They pretended like it didn't even happen.

Mike rubbed the faded scar on his head. The only memory there was left of that incident. His parents were now both born again Christians. They didn't smoke or drink and didn't allow him to either. His father got a job as an insurance agent(one of the few that still went door to door). His mother worked for a small cleaning service that cleaned businesses at night.

The house was quiet. His dad had gone to work already and his mother was still asleep. On Mondays and Wednesdays his dad would use his car. It was better on gas. He didn't bother waking his mother to take him. Instead he just walked to school. It gave him time to think. Since Lachelle had stopped talking to him he had been getting terrible migraines. He didn't handle stress well...."

Analysis

The Judgment Days is the novel that I am currently writing. The three main characters are Kaeden, Lachelle, and Mike. They are three high school kids living in the 2000's. I chose this subject matter because it is what I can relate to the most. My hope is that many others will be able to relate also. Adults can read for a better understanding of what life is really like for their teens, and teens can read for guidance with the situations that occur in life. Kaeden is the naïve freshman. He learns from his different experiences, many of them being that of my own. Mike is the star athlete with everything going for him. People see the good things about him and think that he's got it made, but they don't actually know anything about him. Lachelle is Mike's

girlfriend. She is rebellious towards authority, especially her mother. Her family expects for her to be something that she's not when all she wants to do is become a famous singer. I ask that you stay on the lookout for the release of this story. High school is a journey that everyone has to go through. Loss, drugs, sex and money are not just experiences for adults. It's real. This is real.

MONTEZ BROWN is the son of Montressa Burton and Darren Brown. He is 15 years old in the tenth grade at C E Jordan High School. He throws shotput and discus in indoor/outdoor track. He took Creative Writing 1 in the fall of last year and is currently working on his own novel. This was inspired by a piece written and submitted in Breaking the Silence titled "Stolen." He is a firm believer in *Carpe Diem* (Seize the Day). His life views and experiences give him the needed motivation to write things to inspire others. He plans on becoming a corporate attorney and hopes that his book will be a bestseller. If it is not, then he has enough insight with him to continue writing until he achieves his goal. It should be released to the public early 2008.

KELSEY CAIN

Selected Prose and Poetry

The Human Nature of a Teenager

*Dedicated to all those teenagers out there who can't seem to back up
their always changing behaviors.*

“You’re a miracle baby, Kelsey! Nobody ever thought you would still be alive!” That’s usually the default phrase said by my parents whenever they are proud of me. Whether are not they really are or if I really am a miracle baby, I’ll never really know. Has anybody ever told you that? I’m sure they have, so don’t feel too special. It is just one of the many phrases that parents learn to tell us when they are not creative enough to come up with anything else. One of the many phrases they learn in “Parent’s School.”

I’m a sixteen year old girl who lives in what people today would call a “weird family.” I have a brother who is 10 years older than me, another one 2 years younger, and in my opinion, unique-possibly even strange- parents. Moreover, as many of you might know, I’m not your typical girly girl. In fact, I’m more of a “jockette”, always exercising and running around like a crazy maniac. Pretty entertaining if you ask me, but not quite as entertaining to the close-minded yet unique brains of parents whom we are forced to live under.

“GO DO YOUR HOMEWORK!” says a certain parent or guardian.

“I am.” You reply, as you sit there under layers of fuzzy blankets motionless grasping the TV remote on the warm soft sofa completely taken over by “your show.”

Or even better...

“GO DO YOUR HOMEWORK!”

“I will.” This is usually said at about 10 pm at night when you have been home all day either hooked on Facebook or caught up in once again “your show(s).”

As teenagers, our job is to get in trouble, procrastinate on homework, react to either delayed or recent hints of puberty, and never agree with our parents. Most of us have these down pretty good. Yeah girls, you know you argue and/or fight with your mom (and possibly even dad), but think of it as part of the job description. And guys, you might as well stop acting cocky because we all know that you’re acting that way either because you don’t have a life/anything better to do or puberty has kicked in and you really can’t do anything about it. On the other hand, in some rare cases, you really are an egomaniac (and in this case, you might be a hopeless cause for a possible romantic relationship!). So if parents know that these crazy actions and changing behaviors are just part of the teenage “job description” then why do they still yell at us? Well, that’s simple, because they can, and maybe even because controlling us is part of their “job description” too (but that is just a guess).

“What are you talking about? Why don’t you want to come (insert embarrassing activity of choice here) with your family this Friday night?”

“Because I have a life (or date or am hanging out with friends).” Most of us wouldn’t normally tell our parents that they embarrass us, so we come up with alternate excuses to avoid being seen alone with our parents on a Friday or Saturday night.

“Why, again, are we matching?” says the grumpy teenager in the stinky minivan on the way to the pointless, somewhat expensive family portrait.

“It looks better in the picture, and this way none of us are clashing,” responds the annoyed parent (usually the mom or female guardian) trying to keep the male parent or guardian concentrated on the road while a “big game” is being broadcasted.

“Whatever.” The normal phrase said by teenagers when we are just too lazy to come up with a good answer that does not get us into trouble.

“What!?! Not dressing up for Halloween this year? No trick or treating?” yells the surprised parent when the teenager chooses a party with their friends over trick or treating with Mom or Dad.

Hint: Teenagers, this situation is made much easier to deal with for parents if you have younger siblings. If not, then good luck.

“I’m older now, and I’m too big for trick or treating anyway.” Slamming the door behind them, positioning themselves in the front seat of “a kid from schools” car the teenager is off to just another party, while the parent stands astounded in their steps, sometimes even on the verge of crying because their baby is growing up.

And, of course, there is always the yearly family meeting where we always end up getting lectured about how messy our room is (and sometimes how bad our hygiene is). Then after sitting at the kitchen table or on a sofa in a common room and not saying a word, just shaking our head yes and possibly butting in with a “But mom/dad...” For an hour, you hear the words, “You’re grounded!” WHAT!?!?! How did that happen? I didn’t even do anything yet, unless I really missed something. Some will speak up and argue, getting themselves more grounded than they already are, some might just shrug their shoulders knowing that whatever they say or do, being grounded is somewhat inevitable. Welcome to the mind of a parent or guardian.

It’s field trip day at school and you are going to the zoo. But what you fail to remember is that your parent is a chaperone! Oh no!

Socializing with your friends on the bus waiting for the teachers to organize/ finish talking about useless stuff, you see said parent and your body suddenly shrinks down in the seat.

“Hey, honey! Today is going to be a great day isn’t it?” says the said parent with more excitement than all the rest of the students on the bus combined and reaching out with open arms waiting for a hug.

“Sure mom/dad.” You reply, attempting to respond with just enough energy that said parent will go away or at least to the front of the bus where he or she belongs and your friends will stop laughing at you. And later, as you approach the zoo, the said parent always manages to discipline the girl or guy you have a crush on destroying any possible relationship possibilities with that girl or guy. Don’t you hate going to the zoo.

As teenagers, we know parents will always be there for us and love us, but as teenagers, we also know that it is in our nature to rebel, react to puberty, and procrastinate. So why do we get in trouble when these aspects of “teenage human nature” kick in? Probably because without the default phrases of parents and/or guardians such as “You’re grounded”, “Do this/that...”, and “Because I said so...” in an attempt to control us and our always changing strange behaviors, parents would have no say in society. In fact, without any discipline, teenagers would probably take over the world and/or dominate all aspects of society and culture, even though we really don’t know all that much. But once again, it is in our nature to rebel and always be right, so, sorry, parents get used to it. I’m a teenager, and although I may act different every five seconds, am very proud of myself and who I am!

Now, go to your room and think about what you have done! You can come out when you’re ready to apologize!

Who am I?

We live in a world where everything is supposed to be free,
So why do we have laws restricting this?
A world entailing freedom of speech and religion,

So why do they arrest us for speaking the truth?

No matter what they think, we are people of confidence, virtue, and beliefs

And will administer our voices and bodies in order to prove a point.

So why be hypocrites when you know it is simply human nature?

We live in a world that supposedly reflects the “people’s views,”

So why do we constantly feel betrayed by those who we thought were credible?

A world where individual rights and individuality are encouraged,

So why do they stop us from speaking up for our own wants and needs?

I am told everyday that nobody is perfect and life isn’t fair,

And while that is a complete understatement- I know that we all will end up in one place

So what are our real goals?

All seems silenced in this chaotic world of loud crowds and groups, everything freezes for just one moment in time exaggerating the one moment were everything matters.

All the trees halt in their swift smooth motions east and west while the voices of all I ever knew and heard are completely dimmed in just one moment in time.

Nothing seems real, and yet it is reality.

All I ever worked for seems condensed into this one millisecond in time.

I’ve told myself before not to get caught up in distractions like this or

Become tangled up in the craziness of life,

To stay true to who I am and what I want to become, the true me,

But what is what? Who am I? Where do I belong? Who do I belong with?

All these questions...and yet I fail to ever get answers for them.

Shouldn’t I know this by now? Whatever happened to being an individual and staying true to my beliefs?

What about standing up for what *I’m* all about?

Analysis

As a teenager myself (obviously), I have realized that although these are some of the greatest years of my life, they are now the most confusing. They have proved to be both rewarding and somehow finds a way to slowly destroy self-confidence levels. At first, I thought I was the only one going through all these tough changes and confusing situations, but I soon realized that we all go through unfair situations, moments where we can't seem to figure out who we are and times when life feels like it can not get any worse. It's part of life. And it is part of something that makes us a part of who we are.

I wrote "The Human Nature of a Teenager" to remind both teenagers and parents that while life may seem a bit unfair and inevitable, we can all relate in some way to each other's situations. Parents have been in the teenager's shoes before and possibly even promised themselves that "they would not turn into their parents when they grew up." But we all must remember that in order to fully recognize our mistakes and problems, we must first realize that nobody is perfect and nobody ever will be. Therefore, parents, please do not take it as an insult to your punishing methods, but instead relate to it and know that teenagers will always be a bit bratty and demanding (a natural reaction to puberty) and the only way to control them is to do what every other parent does, punish and embarrass them. And Students, don't take it as a just another excuse for your behavior, but realize that, just like me, we are all going through this awkward and confusing stage in life and we can't help but to act a bit exotic, to say the least.

I wrote "Who am I?" in an attempt to put into words the feelings I have when I just can't seem to express myself in a respectable manner. This poem reflects the times when, although a free and unique individual, I just don't feel represented in the world. I trust that I am not the only one out there with these questions, and I hope that I am not the only one out there acting on them. We are all different, but in this big and complicated world, we should all be able to find a place where we can feel appreciated and loved for who we really are.

KELSEY CAIN is a 16 year old junior at Jordan High School. She is a quiet, yet focused and goal-oriented girl who has grown up to be very athletic, playing many sports, including soccer, basketball, softball and volleyball for several years. Although now only playing both outdoor and indoor soccer year round competitively, she enjoys watching other sports on TV especially UNC basketball. Participating, as well, in Girl Scouts for 10 years where she earned her Bronze and Silver Awards, she became a promoter of handicapped and disabled accessibility. Before Jordan, she went to St. Thomas More Catholic Elementary and Middle School with uniforms, religion classes and all. Her switch over to public school buses (for the first time in 9th grade), opportunity to wear real clothes and encounters with both sketchy but exciting and diverse situations has kept her busy and given inspiration for much of her writing. Kelsey plans to become a North Carolina Teaching Fellow or major in Education and/or Sports Management with the possibility of continuing her soccer career. She plans to make a big difference in a small place where life can only get better. She is the daughter of Scott and Rachel and has two brothers, Brian and Nolan.

TANISHA CARSON
Selected Prose and Poetry

Game Over

Dedicated to: Letisha Gough, Rita Carson, Gene Gough, and Samuel Carson

“Angel! Angel, get up. It’s time for school.”

“Okay mom!” I shouted. I slowly lifted my head only to see that it was still partially dark outside. I grunted loudly, and got up. I went straight to the bathroom and turned on the light. I looked blankly into the mirror, after turning on the shower. I looked awful. The clock in the bathroom read 6:13 am. I realized that I was running a little bit behind schedule. I jumped in and out of the shower, having just enough time to get dressed and snag a bite to eat. I slipped on my Spongebob underwear and bra, my green and white Polo shirt, my black jeans with the green faded on the front, stepped into my black and green Jordans , and threw my hair up into a pony tail. I zoomed downstairs to the kitchen where I found my mom.

“Well, well the queen has finally decided to join me.” She said sarcastically.

“Yeah, umm, do we still have Pop-Tarts?” I asked

“Sure, but I cooked you some pancakes.”

“Sorry mom, no time.” I said. I grabbed my back-pack, kissed my mom and ran out of the door.

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When I got to school my boyfriend Jared was waiting for me. He was going on and on about how horrible his football practice went. He was so cute. He had caramel colored skin, green contacts, dark curly hair, and the most gorgeous smile I had ever laid eyes upon.

“So can you go to Crystal ’s party tonight?” he asked.

“I could ask mom.” I said as the bell rang.

“Well, I will catch up to you later, math test.” He ran off to his last class of the day.

Frequently I and my best friend Jamey would skip our last class. We would run off to the football field on the bleachers to gossip about people. She didn’t like anything I did. It seemed like that she was kind of jealous of me.

“Angel, I’m telling you that you absolutely **SHOULDN’T** go to Crystal’s party, especially not with Jared. He is bad news. How many times do I have to tell you that?”

“Jamey, you should come to the party with us. It will be lots of fun.” I smiled brightly at her “Come on we can gossip about **EVERYBODY!**” I laughed.

“No I’d rather not. I just feel like something bad is going to happen. So watch your back.” She warned.

I heard the bell ring and teenagers poured out of East Keswick High.

“Catch you later Jamey.” I walked away and proceeded to meet Jared at his car. He usually came right after the bell rang and this day was no different.

“Hey baby,” he said.

I greeted him with a kiss and we got into his car. I sang the tunes of Chris Brown all the way to my house. Several times Jared told me to stop “crying” but I ignored him. When we got to my house I jumped out and went inside.

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I looked my best. I had on a pink mini-skirt, a pink and white shirt, and my pink and white Vans. I heard Jared's car horn honk outside. I snuck down the stairs and out of the door. *Slowly and quietly* was what I was thinking at the time. Mom was asleep, but I planned on being home way before she even knew I was gone. I jumped into the car with Jared kissing him on the cheek. Jared was unusually quiet tonight. It kind of scared me.

Crystal's house was flooded with teenagers from our school. So many, that I could barely move. Jared pulled me outside, after us being there for about an hour. He wanted time alone with me.

"You know I love you right?" He said.

"Of course I do." I wrapped my arms around him and kissed him. The next feeling I felt was pain. It was REAL pain. A cold, hard, silver knife had been lodged into my right shoulder. I screamed in pain, but no one heard because of the loud music I looked down at my shoulder to see that the sharp edge of a butcher's knife. I reached behind my head and felt the handle of the knife. I fell to the ground. I was bleeding to death, literally. Blood poured onto the ground, seeming to never stop. I had been stabbed by.....Jamey. I could feel myself slipping into the darkness. I could hear Jamey's voice faintly.

"I told you Angel. Something bad will happen I said. But you didn't listen to ME. I told you Jared was a bad guy. You wanted to ignore everything I had ever told you. I gave you a warning to watch your back, but again, you didn't listen. Now that I know you will be out of the way, I can be with Jared. We've been planning to kill you for quite some time now. I've always love Jared more than you. You were always too busy for him. The cheerleading practices, the piano practices, and let's not forget swimming practice. All this time you've been slipping and I've been slowly creeping up behind you stealing everything you held dear. Now it's too late." She said.

"I love you Angel, but I love Jamey even more. I didn't want it to end this way. You're probably thinking: *why didn't you just break up with me?* Well, I would've except I didn't want you to live THIS way. You just knowing that your boyfriend left you for your best friend. You just knowing

that your boyfriend drugged you up on the night of Danny's birthday party and let all of his friends sleep with you. Oops well, that's something you DIDN'T know, but now you do. I'm tired of playing games baby girl." He threw a rose on top of me "Game over Angel. Game over."

I slipped into the darkness. I closed my eyes as I heard those words. Game over. The last two words I would ever hear. Jamey and Jared being the last two faces that I would ever see. The color red, being the last color I would ever see. I felt my heart stop, that being last feeling that I would ever feel.

Dear Kiesha

Dedicated to: Lakiesha Harris, Janet Woodson, and William Gough (May you all Rest in Peace)

Baby girl I been missing you dreaming about you at night
Needless to say my head hasn't been right
I need you here I'm walking blind and I can't see
I still talk to you all the time, but I need you here physically
You left me suddenly, without even a warning or a word
My words are spoken to you Kiesha. They are never unheard
I'd give anything to have you right here with me again
You were my cousin, my sister, and my very best friend
I have to tell you that I'm still crazy, Devinn's still crazy
I'm looking up at the sky; you are the one that saved me
From myself; I'm sitting here crying knowing you don't want me to
I can't help it though I'm doing what I can to please you
Our time was stolen from us, It's not right. It's not fair.
I guess life can't be. It's just like the wind and the air.
I can't stop it, but I just want you to remember this Key
I love my sister. You know I miss you. And save a spot for me.

Analysis

The inspiration for “Game Over” came from the top of my head. I didn’t know what to write, but I wanted to write something that had a little twist to it. I have never written any stories that had a surprise ending like that particular one. It was basically an “out of nowhere” type of thing. I liked the story when I had finished it, so I decided to stick with it.

I got the inspiration for “Dear Kiesha” from my friend Kiesha, who is now deceased. She died about two or three years ago from a four-wheeler accident. I actually hadn’t planned on putting this poem in my section of the book. I read it aloud in Mr. Albright’s class and so many people liked it that I decided to go ahead and share it with the people who knew her and loved her as much as I did.

TANISHA CARSON *was born and raised in Virginia. She moved to Durham, NC about a year ago, leaving behind many memories, friends and family. Tanisha has been writing poetry and songs since she was twelve years old. When she signed up for Mr. Albright’s Creative Writing class, she didn’t know what she was in store for. She came into the class prepared to perfect her writing skills. She didn’t know that she would be expressing some of her deepest and darkest secrets. She learned not to hold back things that she was afraid or scared of. She started opening up and letting her feelings be known to others that may have known, and some who may not have known. In this class she has expressed many emotions through writing. Such as, rage, happiness, sorrow, and depression. Upon graduation from JHS she plans to attend college to major in Journalism. Tanisha is striving for greatness.*

RONIKA DAYE

Selected Prose and Poetry

What Ain't Goin' Down

*Dedicated to my grandfather Joseph P. Daye Sr.
January 16, 1933- January 14, 2002*

CHARACTERS:

Rena - 15 year old girl that is lively and vivacious. She has a smile that will light up a room. Rena is also a star athlete at her high school. She was captain of her volleyball team, her track team, and her bowling team. Rena is very caring and loves to be with her friends and family. She is also in a very serious relationship with her boyfriend Damion. Also has a short temper

Damion - 17 year old boyfriend of Rena. Damion is a running back on his schools football team. He is in love w/ Rena and wants to spend the rest of his life w. her. He has this crazy ex-girlfriend that claims she still loves him.

April- Damion's ex. She is on the cheerleading team and wants Damion back. She is known around school for getting whatever she wants. Not to mention, her and April can't stand one another.

George - Damion's best friend since the day they were born. They are inseparable. George is the "playboy" of the school. He backs Damion up in

whatever he does. He encourages Damion to “live life” which really means try to get back w/ April and still have Rena

Dina - Rena’s best friend. She has a very short temper like Rena and despises April. She is also a cheerleader. She also dated George for one year until he cheated on her.

SCENE 1: George and Damion are leaving their last class, heading towards the football locker room.

Damion: So are you ready for tonight’s big game?

George: yea man, I can’t wait to whoop some pirate butt. Is Rena coming to the game?

Damion: Of course my wife is coming. It won’t be the same if she doesn’t come.

George: You got it bad man. I mean if no one knew any better they’d think that you were already married.

Damion: Well, we will be one day

George: What ever. Oh you know April is going to be there, right?

(Damion screw faces George)

Damion: Yea so what is that supposed to me?

George: Dude you know what that means. Everyone knows that April still wants you.

Damion: So?

George: So... try to get w/ her, and you'll have two girls.

Damion: Man, what the heck is wrong w/ you? You know she was a long time ago, and besides I am IN LOVE w/ Rena and she is the only one for me

George: Whateva man, I'd get 'em both.

Damion: You are sick G, you really need help

(Damion and George walk into locker room and suit up for the game)

SCENE 2: Rena and Dina walk into the stands at the football game together holding pom-poms. They spot April on the side cheering. April sees them also and screw faces them. They see her and screw face her back.

Rena- why she gotta look at us like that?

Dina- Oh girl, you know why. She is still trippin ova the fact that you and Damion go out

Rena- Well dang it's been two years!

Dina-(smiling) tell me about it. I mean I have never known anybody that would hold a grudge that long.

Rena- That's exactly how I feel. I mean what they **HAD** is done, and he is all mine.

(Rena and Dina scream as they see Damion score a touchdown. They scream and cheer. Then they look down and see April cheering also. Rena

stops and looks with a grimacing look on her face. Dena pokes her and points at Damion. He is blowing her a kiss. (Rena)

Rena- That's my baby. Always scoring touchdowns and making me proud.

Dina- Yea and someone down there is getting really happy
(She notices April winking at Damion)

Rena- She aint stupid

(Dina is jumping as if in a boxing ring preparing to fight)

Dina- She might be, can I please beat her tail just one time and let her know how it is?

Rena- NO!! Now what is our motto?

(sighing)

Dina- Ugh... Have fun now, beat the hoe later.

Rena- Good now watch the game

(The game ends. Jordan won 65-12. Rena and Dina wait as the players come off of the field from taking pics. Dina notices April getting a little to close)

Dina- Oh No!! I know that nappy headed chick aint getting close to Damion.

(Rena looks closely and realizes that April is on her man. She runs down in the field and taps her on the shoulder. Damion is surprised.)

Rena- Ummmm... excuse me, but you need to get off of my man

(Turning around angrily)

April- I'll do whatever I please.

Rena- No you'll do it now!!

(April pushes Rena back and smiles)

April-No I won't!

(Rena punches April in the face and stomps on her face. It takes 3 football players to get Rena off of April.)

Damion-(in shock) Baby, what's wrong? What happened?

Rena- Oh don't act stupid D. I know you felt her putting yo hand on her hips.

Damion- So it was a picture

Rena- Boy, do u think I was born yesterday? Won't no stupid picture been taken! There wont no camera in the air. That lil girl just wanted you to touch her.

Dina-(Running over) Nooooooooo. Why didn't u let me do it? I told u she was up to no good. Man lets go.

(Rena and Dina head back to Rena's house. April is taken home by a friend with a broken nose and a black eye.)

SCENE 3: Rena and Dina are in the house watching t.v. Rena grabs some ice to put on her hand

Rena- I hate him, I hate him, I hate him!!!

Dina- Girl it's ok.

Rena- No it aint! He went along w/ it like it won't nuthin. He knew what he was doin. That sorry excuse for a boyfriend

(There is a knock at the door. Damien comes in w/ roses and George following behind him. George sits beside Dina)

George- Hey boo. So did u see me play tonight?

Dina-(sarcastically)Did you really get to play tonight?.....Dang I missed it?

George- As much as you missed me?

Dina- No FOOL!! I don't want u any more.

George- Oh come on, who can resist all this man
(looks down at his privates)

Dina-(Laughing hysterically) Ha there ain't nuthin manly about that thing in dem' pants

George- so you got jokes

Dina- Of course. Look at who you're talking to

George- I'm out man. I don't have to take this

(George walks out w/ no pride)

Dina- So D. Why did you do my homegirl like that?

Damion- Why don't you mind your own business.

Dina- Idiot, do you not know that my best friend is my business?

Damion- Can you just leave

Dina-Only if SHE wants me to. Do you want me to leave girl?

Rena- Please?

Dina- Only for you. But if you need me (jumps at Damion) I'll be a phone call away.

(Dina leaves and Damion tries to get more comfortable on the sofa with Rena)

Damion- Looks let's talk about this

Rena-(sighs) Fine D. lets talk before I go crazy

Damion- Thanks.

Rena- yea yea.

Damion- Sooooo, what do you want to talk about?

Rena- What kind of question is that? You know what I'm talking about. Why did you let April put your hand on her hips?

Damion- I don't know. It just happened.

Rena- So if a guy that I used to date just happens to touch me in a way that you know you wouldn't like then its no big deal right?

Damion- Heck No!!!! I'll kill him

Rena- Of course. So what in the world gives you the audacity to think that you can? And what bothers me is that you know she still likes you. I mean honestly, you aren't dumb baby.

Damion- yea, but....

Rena- but what? You can not and will not make an excuse. You know what you did.

Damion- True, but it just happened

Rena- Just shut up.

(There is a knock at the door and the doorbell rang. Rena gets up to get the door. She opens it up and there is April.)

April- look I don't appreciate the fact that you hit me tonight

Rena- you act like I care about your feelings. And for the record I don't appreciate the fact that you was all ova my man after the game tonight

April-look I know I was wrong and...

Rena- (Interrupting) yea whatever. Just leave my man alone and everything will be ok. I hope that you understand where I am coming from. I wouldn't mess with anything that belonged to you, so leave my stuff, in this case my man alone!!! You are 16 years old, why can't you understand that?

April- I'm sorry Rena. I really am sorry. I want you to forgive me and I want us to be friends.

Rena- Well I hope you aren't expecting this to happen in a short period of time because it won't. I'll need time to TRY and get over this. Why would you do something like this anyways?

April- I don't know. I guess I just wanted him back because he treated me so good. I was jealous of you and the fact that you have him makes me mad.

Rena- Well I am sorry that you feel that way, but you messed up and now Damion is mine. I really hope you can grow up and get over it.

April- So do I. Well I guess I will see ya'll tomorrow. Bye Damion....bye Rena. I'm really sorry.

Rena-Yeah me too, bye.

(Damion gets off of the sofa and come stands beside Rena. April is gone)

Damion- So is everything ok?

Rena- No! I still can't BELIEVE you did something like that. I honestly don't know if I trust you anymore.

Damion- Yep That makes sense. I wouldn't forgive myself either.

Rena-I'm glad you know that. I want us to be together forever baby, but we won't, if we can't trust one another. And I sure aint up for getting my heart broken. Shoot, I refuse.

Damion- Ok baby, ok

Rena-Don't ok baby me. You have a lot of makin up to do. But you can start by going to get us some movies and pizza.

Damion-(Jumping up excitedly) OK... go. Wha...what do you want

Rena- You know. Sausage and mushroom w/ Pepperoni on the side.

Damion- yea I do baby.

(Damion leaves)

SCENE 4: One month later. Damion, Rena, George, and Dina are at Damion's house. Rena and Dina are upstairs.

Rena- so everything is back to normal and I am really happy. April was really on the hunt for D again.

Dina-DUUHHH I told you to let me handle it before it got that far. But as long as you are happy so am I.

Rena- Thanks girl, you are a good friend.

Dina- (smiling) I know. So, what do you think George and Damion are doin down stairs?

Rena- I don't know

Dina- Well let's go see

Rena- Ok, ok

(The girls walk downstairs to find George in the kitchen and Damion at the bottom of the stairs on one knee. Rena starts to tear up)

Damion- Hey baby.

Rena- (crying) hey babe. What is all of this for?

Damion- I told you that I wanted to spend the rest of my life w/ you didn't I? So will you marry me? Of course it won't be for years from now, but I know that I want to be w/ you forever so why not now?

Rena- Of course baby. You know I will. Your answer is yes. A million times yes.

(Damion gets up and hugs Rena. They walk into the kitchen where Dina and George are setting up for dinner. They eat and decide to go to the movies to celebrate)

Stranded

Stranded in a place where violence rules

Crips vs. Bloods, no sense of responsibility or rules

I hate that we can't live together as one unit, or one voice

In the end when things have fallen completely apart, then we can't complain and say that we didn't have a choice

Stranded in a place where I can't get my privacy
Day and night I got my family on my case stressing me u see
I want to get out, I want to run away
But it seems as if there is no end to my pain
So sit back and take a look at where you stand in society
Is it a place where peace comes in variety?
Maybe its not but what can you do to play your part and change?
Is it inevitable? Do you think that you can't avoid it?

Well you can't. Somehow, someway things are going to change. Just make sure that you are in the right place and that you help make that positive change, happen.

Without You

Without you my days aren't filled with sunshine, but instead are filled with rain

Without you everyday feels like nothing, just meaningless and useless

Without you my world is turned upside down and everything has fallen apart in vain

Without you love songs have no romantic value, they're just words with music

Without you I'll go crazy

Without you everything feels so wrong

Without you I'll get lazy

Without you I won't have any space to be strong

Without you games that I play won be fun

Without you phone calls won't be interesting

Without you we will lose all that was won

Without you my life won't have as many blessings

Without you Valentines Day will get so lonely

Without you I can't expect sweet kisses on the forehead

Without you I won't feel someone lying next to me in the morning
Without you all that I do, I will dread
Without you there won't be any cuddling going on
Without you there is no moral support
Without you I will have an empty home

Without you I can't watch you run the court
Without you baby my life has no meaning, so please don't go

The Friend You Are

You are a friend that I can depend on
Always there to catch me if I am about to fall
You never turn your back on me
Or let anyone put me down
I know I can depend on you

If God above ever said that it was time for you to come home, I would be
at your funeral on the front row reminiscing on all the good times that we
shared

Start Of A New Life

When that day comes
When I'm finally your wife
That will truly be one of the happiest days
Of my life
We've been through so much
We've had our ups and downs
But we know that no matter what we will
Always hold one another down

To stand in front of you and share with you my vows

Will bring tears to my eyes
I am marrying my love
My soul mate, my knight and shining armor
I am marrying, my everything

You have turned my worst days into my best
You have held me when I need to be held
I don't have to tell you if anything is wrong
You can read me inside and out
So when that day comes and I am finally your wife
That will truly be one of the happiest days of my life

What This Has Come To

This has come to an end
I can't take all of the drama
My life is an emotional rollercoaster
You bring me up and you bring me down
You give me highs and you give me lows
I can't take it anymore
Putting up with all your lies and other bull shit
It don't make no sense
I've had enough
My heart can't take all the abuse
All this strife is driving me up a wall

What did I ever do to you?
Absolutely nothing
I have done nothing but love you, take care of you
I helped you through your toughest times
You know you wrong
I hate you

Everything you say is nothing but a word
As far as I'm concerned we have nothing else to say to one another
Pack up all your things and get out now
Don't forget to tell your son goodbye
Tell him why his daddy can't learn to appreciate the good thing in life
Things like a loving and devoted wife
A wonderful and caring son
Let him know that his daddy prefers trifling women that don't know they
right from they left
I hope you are at least man enough to tell your own child the truth
You know I feel sorry for you
You have no taste, no style, no pride, and no dignity
Get out, I **HATE YOU**
My life will be just fine
I can do bad all by myself

Analysis

I chose to use my eight page play and my 100 lines of poetry for this book. I chose these two because I feel that they are both pretty strong and that they will reach out to some people. My play was basically an idea that I just came up with while sitting at home watching a game and thinking about her relationship. I enjoyed this because it gave me a chance to put something I love out there and tell how I feel about everything. My poems were my favorite. They let me let go of all of my anger with the world and society. It also gave me a chance to put my soft side on the table. I wanted to do this because I am always known as the loud ghetto, rough chick of the class. Poetry is just a great release for me, and I wanted to show it. My inspiration of these two pieces came from my life and from my feelings. Mr. Albright put in a place that I thought I could never reach. He caused me to put myself in a whole new perspective when it comes to writing. He has made me a better writer and a better student. I am forever grateful, and glad that I was given the chance to better my self as a writer. I will take all that I have learned in

this class with me for the rest of my life. I plan on showing my children and grandchildren about this class and my teacher. This class has changed my life forever.

RONIKA DAYE was born on December 14, 1991 in Durham, NC at 2:12 am. She is the daughter of Joseph and Wanda Daye. She has two younger siblings. Ronika attends Charles E. Jordan High School in Durham, NC. There she is a sophomore. She is apart of the JHS chorus and is in Jordansound. Jordansound is an all girls choral group at my school. I enjoy it, and I hope it will lead me to different opportunities in music. She is now a part of Mr. Albright's creative writing class. This works well for her because she uses singing and writing to express her emotions and to reach out to others. She is also apart of her church's youth choir and serves on the youth ministry. Ronika is also an athlete. She has played on the volleyball team at school, and the track team, and this year she hopes to make the softball team. Ronika is very focused and wants to become an OB/GYN. An OB/GYN stands for an Obstetrician/GYNecologist. They specialize in women's health and they deliver babies. She loves little babies and hopes that by being an OB/GYN, it will help her when she decides to have children. This is a LONG time from now. She plans to get into a good college. She would either like to get some kind of scholarship, whether it is academic or athletic. Right now she wants to attend a HBCU (Historically Black College/University). But if scholarships come from other places then that is where she will be.

JAIMIE DORFMAN

The Funny Thing About Drama

“Hannah wake-up! Hannah!” That’s my mom, trying to wake me up for another boring day of school. Oh, by the way, I’m Hannah if you already couldn’t tell. I’m finally a junior at Jefferson High school in Tallahassee, Florida. Being a junior is probably the best thing ever, I’m finally an upper classmen, and I have my driver’s license so I can drive to school by myself without having to duck my head, while my mother drives her beat-up Honda Minivan.

I have a best friend, her name is Madison. Madison is a cheerleader along with me; we’ve been best friends since preschool. She’s probably one of the prettiest girls in school, every guy drools over her. Madison has a boyfriend named Bryan, they’ve been dating since sophomore year, and he’s the quarterback and the captain of the football team, your typical jock but a total hotty.

Freshmen year Bryan dated this girl Sarah Hardison. Sarah and Madison used to be best friends freshmen year, until Sarah found out that Bryan was having a little thing with Madison, which wasn’t true. It was just some stupid rumor. So Sarah hurt Bryan by cheating on him with his best friend Mike. That was the end of their relationship. To this day I still think Bryan has feelings for Sarah and he’s just using Madison as a rebound.

The day is almost over, finally. “DING- DING” the sound of relief that school is finally done with for the day, now off to cheerleading practice. I pass by the football locker room and I realize that Madison and Bryan aren’t there. They always meet me there, where could they be? They are both probably smooching in some classroom. I go to check and see if Madison is in the locker room. “Madie! I’ve been looking....What’s wrong?”

“Bryan broke up with me, but he wouldn’t tell me why, I don’t know what I did wrong Hannah, I gave him everything” (sniffle).

“Don’t worry Madison everything will be ok. ”I knew something didn’t sound right and I needed to get to the bottom of this. After cheerleading practice I waited for Bryan by his car until he got out of football.

“Bryan, what the hell is wrong with you?

How could you do this to her and you know that she loved you!”

“Why don’t you just stay out of our business Hannah!”

“Because she is my best friend.” “What ever.”

Something is definitely up. Since Bryan won’t tell me what’s wrong I guess I’ll have to go to other people that might know what happened.

The next morning at school I go up to Rian also known as “Rian the Rumor” He’s the guy that tells everybody everything, starts every rumor in the school, and thinks he knows about everyone. “Hey Rian, do you know anything about what happened with Madison and Bryan and their breakup?”

“They broke up? All I know is that Sarah and Mike broke up.” “What!? No they didn’t.” After Rian told me that I just went straight to class. I was so shocked I couldn’t even concentrate on what Mr. Smith, my calculus teacher was saying. I was totally lost.

Oh my gosh! There’s Sarah walking to the bathroom, I have got to get out of class. “(I raise my hand) Umm... Mr. Smith, can I use the bathroom?”

“Of course, Hannah.” I wait by the sinks until Sarah comes out of the stall.

“Hey Sarah how are you?” “I’m good, you?”

“I’m great, so what’s this I hear about you and Mike breaking up?”

“What do you mean? We’re great, we’re better than ever.”

“Oh... nothing, I was just wondering”

I leave the bathroom and go back to class with total embarrassment and confusion. I think I have an idea of why Bryan broke up with Madison.

I wait by Bryan’s car after cheerleading again.

“Bryan I know why you broke up with Madison”

“Oh you do?”

“Yeah, I actually do. You heard from Rian that Sarah and Mike broke up, but what you don’t know is that I talked to Sarah earlier today and I asked what happened and she told me that Mike and she are fine, and they are not planning on breaking up any time soon. So before you think you have a chance with Sarah, think again.

Bryan gets in his car and drives away. Later that night I get a call from Madison.

“Hey Hannah, guess what?” (Sounding excited)

“What?”

“Bryan wants to get back with me!”

“What! No! Madison, I have something to tell you.”

“What is it?”

“I know why Bryan broke up with you. He heard that Sarah and Mike broke up, witch is a total lie and he made a big mistake, but what you have to think about is if Sarah and Mike really do break up ever, Bryan might do the same thing that he just did and I don’t want to see you get hurt again.”

“Hannah, thanks for being a good friend, but I think I can take care of myself!”(She hangs up the phone).

The next morning at school Madison comes up to me and gives me a big hug and a sigh of relief. “I’m sorry that I was a jerk last night on the phone to you, you deserve so much more, and I don’t need that dumb boy, “Bryan” to make me happy right now, the only thing I need is you, my best friend. So thank you.”

I smiled at Madison and gave her a big hug, then turned around and walked away to go to my first period class.

Analysis

My inspiration for this story had to be an assignment in Coach Albright's class. The second week of school Coach Albright made my class do an assignment where you picked a partner and you both picked an incident that happened, and you write four different paragraphs on the views of people or things that were around, near, or there when the action happened.

My partner and I picked a typical high school scene; a girl and guy are going out, and the guy hears that his girlfriend's best friend (that he has liked for a very long time) has broken up with her boyfriend. So the guy breaks up with his girlfriend and leaves her for the best friend. It turns out, that the best friend did not break up with her boyfriend, and that it was just a rumor, so this whole story was a lot of drama. We wrote about the perspective of the hallway, the boyfriend, the girlfriend's best friend, the girlfriend's best friend's boy friend, and the girl that got her heart broken.

This activity helped me make my first creative writing assignment a success, and helped me out a lot.

JAIMIE MOLLIE DORFMAN *is a sophomore at C.E Jordan High School in Durham, NC. She was born on August 10th, 1992, and is now fifteen years old. She loves to hang out with her friends and spend time with her family. Jaimie also loves volleyball and wants to play it in college. She was selected to the NC High Performance (HP) volleyball team during the summer of 2007. High Performance represents the top 10 players in North Carolina that get picked to play in a national tournament, which meant that the North Carolina HP team would play against other state HP teams. This was a great privilege for Jaimie. Even though this is only her sophomore year, Jaimie has some colleges in mind to play volleyball for: NC State, Virginal Tech, and Florida. While in college, Jaimie would like to major in journalism.*

MATTHEW DUNCAN

Selected Prose

My work is dedicated to my mom, dad, sister, and dog whom I love dearly. Specifically, my Duke piece is dedicated to Mr. Albright with the hope that it will open his eyes and convince him to leave the dark side that is UNC.

“Let’s Go Devils” (clap, clap, clap-clap-clap)

As you walk up Whitford Drive, you can hear the buzz of the crowd inside the building before you can see it. You are surrounded on all sides by Gothic style edifices of grand stature, providing a glimpse into the architecture of old. It is a chilly and cloudless winter night. The cold rushes by, making you pull your jacket a little tighter around your body. Your destination comes into sight. From the outside, it doesn’t appear to be all that special. But it’s what’s on the inside that counts. You walk up a hill leading to the side entrance of the building. You give your priceless ticket to a man in a fluorescent green jacket. He quickly rips it in half and tells you to enjoy the contest. You slip into the side hall. The warmth of all the bodies makes you forget the frost you just stepped out of. The first part of your journey has ended at 301 Whitford Drive, better known as Cameron Indoor Stadium. The contest the ticket man mentioned is the most heated sporting event in the

nation: the Duke versus North Carolina men's basketball game. A true once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Everywhere people are bustling around, full of energy and anticipation. They buy refreshments and snacks and go to the bathroom, not wanting to waste a single second on a trip to the concessions stand or restroom once the game has begun. My dad and I enter the main hall that surrounds the oval-shaped arena. All around, the smell of fresh, buttery popcorn floats through the thick air. Along every wall there are pictures and portraits of some of the most spectacular moments in Duke Basketball history. The 1986 team with Johnny Dawkins, the first squad Coach Mike Krzyzewski achieved national acclaim with and the team that helped propel Duke into a new decade of success. The back-to-back championship titles in 1991 and 1992, products of Duke teams led by Christian Laettner, Bobby Hurley, and Grant Hill. The all-purpose Shane Battier, star of the 2001 championship team, and the incredible duo of J.J. Redick and Shelden Williams. Fans gaze at past moments of glory and hope that the game they will soon witness will deserve to be posted on the wall someday.

My dad and I find our seats, generously given to us by a close family friend. Almost any seat in Cameron is a good one. There are no nose-bleed seats in the place. Cameron is by no means a mega-stadium like the Dean Smith Center in Chapel Hill which seats about 22,000 fans. Cameron's capacity is less than half of that, right around 10,000. Ironically, when it was first built back in the 1940's, it was considered the second largest stadium on the East Coast. How times have changed! However, the relatively small seating capacity makes for a much more intimate setting. No need for binoculars. You can see the players' expressions, the coaches' signals. You can hear the shoes squeaking and the ball bouncing. You feel like you are a part of the game.

The price you pay for such a great view is limited space. Americans' waistlines are getting bigger, but the seats at Cameron aren't. Whenever a person has to get to their seat in a row, everyone has to stand up as the fan squeezes by. It looks like a whole row is doing the wave. As well as being

small, the chairs and floors are somewhat dirty. The seats are wooden with metal hand rests, tarnished over from nearly 60 years of blood, sweat, and tears from Duke fans. When you look at the floor below, you might think twice before setting down your jacket under the seat. The ground is sticky with the numerous spills of Coca-Cola products from fans jumping up to celebrate a big basket or defensive stop. However, the size and cleanliness of the seats and floors in no way take away from the Cameron experience. Every Coke stain and chair scratch is a piece of the history etched into the building. If you're lucky, maybe you'll leave one this night.

Once you are settled in (for the moment anyways), you can begin to look around the historic stadium. There is an enormous cube-shaped scoreboard hanging directly above center court. The cube has not been modernized to flash scores and updates on a computerized screen. On the contrary, the ancient cube still uses individual light bulbs to form numbers to let the fans know what the score is and the point total and foul situation for each player. Ironically, Cameron is one of the few places in the high-tech community that is Duke University still living in the technological "dark age." Cameron Indoor Stadium has resisted the technological wave of change, staying true to its origins.

The basketball court itself, its shimmer so perfect you could use it as a mirror, is adorned with logos, most notably the large "D" at center court and two others reading "Coach K Court," a small way of paying tribute to the man that has helped shaped Duke basketball into one of the top programs in the country.

However, the most obvious attraction in Cameron is without a doubt the infamous "Cameron Crazies", Duke undergraduate and graduate students who sit in the lower levels to support the Devils. These students have camped outside for months for the opportunity to attend tonight's game. They have battled the cold, the snow, the wind and the constant attendance checks where they risk the danger of being taken off the ticket list if no one is in the tent. These students have given up their comfortable dorm rooms to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

As the players warm up, the Crazies practice the chants they will soon be yelling quite frequently throughout the contest. There is the classic “Here we go devils, here we go” and “DEE FENSE” to the more brash “We’re gonna beat the hell out of you” or even, one of my personal favorites, “Go to hell Carolina, go to hell!” The Cameron Crazies make the stadium one of the hardest places to play. The students literally surround the court, screaming, chanting, and poking fun at opposing players.

Soon the Duke pep band, with their blue-and-white-striped shirts, strike up a familiar tune as the Devils come running out onto the court ready to play. The Cameron Crazies jump up and down in anticipation of the jump ball to begin the game. Soon Josh McRoberts and Tyler Hansbrough face each other, separated only by the referee. The ball is launched into the air, both players jump, and the war begins. It is best to soak it all in, because getting to sit in Cameron to see a Duke versus UNC game is once in a lifetime.

Pure Evil

Characters:

Captain Winters- A young and extremely intelligent officer who has moved up the ranks very quickly; cares deeply about all the men in his company; wants to get home to wife and daughter

Lieutenant Elias- Adventurous and courageous; a risk-taker and a very good military planner; charismatic

Sergeant Barnes- Army veteran; tough and an excellent leader; a very “lead-by- example kind of guy”, making him one of the his men’s favorites; not interested in moving up the chain of command

Private Jones- Very young; has very little military experience; new to combat; naïve; homesick

Settings:

Setting #1: A cottage in Germany that has been abandoned by its owners. The large home is currently serving as a military headquarters for Allied operations in and around the town. Captain Winters and Lieutenant Elias are spending the morning in the living room talking and playing cards.

Setting #2: Dense forest outside the town. Sergeant Barnes, Private Jones and the squad are patrolling the area in search of German soldiers.

Setting #3: A concentration camp hidden in the forest. The camp is filthy with piles of bodies, cramped cottages, and multitudes of starved prisoners. The guard towers and quarters are abandoned.

Stage Appearances:

Setting #1: Walls of living room are dirty and plain except for a few crooked picture frames. There is a worn desk and cabinet on the right side. Winters and Elias have laid their weapons and equipment in the back-left corner. A simple card table and two chairs are in the center of the room.

Setting #2: A large backdrop of a forest is complimented by three or four fake trees; enough to make the scene authentic but still allow the audience to see Barnes and Jones.

Setting #3: The forest background remains. There is a large fence set up in the front right of the stage to make it appear like the prison is square from the audience's perspective. Fence should be constructed to look as if it's made from barb-wire.

Act I: Scene I: The Hand You Are Dealt

(Scene opens with Captain Winters and Lieutenant Elias sitting in the center of the cottage living room playing poker).

Captain Winters: *(laying down cards)* Read 'em and weep, Barnes: Two pair. Two jacks and two threes.

Lieutenant Elias: You got me, cap'n. (*smirking*) But wait, doesn't a straight beat a two pair?

Captain Winters: (*slamming fist down on table*) Damnit Barnes! You bluffin' son-of-a-gun!

Lieutenant Elias: What can I say? I'm a natural.

Captain Winters: (*pointing at Barnes and smiling*) As your superior officer, I order you not to beat me again!

Lieutenant Elias: Good thing we aren't playing strip poker, 'cause you'd be naked by now!

Captain Winters: Hah! Let's put these cards away. I'm tired of losing.

Lieutenant Elias: (*putting cards back in the box*) Hey cap'n, what you gonna do after the war's over?

Captain Winters: (*putting arms behind head and leaning back in the chair*) Now don't get ahead of yourself, lieutenant. The war ain't over yet. That bastard Hitler is still breathing.

Lieutenant Elias: Let's say Hitler's dead and you are on the boat back home. What would be the first thing you'd do?

Captain Winters: Well, let's see. The first thing I would do would take the quickest route home to Georgia and give my wife a nice, long kiss. Then I would say hello to my daughter Elizabeth for the first time.

Lieutenant Elias: When was she born?

Captain Winters: February 9, 1944. She'll be almost a year old now. I can't wait to see her in person. Pictures just aren't good enough, you know? She has her momma's sweet blue eyes. What about you, Elias?

Lieutenant Elias: Oh, I don't know. Probably the first thing I'd do when I get off the boat in New York is to find the nearest pizza store and order two whole pepperonis. These K-rations get old!

Captain Winters: (*smiling*) Amen to that!

Lieutenant Elias: After the pizza I would take the first train out of there and go home to Oklahoma and marry my high school sweetheart Cindy Roberts. God Almighty I swear she's the prettiest girl I've ever seen! We've been writing each other a lot, and every line makes me fall even more in love with her.

Captain Winters: I know the feeling. Sometimes I could barely breathe around my wife. I just hope General Eisenhower and the Russians hurry it on up so we can end this.

Lieutenant Elias: I figure it'll take about six more months or so, as long as we don't have any more surprises like Rommel sneaking up on us in the Ardennes Forest like he did two months ago in December.

Captain Winters: I thought for sure that he was gonna push us all the way back to France and cause a truce. Cindy Roberts would've been an old maid by the time we'd of pushed them back!

Lieutenant Elias: (*laughing*) No more surprises would be nice.

Captain Winters: Yeah. No more surprises.

Act I: Scene II: It's nothing

(Scene opens with Sergeant Barnes, Private Jones, and the rest of Squad A patrolling the forest outside of the town for German troops).

Sergeant Barnes: *(shouting in a rough voice)* Alright, everyone, listen up! Sit down and take a break! Drink some water and eat something. We're movin' out in five! Oh, and new guy, what's your name again?

Private Jones: It's Jones, sir.

Sergeant Barnes: Right, that's it. Jones, you stay close to me from now on. We don't want another rookie getting killed when this war's about to wrap up.

Private Jones: Yes sir, sergeant.

Sergeant Barnes: Relax, Jones. Please, call me sarge.

Private Jones: Yes sir, sarge.

Sergeant Barnes: Better.

(Sergeant Barnes walks over to a nearby tree and props himself up against the trunk. Private Jones follows).

Sergeant Barnes: *(removing helmet)* Jones, are ya gonna sit down or just stand there all day?

Private Jones: I'm sorry sir, I mean sarge. *(sits down)* I just get so nervous on patrol. You never know what's behind the next patch of trees.

Sergeant Barnes: Germans, you mean? I wouldn't worry about them. They highailed it out of here weeks ago. Nothing left now but trees and bushes.

Private Jones: I guess you're right. I'll just be glad when this whole thing is over.

Sergeant Barnes: Um-huh. *(takes out a cigarette and lights it)*

Private Jones: *(After a moment)* So, sarge, how did you get into this war?

Sergeant Barnes: Oh, geese. Well, let's see. I've been in the military for about 10 years now. When I got out of high school didn't want to be a farmer all my life and get pushed around by big business like my dad. I wanted to do something adventurous. Something exciting.

Private Jones: So you joined the Army?

Sergeant Barnes: No, I actually wanted to be a mail pilot. The guy who flies letters all over the country to different post offices.

Private Jones: What happened?

Sergeant Barnes: Well, it turns out that flight school was a hell of a lot more expensive than I thought it would be.

Private Jones: Why not join the air force?

Sergeant Barnes: I don't have perfect vision. *(smiling)* Good enough for the army, but not the air force! What about you Jones, what do you want to do after this is all over?

Private Jones: Well, before I volunteered I had really wanted to go to college and be an architect. I was too young to enlist after Pearl Harbor, so I had to wait two years. I finished up high school and on our graduation day in 1943 me and all my buddies enlisted still in our caps and gowns!

Sergeant Barnes: *(smiling)* Well, you can always to college later, especially with that new GI Bill helping you pay for it

Private Jones: Yeah, I guess you're right. I was thinking about going to the University of Florida, but-

Sergeant Barnes: *(looking alert)* Quiet, Jones. I thought I heard something.

Private Jones: *(puzzled)* What was it?

Sergeant Barnes: I don't know. *(whistles and signals to men to spread out and take cover)*

(Men take cover behind trees and on ground, guns loaded and at the ready. The only sound in the air is birds taking off, flapping their wings. Suddenly, about twenty yards away, a deer darts out from behind a tree and sprints off into the forest)

Private Jones: It was a deer, sarge.

Sergeant Barnes: I don't think so. I could've sworn that I heard a shout or some kind of moan.

Private Jones: Really? I didn't hear a thing.

(Sergeant Barnes signals for three other men to come with him to investigate the noise. Private Jones and the others are ordered to stay behind. Rifles aimed and ready, the party slowly advances).

(Private Jones and the others anxiously wait as Sergeant Barnes and the others disappear behind a thick wall of trees).

Sergeant Barnes: (shouting) Jones! Get the hell up here! We need a runner!

(Jones takes off, panting with the weight of his gear. He arrives at the clearing and stops besides the others, who are staring at something)

Private Jones: *(in awe)* What the hell is that?

Act II: Scene I: It's a...

(Lieutenant Elias and Captain Winters are sitting at the card table talking. Suddenly, Private Jones bursts into the room, out of breath)

Lieutenant Elias: *(both men stand up)* Jesus H. Christ, Private. You scared the hell out me. What is it?

Private Jones: *(hands on knees, gasping for air)*
Lieutenant...(gasp)...Cap'n...(gasp) We found a...(gasp)...prison.

Captain Winters: You found a what?

Private Jones: *(gasp)* A prison, sir.

Lieutenant Elias: What do mean, "a prison."

Private Jones: (*standing up, breathing less heavily*) It was right in the middle of the woods, Lieutenant. (*gasp*) It looked like it had been abandoned. But there were...there were people in there.

Captain Winters: Who, prisoners of war?

Private Jones: No, captain. There were women and even a few kids. They were all wearing these pinstripe suits.

Lieutenant Elias: Did someone ask them who they were?

Private Jones: I don't know. Sergeant Barnes told me to high-tail it back here and tell you guys.

Captain Winters: What did the prisoners look like?

Private Jones: They all looked like skeletons. You could see their bones and ribcages. Their faces were sad and expressionless.

Lieutenant Elias: Jesus! (*to Captain Winters*) We need to check this out. Pull the Jeep around front and get Squad B to follow in the halftrack.

Captain Winters: It could be a trap. Germans might be waiting to ambush us.

Lieutenant Elias: I know. That's why I'm bringing B squad. Make sure one of those guys has a radio. Hurry!

(*Captain Winters darts off to get the Jeep and B squad*)

Lieutenant Elias: Private, can you lead us back there?

Private Jones: Yes, sir. It's not that far.

Act II: Scene II: What the hell is this place?!

(Elias, Winters, and Jones take the Jeep while Squad B follows in a half-track. They soon arrive at the camp, pulling up near where Sergeant Barnes is giving commands)

Captain Winters: Holy Jesus. What the hell is this?

Sergeant Barnes: *(to Winters and Elias)* One of my guys has been able to communicate with one of them in German. The prisoner says he and the others are Jews, who have been imprisoned and murdered by the Nazis in this camp. The man says they've been here for about three months. Before that they were at another camp deeper in Germany.

Lieutenant Elias: There are more of these. *(to Private Jones)* Jones! Open up the main gates!

(The prisoners align the fence and watch as Jones smashes the lock with the butt of his rifle and kicks the gates open)

Captain Winters: Everyone, listen up! We've got to get these people help. Squad B, go back to headquarters and radio to command what we found. Also, get all of the blankets, food and water you can and get back here ASAP. Squad A, we're going to go into this prison or whatever the hell this thing is and see if there are more prisoners. Watch out for any Nazis. Shoot anything that looks suspicious. Move out!

(Squad B and Lieutenant Elias take off back to base in the trucks. Squad A, including Winters, Barnes, and Jones, enter the camp)

Private Jones: *(to himself)* Shit. Look at these people. They look dead! Why would the Nazis do this? War labor? Anti-Semitism? I don't get it.

Sergeant Barnes: *(to Private Jones)* Jones, get over here!

Private Jones: *(walking over)* What is it sarge?

Sergeant Barnes: Look inside this shack over here.

Private Jones: Jesus! There have got to be a hundred people packed in there! Damn that smells awful. Look, they're all cringing at the light! Those Nazi bastards kept them locked up like animals!

Sergeant Barnes: Every other house I've looked into is just like this. There have got to be at least a thousand prisoners in this camp. C'mon, Jones, let's try to get 'em out.

(Barnes and Jones start trying to help the prisoners out of the hut. Meanwhile...)

Captain Winters: *(to himself)* I can't believe this. Dead bodies everywhere. People starving. What the hell were the Nazis doing to these people? They're supposed to be fighting us, not the Jews!

(He walks over to a nearby trailer and pushes open the door. Dead bodies come tumbling out)

Captain Winters: *(gagging from the smell)* Holy shit. Jesus Christ what the hell is this? Those bastards killed people and threw them in a train car? *(shouting)* What the hell is this place?!

(An hour later, Elias and B Squad and Lieutenant Elias arrive with supplies. The men begin to distribute the blankets and food. The prisoners dash towards the truck, crying and reaching for anything. They devour anything they get their hands on. A medic forces the soldiers to give them less food so they won't eat themselves to death. Elias gathers the officers)

Lieutenant Elias: I talked with chain of command. They said places like this have been popping up all over Germany within the last couple of days.

Sergeant Barnes: What the Nazis using the camps for, Lieutenant? There's got to be a reason.

Lieutenant Elias: From what I heard it sounds like they're trying to exterminate prisoners. Allied troops have found ovens where the bastards burned their bodies.

Captain Winters: Jesus Christ.

Lieutenant Elias: We've been ordered to stay at the camp for another couple of hours until a medical unit comes and takes over. Just try to help in any way you can.

(As the men spread out around the camp, trying to do whatever they can, many thoughts run through their heads. Everyone is shocked by what they have seen, hoping it to be all just a hellish nightmare)

Captain Winters: Those Nazi bastards. I wish I could tear that son-of-a-bitch Hitler limb from limb. Why kill all these men, women, and children? What have they ever done to Germans to deserve this?

Lieutenant Elias: What the hell am I going to do? These people are on the brink of death. Where are we going to get more food and supplies to help them. God help me.

Sergeant Barnes: I have never seen anything like this in all my years in the army. Jesus Christ. Men, women, and children killed and stuffed into train cars? I can't even think straight.

Private Jones: I can't believe what I'm seeing. What the hell did these people do to deserve this? How can man be so evil? Where does such evil come from, and does it ever end? I don't know. I just don't know.

Analysis

The inspiration for my first piece, “Let's Go Devils” (clap, clap, clap-clap-clap)” came from the Duke versus Carolina game I was lucky enough to attend with my father on February 7, 2007. The priceless tickets were generously given to us by dear family friends, Dr. James and Vivian Efird. Dr. Efird is a retired professor of Duke Divinity School. My father, who works at the Divinity School, met Dr. Efird there, and they have been friends ever since. The piece describes the unforgettable atmosphere of Cameron Indoor Stadium during a Duke Basketball game. It is a thrill to soak up all of the sights, sounds, and smells of Cameron. The place is always loud and buzzing, but when Duke plays Carolina the noise is almost deafening. I decided to include this piece in our class book because Duke University and going to see basketball games in Cameron have been a large part of my childhood and provided me with many cherished memories. I am so privileged to have figures in my life like the Efirds who not only provide my family with many Duke Basketball tickets during the season, but also serve as third grandparents to my sister and me. The Efirds gave me an experience I will never forget that night in Cameron.

I owe the inspiration for my second piece, “Pure Evil,” to the HBO Television ten-part miniseries *Band of Brothers*. The series is based on the

likewise titled book by Stephen E. Ambrose that follows Easy Company, a paratrooper unit from the 101st Airborne Division, during its participation in the European Theater during World War II. In the episode “Why We Fight”, members of Easy Company stumble upon a concentration camp in the woods while they are out on patrol. I thought that this scene could be expanded into an entire play. I included this play in our class book because it represents my excitement in learning about the past. I personally am very interested in World War II history, so writing a play on one aspect of the war seemed like an exciting idea.

MATTHEW GREGORY DUNCAN *was born on February 25, 1990 at Duke Hospital. He has lived in Durham his whole life. Matt values his family more than anything else in this world, and he considers himself very lucky to have two parents and a little sister who love him. Another important member of Matt’s family is his dog Shane, named after Duke Basketball great Shane Battier. Matt is also very passionate about sports. He enjoys playing baseball for Jordan High School and pulling for his favorite teams, including the Duke Blue Devils in college basketball, the Atlanta Braves in professional baseball, and the Florida Gators in college football. Matt’s world perspective has been shaped and is continually formed by his belief in the Christian faith. Matt loves listening to classic rock ‘n roll, including bands such as AC/DC and Pink Floyd. He strives to do his best in everything he does, both on and off the baseball field. Matt hopes to attend Furman University in South Carolina and possibly pursue a career in Environmental Science.*

JORDAN FEARRINGTON

Erased

He wakes up in a sweat, in fear, as if he had just been awoken from a bad dream, but no dreams were dreamt. He goes downstairs, out the door, and into the rain. He hears the silence of the night and smells the freshness of the air. He is pleased to find the air relaxing, sweet, and calm. The air is only this way at night, before the toxins and pollutants of factories and cars consume it. Feeling more tranquil but still unsure of why he was so afraid, he goes back inside.

There, on the couch, sit a man and a woman dressed in all black. Everything from their hats to their shoes is black.

“Come Charles, sit,” They say

Totally disregarding the fact that two strange people are in his home, he does as they command. As Charles sits, they begin to introduce themselves.

“My name is Mr. Rogers and this is Mrs. Smith.”

Simultaneously they say, “We need you to save the town again.”

“Again?” Charles questions.

“Yes again. You don’t remember your last adventure because your memory was erased, but there’s no time to talk about that. However, you need to know that you will go to old man Jenkins’ house and throw one rock through each window on the east side, that’s the front side, of the house.”

Charles now thought about calling the police. He reached for the phone, but when he blinked, they vanished. The only trace of their existence was a piece of paper with an address on it located on the couch cushion where Mr. Rogers sat. It read 1558 Cinderblock Road. Tired and even more confused, Charles went back to bed thinking the preceding events were just part of a dream.

He wakes up in a sweat, in fear, as if he had just been awoken from a bad dream, but no dreams were dreamt. He goes downstairs, out the door, and into the rain. He hears the silence of the night and smells the freshness of the air. He is pleased to find the air relaxing, sweet, and calm. The air is only this way at night, before the toxins and pollutants of factories and cars consume it. Feeling more tranquil but still unsure of why he was so afraid, he goes back inside.

When he steps into the house, the wet soles of his shoes squeak against the hardwood floor. Every step Charles takes reminds him of a basketball game. He sits on the couch to find that the previous night had actually taken place. There was still a slip of paper on the cushion beside him and it still read 1558 Cinderblock Road. He rushed over to the computer and violently jerked the chair backwards. The chair had no wheels, so deep scratches were embedded into the wooden floor.

He logged on to the Internet and searched for a man with the last name Jenkins. Charles didn't expect to find anything because many people had that last name. He clicked on the Wikipedia link and a man by the name of Ben Jenkins came up. It said he lived on Cinderblock Road. Charles thought he should take some course of action, but is unsure of what he should do. He went upstairs and fell asleep.

He wakes up. Charles casually, puts on his clothes and walks outside. He unfolds the note and walks to the address. By the time he gets to the house, it is engulfed in flames. Charles is delighted to see the windows smashed in for him. When he asked the firefighters what happened, they said that they were unsure of what started the fire, but they were sure the elderly man that once lived there passed in the blaze. Sad because of the fact that the

old man died, but overjoyed the windows were broken in for him, Charles walked back home. When he got there, the grandfather clock chimed ten times. Charles hadn't realized how late it was. He ate dinner while he watched *The Butterfly Effect* and then went to bed.

He wakes up in a sweat, in fear, as if he had just been awakened from a bad dream, but this time he retained some of the dream. He remembered that someone very close to him died, and somehow, he knew was at fault. Charles went downstairs and outside to get some fresh air. When he opened the door, two people grabbed him. They wrestled him to the couch and the man pinned Charles there. He recognized them from the other night and asked why they were here again.

"Charles, you failed the test."

"What? What do you mean?"

"You just needed to throw rocks through the windows to save the old man and prove you were good enough to save the town, but you failed. However, time is running out and you are the only person. I sure hope you can pull through for us."

They gave him a slip of paper and walked towards the door. The paper had a phone number on it. It read: *Tomorrow, catch the 7:45 train downtown.* When he looked up, the two people were gone. Charles went back to bed.

The next morning, Charles went to the train station. He arrived at 6:45 to buy some food for the trip. About ten minutes later, he called the number from his cell phone and a man answered. It was Mr. Rogers. They talked for a few minutes. The 7:00 train's whistle blew loudly in passengers' ears telling them it was time to leave, while the conductor's whistle instructed them aboard.

"Get on the train leaving now" yelled Mr. Rogers loudly before he hung up.

With no time to think, Charles dashed to the train. He ran over people, knocked over kiosks, attempting not to be late. The train began to depart, so Charles jumped on the back of the last cabin. He went through the kitchen cabin and got an empty seat.

He called Mr. Rogers on his cell phone and asked why he had to get on the earlier train.

Mr. Rogers said, "O yeah, don't forget to protect Bobby Joe," and hung up.

"Man, he has got to stop doing that", Charles thought to himself.

He had no idea what Mr. Rogers was talking about. He was also getting tired of him hanging up before all of his questions were answered.

After eating and playing games on his phone, Charles looked to the man beside him and introduced himself.

"Hello, my name is Charles. What's yours?"

"Bobby Joe."

That's funny. I'm supposed to be looking for a man by that name. As he finished his sentence, Charles heard some commotion. Two men came through the doorway of the cabin. The first man to come down the aisle was tall and muscular. He had a long beard, strong arms, and strong legs. His shirt was tattered, dirty, and one size too small. His pants were covered in dirt and there was a gaping hole below the left knee. His accomplice was a short man with neatly cut hair, freshly shaved face, and white teeth. He wore a suit and tie. His shirt was neatly ironed and his pants and jacket fit perfectly with no sign of wear. They both looked like trouble.

"Who on the bus knows a Mr. Bobby Joe?" the bigger man questioned.

"This is a train you fool!" exclaimed the other man.

"Right boss!"

So who on this...*train*... knows a Mr. Bobby Joe?"

Charles froze. He felt the man next to him begin to shake wildly. Charles bravely said,

"I saw him in the back of the train."

The thugs thanked him and went to the back of the train. Charles was relieved and proud of himself until the thugs came back. They threw Charles from his seat to the floor and said,

"We didn't see him back there, so now you're going to get it!"

Then they proceeded to stomp and kick him. Charles stopped feeling pain. He began to notice all the smells coming from the passengers and the kitchen. Everything went white. When Charles was able to see again, he was on his feet. He saw a punch coming from the bigger man and caught it with his left hand. He then pulled the man across his body and knocked him out with a hard right hook. The shorter man came with a punch, but Charles dodged that and kned him hard in the stomach. The smaller man doubled over and Charles elbowed him in the back of the neck. Both men lay on the cabin floor unconscious. Everybody looked at Charles in disbelief. They could not believe what they just saw. An average man had just beaten up two skilled fighters. Charles grabbed Bobby Joe by the arm and rushed to the back of the train. He knew more men would come.

Four guys, bearing semi automatic weapons, busted down the door and almost tripped and fell over the bodies that lay on the ground. They yelled out orders for the passengers to tell them exactly who did it and where they went. Everyone was too shocked to say anything, so they just pointed to the back of train. The men began to walk toward the door. It swung open and knocked one guy out. The three men still conscious opened fire. A large cloud of white dust began to form and they stopped firing. When the smoke cleared, they relaxed their weapons and saw they had only hit a slew of flour bags. They each looked around with questioning looks on their faces. While the men tried to put the pieces of the puzzle together, Charles knocked over the bags to create more of a distraction. The three men thought the bags were falling due to the immense amount of bullets they had just received. Charles threw two cast-iron pans through the flour cloud and hit two men. They fell to the ground. This left Charles with one man to deal with.

The man cautiously stepped into the kitchen and looked around. He observed that most of the things were covered in flour. Charles threw some silverware around to confuse the man. Unaware of Charles' location, he shot all around the kitchen trying to hit him. He continuously missed. Once the man was close enough, Charles uppercot him in the chin. Shots hit the ceiling. He then wrestled the gun away from the man and hit him in the head

with it. After the fight, Charles tied the men up with some rope he found in the kitchen. He then walked down the isle victorious, and sat back down in his seat until they got to the train station.

When the train stopped, the police came aboard and arrested the men. Charles walked off the train quickly to avoid any questioning and caught up with Mr. Rogers.

“Why did you tell me to get on that train? You knew those people were on there didn’t you? Do you realize what could have happened to me?”

“Whoa now, don’t judge so quickly. You just defeated the leaders of a hardcore gang that was threatening an important man in the government.”

Charles looked angrily at Mr. Rogers who was laughing so hard the skin on his cheekbones covered his eyes.

“So you had me playing in the palm of your hand the whole time?” Charles asked.

“I guess you could say that, but it doesn’t matter. So, how did you do against them?”

“At first, I got beat up real bad, but I improvised in the kitchen and beat them down.”

“That’s good, but we have somewhere to be going.”

“Where?”

“To a place where we can erase your memory. There are many things I could tell you, but what’s the point? You’ll just forget later.”

“What? I’m not going to let you take me anywhere.”

“You don’t have a choice. And don’t try to run, that will just make things painful for you. You should be happy though, you did just save the town.”

“This doesn’t make sense.”

“It doesn’t matter Charles. Come.”

Analogy

I chose to write this story after watching a series of action movies. One weekend, I decided to watch the *Bourne Identity*, two of the *Die Hard* movies,

Mission Impossible, and *Déjà vu*. The Monday following that weekend, Coach Albright assigned us a 1,000-word short story. I like action, suspense, and thriller movies, so I thought it would be cool to write my own.

While I was writing this piece, I tried to include as many details as I possibly could. I tried to paint the most vivid picture possible for you. During the train scene, I wanted you to feel as if you were actually on the train. I also wanted you to be able to visualize the train thugs and have an idea of their personality traits.

After finishing the story, we “work shopped” it. Coach Albright printed a copy of my story for everyone. They each read and commented on it. They gave me their opinions on what they liked and what they thought needed improvement. This stage of the writing process helped me the most.

I hope to continue on this story and make it into an action book in the future. Some of the ideas I wanted to put in made the story too long. I feel like I need to finish the story and add some more details. Thank you for reading “Erased.” I hope you enjoyed it.

JORDAN FEARRINGTON is a 16 year-old junior who attends Jordan High School. After graduating in 2009, he plans to attend Georgia Tech and become an engineer. Jordan loves to build and work with his hands. Playing football, wrestling, writing, and sewing are some activities that make Jordan an extremely diverse person. He is fun, energetic, and is easy to talk to. Jordan loves to laugh and talk, and he is a great listener. He has two brothers. Their names are Brian and Tristan. He loves both of them so much. Of course they disagree and argue sometimes, but that only brings their relationships closer. Jordan is very family oriented. He loves to spend time with them. He enjoys going to family reunions, cookouts, and just hanging out. Jordan’s family inspires a lot of his writing. One of Jordan’s favorite things to do is listen to music. His favorite genre is hip-hop. He likes the lyrics of some songs, but the beat is what he loves. His music library contains over 550 songs. This sophistichaotic student is a great guy looking to show his great writing skills.

HARRISON “The Professor” FLOOD

Selected Prose and Poetry

Dates from Hell

Exposition: This play is about two people, a man and a woman who keep going on these dates from hell.

Setting: The play takes place at this restaurant called Good Ol Soul Food. This is where everything happens

Characters:

Freddy Jackson: he is an African American male. He is a very laid back person. The only thing he wants is to find the right woman. He always gets set up on these dates from hell and he's tired of it

Pork Chop: she is a beautiful African American woman. She is a hard working single black female. She wants to find the right man that she can spend the rest of her life with. Also she is tired of getting set up on these dates from hell

Lil Ray Ray: one of the guys Pork Chop goes out with

Hong Kong: the husband of China

China: the first woman Freddy goes out with. She is a lyier

Asia: the second woman Freddy goes out wit. She ends up being a man

Mother: Lil Ray Ray's mother

Flavor Flav: the second guy Pork Chop goes out with. Talks too much

Waiter: just comes out when people order food doesn't say anything

Scene 1

(Freddy Jackson walks on stage to the restaurant and sits down at the table. A woman named China then walks onto stage to the restaurant and meets Freddy for their date.)

Freddy: How you doing my name is Freddy Jackson

China: I'm doing good, my name is China, how you doing?

(Freddy and China sit down at the table)

Freddy: I'm good now since I've seen you beautiful

China: Why thank you, your not bad looking yourself

Freddy: Thank you, thank you I try. So China that's a very beautiful name

China: Yea people seem to like my name. My momma decided to name me that cause she was eating some Chinese food before I was born and she loved Chinese food so much. She first thought to name me Chinese, but then decided China was better.

Freddy: Well that's quite interesting. I just got a simple name Freddy.

China: Yea but Freddy is a cute name.

Freddy: Thank you, so what kind of guys are you interested in?

China: Well they have to look good, have a good personality, and someone that can make me laugh.

Freddy: Well do I fit that description?

China: So far you pretty close. What kind of women are you interested in?

Freddy: Basically the same thing you said and right now I'm feeling you.

(Waiter comes on stage and asks Freddy and China what they want to eat)

Freddy: I'll have the 3 piece chicken combo with a side of mashed potatoes and collared greens

China: And I'll have the 3 piece chicken combo with a side of mash potatoes and also a side of two chicken breast and a short thigh.

(The waiter leaves the stage.)

Freddy: Dang girl I'm surprised you ordered all of that. You sure you can handle all that

China: Yea I'm sure I'm kinda hungry

(The waiter comes with the food, then all of a sudden China's husband named Hong Kong comes in wit their 3 children and they cause a scene)

Hong Kong: Aye yo China what's up wit this. What the hell are you doing?

China: It's not what you think boo.

Hong Kong: What you mean it's not what I think, I see you cheating on me with this fool. How you gonna do your family like that

China: Calm down baby this is my boss and he forced me on this date, saying he would fire me if I didn't come wit him.

(Freddy gets up confused)

Freddy: Hold on now. This was a blind date I don't even know this girl.

Hong Kong: Oh so you tryin to call my wife a liar. You think a woman wit three kids and two twins on the way would lie.

(Freddy looks at China)

Freddy: Oh ok that's why you order that much to eat.

(Hong Kong looks at Freddy all mad bout ready to start a fight)

Hong Kong: Aye fool you tryin to call my wife fat. Bruh put your fists where your mouth is *(Hong Kong starts a fight)*

Freddy: Naw I'm straight just take her.

(Freddy leaves the stage leaving Hong Kong and China there)

Scene 2

(Pork Chop enters the stage. She then sits down at the table in the restaurant, waiting for her date to come. Then lil Ray Ray enters into the restaurant)

Ray Ray: Hey miss are you Pork Chop

Pork Chop: Yes I am

Ray Ray: Well I'll be your date for the evening

(Ray sits down at the table with Pork Chop)

Ray Ray: Well my name is Ray, but everyone calls me lil Ray Ray

Pork Chop: Ok lil Ray Ray you already know my name.

Ray Ray: Yea it's Pork Chop, sounds real juicy. All I wanna do is just lick u. *(Ray Ray sticks out his tongue)*

Pork Chop: Ok that was kinda crazy.

Ray Ray: Aye baby why don't we go back to my house and do something.

Pork Chop: Do what I don't know you

Ray Ray: Baby you look so good I just wanna put some hot sauce on you and lick it off.

Pork Chop: Ummmm. No. I think you need to calm down lil Ray Ray.

Ray Ray: Even though my name is lil Ray Ray, everything on me ain't
lil

Pork Chop: *(looks at Ray Ray crazy)* Oh really now. I think this date is over now you nasty freak.

Ray Ray: Why baby all I wanted to do was put it on yah.

Pork Chop: *(slaps Ray Ray in the face)* Forget you man. I think ima just roll.

(Ray Ray's mom enters the stage. She goes up to the table where Ray and Pork Chop are sitting)

Mother: Ray Ray, What is your problem? You know damn well a 14 year old boy aint suppose to be on no date wit a grown woman.*(she looks at Pork Chop)* I'm sorry ma'am, this aint the first time he has done this.

Ray Ray: Come on mom, you messin up my flow. I got this mom.

Mother: Got what? don't make me take off my belt boy, now get you're your lil ass up and get in the car.

(Ray Ray and Ray Ray's mother leave the restaurant existing the stage, leaving Pork Chop there in total shock)

Scene 3

(Freddy re-enters the stage and goes down and sits at the table at the restaurant. Then a woman named Asia comes and sits down at the table)

Freddy: How you doing beautiful my name is Freddy Jackson, what's your name?

Asia: My name is Asia

Freddy: Asia that's a beautiful name

Asia: Thank you I had it changed about a year ago

Freddy: Oh what was your name before

Asia: It's not important

Freddy: So Asia what kind of things do you do.

Asia: I like to play basketball, watch sports on tv ,and play video games.

Freddy: That's interesting I enjoy to do some of the same things.

Asia: Yea I use to play football back in the day

Freddy: Oh you did they let a girl play football on your team

Asia: Naw they didn't

Freddy: So how did you play then.

Asia: Well since we are on the topic. I was born a man (*Freddy looks shocked*) but a year ago I got surgery done. But don't worry I'm hundred percent woman now.

(Freddy gets up and looks at Asia weird and doesn't know what to do)

Freddy: Aye dude, woman whatever you are. I think this date is over

Asia: But we haven't even ordered anything yet. I told you that I was hundred percent woman.

Freddy: Well I don't care what you are. I think I'm just get out of here
(Freddy starts walking away)

Asia: *(In a man's voice)* Boy you betta come back and sit down

Freddy: *(looks up to a waiter)* Check please!

(Asia gets up too)

Asia: Boy don't let me sit you down for u

(Freddy runs away, leaving the stage. Asia then runs after him almost catching him before he gets away)

Scene 4

(Pork Chop comes to the stage and sits down to wait for her date. Then a few minutes later Flavor Flav comes and sits down at the table)

Flav: How you doing my name is FLAVOR FLAV

(Pork Chop looks at him weird)

Pork Chop: Ok my name is Pork Chop

Flav: Yo Pork Chop that's one of my favorite foods. I think I mite order that.

Pork Chop: Ok Flav what kind of girls are you in to?

Flav: Yo I like all types of girls. I like girls who like to play hoops, girls that are delicious, and girls that come from New York.

Pork Chop: Wow that's interesting that you like girls that are delicious

Flav: Yeaaaa Boy!

Pork Chop: Your quite the character Flav

Flav: Yeaaaa Boy!

(The waiter comes and takes their orders and then leaves)

Pork Chop: Dang Flav you really gonna eat all that fried chicken

Flav: Yeaaa Boy! You know it

(The waiter brings the food out and Pork Chop and Flav start eating)

(Flav licks his fingers after eating a piece of chicken)

Flav: Man this some good chicken boy

(Pork Chop looks at Flav all wierd)

Pork Chop: Dang Flav is it that good

Flav: Yeaaa Boy it's that good

Pork Chop: Do you always gotta say Yeeeee Boy!

Flav: Yeeea Boy

Pork Chop: If you keep saying that I going to have to hurt you

Flav: Nooo Boy

Pork Chop: I'm not a boy so stop calling me that

Flav: Yeaaa Girl

(Pork Chop walks off disgusted and just leaves Flav there alone to eat his fried chicken)

Scene 5

(Freddy and Pork Chop both come on stage to the restaurant alone. They both go sit at tables with their backs facing each other)

Freddy: (*Shakes his head*) How come I cant never find the right woman. I'm always going on these dates from hell

Pork Chop: (*Shakes her head*) How come I can't find the right guy. All the guys that I meet just end up being jerks.

(Freddy over hears Pork Chop talking and then decides to go over and sit by her)

Freddy: I couldn't help but to over hear you talking about the same things I was talking about

Pork Chop: Oh really

Freddy: Yes really maybe me and you are meant to be

Pork Chop: Boy you crazy what do we have in common

Freddy: A lot of things. First of all we always come to this same restaurant. And second we both can't find the perfect match and maybe you might be mine

Pork Chop: Maybe you are right

Freddy: I know I'm right

Pork Chop: Let's go do something

Freddy: Lets go get some chicken and get busy baby

Pork Chop: Ok

(Freddy and Pork chop leave the restaurant with a bucket of chicken and they go off holding hands. They stop at the drug store before they go to Freddy's house)

The Beginning Of Love

Us being together is very funny to me,
you liking me, at first I really couldn't see.
We have know each other since we were small,
always have gone to the same church and were in the choir singing the same songs.

Growing up we were only just friends,
we would sometimes joke around and play at church with all the other kids.

But now since we are together we are more than just friends,
and hopefully us just only being friends will never be again.
Cause what we have right now is very real,

we know it's something special that both of us can feel.
Us being together it feels like it has been a long time,
even though it has just been a few months I'm jus glad to call you mine.
I remember the first time we went out I was very nervous,
now I look back and ask myself do I deserve this
A girl that is beautiful, loving, caring, and smart,
also funny and romantic that nothing could tear us apart.
Since we been together you have become my other half,
even though some people don't think our relationship is real, I jus look at
them and laugh.

People say why u wit her when there is so much better out there,
I say it's just not the looks, it's what's inside and that's why I care
I like her personality and her intelligence. That is to me different from
the rest,

I'm not just one of those guys who likes girls because of big breasts.
But no matter what any one might say I know that u are the one for me,
at first I couldn't but now I can really see.
I guess us being together was a blessing from above,
I'm just glad I can write this poem and do other things to show you my
love.

So as I come to a close with this expression of my heart is for you,
the story is not over it's just to be continued.
so when you say you love me I know it's from the heart and it's very
true,
But I would just like to say I love you too.

Analysis

My inspiration to writing my play came from several different things. It took me a while to come up with an idea for my play, but I did finally find my inspiration. The idea for my play hit me when I was watching this show called *Hell Date*. After watching the show and just thinking about other episodes I came up with the whole idea. I decided to make my play kind of

like the show but in my own creative way. After all this I knew my play was going to be good and funny. Other inspirations came from me thinking about other dating shows in the past. I thought about the two reality shows *Flavor of Love* and *I love New York*. I thought that it was funny how both of them ended up with nobody and that's how my play kind of is with all the dates that happen in the play.

My inspiration to writing this poem was my girlfriend. The assignment given to the class was to write one hundred lines of poetry. I knew one of my poems was going to be about her. My girlfriend and I both talked about writing poems for each other. So this was the perfect time for me to write this poem for her. The words that I used for the poem just came naturally to me, because the words were an expression of my feelings toward my girlfriend, and every line in the poem was too. I didn't know that the poem would end up being thirty lines long, but every line written was just an expression of my heart. The poem, to me, was not just an assignment for me to get a good grade on, but it was just to show how much I cared for my girlfriend.

HARRISON FLOOD *is one cool brother. He always tries to stay fly in his own type of way. As a young boy Little Flood would sometimes get in trouble, but he knew when to straighten up. As a kid, Harrison went to four different elementary schools, one in which was a private school where he learned that he was a smart boy, but now Harrison Flood is a senior here at C.E. Jordan High School. He enjoys sports and he likes to play them when he can. Flood is the biggest Carolina fan on the face of this world. Harrison looks forward to his future after high school and going to college and hopes to become a successful man in life. Harrison took Creative Writing, not really knowing what he was getting himself into. He just wanted to improve his writing skills, so he thought the class would probably help him do that. Harrison didn't know the class would be something that he actually enjoyed, and actually wanted to do work in. He believes the class has brought more creativity out of him, that more people got to see, not just a few. Without the class he would have never known what kinds of things he could do by just*

writing. Who knew that he would be able to write an eight page play? But he thanks Mr. Albright and everyone in the class that read or saw his work.

MOLLY GRACE

Fragments of a Life

It is amazing how many thoughts whir through your head when you realize that you are about to die.

Sheila closed her eyes, squinting against the bright lights that suddenly flooded her car. Too much light -- too direct. In that split second, she realized that the truck that had just come around the curve towards her was on the wrong side of the road.

The light was unbearable. The whole clinic was like that-- so dazzlingly white that the reflection from the florescent lights gave you a headache. And sterile; it was all spotlessly clean. The doctor's lab coat was white, too. His voice was as emotionless and cold as everything else in the clinic as he told her the awful words "You will never have children." She broke into sobs on her husband's shoulder, and his own tears fell onto her hair as he held her.

Sheila swerved automatically, but somewhere deep inside of her she knew there wasn't enough time; the oncoming truck was moving far too fast. The coffee she had picked up at the gas station flew out of its cup holder and splattered against the driver's-side window, the empty Styrofoam cup falling on her lap, the lukewarm liquid hitting her in drops. Its scent filled her nostrils; she knew that it was going to be the last thing she ever smelled.

The kitchen always reeked of coffee in the morning; Daniel was addicted to the stuff, it seemed. He was sitting at the table with the newspaper, solving the word jumble, as usual, his uncombed hair sticking up in the back, when Sheila came downstairs. In her trembling hand was the pregnancy test that she had bought without telling him, in a moment of secret, stupid hope. But maybe it hadn't been so stupid after all. She stood in the doorway, staring at him, unable to move any further or even say a word. After a moment he seemed to realize something was odd and looked up at her, concerned.

"What is it, Sheila?"

His voice acted like a magic spell that allowed her to find words through her shock.

"Danny, I - We're going to have a baby!"

The mug slipped through his hand and smashed on the floor, liquid splashing all over the front of the microwave, but Daniel didn't seem to notice.

"Are you sure?"

She smiled.

"Yes."

His kiss tasted like coffee.

The front of the truck collided with her side of the car. In slow motion, it seemed, she watched as the hood of the truck folded in on itself as if it were as flimsy as a sheet of paper.

"Mom, if you make me fold one more bow, I'm going to stick it up your--"

"Now, that's no way to talk to your mother, Sheila." Mom's green eyes were twinkling, and the fact that she was teasing was evident from the broad grin stretched across her gentle features. "But honestly, hon, the baby shower's tomorrow, we really have to get all this done."

"I'll take over the bow operation, Sheila," Jackie offered. "After all, big sis, you're probably tired-- old age and all that," she finished, grinning mischievously.

“You little squirt!” laughed Sheila, tossing her half-finished bow at her still-unmarried little sister. Soon the two women had engaged in a full-blown bow war, while their mother smiled from the sidelines.

The truck forced its way through the side of her car. The windows shattered with a rain of broken glass, cutting her hands, her face, her neck. A jagged piece of windshield sliced her hand open and she let go of the steering wheel completely. She barely had time to register the drops of blood on her skin before the truck itself crashed into her. She had never felt so much pain in her life.

She had never felt so much pain in her life.

The nurses flitted around her bedside like talkative hummingbirds, telling her to keep doing her breathing exercises and to keep pushing. Why the hell wouldn’t they just shut up? Daniel was squeezing her hand so hard that she thought it might break, his face white and terrified. She wasn’t terrified, just tired and-- GOD, THAT HURT! Why did having a baby have to hurt so much? If God wanted people to have kids so badly, He could have made it a little easier.

Then, the head came. Just like that. She stopped feeling irritable at once. All she could feel was amazement and wonder. That’s my baby, that’s my baby, oh God, I’m having a baby! she thought over and over again. The pain didn’t matter anymore. This was her baby! This was a miracle, this was something that they had said was impossible. Tears of joy streamed down Daniel’s face as he watched his daughter come into the world. Thank you, God, thank you, thank you.

“Help me God, help me, help me!” Panic flooded Sheila’s brain. She couldn’t breathe, but that was probably not only from her fear but from the weight of the dashboard that pinned her to her seat, crushing her. This wasn’t how it was supposed to end. Jenny had her first day of third grade tomorrow. Sheila needed to go home so she could make sure that Jenny had all of her school supplies packed away in the purple Dora the Explorer backpack they had picked out last week. She needed to get up early and make the special

back-to-school breakfast-- it was a tradition. Jenny needed those pancakes. It wouldn't be fair if she didn't get them.

Sheila knew that she was dying. The crash barely lasted a second, but in that second she realized that she was going to die. It was the most terrible, most helpless feeling in the world. Mercifully, she barely had time to realize it; it was mixed up in the multicolored blur of her memories, all racing through her mind in less than a second.

They say that right before you die, your life flashes before your eyes. Sheila had never believed it. Not until now.

Analysis

What does it mean, to have one's life flash before their eyes? Considering that question was the inspiration for this piece. The idea intrigued me, so I set out to convey it in a story. At first, I planned to include many more parts of Sheila's life in the story, and make them less complete and more fragmented, as I imagine a life flashing before one's eyes would really be. However, I soon discovered that this does not make for much of a story, so I began writing from a different angle. I decided that Sheila's flashbacks would focus around her daughter, the most important part of her life. Using her daughter allowed me to give Sheila some history and create a more believable character. Once I began to focus on a few specific events, I got the idea to link them to events during the crash. The scenes that Sheila sees as she dies are more detailed than they would probably be in reality, but I don't think that the reader would understand them otherwise.

Certain details are drawn from my own life; for example, it is a long-standing tradition for my mother to make my brothers and me a special breakfast on the first day of school. However, Sheila and her life story are not based on anyone in particular. I think that Sheila is representative of my idea of mothers; when she sees her life pass before her eyes, she sees scenes related to her daughter. Her child *is* her life, what she cares about most.

MOLLY GRACE was born at Duke Hospital in 1990 and has lived in Durham all of her life. She has loved reading from a young age, and is delighted to now have the opportunity to try her hand at writing. A source of constant inspiration for her pieces is, of course, her wonderful family: her mom, Karen; her dad, David; twin, Matt and younger brother, Ben. She may write that they are crazy, but she knows deep in her heart that they are not, and she loves them very much. In addition to reading and writing, Molly has a passion for acting and singing, and in 2007 traveled to Italy to perform with her choir. Molly is a senior at Jordan High School and plans to attend college in the Fall to study zoology.

LADRIAN GREEN

Selected Prose and Poetry

To up coming students at Charles E Jordan High. "Keep your head up high; never let those who bring themselves down get you down." Stay strong, many who put themselves down don't care about life. Don't ever be afraid to stand your ground. Speak aloud and be real proud. All you have to do is keep your head up high.

Starter

He was in my third period class, and he didn't even care that I had a crush on him that hurt my soul so much. I had written him so many times and he always seemed as if he didn't get them. I always wondered if he did get them and was playing hard to get or he just had a girl and was on lockdown. If that was the case it would just suck for him because he would be the one missing out on this hot Coca Cola bottle shape body. This guy was so fine and sexy he had a body like Tyson. The thoughts that would run through my mind were so wild and hot. "Damn I want his sexy ass". But how could I get him with that ugly girl always around? I felt life wasn't fair, it seemed as if all the pretty girls have the good looking guys.

Untitled

He was short and built
With a body that had
Skin like a Hershey bar.
You could eat and drink it
With milk. So hot and spicy
With just a little sweet, nothing
Could stop him from being my treat.
He was all I wanted no Reese's, no m&m.
Just that Hershey bar.

Analysis

I chose these two pieces because I felt that they represent a part of a detail in my life. My starter reflects a relationship I once had with a guy friend that didn't turn out very good. He was trying to play me with another girl, who had a crush on him for a long time. It turned out the girl was one of my close friends. After that he broke up with me and went with her. You learn hard lessons in life as a teenager that will stay with you through your adulthood. I know that I am worth being with and have confidence in myself as a young lady. So I didn't get mad, I just moved on. I soon will become a mother and want to show my child that I have good morale and ethical values in life and not to sell myself short. I want my child to be able to pick up the good morals as well, and don't ever sell herself short to anyone.

The poem I chose tells characteristics about the man that I once loved and the father of my child. He was a sweet guy with good qualities and would always handle his responsibility, that's what I love about that man. I only hope that one day I will really find someone like him to settle down with. He is still not ready for that. These emotions I felt as I wrote this poem were really responding to a man that has these characteristics. I don't believe there will ever be anyone to take his place. No one can ever steal his spotlight. I would hope one day he would grow up and decide to be with me.

LADRIAN GREEN *was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina. Her mother is a single parent raising her all by herself. She is the only child and always wanted a brother and sister. She never lived anywhere other than Durham, North Carolina. She is a small petite girl who is sweet and kind. She never really bothered anyone, but she has many friends at Charles E Jordan High. She is loved by so many people for the sweet, kind soul she has. She is a senior of class 2008 and she is ready to graduate. She has already attended Jordan for three years and is ready to go. She knows she will miss all her teachers and friends and those special feelings she has for them, but it is time for her to move on and be an adult. She is about to become a single parent and is ready to take on the fast life of being in adult. She really isn't sure about what she is going to do after she has finished school. She wants to attend college and pursue her career.*

JANNAH HAWLEY

Selected Prose and Poetry

“I Believe” is dedicated to the people who have shown me who my true friends are. Ariel, thank you for being there for me these past years, when I didn’t want to listen to anyone. Heather and Terry, thank you for caring enough about me enough to be honest and tell me something wasn’t right. I LOVE YOU!!! Tiff, thank you for making me laugh even when I wanted to beat the mess out of people...this past year would have been miserable without you... “All I Want” is dedicated to an ex-boyfriend/ good friend who without knowing it, helped me realize what I want out of life and a relationship.

I Believe

I believe that true friends, never leave your side. They stand by you no matter what stupid thing you do or say. Yeah, they do mess up and hurt you sometimes. But if they are a true friend they quickly realize their mistake and ask for your forgiveness. A true friend will be there for you when you need someone to talk to or a shoulder to cry on. They would drop everything and come to your side. If they do something that they knew would hurt you, but did it anyway, they weren’t meant to be your friend, no matter how much they apologize. True friends think about each other and not just themselves.

NEVER let a guy come between you and your friends. And if he does come between you and a friend, he better be able to fill the same places in your heart that your friend did.

I believe that if a guy dates you and then tries to date your best friend, and she goes along with it, neither of them is worth your time. He obviously didn't care about you enough to stay and try to make things work, and she was never really your friend if she knew how much you cared and went and did it anyway.

I believe that actions speak louder than words. You can tell someone that you love them or how you feel about them until the end of time, but if you never show it, what good are the words? You can say you love me, but when you only talk to me when your friends aren't around, how does that prove what you're saying to be true?

Then again, I also believe that words speak loudly as well. It just depends on the person. When a person thrives on every word that someone says (which by the way isn't a good idea) the words that the person is hearing can be what makes them begin to fall in love. You just have to figure out how to balance the two and figure out when someone is being genuine and when it has become just a game.

I believe that at times school can be a waste of time. A lot of people only come to school to see friends or to find out who fought who. At the end of the day, I want to go home and be able to remember what we did in math class, not what someone told me about my ex-boyfriend. But when the day is filled with nothing but drama and he said she said stuff, it gets really hard to remember what you did in class because you're so consumed with what his friend told you in the hallway and wondering if it was true or not. Only when you shut yourself out from everyone telling you about who did what with who over the weekend and start focusing on what's going to get you across that stage in June, does school become worth all the effort you put into to it.

I believe that failure is caused by fear, which means those who fail bring it on themselves. People who fail only fail because they fear doing whatever it takes to become successful. In order to be successful you have to put all your

fears and insecurities behind you and just go for it. You have to work for what you want in life.

I believe life is only as fair as you make it. If you feel that something is or has happened that is unfair, then fix it. If it bothers you to the point that you complain then do something about it other than complaining. If you're that set on making things fair you won't sit around and complain about it, you would do whatever it takes to make it fair. If you're not willing to do what it takes to fix the problem, then it was obviously not that important, and you should stop complaining.

I believe that God has a plan for everyone. We get caught up in things that have no purpose in our life, and some say that we aren't listening to what God wants us to do. I feel that even when the rest of the world tells us that we messed up; it was all still part of God's plan. He knew from the day we were born when, why, and how we would mess up, and he chose then to show that even when we are at our worst, He will still be there for us.

I believe that unconditional love is best thing that can happen to a person. Love alone is amazing, but unconditional love is how you can tell when truly are in love with someone. When no matter how much pain and heartbreak a person puts you through, they are still the only person you want in your life that to me is unconditional love. Most people tell teenagers that we are too young to be in love, but I strongly disagree. It is very possible for two teenagers to be just as in love as a couple that is married and in their 30's. Love does hurt sometimes, but the good memories are what remind the person that they are in love. I also believe that it is very possible for someone to be in love with someone who doesn't share the same love with them. It is possible for someone to want to give their all to someone who just doesn't really care. It goes back to being able to find the balance between actions and words and how to tell when someone is genuine. Some know in their heart that a person does not care about them as much as they care about the other person, but they are so caught up in it being their first love or just being in love that they don't want to admit it.

I believe to some, love is just a game. The winner is the one that walks away from a so called “relationship” without being hurt, the loser is the one who can’t walk away and has the broken heart. The winner puts none of their self into it, and gets all of the other person. The loser puts in all of them and gets none of the other person. As long as there is a winner and loser, it doesn’t really matter.

I believe that sometimes you have to hit rock bottom, before you can be back on top. When you’re on top, you sometimes get conceited and forget those who help you get there. That’s when you start to lose the people who truly care about and start hanging with people who are just there to piggyback on you to the top. Once you get there, they all of a sudden want nothing to do with you. It’s the people who cared about you the most and stuck with you when you at your lowest, who will be truly happy for you when you make it. The ones that come in on your way might not really be there to help you and support you.

All I Want

All I want

Is someone to be there

Someone who cares about me

To be by my side

Through the thick and thin

Someone who won’t leave

Just cause they think they found something better

Someone to love

Someone who loves me

Someone to grow with

To teach me

Someone who makes me think

Even if I don’t want to

I want someone who will have my back

If I ever need them
Someone I can trust
Who doesn't play games
Someone I can call my best friend
Someone who makes me smile
Who can make me laugh
Someone who needs me as much as I need them
Someone who knows where they want their life to go
And what they want to do with their life
I want someone who understands me
Someone who doesn't want to change me
Into exactly what they want
Someone who let me change from the things I learn
And let me change on my own time, not theirs
Someone who loves me the most
When I am at my worst
I want someone to love me

Analysis

I chose to put the "I Believe" piece in here because it really does express my feelings on life and things that most people go through in life. There might be some people who get offended by some of the things that I wrote because I was inspired to write some of what I wrote by things that they had done to me. They taught me lessons that I couldn't have learned any other way. By putting this piece in here and letting other people read it I hope it allows others to understand me more than they did before. For those that knew me or thought they knew me, I hope you read this and learn something about me that you didn't know before.

I chose to put the poem "All I Want" in here because it is also just was a good way of letting people know more about me and what I want in life. I was inspired to write this poem after a relationship didn't work out too well. I thought that he was everything I wanted in a guy, and a lot of what I want I

saw in him. But the words he said to me were never backed up by the way he would act. I went a long time being stuck on him and lying to myself about the way he really was. I've done a lot of growing the last year and a lot of that was because I learned from our relationship. He was the first guy I ever loved, even though some say he never loved me, and I found out because of him what I want out of life and relationships. He was the only relationship I've ever had that I didn't regret.

JANNAH HAWLEY *was born on October 10, 1990, in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She moved to Durham with her mother and father at a very young age. She now lives with her mother, step-father, brother, and sister in Durham. Her father lives in Florida. She finds most of the inspiration for her writings from relationships and life lessons that she has learned. In the past year she has learned a lot about life the hard way and the times that have taught her something have also inspired her to put them on paper and share them with others.*

KASEY HENRY

So Impossible

Dedicated to my boyfriend Jeff, my fiancées Anne and Breagh, and all of my other psychotic friends who molded together to make the character of Ace. And thanks to Chris Carrabba for providing the lyrics.

Characters:

IMPALA – A 16 year old girl who is shy, self conscious, and often wonders about the people around her. She is brown haired and blue eyed, about 5'2". She owns a Giant Schnauzer named Goblin, and her whole family (herself and her parents) are involved with search and rescue. Her parents are pretty well known for search and rescue with their German Shepherds, but Impala and Goblin have never been out to a real emergency. She tends to talk to Goblin when she needs to ramble. She is a big fan of Dashboard Confessional. Her real name is Paula, but for an unexplained reason she always goes by Impala. Her boyfriend is Forest.

ACE – One of Impala's best friends. She often has her head up in the clouds. She also tends to talk to herself, and on a scale of weirdness, she has a higher rating than Impala. She often gets distracted by simple things. She has a fascination with penguins and wants to adopt one as soon as it's legal. She

also wants to eventually buy a zebra. She is also a huge fan of Dashboard Confessional. As with Impala, Ace is not her given name, but it is the name people know her by. Ace is good friends with Forest.

FOREST – Impala’s 17 year old boyfriend. He is very friendly, a bit shy, and sensitive. He and Impala go to different schools, and he is one grade above her.

SCENE 1

Setting – On the corner of two streets in downtown Durham at about 8 o’ clock on September 10th, 2001, at night.

(IMPALA is on the corner, looking impatient and waiting. She constantly checks her watch. Finally, she sees ACE walking towards her, in the dark. IMPALA waits until ACE gets within whispering distance.)

IMPALA – Ace... c’mon girl, it’s about time.

(ACE slows down, but keeps walking ahead, away from IMPALA. She seems to be humming “Stolen” by Dashboard Confessional.)

IMPALA – (Impatiently) Ace, over here, girl.

(ACE spins around, noticing that she has passed IMPALA, and briskly walks back to her, grinning awkwardly.)

ACE – (ditzzy and dazed) Sorry... I knew you were there, really. I’m a bit distracted... (grinning) Stolen... one of the greatest songs EVER...and the prettiest... well no, a bunch of Chris Carrabba’s stuff is... like Dusk and Summer! Oh my God... (sings) But you’ve already lost... when you only had... barley enough... to hang on... (begins humming the rest).

IMPALA – (very irritated) I don't need a concert Ace, thank you. I've got his stuff, it's very nice...

ACE – (excited and ready to have conversation) What's your favorite again? I've got so many... "Swiss Army Romance" is wonderful, "Again I Go Unnoticed", "Hands Down"...

IMPALA – "So Impossible." Come on, we need to go. I need to get back.

ACE – (now humming "So Impossible") Okay, we can go. Geez...

(The two girls walk down the block and reach an apartment complex. This is where ACE lives. ACE likes company when walking alone, so she often calls IMPALA to walk with her, like tonight.)

ACE – (smiling) Thanks for walking me. (sarcastically) I feel so much safer when you're with me...

IMPALA – Why do you need me to walk you anyway? I was with you for one block.

ACE – I dunno. Until I have my penguin, I'll need company as much as I can. You know...someone could be waiting for me, right by my front door, ready to rob me or force me to be a politician or lawyer or a conservative or something...and I'd be screaming "Dear God! Help! I'm not meant to go to law school!" And he'll offer to pay for me, and my parents will be ecstatic and make me go, and then I'll fail and become a chicken breeder, only my chickens won't sell because I'll be too upset to sell them...and then I won't make money. So that's why you need to come with me, so I don't go broke and fail as a chicken breeder.

IMPALA – (grinning, and a little less annoyed) Of course. That’s what friends are for.

ACE – (giving IMPALA a good bye hug) You bet. Besides, chickens get messy. I’d have to get ducks, and I can’t make money off of ducks either...

IMPALA – (playfully rolling her eyes and pushing ACE toward the door) I have work to do. Scat.

ACE – (walks toward her door, then turns back around.) Don’t leave yet...wait ‘till I’m inside, you never know where those lawyers may be hiding...

IMPALA – I’m waiting...

ACE – Bye.

IMPALA – Bye.

(ACE exits into her house, and IMPALA turns to go home.)

SCENE 2

Setting – Later that same night in IMPALA’S room. She is sitting at her computer with her cell phone next to her. Her Giant Schnauzer Goblin is on her bed, resting.

(IMPALA is waiting anxiously for something. She is tapping her foot and humming “So Impossible”, having gotten it stuck in her head from ACE. Her cell phone rings, and she sees that it is her boyfriend FOREST. She grins happily and picks it up.)

IMPALA – Hullo?

FOREST – (his voice is heard, but he is not seen.) Hi.

IMPALA – Hi.

FOREST – How are you?

IMPALA – Fine. You? (She has a look on her face that says that she would have liked to have given a different answer, but she is too embarrassed to bring anything up.)

FOREST – I'm fine. (There is an awkward silence; both are waiting for the other to talk. Neither of them are good conversation makers. Finally Forest speaks up.) It was weird, today in school...

IMPALA – Uhh huh...

(The conversation goes on for about 10 more minutes, consisting of what each person had for dinner, what stupid things ACE did that day, and the ridiculous amount of homework they each have.)

FOREST – I have to go...I've got calculus to do...

IMPALA – Yeah, sounds like a good idea. I should start my work too...

FOREST – Okay.

IMPALA – Okay.

FOREST – Okay...

IMPALA – (grinning) Okay...

FOREST – Okay.

IMPALA – Okay.

FOREST – Bye...Luv ya...

IMPALA – (with some difficulty) Luv ya too...bye...

FOREST – Bye.

(They hang up. IMPALA look silently ahead for a moment, then moans. She begins talking to herself, or to the dog.)

IMPALA – Ugh. (feeling a bit irritated) If this is always going to be the extent of our conversation, then I should just give up now. (She thinks silently for a moment.) I mean...I must be so boring to him...what's going to happen when he goes off to college next year? He'll either dump me before then, or he'll find someone better.

(IMPALA sighs, and goes to iTunes. She selects the song "So Impossible" and plays it. As it plays, she listens, and starts thinking allowed to Goblin again.)

IMPALA – How much do I know about him? All we ever talk about is technical stuff... what we did that day, what's going on... when was the last time we talked about feelings? I mean, just with each other, not with Ace around? We don't ever talk about that stuff. And if I mention it too him... It'll be too much trouble... and he'll dump me. (sighs, and looks down) No one wants a girl with problems. It's not fair for me to bug him with my jealousy shit, is it? It's not his issue to deal with, it's mine. But... I wish he'd be more

open to me... he knows he can tell me things, he can be honest... I think anyway...

(The second verse to “So Impossible” has just started, and IMPALA begins to sing long, very loudly.)

IMPALA – (slightly off key, and shouting) I’m dying to know...do you, do you like dreaming of things so impossible, or only the practical? Or ever the wild, or waiting through all the bad, bad days just to end them with someone you care about? Or do you like making out and long drives, brown eyes, and guys that just don’t quite fit it? Yeah, do you like them? (The song finishes, and IMPALA grins while putting it on repeat.) You got that right, Chris... (chuckling to herself) I sound like Ace now...

(IMPALA gets up and walks across the room, then plops down on the bed next to Goblin, who is licking his paws.)

IMPALA – That’s just the way he is. Or the way I always see him I guess. Forest... he’s very practical about stuff. Realistic. I mean, think... (She looks at the clock and sees that it is almost midnight.) Shit. I need to go to bed. (She looks at Goblin, who is stretched out across her bed.) Okay scoundrel, get up. Or move. We can’t both fit. (Goblin wiggle his short his short tail, but doesn’t move.) Fine, I hate you too. (She leans over and pats his belly, then kisses him on the head. As she lays down, she sings very quietly to herself.) Forest...do you, do you, like dreaming of things so impossible... or only the practical...

SCENE 3

Setting – The next morning, September 11th. IMPALA and ACE are on their way to school. IMPALA is at ACE’S door and is waiting for her. ACE comes out, still chewing an apple from breakfast.)

ACE – (With her mouth full) So last night, I had this dream I got in a fist fight with Madonna, and I kicked her ass.

IMPALA – (Tired, and with her head still on her thoughts of FOREST the night before) Why did you fight Madonna? What has she ever done to you?

ACE – I don't know!! But I was pissed at her for something...

IMPALA – (chuckling) But why Madonna?

ACE – Just 'cuz... I dunno, I decided to look her up on Wikipedia last night right before I went to bed...

IMPALA – Well that's nice. (*She is silent for a minute while ACE hums the theme from Jaws.*) So, I talked to Forest last night.

ACE – (suspiciously) And did you actually hold a real conversation?

IMPALA – (insulted) Yes! Sort of...you know, the usual...

ACE – So no.

IMPALA – Actually, I was kinda thinking about that... all the usual stuff...

ACE – (rolling her eyes) Oh geez, you're kidding me. Are going to go on again about that?

IMPALA – (letting loose a bit, and sounding panicky) How much do I actually know about him? Like real important stuff? Not just what he likes, but why he likes, why he has opinions on certain things...

ACE – (speaks like this is routine, and she knows what’s coming.) How much of your rambling he’ll put up with before he dumps you because you are the most annoying person in his life and even though he’s your boyfriend and he loves you... (IMPALA gives her an anxious look) Okay fine, really really likes you... he simply can’t stand to listen to you speak? Because, you know... he’ll dump you if talk too much, or if you walk funny, or breathe wrong, or eat tomatoes whole. Seriously, Impala... Forest is a moron, don’t get me wrong, but give him some credit. He’s a good guy.

IMPALA – (turning red) Well... I’ve told you before my thinking isn’t rational, but I just can’t help it...

ACE – (pats IMPALA on the back) No of us can, I swear. But it’s the same thing over again...have you ever thought about talking to *him* about, like you do to me?

IMPALA – You know I would. But I can’t...it’s like every time I speak to him I have this little voice in my head telling me to do it, but I never can. It feels impossible...

ACE – (grins and bursts out singing) Do you, do you, like dreaming of things so impossible...

IMPALA – Ah, shut up! I was listening to that song over and over again last night, you got it stuck in my head.

ACE – So I did my job then, yes?

IMPALA – Yeah yeah, of course. But that got me thinking...it fits, kinda...

(They are nearing the school, and are about to be late.)

ACE – Sure, my friend, sure. (Looking at a pigeon flying by) We tend to find meanings in places where they aren't meant to be when we really want to see them.

IMPALA – That was deep. (ACE looks at her questioning.) Well, it could be... (They enter the building).

SCENE 4

Setting – IMPALA'S English classroom. It is about 11 am.

(IMPALA is struggling to pay attention, but her lack of sleep is catching up.)

(The speaker bleeps)

OFFICE LADY – We need Paula Ridderick in the office please...she's signing out...

ENGLISH TEACHER – Thank you, she's on her way.

(IMPALA, confused about this, stands up and begins to pack her bag. The speaker bleeps again, but this time addresses the entire school. The Principal is speaking.)

PRINCIPAL – Attention teachers...we have just sent out an important email regarding events that took place earlier today. Please read this email to yourself and to your students, and listen for further announcements. Thank you. (Intercom goes off.)

(IMPALA stands, confused, and looks at her teacher. She motions IMPALA to go on to the office, so she gathers her bag and leaves, just as her teacher walks over to her computer.)

SCENE 5

Setting – Back in IMPALA’S bedroom that evening. Her cell phone is on her desk by the computer, and there is a suitcase on her bed.

(IMPALA is in the process of packing when her cell phone rings.)

IMPALA – Hello?

ACE – (she sounds very scared, and is almost in tears) H-hey. I haven’t seen you since this morning...

IMPALA – (sounding much more calm than ACE) I know...I’m sorry, I didn’t know I was leaving...what...what did they tell you guys? I mean, I know what they told you guys, but...

ACE – (beginning to cry) They weren’t sure at the time...and nobody’s really telling me, and I’m too scared to turn on the news and watch...the school said maybe there were bombs...but both the World Trade Centers went down...and lots of people got trapped...what did they want you for??

IMPALA – (now more nervous, her heartbeat starting to increase) Well...there were planes. That was what it was...two planes crashed into it, and then they both fell. (ACE gasps on the other line) And there was another one that went to the Pentagon...and another that was headed for the White House, but that one crashed somewhere in Pennsylvania, cuz the passengers attacked the hijackers and stuff...

ACE – (crying hysterically) Oh my God...but why did they want you in the office? You don't have family working there do you??? Oh God, do you know anybody who...

IMPALA – Whoa whoa...calm down, I don't know anybody working there... (Takes a deep breath) They wanted to see me because they need search and rescue teams down there. And my family is going.

ACE – So you're going to New York?? All of you? I figured they might call your parents, but... you too? You're young...and you hate flying...

IMPALA – I know. But they really need teams down there...and...I saw so many kids around today, getting picked up from school, kids of all ages...their parents, siblings, aunts and uncles...they had family up there...(she starts to shake) As I was leaving the school...you know that girl Shaundra? She's pretty nice, and she's usually pretty calm and stuff, but...as I was leaving...it was in the guidance counselor's office or something, but she was just screaming her lungs out, banging on stuff and crying...her dad worked in one of the buildings...but I mean, it was unbelievable.

ACE – Oh no...

IMPALA – Yeah. And there were other kids too, crying and screaming...This wasn't some little accident...and if I have the chance to be down there...

ACE – Then you need to be there? Yeah. I'm just sort of surprised that they want you, and your parents are letting you. Not that you and Goblin can't do it, but...you'd think there'd be all kinds of safety issues cause of your age and stuff... and since you guys haven't gone before.

IMPALA – There are. But I’m going anyway. My parents are working on it. There are tons people affected personally by this, and only handful will be able to get out there and...yeah. So I’m going.

ACE – You’re a hell of a lot braver than I am...

IMPALA – No I’m not.

ACE – Yeah you are...hey, my mom just got home, I need to go...I’ll call you later...

IMPALA – Okay. Bye... (They hang up. She looks at Goblin, who is still sitting on the bed.) Well...we sort of wanted to be part of an emergency, boy... (Her cell phone rings again, and this time it’s FOREST.) Hello?

FOREST – Hi...

IMPALA – Hey.

FOREST – Yeah...today was scary... I can’t believe it happened to us, you know?

IMPALA – Yeah...

FOREST – So what are you doing?

IMPALA – Packing.

FOREST – Why?

IMPALA – My family’s going to help with the rescue efforts...

FOREST – Hold on... you... you're going to the site?

IMPALA – Yeah.

(There is a pause. IMPALA waits nervously.)

FOREST – No... you... what if you get hurt... I just saw the news... people have died going in there...

IMPALA – I know. But I have the potential to save people... and I need to be there if I can...

FOREST – But... you're a teenager... your parents are going, you don't really need to... you don't have the experience that the others do...

IMPALA – I need to get experience sometime, right? (Her phone beeps.) Listen, my battery's about to die, can you...

FOREST – (interrupting) When are you leaving?

IMPALA – Tomorrow morning...

FOREST – At the airport? What time?

IMPALA – I have to board at 9:30 am... my battery's almost dead, can you... (The phone beeps, and cuts off. IMPALA throws it on the bed and begins to pack again, shaking angrily) Stupid phone...

(She begins to talk to Goblin again as she packs.)

IMPALA – I didn't really get to talk to him. It would have been a good time to bring everything up... (She looks down, knowing that she wouldn't have anyway.) Who am I kidding? I can't do it. I wouldn't have been able to.

(She sits on the bed and retrieves her iPod from her bag. She finds "So Impossible" and plays it, and begins humming. After it is finished, she puts the iPod down and talks again to herself.)

IMPALA – Do you like dreaming of things so impossible, Forest? Like maybe young love? Or at least something? Or the fact that maybe love really doesn't exist among people our age? Do you like dreaming of a world where you look into someone's eyes, and you know from the minute you meet them that they were going to be yours forever, and you wouldn't have to worry about making sure you didn't make a mistake? Do you dream of a state of mind where everything really is a sure thing...and speaking up wasn't hard at all? Are you like me? Do you...do you like dreaming of things that impossible? Or are you the way you appear to be... only the practical...

SCENE 6

Setting – RDU International Airport the next morning, at about 8:30. The dogs have been put into cargo, and her parents are working on the tickets. IMPALA is waiting to board her plane.

(IMPALA is playing "Hands Down," another Dashboard Confessional song. She is very nervous, and is trying to get her mind off of the plane ride, and the plane's destination. She does not see FOREST a hurrying toward her.)

FOREST – (still a few feet away) Impala!

(IMPALA jumps up at the sound of his voice and rushed toward him. They hug, and the let go.)

FOREST – S-so... you're really going...

IMPALA – Yeah, I told you, I...

FOREST – I know... I just... I kind of hoped that maybe...

IMPALA – What, that I change my mind? Listen I...

(FOREST grabs her and pulls her into a big hug. He then begins to cry. IMPALA is shocked...she hasn't seen him cry before. She begins to tear up too.)

IMPALA – Aww... sweetie... (She pauses, since she has never called him that before... not to his face anyway...) I'll be okay... I... I promise... I'll take care of myself...

FOREST – I know. I...I'm proud of you. Really, really, really proud of you. But...it scares me...what if something happens again...what if you fall, or get cut...you might not come back the same as you are now...

IMPALA – I probably won't come back the same. But it'll probably be good change...

FOREST – I wish...I wish we didn't have war. I wish we all got along with each other, all the time.

IMPALA – (resting her head on his shoulder) That's impossible.

FOREST – I can dream. And it's not really impossible. Unless we want it to be.

IMPALA – (smiling) True... (She holds her breath, and after a moment of hesitation, she says it.) I love you. (She turns bright red and looks down, afraid of his response.)

FOREST – (grinning awkwardly) I love you too. (They kiss.)

(IMPALA'S parents return and the plane is ready to board. They hug one last time, and IMPALA leaves, humming the tune of "So Impossible").

Analysis

Needless to say, Dashboard Confessional's song "So Impossible" was the main inspiration of this piece. I never expected to enjoy the play unit, but I found that I actually did enjoy writing scripts more than I thought.

Parts of this play are loosely based off of my relationship with my boyfriend – particularly, the awkward conversations. I suppose Impala is loosely based on myself. Ace is a combination of all of my friends – except the Dashboard Confessional part. I added that. The 9/11 story just seemed to fit and bring the story together. I am a dog nerd, so I enjoyed incorporating search and rescue in there (I hope to practice it with dogs someday.)

When I wrote this play, I guess one might say I was on a Dashboard Confessional high – I was playing their songs and really feeling it, and the story just kind of appeared. However... it wasn't until after I turned the story in and decided to include it in the book that I had a horrible realization – the songs that I used in the story, including "So Impossible," had still not been released in September 2001 (The *So Impossible EP* was released December 2001.) Boy, did I feel dumb. I considered changing the disaster from 9/11 to another one, but I didn't feel like anything would work as well and would not say what I wanted it to say. Therefore, nothing was changed, except that I had to add this part to the analysis.

This was also my first time writing about love. I have always tried to avoid it, but in my Dashboard Confessional and caffeine-induced frenzy, I

decided to experiment a bit. And strangely... I am not too disappointed in the way it turned out.

KASEY HENRY *was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1991, and moved to North Carolina when she was two, first to Fayetteville, in 1993, and then to Durham, in 1999. She has always been very shy and has had trouble making friends in the past. She is slowly becoming more comfortable with herself and with other people. Her teachers have always complimented her on her writing, and she often turns to writing when she needs to let things out. She finds most of her inspiration in the songs by Dashboard Confessional, and tends to write short stories based on their lyrics. Her other passions include working with dogs, horseback riding, and sketching. She currently attends Jordan High School where she is on an Animal Science pathway, and hopes to study animal behavior in the future. She is a very strong advocate for pit bulls and is outspoken against breed specific legislation. Writing will always be a hobby and a passion. Kasey also happens to enjoy long, pointless car rides, and is engaged to Anne Moore and Breagh Olson.*

TIFFANY JONES

Selected Prose and Poetry

Star Hood

Growing up in Brooklyn we had our share of drama, more than people our age else where have ever experienced. Oh by the way I'm Star I'm bout five-six with a coke bottle figure that comes with light hazel eyes to match, my friends and I run our block and a few others. There is never a dull day on this block and no day is ever the same things happening.

The school year had just ended and the summer had just started. So I'm sitting out on the stoop tryin to find some stuff to do. Walking up the sidewalk I see Keisha one of my best friends wearing a mini skirt and halter-top walking towards me.

"*Whats good witcha.*" She's talking loud enough for the people down the block to hear.

"*Nuttin now, thinking how we hafta find a way to spend our last summa in high school*" .I made sure nobody could hear me because they always find a way to be all up in your business around here.

"*Well you know we have to get the crew togetha an wil' out!*" For some reason today she is talking louder than usual. Sounds like she has a something he wants all of Brooklyn to hear about.

We begin walking down eastern parkway to find some more people to chill with. While we was walking and talking bout our usual gossip stories, we ended up at Jamal's house that is now keisha's boyfriend and she won't let you forget as much as she talks about him. He was outside with a few of his boys playing cards. Jamal comes running up to us as we were walking towards him.

"What's up babes" he said talking to keisha which is dazed by his hazel and green eyes. He was the type that could have a girl speechless. So I end up speaking for her

"We just walkin trying to find something to do" after I say that I hear someone calling my name from stairs on the stoop, comes to find out its Brandon one of Jamal's friends he can get on my nerves so bad sometimes.

"Ay star, I been thinking bout you all day...I was just about to call you...when we gonna hook-up". He asks that same question every time I see him or when he calls me. Can't figure how he got my number anyway. Probably got it from Jamal his big mouth.

I looked him up and down and said the same thing I say every time *"How bout the twenty fourth of never"*

You would think after months and months of him asking and me giving the same answer he would just quit but who can blame him. I can't, which is what im thinking as I pull my mirror out my Louis Vuitton knock off handbag. Personally the real ones and the knock off do the exactly same thing and you can't really tell just by looking at it any way. We all stood out there laughing and fooling around and talking bout that fight that happened the last day of school at the notorious William H Taft high where one of the girls track was laying on the on the floor from her hair being pulled so much which was insane cause the girl was somewhat bald without her the tracks in. My boyfriend Rashad would kill me if I ever thought about fighting. He is the one who keeps me under control most of the time. As the time went by and it was getting close to lunch time Jamal, Keisha, Brandon and I started heading towards the subway.

The subway that is hot muggy and at rush hour jammed pack with people moving every which way was at ease today for some reason. I think people are just plain out lazy at the beginning of summer just because they feel they can be. We bought metro cards for unlimited rides. For some reason Brandon as always can never swipe the stupid card right so I wanted to leave him but Jamal turned that in the opposite direction.

"Yo star go help my boy out" he ask me just cause he wanted to be with Keisha, from now on I'm bring my boyfriend then Brandon will be left.

"Ugh fine!" I said expressing my self so every one can hear.

"Brandon, you need to take metro card 101 and learn how to slide the stupid thing ya self." I really wish that were a class but he would probably drop out of that and just never ride the subways again which would be fine with me.

Thanks bae. He said all happy knowing that gets on my nerves.

"I'm not your bae don't get it twisted." I'm tired of him always tryin to get at me knowing how I feel about him.

We had all finally got through, and were now on our way to the Bronx to swing by Rashad's house. We get there and while walking down the street the guys wanted to stop and watch the pick up game that was going on. Keisha and me were especially glad they were playing shirts verses skins. Of course Jamal did not want Keisha to be watching but we really didn't care we never really care what he thinks when it comes to this beautiful sport. After a while the guys started getting tired of watching and wanted to leave.

"Lets go Keisha, you can watch me play anytime. You know I am always on the skins team." He was quick to show off his six-pack when he said that along with muscles to match.

"Yea I know that's right" Keisha said with that big smile on her face, which looked like it was fake if you ask me.

Out of nowhere I hear my name being called from behind me.

"Oh gosh here he comes. Now I gotta be the third wheel again". Brandon is just mad cause he always gets left alone.

I turned and look and there came Rashad. He came rolling up in his new car he just got today.

"Wats good. He called out to me. I was glad to see him pulling up so now I won't get stuck with Brandon any more.

"Hey, Dang bae that's a hot car." I say inspecting the blue Chevy to make sure he didn't just pick it up from the junkyard somewhere.

"Thanks, Ya'll want to ride. Hop in". He calls the others over so we can all go for a ride. If only this car had a metro card you know who would be left right here. That's going to be my next invention.

Riding down the street with the music blasting and windows down. We could tell this was going to be the start of the best summer ever. Keisha and me had our guys, which made us the happiest girls alive. Now only if Brandon got himself a girl...Oh how things could be even better he would not bother with me so much, but anything can happen the summer is just beginning.

Wasted

That school year that has come and gone, is something that I hope will never return.

It was a year of love, pain, and emotions.

It was a year wasted thinking I had found that special someone.

The drama that came with it was not worth fighting for.

Lies, deceit, and betrayal were something that you bought between him and me.

His past that kept coming back is something that was making me furious.

The thoughts of what we could be.

The vision of what he saw in the future, that we would share together.

The calls and late night conversations,

The three words that I thought was something special, turned out being nothing but words to try to get you what you wanted.

A whole school year wasted.

Semester by Semester,
Quarter by Quarter,
You led me to believe that you really cared,
You believed other people over me and then not believe me when I said
it wasn't true.

Your wasted my year.
A year of my life that I can never get back, a year wasted
We was good together but then things changed,
Things started to go down hill from there.
That was something I didn't expect to happen.
Turns out I have moved on from that wasted year,
The year of drama, hurt, and soon defeat
We had been pulled down by reticule of the relationship for many other
things that had happened

The new year started
We both have come to a compromise
Things were settled the battle is over.
That year that I wasted,
I will never get that back.
Though I refuse to go through that drama again.
We still remain friends to this day.
After all we been through
I do forgive you for the hurt,
but it was something that can never be forgotten.
That year wasn't wasted as bad as I thought
I might have lost a lover.
But I have gained another friend,
that's the least you can let me have after everything
that we have been through
and my wasted year...or was it a wasted year?
I learned a lot

Even though it's hard to believe something good could come out of the relationship.

One thing was,
Get to know some one before you put your heart out on the line,
There's a chance the person might not care for it as much as they say they do.

Wasted is what it appeared but in the end.

It was a journey that I had to go through to realize

That I truly deserve better.

Then you want to turn around and tell me you still love me.

I don't have time for your games any more.

Just move on...because I know I have.

Analysis

"Star Hood" came to me from the thought of what if my friends and I lived in Brooklyn, New York for the entire summer. The personalities for the characters came from certain friends whose personalities stand out and who I knew could make the story more entertaining and help keep the readers attention. In the real world that's what happens the things they do cause you to pay attention and they hold on to it for a while. The short story was one that when someone read it they automatically tried to figure out which friends were who and some of them guessed right the first time. The way the dialect was done to bring a more updated and modern feeling to the story. The way the characters talk is another way that the attention can be kept and held on to. The places described were taken from the sights that I saw while vacationing this summer, everything from the subways, to the basketball games, all up to the school where the fight was said to happen during the school year. Every piece of detail was put to somehow fit into the daily lives as if they actually lived there and made it seem more realistic. This short story is something that I would hope could evolve into a novel of some sort so there can be more ways to get to know the characters and to see relationships come about during the summer time.

The poem “Wasted” was based on the perspective of a common teen relationship gone wrong. It came to me from what I have observed over the years at Jordan and what people are going through. The poem was one that I would hope someone could relate to because at some point in life a person can feel that a time spent with someone after a long period of time, has made a turn for the worst. A relationship that people were against from the beginning ended because it was probably for the best. In the end there is always someone better. It was a way to express different feelings and things that were held in by different people, and it was time to let it all out.

TIFFANY JONES *aka Tiff made her appearance into the world in September 1990. She was born and raised in Durham, NC, also known as Bull City where she has attended various schools throughout her learning career. Now in the senior year of high school and ready to graduate, she is a fun and entertaining person to be around. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends while making them laugh at different things. After trips to Las Vegas, New York, and her own experiences in Durham, it was always a simple task to come up with a creative piece of writing to present. She plans to graduate from Jordan in June and attend college in August 2008. She plans to take all the good memories, friends and relationships with her when she does leave. Her friends would probably describe her as a person who can bring light out of any situation, and is a silly person to be around. They are also the ones who can keep her texting 24-7.*

KEVIN KERSHAW

Rainfall and Gasoline

I've always loved the smell of rainfall and gasoline and now the air is filled with the scent. The intoxicating aroma tickles my fancy as I stand over him with a twisted, sick smile on my face. Once I realize I'm smiling I stop myself from doing so.

His car is flipped and gas is flowing out of it. The rain is pouring hard and I can see my own breath. As I examine the car silently, he moans and tries to get out of the car. He, of course, is the man inside the car and the man I am describing. I hate him. He didn't have to do what he did but he did, so I did.

"Why?" he asks me in a fragile, hoarse voice. I say nothing to him; I just stare at him with an expressionless face.

It's late at night and there is no one on the road but the man on the ground before his assailant, and myself. I don't really know where we are; it doesn't matter- some back road. Huge trees create a cage on either side of the straight, long road. He looks scared, but god damnit he should be! My car is parked about ten feet from his wrecked, flipped car. All around us there is shards of his car; big and small of all shapes. The only real light illuminating this troubled scene is from the moon and my car's headlights.

"What the hell is wrong with you?!" he yells in a less than friendly tone. Still, I say nothing.

He is banged up pretty badly, but of course he is, his car flipped when I rammed him from behind. I'm fine... physically anyway.

"Why would you flip my car?!" he screams at me, "answer me you bastard!!" I don't think he realizes that I'm not going to say anything.

By this point, he's kind of limped and struggled his way to his feet while cursing beneath his breath. And on his way to his feet he grabs a nearby rock; a rather large one at that. Slowly, but still as fast as he possibly can, he starts moving towards me and it looks like he's going to try to hit me with the rock. Right as he is about to strike me from about two feet away, I grab his throat with one hand and his hands with the other hand. Still, my face is expressionless. He kind of makes a choking sound and drools a little as I tighten my grip and as he drops the rock.

Choking him to death right now would be too simple and it would not quench my thirst for revenge. So, I shove him to the ground. I decide that the broken pipe lying on the ground from his car could be useful as I walk towards it slowly. It is cold on my bare hands. The wet, slippery, grayish pipe doesn't make me feel any more manly but that isn't what I am going for here. The whole macho thing isn't my goal.

I think he understands what is going on now because there is sheer horror in his eyes that are looking at the sharp, ominous pipe in my tense right hand. I stop for a moment to run my left hand through my long black hair; I don't know why.

"Hey... what are you doing? NO!!" he uttered as I walked towards him at a patient pace. He tried to crawl away from me but nothing he tried was worth anything anymore.

He writhes and contorts in pain and screams a blood-curdling scream while I pin his legs together with the pipe by stabbing it through both of his thighs. He knows that if he pulls it out it will hurt far worse and do far more damage. He is whimpering like a sad dog. His face is wet with his tears, sweat and blood as well as rain. His pants are drenched in his own blood and the ever-pouring rain. My hands are wet with my pathetic prey's blood and rain.

As I watch him squirm on the ground, my mind ventures from myself. I begin to wonder what he feels right now, physically, mentally, emotionally and religiously. Then I realize; I don't care. It wasn't long before my mind returned to me and now I find myself standing over him. Then I crouch down.

CRACK! I break his right thumb; he screams. It's funny how fragile some things are and how some movements and bends can completely render some things useless. I break his index; he screams; his middle and ring and he screams each time. It continues until all of his fingers are lifelessly broken.

I choose not to imagine how much pain he is in now. I can't decide if it is by choice or not but still, I show no emotion. I hope he knows I'm not going to stop; I hope he knows I've just begun. I hope he knows he will learn his lesson. For what he did, he will pay.

I consider the fact that I have no knife and head to my car to get my keys. I decide to only take my house key so I can leave the car running to use its headlights. I want to see what I'm doing; I want him to see what I am doing. I want to see his face; I want him to see my mine.

The key isn't particularly sharp but it is not blunt so it'll do. Before I begin to do what I am about to do, I decide to draw a smiley face; so I do. I do not take haste as I cut a large circle into his gut after I pull his shirt up so his stomach is exposed. The cuts are about an inch deep and I have to wipe the blood off his belly every once in a while; about every thirty seconds. In addition, I have to tie his hands together with my belt and use one of my hands to hold his hands away from me; he begins to struggle, but not much. I take my time to finish the eyes, nose and mouth of my beautiful work of art; all the while, he is screaming and moaning in absolute pain.

For a good two minutes, I blankly stare at my work after finishing it while my barely conscience buddy lays on the ground asking the same question over and over again as if he doesn't know the answer.

"Why? Why? WHY?!"

I think he should know the answer so I do not respond, instead, I just give him the same blank stare I have been giving him all night.

Suddenly and finally, I snap and choose to finish this and him. I ignore how damn cold I am as I jab a sharp piece of metal that I found on the ground nearby into his torso and gut over and over again; he doesn't even scream after about the third time I plunge the metal into him. I don't know if he even can scream or if he's lost the will to scream any longer. I suddenly realize I am screaming. I am screaming as I stand up, I am screaming as I raise my leg and I am screaming as I stomp on his face over and over again until it is no more. I just scream.

If these trees could speak, they would tell a horror story. He shouldn't have done it! I wouldn't have had to follow him for three hours to flip his car and take my gruesome revenge. I wouldn't have his blood all over me if he hadn't done it. His head doesn't have to be painting the gravel red but he chose this.

He shouldn't have cut me off on the highway earlier today. I've always loved the smell of rainfall and gasoline.

Taco Freedom

After a long day of school,
Full of stress and work,
It's nice just to kick back and stuff your gut with all the tacos \$5.10 can buy.

It's a liberating feeling,
That first bite into that first crunch rap supreme.
Supreme is just what it is.
Sometimes, it's later; sometimes it's fourth meal.
Those hard and soft tacos really hit the spot around eleven p.m.
Sometimes its tacos, sometimes its nachos or toquitos;
Whatever it is, its delicious.
Even though it might not look good,
Even though it might not look like what the commercials show,
Its scumdiddle-umptious.

It's forth meal revolution,
It's an epiphany of spice, cheese and beans,
It is... taco freedom.

Analysis

I drew my inspiration for the first piece, "Rainfall and Gasoline," from any and all horror movies. Horror is my favorite genre, and I wrote this right after I saw Rob Zombie's remake of Halloween. Halloween, Saw (I, II, III and IV), the Gingerdead Man, the Hills Have Eyes (I and II), The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, The Shining, Hostel, and Night of the Living Dead (along with many more) have had heavy influence on my writing. For some reason the gross and gory stuff interests me. For my second piece, I drew inspiration from life experiences. Taco Bell is my favorite fast food joint and I make frequent trips with my good friend Alex. I was thinking about it one day and I just typed "Taco Freedom" because it expressed my feelings and I needed to write a poem for homework.

KEVIN KERSHAW is a fifteen-year-old sophomore at C.E. Jordan High School. Kevin grew up in Maryland and moved to North Carolina in the summer before his freshmen year in high school. Kevin was never too fond of reading and writing but somehow enjoys it in third period creative writing. He enjoys moonlit walks on the beach, fancy dinners, and gypsy potions. Kevin is very interested in horror and comedy as you can see in his writing. He admires writers like Stephen King and Edgar Allen Poe. He is also a regular at local skate parks and anywhere that skateboards hit the pavement. There's really not much to be said about Kevin other than what's already been said and that he is a mildly good student and a mildly good person.

AMANDA KIM

Selected Poetry

My Mother

Love is all I have for her,
She has done so much for me.
Provided what I need.
Gave me what I want.
If she could, she'd give me the world,
And I still wouldn't be able to repay her.
She has granted my every wish,
Just to make me happy.
She listens to me when I have a problem.
Never turns me away.
She gives me great advice,
And it never lets me down.
There have been times when we've argued,
And I blamed her for my pain.
But I realized that nothing was her fault, it was mine.
Even for my foolish mistakes, she forgives and forgets.
She is my motivation.

The one that makes me strive for the best.
She is my everything.
She is my mother.

What We Forget The Most

As children, our minds were expanded.
We allowed our imagination to soar beyond all means.
We didn't let fear or embarrassment get in the way of meeting new people,

The ones that had potential to be our friends.
We lived and loved life like it was all we had.
There was no room for anger or sadness.
We only had time for giggles and smiles.
But now where did all that go?
Now growing older, our creativity has limited.
We don't use our imagination anymore, as if it vanished.
We think it's out of the ordinary to greet everyone you see.
Only allowing known friends to be near you.
We feel more anger and sadness than we do happiness.
We used to be carefree and not have to worry about anything.
Now we stress about the littlest things.
Whether it is schoolwork, love, looks, or other insecurities.
We don't stop and think about what really matters.
To just have fun and experience life for what it is.
An adventure and a journey that is full of risks.
Because we all forget we only have one to live.

My Little Best Friend

Your happiness makes me happy.
Your sadness brings tears to my eyes.

The anger in your eyes hurt more than the words you speak.
I feel what you feel even if we were a million miles away.
I'm always excited to come visit you,
Because I love to hear you call out my name and run into my arms.
You give me a great big hug and a kiss on the cheek.
Oh how I love those.
We eat all the food we can find together,
While we watch TV for hours.
You show me all your favorite hot wheel cars and let me play with one.
We race around the whole house until we are too tired to stand.
The only thing I can hear is your soft breathing.
Sucking your thumb while holding your little hanky...the priceless
moment.
When it's time to leave, I can feel the tears forming in your eyes.
I tell you not to cry because I will be back again.
You smile your beautiful smile and blow me a kiss goodbye.
And I give a kiss back and say goodbye to my little best friend.

You

You've opened my eyes to see greater things,
What life has to offer and all that it brings.
You bring out the best in me that was hidden deep down.
You were searching for love and in me you've found,
What you were looking for,
Everything you wanted and so much more.
Happiness, smiles, laughs, and love,
That one special person, you're always thinking of,
To have and to hold, to cherish and adore,
Who lifts you off your feet and makes your heart soar,
High in the skies, not wanting this feeling to end.
I think I've found my special friend.

My Heart

A best friend you can call her, she can read my mind.
Knows what I go through and feels my pain.
A person like her is hard to find.
She gives me advice and keeps me sane.
All best friends have their “special” things.
Secret handshakes, codes, and certain words they say.
But we like to use text messaging.
We talk all the time, never missed a day.
We discuss our future and joke about the past,
Laugh about how we finish each other’s sentences on AIM.
Hanging out with her, I always have a blast.
I guess you could say we are one in the same.
She is the sacred place, she is my heart.
She keeps me alive, we can never grow apart.

Analysis

I decided to insert my poetry from my creative writing class for the book because poetry is my strong point and I feel more comfortable with it than stories or plays. It defines me as a person and it brings out my creative side. Each poem was inspired by a different person, which makes them unique and meaningful to me. The poem “My Mother” was inspired by none other than my mother and the things we have been through together. She has lifted me up in higher places than I have ever imagined going. “What We Forget The Most” was inspired by my personal experiences with people and my life itself. I just sat in my room one day talking to my friend on IM. We were reminiscing on the past and discussing how sad it was to see how the people we knew have changed. “My Little Best Friend” was inspired by my little cousin, Eric. Ever since he was able to walk and talk, he has always been my favorite and we practically act like best friends. He puts a smile on my face

whenever we are together and I enjoy spending “family” time with him. The poem “You” was inspired by all the happy couples that I see around school, including my own. Everyone seems so happy to be with one another. Also to listen to the sweet words that come out of their mouths to express how they feel about their loved ones just enlightens me. Lastly, “My Heart” was inspired by one of my best friends. She has always been there for me from day one and she never lets me down. We have a lot in common and we share most of the same ideas. It’s like we can sense what the other is feeling just by looking at each other. She has never failed to make me laugh everyday I see her and I thank God that I have her, because without her I wouldn’t have had the courage to express my feelings and ideas as much as I do now. She is the one that helped me through tough times and she was my thought process along the way through my high school career and will continue to be my support. These poems have increased my creativity and bond between the people that I wrote about. They inspire me to keep on writing and always believe that whatever I write is always good to me.

AMANDA KIM *is a junior at C.E. Jordan High School and will be graduating in the year 2009. She loves children and wants to study medicine to become a pediatrician. She is trying very hard in school and wishes to attend the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. During her free time she enjoys hanging out at the mall or the movies with her friends. She absolutely adores spending time with her family, especially her little cousin, Eric. She loves to laugh and smile all the time. It’s hard to find a time where she isn’t doing one of the two. Those are the reasons she is easy to get along with because she isn’t afraid to walk up to someone and make a new friend. Amanda loves to talk to people and learn new information. There are very few things that don’t interest her mind.*

DWAYNE LEATHERS

You

As I stand here
And stare into your angel eyes
Baby, I start to realize
That you are the one for me
Look girl you're the one I need
So I'm pouring out my vows
To you, in this poetry
Baby you know I love you
You're attached to me like a bad case of the flu
Look don't get me wrong
It's not bad thing
Cause without you boo
I could accomplish nothing
You're like a brick to my life wall
And without you girl
My life would do nothing but fall
Honey I would take a bullet for you
Cause girl I know that our love is true
Standing right here in front of you

It feels like a dream come true
And you don't know just how proud I am
To be able to call you my boo
You found the way to my heart
Like it was an easy maze
It's still a mystery
How your love put me in a daze
I didn't believe in love at first sight
When I looked into your eyes for the first time
Just like a star they shined so bright
From then on I knew it was meant to be
Cause you're love is sweeter
Than a bee's honey
Some people might think that it's funny
They never thought that me and you would be together
But they didn't know
That baby you make me better
Baby your golden skin shine's like the sun
All I could think was
How I just wanted to eat you up
Like you were a honey bun
Now that you are mine I will never let you go
No matter what the weather
Rain, thunder, sleet or snow
It feels like I'm the plug and
You are my socket
With your picture
I would put it in a locket
I would always wear it around my neck
And never in my pocket
It will represent all the love that we share
And when ever you need me

Baby I will be there
Check this girl you know that you're my everything
That's why I got down on one knee and gave you that ring
Every since I met you, you have always been nice
On our first date you ordered shrimp fried rice
I will hold you tight
Just like a gambler holds his dice
With me you will never have to worry about anything anymore
I will be with you even if we go poor
You don't have to worry about me doing my part
Just know that you will always have the key to my heart
Baby with me your dreams will come true
Cause woman I would give up anything for you
I will give you everything I can
I will build your dreams with these two hands
If I ever do you wrong
You don't have to worry I will apologize
I will always act my age and not my shoe size
If you get sick I will be there to take the pain away
Cause I know that with you
tomorrow will bring a brighter day
I cant wait for the day that you have my child
It brings a smile to my face,
Just the thought of a little me running around wild
But that's not why I love you
I love you for who you are
And honey when ever you need me
I will not be far
When I go to bed I don't pray for me
I pray for us
Cause truly in God I trust
For sending such a blessing as you

He must have known
That we would be the perfect two
That is why he put you in my life
And now thanks to him
You will become my wife
Baby I will love you until the end of time
Darling you will forever
Become mine
So baby just relax and take it slow
And don't worry
Cause when you walked in my life you stole the show
I hope you feel the same
And if you didn't
I would only have myself to blame
I would never play with your heart
Cause baby I would never
Want us to be apart
I mean it when I say it
Girl I love you like a fat kid loves cake
You just don't know
How much you mean to me
For you girl anything I would give
Cause you are the reason I live.

Analysis

This poem comes from an assignment that I had received in my creative writing class. What we had to do was to come up with one hundred lines of poetry. It could be little small poems that all equaled one hundred lines. Or it could be one large poem of one hundred lines. So I took on the task of doing one large poem of one hundred lines. At first I couldn't find anything to write about. I had no inspiration what so ever. As the due date was drawing nearer I knew that I needed to do something. So I was at home one day and I decided

to listen to my iPod. Whenever I needed to write a paper I could always find inspiration out of music. I came across one of my favorite all time songs, “All My Life by K-Ci and Jo-Jo.” The song is telling how they thanked god that they found the right woman for them and how much they loved them. So I decided that I could also write a poem talking to a woman telling her how much I loved her.

DWAYNE LEATHERS *was born September 4, 1990 to Anthony Jr. and Donna Leathers. They lived in a two bedroom apartment in Durham, NC. He also had one older brother, Anthony Leathers III at the time. When Dwayne was brought into this world everyone thought that he was like the sun shining bright over the world. They literally thought that because Dwayne was a little light-skinned baby. He had some of the most beautiful blonde hair that a baby could have. As Dwayne got older he grew out of his beautiful blonde hair, and received black hair. At the age of four, Dwayne entered into Parkwood elementary school in Durham, NC. Throughout his elementary career Dwayne received great grades never making below a 3 or 4 on his test, which were the highest. Dwayne graduated from Parkwood and went on to Githens middle school, which is also located in Durham, NC. Now Dwayne is a senior varsity football player at Jordan High school. Dwayne plans on graduating and attending Winston Salem State University in NC, where he will major in business.*

LAUREN MCINNIS

Selected Prose

How I Found Love

The Phone rang its annoying generic buzz, sending waves of tension through all the people at the front desk. The nurse, a lady with long orange hair and a smashed face immediately jumped up, tripping over her chair to answer it. She then accidentally dropped the phone, probably from the pools of sweat in her palms.

“Two-West, Girls, this is Holly, how may I help you?”

Her brow furrowed as a man’s deep voice pounded out of the phone.

“Uh, yeah she-“ Holly looked over at me, glancing down at the growing number of bags “-she’s getting all her stuff together right now.”

She paused as he gave her a series of directions that she was directed to write down. She tore a small yellow Post-It from a pad and grabbed a pencil and scribbled down a series of letters and numbers, that judging my her facial expression, could’ve been the answer to world hunger. She listened to the mans booming voice for another minute, then promptly hung up the phone.

“Who was that?” I asked hopefully.

She sighed “No one.” I too sighed and looked around at all my blue and white bags labeled “Patient Belonging Bag”

“You know, my mother told me, she said ‘I’ll be here at six. Directly at six.’ She’s such a fuckin liar. I mean, she’s probably driving around somewhere, shopping without a care in the world.”

“Calm down Lauren, she’ll be here soon” she said in her overly sympathetic voice that she’d typically use to soothe people on the brink of a meltdown. I guess she uses it so much, it kinda got stuck there.

The nurse sat back down in her chair, trying to refocus on the large stack of discharge paper work staring her down.

“You should go back to your room and finish packing all your stuff up.” She said blandly.

I rolled my eyes and looked up at the clock. 6:46. My eyes slowly shifted downwards to the large windows beneath the clock that led to the dayroom. 24 girls sat in large blue chairs with trays of food in their laps, eating and talking, mostly about the recent catfight or who cut whom in the cafeteria line. I scoped the room, looking for her familiar face. I didn’t see her so I assumed she must be sitting along the windowed wall. I walked to the entrance of the day room and saw her frantically mashing up a combination of spaghetti, raisins, ranch dressing and ice cream together, wasting her entire dinner just to gross me out one last time.

She looked up to see me staring down at her, smiling.

“Oh, wait.” She fixed a large spoonful of the concoction and held it up, her face beet red with excitement and the Oh-so fond eagerness to see me cringe.

“It has raisins in it. You *like* raisins” She cheered.

Both her and I giggled at our inside joke, that always, 100% guaranteed, drew strange glances from at least half the girls. But we didn’t care. We never cared what they thought of us. We knew that half of the time they were just incredibly jealous that we had a strong unbreakable bond that all the rumors and drama they started so often never broke. They were left with nothing else to do *but* hate us.

And they did.

Helen carelessly dropped her spoon into her Styrofoam tray and suddenly snapped back to the situation at hand. She gave a humongous smile and asked when my mother was coming or if she was here already. She tried not to fidget under my gaze cause knew I could see through that smile. The look in those bright brown eyes always gave it away.

“I have no idea when she’s coming” I said, my eyes not leaving hers. I sighed and tried not to focus on what was happening.

Helen looked down, immediately regretting her question. I gave her a small reassuring smile.

“I swear Helen, I’ll write you every day. I’ll *never* forget about you, okay? *I love you.*”

I leaned forward a little so she’d make eye contact and she smiled back.

“You know,” she retorted quickly, “how they’re always bitching about us being so close and shit? Well I told my doctor that when you leave I’m gunna be thrown into this catatonic state of depression and they’ll have to let me out to see you so I can back to normal again.” She shook her head “And you wanna know what my dumb ass doctors response was? That we’re gay. Can you believe it!? I’d expect it from all these ass holes, but not from them too. You know, I think we should go along with this whole gay thing, just to freak them out.”

I gave her a small appreciative smile. I was going to miss her like I’ve never missed anyone ever before. How was I supposed to wake up every morning and not hear about one of her crazy dreams or listen to her go on a rant about her doctor and how stupid she was?

“Lauren!” Ms. Holly called me away from the doorway to continue packing my belongings.

“Do you need any more bags?”

“Yeah.” She handed me four bags and I took them all, heading off down the hallway to my room. It was the fifth one on the left, room 263. I walked in the room and looked around. I had already packed the two small drawers full of clothes and all of my three books that I kept on the desk in front of my bed. The room was a fair size with two beds, one near the small bathroom and

mine, near the door. There was a small sink and an even smaller mirror outside the bathroom. A large six foot tall by two feet wide, metal mesh covered window was also beside the bathroom. The window face the front of the building, a not-so-busy street that would occasionally have a few people walking down it. None of the windows opened and there was no air circulation. Going outside here was a privilege, not a right. In front of each bed there was a desk and a large shelving unit with two small drawers on the bottom with about six inches to the right of them to shove dirty clothes.

I walked over to my desk, pulled out the one drawer that was still there and took out all of the letters Teresa had written me while I was in here. I cleared the top of the desk from all of the pictures and cards I had made in our art therapy that we had every Monday after dinner. I piled all of these things into a bag and closed it.

I walked over to my bed and sat down, staring at the pink and orange flower comforter I had brought from home. I lay down and wondered to myself, when I go to this new group home place, at night, when I miss home, will I hold my blanket to my nose and let the smell of it relax me like it did while I was here?

For such a violent place like a mental hospital, I'd grown to love it. It had a homey feel to it that I felt privileged to feel. I could bet you anything, no one else felt like that. I mean, this was the first place in my entire life where I had adults that cared for my well being. Sure, there were strict schedules and techs I didn't like, and yes, we woke up way too early, even on the weekends. But underneath it all there was Mr. Walter who acted more like a father than a staff member, and then there was Helen. Glorious, glorious Helen. How could I leave her?

"Lauren!"

I grabbed my two bags, leaving the extras behind and I scooped up my comforter. I stood up, heart beating far too quickly, and started to walk down the hallway, for the last time.

As I approached I saw the familiar form of my mother, signing the discharge papers. My mind automatically wandered to Helen. What am I gunna do? I thought as I dropped my bags with the others.

“Good Lord!” cried my mother, “Do you have enough stuff!?” She gave me a smile I did not return. I rest my elbows on the counter top, gazing helplessly into the Day room.

Dinner time had ended and Helen had moved chairs, for a better view of the desk, and as I saw her I automatically smiled. She too tried to smile, but it didn’t work out so well, and I gave her a thumbs up, which made her smile, more from my cheesiness than anything.

After this my mother gave me the cue to gather my things and ‘lets head out’.

I ran back to the dayroom and broke probably the biggest rule here. No touching. I Gave her the biggest hug ive ever given anyone in my life. She looked up at me and said,

“I love you like woah to the max times a million bunches of peanut butter and I said it first so there!” That last part faded away a little as she hugged me again.

“Come on! Lets go now!” snapped my mother “We’re already late as it is!”

“And whose fault is that?” I snapped back.

She glared at me and I went back to the desk to gather my things. I had in total six bags, my purse and my comforter. I walked slowly behind my mother, and as I looked for Helen, I saw something that I’ll never forget.

I looked over at Helen, her knees pulled to her chest, and her head in her hands sobbing. I’ve never ever seen Helen cry before. No one has. That’s why she was here, because she couldn’t cry, and now to see her bawling, in front of a room full of people, must have taken a world of strength and hurt.

I’d like to not think about that last one.

But the thing she showed me in that last instant, as I was walking out the doors, unaware that this would be the last time I’d be able to see her for the next six months, was something more powerful to me than any words. I saw

one of the best people on this earth sob over the potential lack of my prescence. And that's something that I'll never forget.

Never.

Superhero

She looked cute. He couldn't deny her that. She was wearing a blue short sleeved dress with two large pink buttons, each one an inch away from each armpit. The dress came slightly below her butt, and contrasted perfectly with her white footless leggings. The light seemed to fall on her more than the other kids, but perhaps it was just the glare on her shiny black shoes, matching perfectly with her silky waist length black hair.

She felt his eyes burn into her arms, gawking shamelessly at her arms.

"Why did you do that?" He looked her up and down, almost repulsed, as if the scars made her a different species, one inadequate to himself.

"Why does it matter?" She retorted with a small amount of fury she reserved for these questions.

He looked at her with something that could possibly have been disappointment.

The pastor's son, a short, thin blonde boy that looked to be no more than eleven ran over, seeing his father, and after quickly assessing the situation, he decided this conversation was one that needed his input.

"If I were you, I wouldn't be showin those off," he said confidently. She gave him a look that could've shattered glass.

"If I were you I'd be--"

"David," The pastor broke in, sensing the tension between the two. "This is no place for you. Go up to the auditorium and get your sister, she needs to come and speak with me."

David walked away quickly, in his natural fast pace, not the least bit phased by her words or the pastors warning. The pastor turned back to her, giving her a sympathetic smile.

"I'm sorry, he's young and he's still learning his place." He took a deep breath and scratched his head. "Why did that upset you so much?"

"Because," she said, "Everyone looks down on me because of them and-"

"No one said that. What lead you to believe that?"

"All common courtesy goes out the window. Its 'Ewe! Look at her' or 'what are those!? Why are those there?' It's a respect thing. There's absolutely none when the matters of a 'cutter' which by the way is a stupid label that stupid people use, come into the picture and that's basically saying 'Hey you're a freak, and I'm better than you'. And, well, just putting it simply...I'm not going to stand for it."

"But you still show them off. You must be proud of them." Said the pastor in a tone he was well aware of. He liked challenging her because it was the only way he could get her to talk.

"No, I'm not proud of them, but I'm not ashamed of them either" she said in a surprisingly calm tone. "Each one of them tells a story. They're all a part of my past...each one of them."

He let the words she spoke set in giving a few seconds of silence before he decided he should speak again.

"I understand." He looked her dead in the eyes and gave her a small, sympathetic smile.

She looked up at him with ice blue eyes that didn't give a damn what he had to say. She didn't return the smile, but instead stood there until he walked away, challenging him to say more. When she didn't respond, he took the hint and walked away. Church would be starting soon and he had a sermon to give.

She looked around at the small, crowded room, full of smiling people, all happy to be here, happy to be in church. She was not one of them. She hated church, the whole concept of it really. The whole concept of worshipping a god that never shows himself, never gives anyone a reason to believe he's there, other than these 'miracles' that only a select few receive. On the one hand, she found it amusing. These people were all alone and they had no idea.

The thought of giving off their pain to a higher being, to believe that if I talk to myself enough, bedside each night, that all my pain will be given away, stole from me by a higher being gave them a sense of security that they probably will never give up. And she didn't blame them. Hey, whatever gets you through the day, right? That was a motto she lived by and used everyday. It was also a motto that struck fear into the hearts of her friends cause they knew what 'got her through the day'. They knew when she hurt herself she got a twisted feeling of accomplishment that made her feel like a success and let her feel like she was actually worth something. It was amazing the feelings she drew from the pain that she felt.

The scars on her arms were a pale pink cluster of contrasting lines, jutting out in various directions, but a few of them were more than misshapen lines. Some of them said things. Things like *Failure and Perfection*. Each word, each symbol carried a million feelings and endless memories. Most of them were painful, Painful reminders of things she feared she one day might forget. And forgetting...that was a scary feeling. The thought of forgetting how she used to feel, who she used to be, where she came from struck her with a constant, pounding fear that never seemed to leave her alone, and was always nagging at the back of her mind. She could feel herself slipping from that old person and becoming something she never understood, something she was all too familiar with. She was becoming just like everybody else.

Analysis

Writing "How I Found Love" was a refreshing thing. Just thinking about the bond that Helen and I share is one of the most uplifting things I can do. Any time I feel like shit or feel alone, I automatically think to her and how I know that she loves me so much and that she'd do just about anything for me. It's an amazing feeling to know that there's a person on this planet that cares the world for you and would follow you to the ends of the earth if need be. I love her with all my heart and soul and bunches and bunches of frosting and I said it first and last, so there. I'd give anything to ensure her safety for the rest of this life. We seldom see each other, but the few times we do it's because

we've schemed and plotted against our parents to the point where we'd throw fits like annoying two year olds if we don't see each other, that or we make plans with other people to the point where us not seeing each other would have a ripple effect and everyone else's plans would be ruined, and neither one of our parents could do that. Probably cause they'd feel too guilty. But, nonetheless, I love her so much and I'm extraordinarily proud to say that she too is doing better and is continuing to still improve. She's an amazing person that, through this paper, I still can't put into words what she means to me. It's a feeling that words cant describe, that warms you from the inside out in even the coldest of conditions. I'm just so grateful to know that she's in my life.

"Superhero" was probably one of the easiest, and yet most draining stories I've ever had to write. Easy, because this story was based on my real-life experiences and a few of my opinions. Draining for simply the same reason. I basically took a stroll down this side of memory lane, and this time around it wasn't so forgiving. It brought back old feelings, and old respects that I, for a time, didn't forget, but pushed to the back of my mind so I wouldn't have to deal with the remembrance of what life used to be like. As you can see, writing is a huge release for me. It's getting the enormous weight of what sometimes can feel like the world on your shoulders. This piece was the first thousand word story that I wrote in creative writing this year, and it certainly won't be my last. This story holds a lot of meaning in it, a lot of value for me, so much so that re-reading it sometimes can be confusing. Confusing in the sense that I'm not entirely sure if I want to just put myself out there like that, or if I want to stay content just being the quiet kid that doesn't share anything. It can be a lot to think about, but I'd like to think that it all works out in the end.

The title of my story "Superhero" is one that, to the naked eye, holds no direct correlation. Unless, of course, you listen to the soulful Ani Defranco, and are familiar with her wonderful song, Superhero. In it she sings

"I used to be a superhero, no one could hurt me, not even myself. You were like a phone booth that I somehow stumbled into, and now look at me, I'm just like everybody else."

I didn't realize the connection between the two until I re-read my piece and decided that this would be a fitting title. Music is essential to life, therefore, it must be included in such an important piece.

LAUREN MCINNIS *was born in the Raleigh-Durham Area, but moved to Greenville, South Carolina when she was 5. She spent most of her childhood years there, living with her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother has been critically ill and in and out of hospitals since Lauren was young, and they eventually followed her back down to North Carolina, seeking better hospitals, and she is still living there. Lauren's had a couple of stays in different psychiatric hospitals where she underwent experiences that have helped make her who she is today. Lauren lives in a group home with three other girls, and a boys house up the road. She has met a lot of very special people here who she plans to stay in contact with. Lauren now visits Helen as often as possible and they are still VERY close. Lauren has dreams of being an artist and a writer, who hopes to move to Ireland and study philosophy with Helen. Music plays an extraordinarily large role in her life, as do books. Anywhere Lauren goes, so does her "Baby," more commonly known as her iPod. She generally keeps at least one book with her, and though it is commonly frowned at/criticized, she strongly believes in Faeries and worlds parallel to ours that most people will never have the honor of seeing. Lauren strongly believes that you will only ever see what you open your eyes to, and that your beliefs dictate what you open your mind, and your heart to. Just believe and see what happens....*

ANGELICA MITCHELL

Selected Poetry and Prose

Letting Go

Trust is something that one has to earn.
I can't just trust you,
That would make me a fool.
But after 4 months if you can't at least trust me,
Than what we had was nothing.
The soft kisses,
The hugs,
The notes,
The gifts,
The phone calls,
Everything for nothing.
I refuse to believe that.
That would mean these warm tears falling from my face are for nothing.
No.
The heavy weight of sadness is for nothing.
No.
I refuse to believe that.

I promised myself that I would never let a dude have this much control over me.

But to me you weren't just a dude.

You were my knight in shining armor,

The man of my dreams,

My bookie bear.

And you threw that away over a rumor.

A rumor.

Yes, those same things that you pleaded with me not to believe about you.

I didn't.

But I guess I don't deserve that same respect.

Let him go he ain't thinkin bout you.

He was cheap any way.

He's a loser.

You can do betta.

These are all I hear.

So why can't I hate you?

Because love concurs all emotions.

You were my first love,

And my first heartbreak.

But everything happens for a reason.

And if you learn something from an experience tan it was worth it.

Thank you for making me a stronger person.

Guess what,

I'm gone.

If the Road Could Talk

I am home to some very colorful people, to say the least. The same people who walk up and down my streets from sunrise to sunset. I am very small, only having about 7 blocks to my name, but I'm well known. You can't

miss me, but if you do, to the north of me is Hillside High and to the south is Martin Luther King Parkway. I'm only a few miles away from Hope Valley though some would say I'm the exact opposite. Hope Valley is caviar while I'm fried chicken. Who cares if at night you can hear sirens, gunshots, and a few house parties? The people on my street just like to have a good time. Don't get me wrong I'm not the projects, I'm the step in between.

I'm home to tacky houses during Christmas time. Houses with at least 20 different color lights, and also the house that never disappoints with HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS proudly lit on its roof. I am home to a school, where even its students don't know how to pronounce its name. Three of my streets aren't paved, and even worse there is only about an eighth of a mile worth of sidewalk for the whole road. Trash is scattered all around me and stray dogs and cats roam until another naive child adopts them. There is also a park, but don't stay too long there is no bathroom. If you so happen to get hungry I have a Wendy's, Amantes' China Wok, and a Subway. Not to mention a Kroger's and various other shops that are all supposed to be patrolled by a morbidly obese rent-a-cop (it's so funny to see him run).

When you think about all the things one could do, or complain about, no one could ever be bored with me. Take the time to look around and laugh at me. I don't mind. I'm the infamous COOK ROAD. You'd betta recognize.

Analysis

I couldn't decide between two pieces that I wrote so I decided to put them both in the book. The first, is based on one of the easiest assignments that we had in class, which were the stream of consciousness poems. They didn't have to rhyme, they didn't need a beat, there were no rules and you could say whatever and you could write the first things that came to mind.

I decided to write another stream of consciousness poem in light of the awful events that happened during my birthday week. I decided to take the worst event, my boyfriend breaking up with me two days beforehand, and write about that. The hardest part was just to get it all into words. Well, one night I was in bed and I was listening to the radio to help me fall asleep and I

kept hearing songs and commercials about love, hate, and everything in between. I decided to write about love because I feel that that is the strongest of all emotions. I knew that writing the poem would alleviate my stress from the week. I named my poem “Letting Go” because writing it was just a total relief.

Secondly I wanted to put my piece about a place in Durham in the book. It is entitled, “If the Road Could Talk.” I got the title from the unique spin I took on the assignment. I wrote it as if my street was talking to the reader, and when telling this to a friend she also used the idea. To me any idea that is good enough to be used multiple times needed to be shared. I hope you enjoy my contribution to Sophistichaos.

On November 1st, 1991, ANGELICA MITCHELL was the last of three children born to Mark and Linda Mitchell. From her brother, Mark, and her sister, Ryann, she learned to be quick with comebacks and just an all around feisty person. These attributes became problematic when she started school, being that she is never one to back down from a challenge, but in one way or another she always came out on top. Defensive in nature, Angelica set her goals very young to becoming a defense attorney, and is not going to compromise her plans. Angelica has a softer loving side as well, which comes from her deep rooted spirituality. She hates to see people down and will do anything she can to make them feel better. She is bubbly and energetic and never hesitates to share a smile. She now attends C. E. Jordan High School where she is a sophomore.

ANNE MOORE

Rough Draft

Dedicated to my muses. You know who you are. >^ . ^<

This is my rough draft
Because
I haven't edited it.
Knowing me
It will
Have
Not a single error in sight.
Why?
O.
C.
D.
Not really.
But I say that.
Yes.
Hot chocolate.
Sugar.
Glorious sugar~
Hyper.

Hyper~
Hyper as hell~!
Alliteration is your friend
But polysyndeton isn't.
Polysyndeton? What the crap izzat?
"Frequent repetition"
And
"of the connective"
And
"in successive words,"
And
"phrases,"
And
"or clauses"
I learned that
In A.P. Latin.
Catullus
Is
Evil.
Litotes,
By the way,
Are not an un-dumb thing.
Litotes
"the expression of an idea
By the denial of its opposite"
For
Example
"Catullus is
Not
An
Un-insane
Poet"

This bothers me.
Ever noticed
How
MS Word
Capitalizes
The beginning
Of
Every
Line,
Whether
Or
Not
You tell
It
To?
Drives me crazy,
Ya know?
This is
My mind.
Welcome to my world.
Would you like me to show you to the exit?
If you don't escape
Now,
You may never escape.
I have to leave now,
So I'll leave you
With
This
Parting thought:
Muahahaha.

Analysis

I wrote this piece, honestly, because I didn't like what I'd been planning on submitting. I typed it up on the spur of the moment. I didn't know what to write, and I had already written the words "Rough Draft", so I figured, "Hey, why not call it 'Rough Draft'?" From there, I began rambling. I'm ridiculously picky about grammar, and rarely find serious errors when I go back over my work. As someone who's been known to agonize for half an hour over whether I should say, "Blinking his bright green eyes in surprise, he turned slowly on the spot to regard the other man," or, "He blinked his bright green eyes in surprise, turning slowly on the spot to regard the other man," I tend to take my writing style rather seriously. Thus, I started this piece writing about how ridiculous I am about grammar. A chance example of alliteration, however, caused me to stray deep into the land of Latin rhetorical devices.

At that point, MS Word's incessant need to capitalize every other word drove me to rant about that for a few lines. Really, this poem is simply an example of what happens when you combine Anne, sugar and a computer. I ramble, with no purpose whatsoever. This poem actually offers a rare look into the inner workings of my mind - and a very good example of why it's never a good idea to try to understand the inner workings of my mind.

ANNE MOORE *has lived in Durham all of her life. She's gone to the same church for all of her life, and joined her youth group the instant she was old enough. Anne is an otaku. An otaku is, essentially, a geek obsessed with anime, manga and Japanese culture in general. She draws herself making comments on her papers, but she draws herself with cat ears and a cat tail. This is, in fact, Anneka, her alter-ego/avatar/character. Anne does not, in real life, actually possess feline features. Currently, she's participating in National Novel Writing Month, and by the time this is published, she may have actually succeeded in writing a novel! Anne also has ADHD and tends to ramble a lot, as in this biography. Anne actually possesses magical powers, and, in fact, has the ability to relate anything at all to her fandoms. Truly, this girl is an oddity.*

SHAWN MORGENLANDER

Selected Prose

The Sky Watchers

The roof of an apartment building, slightly taller than those surrounding it. It is a starry fall night, windy, but not too cold. There is a door leading to the staircase upstage L.

A girl, about age 15, is in her pajamas, lying down R on a flannel blanket, gazing at the sky. A boy, about age 14, wearing jeans and an enormous, comfortable sweatshirt, clambers up the staircase. The girl looks disgruntled.

He looks over, sensing that he is disturbing her. She remains absorbed, trying to pay no attention.

Boy: Hey.

Girl: *(she is reluctant to engage in a conversation)* Hi.

(Boy wanders downstage, keeping his distance.)

Boy: Do you mind?

Girl: *(pause)* No... you're fine.

(The boy sits down, not directly beside her, but nearby. He too gazes out.)

Boy: They're gorgeous, aren't they?

Girl: *(looking away)* Yes, beautiful.

Boy: I love the stars. They remind me that there's something bigger out there. And I'm a part of it. I belong, you know? *(She is visibly uncomfortable, but he doesn't notice, lost in thought.)* Maybe I'm a nerd, but it's pretty amazing. The sky was never this clear in Seattle... Have you always lived here?

Girl: *(abruptly)* I come out here to think. It's really the only place I can be alone. So, if you don't mind... *(trails off)*

Boy: Oh, I'm sorry. *(Gets up, as if to leave)*

Girl: No, no, don't leave! I mean, I... *(he comes back)* I just don't really feel like talking... right now... *(Meanness of not speaking has outweighed excuses. Boy sits back down and looks directly at her, concerned. Long pause. She sighs. Apologetically)* I've lived here two years. *(Bitterly)* With my mom, and my sister. *(She looks away, distraught, and shivers in the night air.)*

Boy: Are you all right? *(Takes off his sweatshirt)*

Girl: Oh, yeah. Hah... I'm fine. *(She does not sound fine.)*

(Boy offers her the sweatshirt.)

Girl: No, no. I don't even know you. I'm not going to steal your—

Boy: Take it.

(She pushes it away. He takes back the sweatshirt, but keeps it folded in his lap rather than putting it back on.)

Girl: *(frustrated)* I don't need you to feel sorry for me...

(He gazes at her wordlessly and patiently.)

Girl: *(Fumbling)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. I'm such a brat. I don't even know you. Wow, I already said that...

Boy: Do you want to talk about it?

Girl: What?

Boy: Do you want to talk about it?

Girl: Everything's fine, really.

Boy: *(disbelievingly)* OK, fine. So... what are you *thinking* about?

Girl: I dunno. Stupid stuff. Whatever comes to my mind. This is really the only time I get peace and quiet, so I think about the deep things, you know? The ones no one ever talks about at school. Or at home. God, definitely at home.

Boy: Ah. *(Pause. This has been on his mind)* Do you pray?

Girl: Pray?

Boy: Do you pray. When you come up here.

Girl: Oh. Sometimes.

Boy: That's what I'd do back home. I'd go on the roof and pray.

Girl: To each his own, I guess.

Boy: (*pressing on*) Don't you think God is up there?

Girl: (*Sighs, unsure of what to say. She did not ask for this conversation*) I don't know about up *there*. He's *out* there. Somewhere. I dunno. Sometimes I wish I'd pray and he'd just, you know... talk right back at me. But I guess that isn't how it works.

Boy: I'm pretty sure my parents think praying is dumb, so I'd just go away to do it.

Girl: (*The words flow more easily as she lets out what's been on her mind*) They're just always *talking* down there. Always arguing, picking on each other... it's nice to get a moment away.

Boy: I know what you mean.

Girl: (*Quieter*) Praying isn't dumb. I should know. Everything I think about up here is dumb.

Boy: I bet it isn't.

Girl: (*turns to him*) Do you ever think about infinity, or maybe about the people in Africa who see the same moon as you? Or wonder why time passes, and people change, and get old? Or how the person you're going to spend the rest of your life with could be out there looking for you right now?

Boy: Wow.

Girl: See? I told you. Now you think I'm crazy.

Boy: No. That last one.

Girl: Huh?

Boy: About... finding someone. I think about that.

(*Pause. They both look at the sky.*)

Boy: And I think about how weird it is to be human. And have a mind that can do whatever it wants, and eyes that show you the world... and a heart that gets out of control sometimes.... Hah. See? I'm as crazy as you.

Girl: No, you're not. (*They look at each other for a moment*) But you sound like a writer.

Boy: I am one. Well, kind of. Not really.

(*Pause. Girl rises w/ blanket and sits down beside him, motioning for him to sit beside her. Once more, he offers her the sweatshirt, and she takes it.*)

Girl: I'm Amy.

Boy: Ben.

(He extends his hand pompously, and Amy shakes it. Both laugh.)

Scene II

(Amy is waiting on top of the roof, sitting on the blanket. It is a year and a few months later, very late, and much colder than before. She is dressed appropriately. On top of all her layers is Ben's sweatshirt. She is also wearing a Santa Claus hat, and another sits beside her under a tiny Christmas tree. Also underneath it is a wrapped gift. She is sipping from a coffee cup of hot chocolate.)

She takes her cell phone from her pocket and checks it for what is obviously about the thirtieth time. It rings, and she hastily answers it.)

Amy: Ben! Where are you? You just got in? What is it? Come on, tell me. Ben... are you crying? Will you meet me on the roof, at least? ...Please? I have your Christmas present. All right. I'll be here. *(Hangs up.)*

(Stands up, rubbing her arms in the chill, and walks to the other side of the stage, looking out.)

Jesus, it's cold.

(Ben enters. He is not dressed near warmly enough—he has on winter boots with pajama pants, and an undershirt with a heavy jacket. He looks completely distraught, and simply stands at the doorway to the staircase. Amy rushes over to him, concerned)

Amy: Ben, you'll freeze! *(She leads him over by the tree, where she tucks the blanket around him.)* Here, have some hot chocolate. *(She offers the mug.)*

Ben: I'm really not hungry. Or thirsty. I just...

Amy: Ben, what happened in the hospital? *(She shoves the other Santa hat over Ben's ears in an attempt to warm him, very aware of the awkwardness of the situation.)*

Tell me what's going on. I have never seen you like this.

Ben: *(shivering)* Everything went wrong.

Amy: Ben. You're scaring me.

Ben: Mom lost her baby, OK? Well, her babies.

Amy: *(shocked, breathless)* What? Your little sister?

Ben: They were twins. Stillborn. A girl and a boy.

Amy: You mean you would have gotten... your little princess AND your little partner in crime...

Ben: It doesn't matter. It's over now. Nothing matters, really.

Amy: Ben. You've got to pull yourself together. There are people that love you... Your dad, your mom... and me...

Ben: Pull myself together? My mom is still in the hospital. They don't know if she's going to make it, Amy. I wanted to stay with her. But Dad made me come home...

Amy: *(concerned)* Ben...

Ben: *(Gets up and begins pacing)* Amy, my mom and I are different from you and yours. We... I don't know, we have our fights, but... she can't just LEAVE me like this. She's the only mom I have...

Amy: *(abruptly)* I think I can understand.

(Ben stops his pacing)

He was the only dad I had.

(Ben looks down in humiliation, remembering what Amy has told him before about her father.)

Ben: Amy, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. *(Sits down beside her)*

Amy: I know I have a stepfather now. But that doesn't mean I miss him any less. *(Sighs, tries to detach and help Ben)* Don't worry about it, Ben. We all have our issues, I guess. I'll pray for your mom.

Ben: *(eyeing the Christmas tree)* I'm not really sure why... or if... I believe in any of that anymore.

(Amy blinks, confused.)

God. I'm talking about God. I mean, "deck the halls" and all that, but he hasn't seemed to be around here much lately.

Amy: *(grimly)* Well then, I guess you aren't really in the mood to open any Christmas presents.

Ben: I don't know. If I have to... *(lost in thought)* Did you say you loved me?

Amy: (*The question seems very random.*) Of course I do. (*Ben looks surprised*) Come on, Ben. We've met on the roof every week since last September. You're my best friend.

Ben: Oh.

Amy: What's wrong with that?

Ben: Nothing. Never mind.

Amy: Tell me, Ben. You know you can tell me anything.

Ben: Not some things.

Amy: (*impatiently*) Like what? You're sitting here dying, and there's really nothing I can do about it. Can't you at least get some of the weight off your chest and make me feel productive?

Ben: (*sarcastically*) Oh, well, when you put it THAT way...

Amy: (*gentler*) Here. (*Tucks blanket around him again*) I guess you're just not in the mood for talking. (*Gathers up the present, gets ready to leave*)

Ben: Or maybe... I could just tell you how I feel about you.

Amy: What?

Ben: What's the point of keeping it a secret? (*Puzzled, Amy returns and sits down by him.*) Yeah. You know what? You're right. You don't know when you're going to lose someone. So what's the use in leaving things unsaid? I should have told my mom I loved her. And so now I'll tell you that I

love you. *(There is a long pause; Amy is speechless as understanding dawns. Ben withdraws in embarrassment)* Great. Like I needed this night to be any worse.

Amy: No. *(Gently touches Ben's arm.)* You need to sleep. Here, bring your present in and open it later. *(She gets him up and guides him to the staircase, her arm around him the whole time. He helplessly goes along—they have never walked like that.)* Call me first thing tomorrow morning, OK? *(She leans toward Ben and kisses him lightly on the lips before exiting.)*

Ben: *(His eyes widen and he stands dumbstruck)* ...OK.

Scene III

(It is sunset in the spring. Ben climbs the staircase. Yet another year has passed; he is now a junior in high school. He has brought a blanket of his own, along with pencils and a notebook. He makes himself comfortable and begins to write.)

Ben: He wondered... *(erases)* I wondered how I could bring myself to say goodbye. Something as terrifying as goodbye... *(Puts down the notebook. To himself, and the sky)* Goodbye...

(Amy enters. She is wearing a new college sweatshirt. She carries her car keys and Ben's old sweatshirt.)

Ben: ...what a word. *(He looks up at her and smiles.)* Amy! What are you doing here?

Amy: Oh, you know. I just thought I'd drop by. *(He stands up and walks to meet her. They hug warmly)*

Ben: I can't even remember the last time you were on this roof.

Amy: I miss it, believe it or not. My house is nice to hang out in, but it isn't exactly the same. For us artists, anyway. Look at that sunset.

Ben: It doesn't really matter where I am, as long as you're there. *(This comment causes Amy to look serious and nearly say something, but Ben interrupts, light in tone once more)* How'd your Chem final go?

Amy: *(grins)* It was glorious.

Ben: I take full blame.

Amy: All right, Mr. Ego, I know you're a great tutor. You don't need to keep reminding me.

Ben: But you're off to bigger and better things. *(It is too sad to be a joke.)*

Amy: *(Takes a deep breath)* That's what I came to talk to you about, actually. Because we still never really have.

Ben: *(Nervously, trying to keep things light)* What is there to say, Amy?

Amy: Ben.

Ben: You have to do what you have to do. *(He is no longer really arguing, however. He sits back down, and motions for her to do the same.)*

Amy: Of course I do. But it doesn't mean *you* have to... *(catches sight of notebook)* say goodbye.

Ben: *(too resigned to move the notebook away)* I know this is goodbye, Amy. You don't have to sugar-coat things.

Amy: First of all, I haven't even graduated yet, and we still have all summer together.

Ben: Amy, you graduate in a week. And it isn't the same. You'll be getting everything ready to leave.

Amy: I'll always have time for you.

Ben: But what about next fall?

Amy: We've been over this. Three hours isn't that long of a distance.

Ben: Amy, keeping in touch will be hard. I'm so used to having you here. I don't know what I'm going to do with you gone. I can already feel my inspiration draining away...

Amy: *(struggling to stay composed)* Don't be melodramatic. You have plenty of inspiration without me.

Ben: *(as if planning something to write; looking off into the distance)* What's a sunset without the gold in your hair to reflect it?

Amy: Ben— *(she takes his hands and looks directly in his eyes)* Be sensible. Think about this. People make relationships... like ours work all the time... *(chokes back a sob)* It isn't that bad.

(He gives her the same patient, silent look as the first time he met her. She looks away, gathering her thoughts)

This used to be my dream coming true. Now that I got this scholarship... my mom is thrilled. About something I am doing. For probably the first time in my life.

Ben: I know.

Amy: But it isn't just for her. I told you. I'll get to study design and art history and everything I always wanted, for free... It's amazing. *(She gasps for breath)* And I told myself that for months, and tried not to imagine... living without you. But I can't really help it now. *(She breaks down and Ben holds her. She cries on his shoulder)* How am I supposed to just... *get over* my best friend? I'm going to miss you so much... Oh, my God, I'm going to miss you...

Ben: Don't worry. I will always be here for you.

Amy: There will never be another Ben.

Ben: You are always my Amy. *(She lifts up her head, and he wipes her tears)*. Now, I have something for you... IF you promise not to cry anymore. There's plenty of time for that at graduation.

Amy: *(Beginning to smile)* All right, deal.

Ben: I'll be right back. *(He runs down the staircase. While he is gone, Amy picks up his notebook and reads what he has written, then flips a few pages back. She buries her head in her hands, threatening to lose her composure again, but snaps back up as he returns.)* Ah-ah-ah, did I see crying?

Amy: No, No, of course not. *(Another small smile)*

(Ben sits down on the blanket with Amy, his arm around her, and hands her a jewelry box. She opens it to reveal an exquisite silver ring.)

Ben: It was my grandmother's. Don't worry, Mom gave me permission.

Amy: It's... it's beautiful, it's...

Ben: Something to take with you. But for God's sake, you had better take that old sweatshirt too.

(Amy half-sobs, half-laughs as she looks up at Ben and takes his face in her hands. They kiss.)

CURTAIN

Snapshot

There he was, all over some nameless chick, for what must have been the fourth time this year. The image flashed into my head yet again before I pushed it out and emotionlessly continued packing my open suitcase, which lay open on our—my—his—bed. This was it. It was certainly too late for “Give me another chance,” and “I never meant to hurt you” had reached its expiration date as well.

I tried to control my shaky breathing, repeating *this isn't the first time this has happened, he is bad for you, you warned him about this, there's no turning back now, you've made the right decision* in my mind. I heard the door downstairs open and froze for a moment. I hadn't prepared for that.

You warned him. No turning back.

With new resolve, I opened the top drawer of my dresser and took out a few more pairs of underwear. The doorknob jiggled. No! He couldn't see me

with—underwear! I hastily shoved them back in, shutting the drawer, and busied myself with taking a few shirts out of the next one.

I turned to the suitcase. He was right beside me.

“What are you doing?” he hoarsely asked. His eyes were shadowed. He looked completely exhausted.

It was a look of remorse I’d seen before.

“Can’t you tell?” I said shortly, keeping my face turned away as I passed by him on the way to pack the shirts.

He slouched back, eyes still burning into me. “I mean, I think so, but...”

“It should be obvious,” I cut in, maybe a little more harshly than I’d meant to. My eyes automatically, almost apologetically, flicked to his.

He is bad for you.

I quickly averted them, trying to blink back their familiar sting. Barely able to see the bed for my rising tears, I started shoving shirts into my suitcase a little more urgently. I had to get out of there.

“You shouldn’t.” He was facing the mirror now, the eyes of his reflection making contact with mine. This time I held his gaze for a few excruciating seconds.

“I know,” I mumbled, turning my back and shying away to my bedside table before he could see a tear. I made the mistake of picking up that old picture of us—that picture of the beautiful, sickeningly sweet summer when we met. For a second, I stood contemplating. Dare I pack it and take even one single shred of this man with me?

He noticed my second of weakness. “I mean—I really wish you wouldn’t.” Wouldn’t take the picture? Oh. Wouldn’t... leave. For the first time, he turned to face me directly. I quickly set the photograph back down.

Don’t look. Don’t look.

This time I managed to avoid meeting his eyes as I moved with purpose back to the dresser. “You should have thought of that,” I said steadily.

He stepped out to counter me, blocking my path. The audacity! “Is this because of what I did?”

Even though I knew what he meant—because of what he did *today*—a million sarcastic responses immediately burst into my head like champagne bubbles. *No, it's because my grandmother in North Dakota is sick. No, it's because Harvard Law finally accepted me. No, it's because I'm actually a werewolf. Of course it's because of what you did, you idiot.*

But at this point his tears rivaled my own. He was sobbing. I'd never seen that idiot—that man—so emotional. It was almost like he was human. Oh, who was I fooling? I knew he was human. Like a coward, I watered down my reply.

“Partly yes... mostly no.” Some truth. No, all. This decision was for *me*—not him. I surprised myself by laughing bitterly once or twice at the sheer absurdity of the whole situation, of the games we play. Shaking my head, I started to turn away.

He lay his hand on my upper arm. The touch tingled dangerously and spread until it had completely rooted me to the floor.

Why, why, why did you have to do that?

I couldn't get that stupid photograph out of my head. We'd been standing just like this—only our other hands were intertwined, and there were no tears, only movie-star smiles brushed with sunshine. Had that ever really happened? Could it happen again? Though I was disgusted with myself for it, I couldn't help imagining how my hand would feel in his now...

“Can I make it up to you... somehow?” he said quietly, breaking my reverie. So, so naïve—but it didn't matter. We were conversing now. I'd let him in. He had won some victory, however tiny.

“I very much doubt it,” I promptly replied after another sardonic laugh. If he wanted to talk like old buddies, fine. I'd tell him what he deserved to hear. But no way would he get in the way of my packing. Three more shirts to go... his hand slid to mine and caught it before I could get away entirely. I set my jaw and kept my focus in the opposite direction, toward the suitcase, refusing to let him pull me back... but the picture on the table right beside it, the picture glimmered back at me...

“Stop doing that and really listen to me,” he said, a little strength coming back into his voice.

Oh my God. He still thought that caramel-sweet baritone voice could call the shots, even when he had everything to lose and nothing to gain—except maybe another cheap hot mama. The image helped me. “You don’t understand ‘no,’ do you?” This time I yanked free and the shirts found their way into the suitcase. I zipped it up.

“I just asked you to listen,” he replied. But it was finished. I flew to the bedside table one more time and grabbed the summer photo—then, after a final searching glance, set it back down forcefully. The thing caused more trouble than it was worth.

He caused more trouble than he was worth.

Well aware of the risk to my fragile sanity, I was the one who did the touching now. I gripped his shoulder and looked him in the eye one final time: “I said no. That’s it.”

The door slammed behind me. I should have been relieved. But the fact that both of us would still be here, in this town, in this state, on this earth, existing together, was too uncomfortable for me to bear.

Analysis

Being able to flex my creativity in my writing again has been so much fun. I was apprehensive of playwriting at first—mostly for fear that I would lack inspiration—but after giving it a try I look forward to delving deeper into the field. I think it’s my acting background that has given me such a fascination with dialogue and the nuances of how people communicate with each other. Ironically, though, I didn’t exactly write the dialogue itself for the second piece. It’s based on a skeleton script that we worked with at my acting class in Raleigh. We were given only the lines with no direction or situation, and we had to stage them in a unique context. One of the situations I used was a woman packing to leave an unfaithful man. A class “starter” gave me the opportunity to further develop this situation. The piece was both a playwriting

and a directing exercise for me—not only did I detail the characters’ actions, but I also got to provide their thoughts.

I am obliged to three parties for all my writing work: my family, who taught me how to love, my theatre teachers, who taught me how to live, and Andrew Srebro, who continues to teach me how to laugh. It was mainly the latter’s fault that I took this class, and so even though none of my pieces are of the sort that he would voluntarily read, I owe each to him in some way.

SHAWN ALYSSA MORGENLANDER *was originally terrified to take creative writing, as her last experiences with it were back in about sixth grade; however, it quickly became her favorite class. After all, when else in the day can a Jordan student sit in a dimly lit armchair and read melodramatic free verse for an enthusiastically snapping audience? Shawn is sixteen years old and has lived in Durham all her life. Her very first acting was in the fourth grade—she played Professor McGonagall in Harry Potter and got to yell at people onstage. From that moment, she was hooked. Since then she has developed a passion for musical theatre, and plans to major in it. Shawn attended Catholic school from kindergarten through eighth grade, and believes that those years made her who she is today. She is the oldest of four and relishes her position of power. Shawn agrees with Neil Gaiman when he wrote that inside every single person are “unimaginable, magnificent, wonderful, stupid, amazing worlds... hundreds of them. Thousands, maybe...” and she lives by the philosophy that those worlds, and those people, should be discovered, encouraged, and loved.*

JOYCELINE MWANGI

Selected Poetry

A kiss to heal all wounds

Nothing has been the same,
Nothing has been right
Ever since that hot summer day
No feelings seem true
Ever since that day
I just don't feel the same

They say I need medication
For this sadness and pain
They say I need to see someone "QUICK"
And you know what,
They just might be right.

One thing they don't know,
Is that my medication can't be prescribed.
You're the only one with this drug,
That gives me the best high of any other

No one else can do what you do best,
You're my surgeon
To fix this shattered heart.

I lay here,
Ribs cracked wide open,
Fragile heart exposed,
In the safest hands its ever known.

Oh sweet nurse,
Begin the operation
Fix what's been broken
Heal what's not right
Bring this heart back to life
Let me be whole again,

Your kiss is my medication
Your love is my cure

My Kind

Music on the breeze outside my window,
to which an accident part of me responds,
hips swaying, fingers snapping
This is not the voice of my father's people.
My hands are the hands of my grandmother
care worn, full of knowledge of spice.
these legs are my mothers
ankles wrapped around the white legs of
a wooden chair, brown kitchen
painted cupboards, brown stew on the stove.
My childhood is that of long summer days
walking to the corner store for soda
chasing the bells of a Kenyan pineapple truck

Eating lard-filled pink frosting cookies
coating my tongue, delighting the senses
I am the hope of three generations
searching for the American dream
brown skin passing for acceptance
on paved golden roads. Longing
For the taste of smoked sausages, a secret history

Don't Go

The world is comin to an end
but the sky is still blue
and as long as that stays the same, I'll be here for u.
You came into my life
and you made me fall in love
now i wanna be your main girl
without the push and shove
I hate when we argue
it makes me angry and sad
but i know it's not you
it's the past relationships i've had
I want u to always love me
but i know i sometimes make it hard
when i do things that's not of me
I feel u put up a guard
U are my fairytale come true
you make my heart glow
I want to stay with you
so please don't go
I would give up my world
and give u my all
I would turn "I" plural

as long as we never fall
I give u my heart
as long as you take care of it
it will only survive
if u promise to love it
You put up wit my bull
even though our patience runs low
but with love our hearts are full
with room enough to grow
You give me reason to wake
you give me reason to shout
I'm like a fat kid with cake
you, i jus cant do without
My feelings may not come out in words, but there is one thing i do
know.....
My heart belongs to you, so please don't go.

Analysis

Poetry has never been my cup of tea, because I never really thought I would put words to rhyme and work well together like others do. But ever since Mr. Albright made us write poetry in class, I realized that I may not be so bad at it after all. I never really liked to write poems, I just liked to read what others have wrote. The poem titled "A Kiss to Heal all Wounds" came from my past relationship. It was one relationship in particular that all these emotions came from. He made me feel weak and made me feel like I could depend on him for anything. So he spoiled me pretty much, and I got used to it, so it was kind of hard for me to let go of something and someone I really cared about. I love my country and mostly everything about it, so the poem "My Kind" came from the things I miss. I remember when I was walking in the town, where they sold everything in the street. Everybody got excited when a pineapple truck full of pineapples rolled by because those pineapples tasted so good. Basically I was talking about everything I missed about

Kenya. The last poem, “Don’t Go” basically came from my friends and my past and recent relationships. I wrote down what most of them say to their boyfriends or what we’re feeling inside but we never want to tell our boyfriends. Pretty much what the teenage relationship is all about. No one really knows, but in our mind we think we do.

*Nice, bubbly, outgoing, spontaneous, joker are just a few adjectives that describe **JOYCELINE MWANGI**. Joyceline is a 17 year old senior at Jordan High School. She was born and raised in Kenya but she moved here when she was about 9 or 10 years old. Joyceline enjoys reading Zane books because they keep her interested but she mostly just likes hanging out with her friends. She values family, friendship, trust. She was brought up to treat people with respect and treat them just like you would want them to treat you. Joyceline looks up to her sister Olive and tells her everything that goes on with her life. She is her best friend in the whole world. Joyceline enjoys helping others and giving back to the community through church. She hopes in the future her career will help her accomplish that. She also enjoys traveling. So far she has been to Mexico, Dubai, and the Bahamas. She hopes she will get a chance to travel to other great places in the future.*

BONNY OKAFOR

This I Believe

I believe that it's no mistake when you first meet that one you love you would think she just came from the sky above. I believe to find true love you must start by figuring a place where you feel comfortable this could be your school the mall or really anywhere it's a hard job when looking for love. When you a meet a girl find out some qualities about her, see if both of you have something in common. This is not finding true love walking to the corner store and looking at a girl who's half dressed with pumps on looking dirty. You will not find love there you really can't predict when love is going to come. You can give yourself better chances by girls you meet take time to get to know them don't rush in say she not the one for me because she could be your future wife hypothetically speaking. When you finally find the love of your life cherish moments y'all spend together but start off to see if she's the one. Ask her random questions just to get her mind thinking. Remember to ask her things to see if both of you have the same thing in common if you know that she's the other counter part to your soul then you basically found your love the next step is to keep her and whatever you can to make it work because love is hard work remember my beliefs and you should be good. That's why I believe that there's no mistake when you first meet the one you love.

Analysis

The reason I picked this particular piece was because it meant a lot to me because when you're looking for love these are some steps you could follow. This was a piece I wanted the class to see because I know a lot of us think we've found love. But what really makes us love that person all the answers are in my piece. I can definitely say the love I found wasn't what I was interested in. We both weren't compatible and at times we agree and disagree on different reasons so we knew it was going to work. It does take time finding that one you love. You just have to give time and remember the tips And you should be good.

BONNY OKAFOR *is someone who you can count on in any situation you ask his two parents also his little annoying sister. They know that they raised a good son to the right thing his parents wanted Bonny to start in a private school known as Cresset Christian Academy this would be his home from 1st grade to 8th grade. He really liked it until he wanted to experience new things and start high school somewhere else. Bonny decided he would start at Jordan High and also he could play soccer and tennis for them he always had a strong work ethic in life. He saw life as this: that you should live everyday as if it was your last he sometimes endured racism while in middle school. He was the number one player on the tennis team and continued to be all year round and the number two guy was always envious of him. The person's mom was you could say the manager of team providing for us etc. At the end of the year when giving awards for the MVP of tennis it was given to the number two guy. This was a big shock to Bonny and his family. The coach later told him that since the mom helped out it was better to give it to her son. Those words stayed with him even till now. They saw a black man who was beating them at their own game; it made him feel good, though. He always bounced back strong and still to this day is still continuing his strong work ethic in tennis, soccer and whatever life brings at him.*

CASEY OLYNICK

Walls

The white walls surround me; I am unable to be free. Being watched constantly, Cameras scan each door making sure we're not trying to leave. I'm so scared when those evil thoughts come, how evil they are. I'm only eleven, I don't want to think, just listen and talk to these white coated people. As I try to go to sleep in my room by myself the door opens, the hallway light on. I get the thoughts coming in my head I'm scared so I cry, I get a nurse to help me sleep and fight the nightmare from affecting my improvement here.

The first night here I was driven by two cops who thought I was really dangerous. They almost put handcuffs on me. I remember I was so cold and tired I just wanted to sleep. I was so alone; it was late, maybe 2 am, we were driving far away to that place. I wanted my mommy she was driving right behind me in her van. I was hoping she would stay with me but they wouldn't let her.

I cried when we got there, I didn't want her to leave but really I was too tired to protest. They searched my things for strings and things I could hurt myself with. All I wanted was my mommy. The nurse showed me to my room, I could see inside the dark rooms where bodies were sleeping as I walked by. I didn't want my mom to leave; I wanted her to be with me the

whole time. I needed her comfort to know I loved her and I didn't mean to think those bad things.

Pretty soon she had to leave and told me she loved me and would be back on visiting day. She tucked me in and I soon fell asleep. I was exhausted but I slept in the cold room with the bars on the windows, so tired from having doctors ask me questions all night. The next morning I slept in late and didn't get up, the nurse brought me breakfast. I didn't eat much but I was told I had to go to group therapy when I was done in that room with the toys and TV. I didn't want to go to the group therapy with all those crazy people, apparently I wasn't one to talk, though.

I'm so scared here; the floors are so cold; I wish I had my blanket and my doll. I get up to walk down the hall, and through the window I see children sitting on plastic couches and chairs. I go in the room and sit down in a chair as far as I can get from everyone else. I'm not one of them, I'm not, and this is a mistake. Everyone looks pretty normal; I thought crazy people were supposed to look crazy.

A women comes in the room and sits down; she faces us and starts talking to everyone. I refuse to talk so instead she asks everyone the same question, "Why are you here?" she asks everyone in a circle. I realize she saves me for last and I don't really have much of a choice. I tell them all with my eyes on the ground hands clasped that I had scary thoughts and sometimes wanted to kill people. No one cringed or laughed; they just looked at me. I realized we were all alike in a way; we all had issues that needed to be worked on.

After group therapy, people start talking to me, and strangely I'm thrilled, I won't be going through this alone. The next couple of days get easier and easier as I make friends and talk to my therapist. Being in the enclosed environment makes me feel safe like I can't do anything to hurt anyone. The same routine everyday helps make me feel at ease.

My mom comes to see me every visitor's day. She brings me clothes, and my blanket! I drew a bunch of pictures, and hung them around my bed. My mom was so happy to see me and I was thrilled to see her. I told her about

what I did everyday, which is the same thing but I told her my schedule. Breakfast, therapy, class, art, lunch, quiet time and finally, free time.

My favorite part was the movie after dinner, but I didn't like the bedtime. The therapy is really helping and I'm learning to push out the bad thoughts and think about the good ones. I found out I have bipolar, OCD and some other stuff. I am so glad I am finally on medication to help. I hate having OCD; I have to do things over and over again until I do it perfectly. Like opening a door, if my hand is on the knob wrong I have to start all over again. It's with everything, though, not just that. Now I can control it, it's awesome. I don't really understand bipolar except that it makes me happy and okay one minute then the next I'm depressed and upset.

I can't wait to go home but I've made a really good friend. She has worse issues than I do, she lives in a homeless shelter with her mom. I am so lucky to have my mommy. I've been here for two weeks now; we get up every morning to take our meds,

They're supposed to help me control my thoughts. I'm going home today, I am so excited! I'm finally free.

Analysis

The reason I wrote about my time in the hospital was because that experience help shape who I am today. Now when you read this story you probably thought this was a made up story or that the person who wrote it was crazy. Very true, everyone's crazy in their own way.

I'm not sure why I decided to share something so personal and scary with people I don't even know, but for some reason I just did. I didn't give all the details of the everyday step by step of what I went through, just the main and most needed facts. I talked a lot about my mom in my story because she was and still is the main support in my life.

I didn't mention that while I was there that I prayed a lot and got closer to God and learned more about myself. This is always important. I don't know how my story will benefit you but I hope it did somehow.

*What to say about this complicated, crazy girl, Casey? Well, **CASEY OLYNICK** was born on May 16, 1991 in Durham, NC . She was adopted by her awesome mom Sharon when she was 2 ½. Casey has been through a whole heck of a lot, but we're not going to get into that now are we? Casey would be nothing without her over protective, OCD mom. Let's see, Casey has been to six different states; the only medal she ever won was for soccer. Casey's main focus in life is God, and living for him. God is always there for her when she needs him, through everything he leads her to the light. Casey should be a junior, but no, she had to go and fail two grades. Not cool. I know, also not very fun. One of the other strongest loves in her life is for animals, all kinds and for friends and family. Let's see what else, well Casey wants to be a writer and a Vet, but it's hard to choose, so she's going with the flow. Some of the coolest things Casey has ever done is going white water rafting in Oregon, Tubing and not falling off for a while (it hurts; don't fall), Riding on the front of a speedboat, and going to the Fray concert and getting a shirt signed. Many more cool things but you can't handle them all, joking. For Casey's last few words I'm sure she would like to say, I love you to her wonderful mom!*

RUTH PENADO

Selected Prose and Poetry

The Rainiest Day

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't erase that cold, rainy night from my memories. The moment when the first tear fell from her eye was the only picture in my mind at dawn's break and at night's fall. The soft whimpers she let out between breaths wrung in my ear. Those hateful words she screamed in my face, "I HATE YOU", could never let me forget the pain I caused her, never. The sight of her watering eyes glistening in the moonlight, seeing her standing there shivering in the rain and not being able to put my arms around her gave me chills. I remember working up the strength to pull up into her driveway, and calling her to tell her I had arrived. It always amazed me how quickly she was able to retire from whatever she was doing just to greet me with open arms. The smile she wore lit up the sky brighter than the moon ever could and one look into her hazel eyes made me feel warm inside. I had come to her more serious than ever before. I had no idea how, but I had to let her know that I had been cheating on her with her best friend Sophie.

My mind wasn't focused and my thoughts were swarming with regret. Being with Sophie reminded me of the first time I spilled milk. I did it once and I knew it was bad but somehow it kept continuously happening

unexpectedly, without even giving it any thought. She was like the drug I never had. I knew she was bad for me but no matter how I tried to stop I just kept going back. I couldn't get enough, I was addicted to her. We were out one night partying and shots were being swallowed left and right, one after the next. I couldn't stop but she didn't want me to. She was giving more and more, knowing that I couldn't take it. One thing led to another and I soon found myself lying in a bed, with Sophie on top of me, shirtless and kissing me all over my bare chest. I was completely confused but at the same time I knew exactly what was going on.

I woke up the next morning with a massive headache. It hurt so bad that every time I blinked it felt as if someone was hammering needles into my temple. Amazing enough, I was happy that I had somehow been able to make it safely back to my room. Although the fact that I had no recollection of it frightened me a bit. Thoughts of hatred trailed my mind. I hated myself for not being able to say no, for not even feeling guilty at the moment. I hated Sophie for being sober and completely knowledgeable of her actions, neither one if us was thinking of Jessie at all. I didn't understand how having a girlfriend as amazing as Jessie would make me even want to be anywhere without her. I could see the pain and hurt in her eyes. That was what broke me. It killed me to even think of hurting her, and yet here I was, causing her more pain than anyone ever had before. I always talked about how much I hated cheaters, but I was the biggest one of them all.

The whole time Sophie knew what she was doing. Sometimes I wondered if she did this because she really did **want** me, or if this was just some sick way of getting back at Jessie for always being better than her in everything. My reason wasn't any better, because I didn't have one. Many times I tried to end it, but Sophie just kept pulling me back into her web of lies and I just kept letting her. Though this night was different. I couldn't take it any longer, the guilt in my conscience was driving me insane. I knew that if I told Jessie about being with Sophie, she would hate me forever. I also knew that if she heard it from Sophie herself or anyone else then she would never look at me again.

It seems the rain was pouring harder than it ever had. I told Jessie I was going to be cramming for a chemistry test so she wouldn't call. I found myself lying to her without even knowing it. My true plans for the night involved me being with Sophie. She was the center of it all. She always told me she loved me, and that Jessie wasn't important. Every single time I did it, I felt like shit afterwards. I don't know what kept me going back. This was the final night. I could no longer betray the one who owned my heart. The girl who baked me my favorite macadamia nut cookies for my birthday, the girl who stood in my hospital room for ten hours straight after I fractured my spine due to football. Jessie was the girl of my dreams, someone I would die for, I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her, and there I was throwing it all away. I was finally finished with it all. Even if it cost me the love of my life, I could no longer do it. I was disgusted with myself. I had to call her. *Ring, Ring, Ring...*

"Hello?"

"...Hey Baby"

"Chris?"

"Yeah, its me...what are you doing?"

"Nothing, I thought you were studying?"

"Jessica, I need to talk to you"

"What's wrong babe?"

"I just need to see you"

"Well...come over then...ok?"

"...Hey Jessie?"

"Yea?"

"I love you."

"I love you too Chris."

The drive there felt as if it were the longest drive I had ever taken. I prayed that Jessie would forgive me. I didn't want to lose her but I didn't deserve her. I wouldn't forgive myself, so why could I think that she would? I pulled up into the driveway very slowly. I took a minute to gather myself and with the pounding of heavy raindrops hitting the roof of my car my mind

could not stay focused. I just couldn't find the right words to say, or if there even were any. I had come to her more serious than ever before. I had no idea how, but I had to let her know that I had been cheating on her with her best friend Sophie. All I could think was *Goodbye Jessica, you're going to hate me forever.*

Sticks & Stones

We live in a world based on lies
 Lies we don't want to know exist
 Sticks and Stones lie on the ground--
 Motionless, thoughtless, lifeless
 We are just as sticks and stones
 They break bones, we break bones
 They don't think, we don't think
 They have no purpose--but we have one purpose
 And that is to lie motionless and not think
 Why were we put on this earth?

To kill, rape, steal, lie, cheat and deceive?

They say "Sticks and stones *may* break my bones, but words will never hurt me"

--Words hurt me! Words hurt...

When in denial,

When in refusal of true self,

When you don't see you for you,

When you don't let them see you for you

--why hide? At the end of the day,

It is you, who break your own bones,

Using sticks and stones

Analysis

"The Rainiest Day" has to be my favorite writing yet. The reason I am so fond of it, is because it came from right out of thin air. I thought it was very creative, and the fact that I made it from a guys point of view a little more interesting to read, me being a girl, of course. I actually began from a starter and I loved the first couple of paragraphs so much that I had to continue on with it. It doesn't necessarily express any of my personal emotions but some of it was relating to things I have personally witnessed. I felt as though it was very sad and anyone can relate to those emotions whether or not it has been for the same reasons as this scenario. I wanted to write a piece that captured one mood, and that was either sadness or depression. I happen to like writing things of this sort because I tend to find a comfort in this tone of theme. It is so easy for me to write things like this as opposed to happy and joyfully ending stories. I tend to leave my reader with a bit of a cliff hanger but at the same time completely knowledgeable of all important facts in the story. This could be because I, myself have never really been happy in my life until now and experiencing so much sadness and hate could be why I find acceptance in this area of a dark type of writing.

"Sticks and Stones" was a poem that happened to be based on a strong belief of mine. That is, that the world as we know it is destroying itself. I find it humorous to hear people talk about all the different reasons why the world is corrupt, when truly everyone is guilty in their own way. If everyone realized what they were doing, then maybe life could change, but living in society today, it's likely impossible.

RUTH ABIGAIL PENADO *was born on a warm morning in June of 1992. She was born in Durham, North Carolina at Duke Hospital, where she would later be raised. Being the youngest of three children, Ruth never really felt like a part of the family. The neglect and dislike she felt from her older brother and sister made her turn to other things where she could find acceptance. Art and writing are what she loved most. She would sketch drawings that would stay hidden in notebooks, where no one would ever see*

them. Her writing was for her eyes only, and that is the way it was for along time, until Ruth matured and came to find that she was loved by her family and that she no longer had to hide anything. She learned that she could be loved and she could also love back. Hating life wasn't going to solve any problems in her life. She enjoys the company of friends and loved ones alike, and no matter what, she strives for excellence. Ruth has always had big shoes to fill, with her older sister, a beauty and goddess in the eyes of all, and her older brother, the smartest, most intellectual person she has ever known. She always felt as if nothing she ever did was good enough, but she then found the separation between them, where individuality would step in and she would find her calling. Still on a journey to finding herself, Ruth has much to learn and will continue to do so throughout her entire life, and she plans to explore the world while doing so.

SHELBY RIMMLER

Selected Prose and Poetry

The Phone Call

In Memory of Jonathan Bebout

The phone rings. It rings a second time. It rings a third time. It rings a fourth time, and the answering machine kicks in. Julie waits for the caller to leave a message. *It has to be either my mother or a telemarketer*, she thinks to herself as she screens the phone call. The machine's loud tone sounds and the caller's rushed and panicked voice comes on.

"Julie? Julie, are you there?" the voice sobs. "O-oh, I can't do this on the answering machine. Julie, p-please call me back right away when you get this."

Julie scurries over to the phone, panicking too, and drops the bag of Lays potato chips she had been indulging in after losing three pounds in the last two weeks. Julie picks up the phone, hoping that the unidentified sobbing caller would still be on the other end of the line, but all she can hear is the dial tone. After recognizing the sobbing mystery caller's voice to be her mother's, Julie dials the number of her parents' old, sweet town home. The phone hardly rings once this time and her mother answers.

"Helloh?" answers Julie's mother, her nose full of phlegm.

“Mom, it’s me, Julie. What’s wrong Mom?” Julie asks in a concerned, but soothing voice.

“Oh Julie!” she bawls, “Julie, it’s Jonathan. He...He’s-Oh Julie, it’s not good.”

“Mom! Calm down!” Julie’s yelling frightens her distressed mother. “Tell me, what’s happened?” There is a pause before her mother speaks, and Julie begins to perspire.

“He was out driving tonight, and drinking. His blood-alcohol level was above a .10. It’s awful, he was so young.” her voice fades away.

“Mother! Please tell me what has happened to Jonathan!” Julie pleads.

“Julie, he’s...dead!” her mother blurts out this last statement and begins to sob again. Julie’s mind freezes, her whole body freezes. *Jonathan, my nephew? This is the one we’re talking about, right? No, it can’t be him, can it? He was so young, but he was an alcoholic. Twenty-six is so young.* Julie’s mind is now racing with thoughts of utter confusion and denial. Her head begins to spin as she feels herself getting dizzy and her legs start to tremble.

“Mom? I-I’m going to have to call y-you back in a few minutes.”

“Oh Julie,” her mother cries, “Julie, I need you-”, but Julie has already hung up the receiver. She slides down the wall into a sitting position, pulling her knees up to her chest as she does so. Her mind races on and on, *How could this happen? When? Should I call my brother? How long have they known, how long have they been keeping this from me?*

“What will I tell Jacob and Sarah? What will I tell my family?” she mutters to herself and the panic and denial melt away, leaving her with a feeling of terrible sadness and disappointment. The first of many tears to come warmly glides down her face as she stares into a seemingly blank and fearful space.

* * *

The caravan of tiny buses pulls into the church parking lot as Julie waits for her daughter, Sarah, to return from her trip to Busch Gardens. Julie slowly climbs out of the green mini van and walks over to the crowd of other awaiting parents. Not knowing many of them, she is content to stay quiet and

keep to herself. Sarah, drained of all her energy, slouches down onto the asphalt and walks to her mother.

“How was it?” Julie asks in a quiet tone as she presents a weak smile.

“It was great, but exhausting.” Sarah replies. Julie takes Sarah’s bag and the two walk over to the car. Julie stops Sarah when they are out of earshot of the others.

“Sweetie,” she pauses, “Jonathan was killed in a car accident today.”

“What? My cousin?” Those being the only words that Sarah can manage, she throws her arms around her mother. “I’m so sorry,” says Sarah, “I’m so sorry.”

“I know, we’ll get through it.” Julie says as she lets go of Sarah and they climb into the car. Julie looks over at her daughter. All that she can see on the pretty girl’s face is shock, and she tries to imagine what is running through her mind. Finally, it appears. A single tear runs down the side of her cheek. Sarah wipes it away quickly, not wanting her mother to see her cry, but she knows it is too late. She straightens up in her seat.

“So,” Sarah says with a sniff. “How did it happen?”

“Nana said that he was drinking this afternoon and went out for a drive. They say he overcorrected himself when he drifted onto the shoulder and went across both traffic lanes. He went off the road. They say he was thrown out of the car and died on impact.” Julie pauses, “It’s such a sad thing.”

“It is sad. I never realized how serious of an alcoholic he was. I didn’t know him well, but it still makes me feel bad, knowing that such a thing can happen to our family. It’s such an awful thing.”

Julie had never realized how strongly Sarah felt about Jonathan being an alcoholic. She tries hard not to remember the young, spirited boy whom she once taught how to pump on a swing, who had looked exactly like her brother. She tries not to think of her brother and the way he cried to her on the phone earlier that day. All she wants to think about is her daughter and her husband, but she can’t. Her mind drifts back to Jonathan every time she blinks. And as she blinks, more and more, her eyes become moist and tears begin to stream down her face.

Sarah puts a reassuring hand on her mother's shoulder. "Mom, it's going to be okay, I promise."

"I know, sweetie." Julie turns into the driveway and turns off the car's engine. She doesn't move out of her seat. Sarah looks up at her mother with a feeling of empathy and opens the passenger side door. Julie watches as Sarah runs up to her father, Jacob, and embraces him. She sneaks a smile onto her tear streaked face and gets out of the car. She walks up to her husband and daughter and hugs them both.

"I'm going to Virginia tomorrow, for the funeral." says Julie.

"Tell everyone that we're sorry and that we wish we could be there," replies her husband.

"Don't worry, they already know."

"I'm sorry that this happened, honey."

"I know, but we'll make it. We're a strong family. We'll make it through."

Wasted

How could anyone be so **God Damn stupid**?

You make **mistakes** like that and...

BAAM! game over.

Sorry you lost it,

Thanks for playing anyway.

You don't do crap like that.

You don't drink - waste - your life away.

But that's right,

You didn't **waste** you life away,

You **lost** it, and you can't get it back.

I wish you could have seen

What you put them through.

I wish you could have felt **their** hurt,
Their anger,
Their sadness, when **you** screwed up.

You thought drinking would solve your problems?
Well, look at where it got you now.
They went hysterical, temporarily unstable,
At the news of what happened.
You hurt them.
Their hearts were cracked.
You hurt them,
And it can't be taken back.

Thank **God** no one else was hurt.
They say you nearly missed one,
By an **inch**.
You flipped,
Died.
Hurt them, You hurt them deep.
How could **you** be so stupid?

Analysis

This short story, "The Phone Call," is based on a true event. Jonathan was my cousin and died in a car crash the weekend before school started this year. I had been wanting to get my feelings down on paper, but I was also in denial about the fact that this event had really affected me. For a while I had been telling people who asked about how I was dealing with it that I hadn't known him very well, and that it was just a shocking occurrence. This piece has allowed me to finally tell the whole story and how it affected my family without denying the fact that I had been hurt. I based Sarah's character on myself, and she says the line that I repeated many times after the tragedy, "I didn't know him well." I chose to use my mother for the main character and

changed her name to Julie. I felt that she was the one most connected to Jonathan and would have been the best person to have as the primary character. I included the supporting characters Nana (Julie's mother and my grandmother), and Jacob, my father, to help explain the details of the story without making it too confusing by including too many characters.

The poem that I have included, "Wasted," goes along with my story. This was the first piece that I had written about Jonathan's death, and it helped me to clear my head. It is a collection of my negative thoughts and emotions toward him for hurting our family.

SHELBY RIMMLER *was born in Durham, North Carolina on a clear September night. Growing up in Durham has formed her into a hometown girl, now wanting to experience new things in life and expand her horizons. Learning about the different trials of life has given her inspiration to write. Writing is how Shelby lets her emotions, thoughts, arguments, and feelings escape from her head and get out into the open. It allows her to express herself and keep certain thoughts private at the same time. Another way for Shelby to de-stress herself and get rid of overwhelming emotions is by playing tennis. Being born during the U.S. Open tennis tournament, with two tennis playing parents, Shelby was destined for the sport. She is on her high school team at C.E. Jordan High School and feels that high school sports are a great way to meet new people and have a healthy emotional and physical life. Writing and sports have allowed her to manage her time and thoughts in a non-stressful way.*

SNEHA SHAH**A String of Pearls (Excerpt)**

I dedicate this to my parents, without whom I would not be here, Shihan R. and Louise Walter for always being there to listen, and care through the good times and bad.

Chapter 1

Life. What is a teenager of eighteen supposed to make of it, at such a young age? It leads us into such a large spectrum of things, that sometimes it's hard to distinguish the red colors from the green, and therefore, we get lost in the gray and into oblivion.

Annabella was just one of those eighteen year olds, trying to find herself in this world, which she did not recognize as her own anymore. Her life was full of spirals, circles and waves, which always seemed to cause her to stray from her starting point only to find herself back at the same place where she started.

Living in an Indian family that moved to the United States of America in 1973, she was one of those first generation babies who had the privilege to do everything wrong in the eyes of their parents, until they could share with the proceeding generations what the difference was between appropriate and inappropriate behavior for an Indian child. Being an only child, she was so

used to getting bored that it had become a part of her. She did not mind it though. She liked playing alone, and it became a part of her until she could not recognize whether she was getting bored or not.

Annabella was always content when she was with her friends. Even as a baby she would always want to stay out of the house rather than in it, so moving was not the worst thing that could happen to her. She never felt the need to stay in one place because of her friends, because she liked to see new places. She always wrote in a journal that she kept, so that when reading back, she could bring out those small details, like the emotions felt at the time, or remember exactly how it felt writing on that day, to become fully immersed in the prospect of becoming that age again. It's like reading *Antoine de Saint – Exupery's The Little Prince*: unless you can think from the perspective of a child you can't understand what they mean. Through her journal she was able to put down the main things that happened in her life and express her feelings about and toward them.

Chapter 2

Not everyone can say that they have lived in three different countries, been in seven different schools, been in an emergency room fifteen times, and loved every single day of it. Annabella moved to Pune, India, when she was seven, from Durham, North Carolina, USA. Her parents called her Bella for short. Due to her father's job, and need to live some place closer to his parents, they moved to India, but because of Bella's asthma, they ended up living a good twelve hours away anyways, making trips to see her grandmother short and based on vacations. Bella was very shy and didn't always make friends very fast. When she was in Durham, she always stood out as "The Indian girl", and because of the unclear distinction between Native Americans and Indian Americans for six and seven year olds, she was always meant to play the role of Pocahontas, because she had long dark brown hair, skin, the color of mocha, a little button nose, big brown eyes, big lips, and dimples on both cheeks. In India however, she was known as "The American girl", who spoke very, very fast and had a very weird and thick

accent. No one could ever recognize the words that she said, and she would have to repeat them slower and slower for people to understand her. It's amazing how accents are such a universal problem not only in America. Then, there are differences with colloquial English too, depending on where you stay, just like in the Southern states of USA, where they say "ya'll" instead of "you all". In India they will say 'na' for 'right?' or 'yea', and they will mix Hindi and English words to make them "Hinglish". It's amazing how similar and different languages are at the same time.

During Bella's first year in India, things were quite tough, because she didn't have any friends and she was getting used to the different accents and no one understanding her, which can be very rough on a seven year old.

Dear Diary,

First of all, you will not believe this. Mama and Papa are soo mean. They placed me in the second grade again because there wasn't enough room in the third grade, but suddenly an opening came up and they still didn't let me go into the third grade, so now I'm stuck in the second grade. The coolest thing though, is that I got to pick what school I got to go into, because I got admitted into four schools, but I picked St. Mary's, because the Hindi wouldn't count against my grades.

When we went to Hutchings for our interview though, the principle called us in, and there were stuffed animals everywhere and when Papa asked me to sit down, she started yelling, "How dare you ask your daughter to sit down in front of the principle, without her permission, have you no decency"? She was really mean. Then, when we went for my interview at St. Mary's, I kept standing, because I didn't want to get shouted at again, and the principle asked why I was standing and when papa told her what had happened before she hurriedly asked me to sit down and not pay any attention to what the other principal had told me and she said that it must have been to scare me. She was nice though, I liked her. And her daughter studies in America too, so we have that in common. =)

But things are so different here in India na? The people are different and the schools are different. Each class has sooo many children in it, and the schools are divided into girls and boys. And the boys aren't allowed to see the girls when we have lunch and the girls aren't allowed to go to the boy's side. It's so different. I miss all of my friends and reading in the loft. Everything here is so much stricter and the teachers are mean. I love my English teacher though, Mrs. Jugdale, she's really nice and makes sure I am doing alright in class. The classes are so much harder here too. My art teacher is so mean, she shouted at me because I colored outside of the lines and I wasn't coloring in one direction. They are also teaching me how to write in cursive, which is really hard because I can't even spell a lot of the words. And all of the kids here already know Hindi, and had started learning it in the first grade, so I have to learn a lot to be on the same level as them. I'm scared this is going to be a very weird year.

Why do all the girls here have to be so mean though? On the first day of school they all crowded around me and were laughing at me, so what if I don't have the same accent as them? They were so mean. There was this other fat girl, whose name was Shruti, who was pointing into my face and laughing at me. Oh and there are four Shrutis in my class.

Soon Mrs. Jugdale will be choosing who is going to do what for the class play. We're going to be acting out Aladdin. I hope I can play the role of Jasmine. I'm excited. Anyways, I have to go to sleep now, so I will write to you later.

Love,

Annabella

Life seemed so much simpler when Bella was seven. She had her work cut out for her. That year was very hard and tough for her because she was working alone, without any friends and her mom was depressed too, because she was suddenly all alone in a new city. Her mom was not working in India, which was a huge change for someone who had been working for nineteen

years, without breaks. She was alone, because her dad was traveling a lot and his office was in Bombay, which was four hours away, so he would go Bombay for the week and come back on the weekends. Bella's mom took up computer classes and then fashion designing classes to spend some of her time. Bella never saw much of her father, and therefore, missed out on a lot of the father-daughter activities as a child. Her father was trying to start business and was traveling all around Southeast Asia soon, to find new markets.

India is such a huge change for someone who is used to seeing a clean city, with many trees, clear roads, and people driving in their designated lanes and not having big animals in the middle of the streets. Before even landing at the Mumbai airport, one can smell sewage. The airport itself is lifeless, and looks bleak and dull like it has lost its will to stay happy. There aren't any posters on the walls and there are spit marks from chewed tobacco on the bottom foot of the walls. The first thing you see when you get onto the road is just hoards of people everywhere. There are taxis and rickshaws standing in lines everywhere and no matter how late it is, something is always open. Once you leave the boundaries of what you had once thought to be horrible, you wish you were back at that sanctuary and boarding a flight taking you back to where you originally came from. From the inside of your black and yellow taxi, you see a flood faces, that will never be seen again, and you realize that everything is on the opposite side here. They drive on the left side of the road, write in British English and speak in a British accent.

Analysis

This piece is an excerpt from the book that I am writing, *A String of Pearls: A Unique Light which Balances Dark*. It is a fictional piece, but it incorporates many of the sights I have seen and the places I have lived. The basic plot of this story is about a girl, Annabella, whose parents are from India, but live in the USA. They have also lived in India and the United Arab Emirates, so Annabella has been exposed to many different cultures. While everything may appear to be happy on the outside, she faces many conflicts internally about what she wants in life, and with her family. This book is

about one girl's journey through a very unique life where she has to find her own path, breaking away from her traditions and family expectations to become the person she wants to become. I was thrilled to get the idea for this book from my mother and have gained a better grasp on the hardships, good times and unique moments of the past which can never be repeated. From the eyes of Annabella, I was able to enter a world where although she was the most optimistic and bubbly person people knew, she was also hurting inside and dreading the moment when the bell would ring, signaling the end of the day.

SNEHA SHAH, *who is a senior now, and trying to find her path in life, has a concoction of interests. While dancing, painting and reading have been long-term ones, her newfound passions include writing and singing. During her last year of high school, she is writing a book for her creative writing class and is accomplishing one of the items on her list of dreams to make come true. She hopes to go to business school, go into fashion and be able to travel the world as a fashion merchandiser, incorporating different elements from the three different countries which she has lived in, India, Dubai and the USA in to the designs she hopes to one day sell. She can speak four languages and loves learning about new countries and cultures. She always has at least one book with her to read. She loves to read about the evolution of different cultures and religions and loves to read books based on real-life situations. She is a very open-minded, charismatic, and optimistic person.*

AARON SMITH

Selected Poetry and Prose

Anger

Screaming at no one
No one but yourself
Hope is lost and despair is yet to come
The world is bad, the world has done you wrong

Why does this happen?
Ripping and crumpling paper, you clutch your head
The pounding pain is relentless but nonexistent
Anxiety has overtaken you but despair is to follow

There is hope if you lose your anger
But you must not let go of fury
Why are things not different?
And despair has come

Incoherent

My mind lays empty and bare devoid of thought
All consciousness is lost and what remains has no merit at all
I am empty
Without passion, without ambition, without thought
Good memories fly through my mind but nothing stays
Those glimpses of evil fill my mind but the shadow of the man stands
formless

He stands wide eyed with gaping mouth beckoning to me
Come, come he says and I shall consume all that is you
You have no further need, no will to do for all has been done
All that is for you has been exhausted
You can not help to make this place better for those in it
You have no more will so self improvement is futile
Happy, you thought the experiences past have all faded
Emptiness overtakes him as he rides through the dark
What is purpose without direction?
Sleep overtakes him for he is no longer good
He drown in the tide of thought, that sea that he rode over but now sinks
into

The colors fly and the patterns emerge from nothing
“Is anything normal?!” He cries as the banshee wails
But silence has fallen once again.

I Believe

I believe that gravity is real, and I believe in everything that people can logically justify. Gravity is real, except for when I'm bored and convince myself that Newton was wasting his time when he invented the idea, had he never sat around and mass produced gravity for the planet, I could float about as I pleased. If something is solid, you can't pass through it, except for

windows. Everyone knows in their heads that if you put your hand up to a window you will sit with your hand stopped by a piece of glass, but if you think with your gut (as the famous Steven Colbert advises us to do) you will realize that the window is clear. Air is clear. If you can stick your hand through air, you can stick your hand through a window, or walk through a sliding glass door, for that matter.

I believe in a set of morals. There are far too many of these moral ideas for me to discuss them all, primarily because I remember them as they are applicable. I believe that anger is a negative emotion. It shows weakness in people, and when people get angry, they act irrational. Putting it shortly, angry people piss me off. I believe that women are sexist too, so it's hypocritical when sexist women complain about male sexism. All women make more sexist statements than men. I believe that people wouldn't be nearly as annoyed by emo kids if they would admit, even partially, that they were emo, and stop claiming that they were unique. Simply having hair in my eyes doesn't make me emo, you should stop trying to label me.

I believe that people have a desire to be good. I believe that everyone strives to live up to their moral standards, even if that moral standard is a hedonistic desire for material gain. This doesn't mean that I believe in moral relativism, but I accept the fact that there are many different moral standards. Because of this, I do not believe that one can truly be happy unless truly good morals are upheld, even if only in part.

I believe that if people had just let Hitler paint, the world would be a much brighter place. I believe that murder is wrong in most cases and in the cases where people deserve to die it isn't right for the state to murder them. I believe that Pen and Teller are right about most things on their show *Bullshit*. I believe that marijuana should be legalized because unless someone can prove that it is more harmful than alcohol, cigarettes, and McDonald's food. I do not believe we should illegalize fast food. That's ridiculous. I believe that if McDonald's took advantage of their amazingly awesome Scottish name and sold haggis, people would have a greater respect for them, even if no one ate that haggis. I believe that people would like Christianity a lot more if

Christians focused less on homosexuality and more on the parts of the Bible that talk about not judging people or getting angry. I believe that if history classes taught students to use the market to express their morality, people would have a more hopeful outlook on life.

I have many beliefs. I have moral beliefs that I hold very important. I have simple beliefs that are more opinions when you get down to it. The beliefs that govern the majority of my actions are pointless ideas (like the belief that attaching a clothespin to one's pinky finger could give one a new appreciation for their body) that don't have much significance.

Analysis

The following analysis tells of the desired effect/impact that I hope these pieces may have; however, if any reader finds alternate meaning in any of these pieces I hope they will completely disregard my interpretation. It is my belief that the meaning an author ascribes to a piece is far less important than the meaning the reader ascribes to it. So if, by some stroke of luck, you find meaning that I did not originally intend to put in this piece, it isn't my place to take that from you; I only hope that you found some meaning in these pieces. In short, this analysis is meant to clarify the meaning of these pieces if you could not find any, and to tell of the meaning I intended to convey if you are curious to what the intended purpose of these pieces was.

This first piece (*Anger*) was written late at night in an attempt to capture the feelings of anxiety I felt while realizing that I couldn't think of any meaningful accomplishment I had achieved that would be worth writing about. This piece is supposed to sum up these feelings of remorse mixed with simple mental exhaustion. The second piece (*Incoherent*) was written within an hour of the previous piece and was meant to convey the despair that ensues shortly after the anger described in the previous poem.

The final piece (*I believe*) was written in three parts with each part aiming to convey a different idea. The first two paragraphs simply outlined a few ideas and ironic phrases that I felt were unique to me. The third paragraph gives more serious ideas that I feel are the foundation of what makes me the

person that I am; the fourth paragraph applies aspects of my belief system to various situations in the hopes that this will give a clearer picture of my beliefs than simply stating the ideas behind these statements. The final paragraph simply states the bearing my beliefs have on my actions.

AARON SMITH *is a sophomore at Jordan high school. He moved to North Carolina from Massachusetts when he was seven and he has never been to one school for more than two years. Aaron lives close to Jordan with his three younger brothers and one older brother. Aaron enjoys nature and is involved in the Jordan environmental club. Aaron looks forward to third period everyday. He views creative writing as a good way to relieve stress in an otherwise busy day. He tends to blend in, and if you saw him in the hall you probably wouldn't notice anything particularly strange about him. He lives a relatively normal life, but it would be difficult to find a single social label that could fit Aaron well. Despite his constant efforts to blend in, he doesn't seem to have what it takes to just lay low and remain unnoticed. Aaron is a relatively good student.*

CJ STARKEY**A Hero Falls with the Leaves (Excerpt)**

Adulis became overwhelmed with joy as he stared at the immense amount of cuisine begging to be consumed. He sat at the table in utter amazement, staring at the vast amount of steaming food resting on the table. He could smell the different spices and "secret ingredients" his mother had recently added to the variety of foods. As soon as prayer was over, Adulis hands darted out across the table grabbing ridiculous amounts of food and dumping it onto his platter. His mother slapped his hand away just as he reached the bowl of yams.

"Adulis, do you have to be so monstrous at the table," she asked as she stared at the mountain of food on his plate.

"Let the boy be, he has to feed the hunger of a trained warrior," Umar replied proudly.

Adulis felt the happiness overcome him similar to his satisfaction with completing his first home meal in what seem like an eternity. He indulged the last bread roll in the basket and sat motionless at the table, with his hunger satisfaction simply flowing through his body down to his toes.

"Mother I want to be a better warrior than anyone in the history of the Aksum empire," he began slowly happily starting a conversation with his

worried mother. She has never thought of the dangers of her son's destiny, his new dream, she wanted him to be safe in their home.

"Mother, you don't have to worry my skills will improve to a point where a blade of grass will not be able to touch me without retaliation," Adulis continued almost falling asleep at the table from the comfort of a complete meal. Mani's depression didn't seem to change any, ignoring her sons confident statement.

"Adulis, you have to understand that every year a hero drops to the ground with the leaves of fall, the rain of spring and summer, and the snow on the mountain tops during the winter, a warrior just does not reach a legendary dream life without tragedy," Mani said softly as tears began to fill her eyes.

Umar could sense the trouble coming across his significant woman's face. He urgently got out of his seat and passionately pulled her into his arms.

"My love I have survive the wars and battles of the kingdom and he shall do the same," Umar whispered softly into Mani's ear. She looked softly into Adulis's startled eyes and began to smile, he was becoming a man, a warrior something that she shall be proud of.

After the emotional climax in the dining hall of the barrack, the family prepared to sleep for the night. Adulis rested in his old bed looking at the wooden ceiling, listening to the chirps and melodies of the wilderness of the night. He had worried his mother with his dream, he must keep his word and survive, no matter what the circumstances he must survive for his mother's worries and his fathers faith. He had nothing more than a destiny that has fell upon him but now he has a meaningful purpose to survive, not for the glory, not for the kingdom, but for his family that has taken him to his level of manhood. He hears the last chirp of the cricket outside his home and falls fast asleep.

The next morning the village was buzzing with its inhabitants vigorously going through the morning routines. The animals creating enough noise to awake and disturb the gods above. Adulis laid in the bed taking in every sound, constantly reminding himself of home. He smiled as he heard to village men arguing over who has a better way of planting yams. The

marketplace teeming with people negotiating prices and merchants shooing off sneaky, daring teenagers trying to steal some sweet fruit from their stands.

"Adulis!" his mother shouted overpowering all the noise outside of the barrack. "Come and eat your morning meal".

At the sound of the word "meal" Adulis, jumped out of his bed and sat anxiously at the table, waiting for his feast of home cooked tender love. His mother handed him a plate with eggs, fruit and chicken. Adulis devoured the meal so viciously and quick that he burnt his tongue. He gave his mother an enormous hug and proceeded back to his room, to prepare for the day ahead. After glancing at himself up and down multiple times with a silver platter, he walked back out of his chamber and proceeded out into the yard. He stared at his mother's garden as he walked towards his father, cutting large pieces of lumber, as if he was creating a masterpiece. Umar threw the ax against the wood with incredible force and strength. He looks up to see his son admiring his work.

"Good morning young warrior did you come to join me," Umar said as he threw the ax into the wood once more.

"No sir, I just wanted to acknowledge you before I venture off into the village," Adulis replied.

"Very well, stay safe and away from mischief," his father said as Adulis walked away. He walked around his mother luscious garden and continued into the main dirt road in front of his home. He smiled as he gazed upon what seemed to be thousands of his fellow village people, moving around in unison. He missed the merchants at their stands and the children chasing one another through the commotion. There was nothing like his home village, the sights, smells everything set him into a frenzy of memories. He decided to go for a walk through the village to catch up on some things and see what things have changed within the months of his training. He barely walked 50 yards when he was encountered by an "old village friend" he couldn't seem to recognize.

"Adulis...is that you," the young man asked as he approached Adulis slowly.

"Uh yes I'm Adulis," he replied slowly, almost trying to avoid his new companion.

The young man rushed to Adulis, shaking his hand with enough power to tear his bone out of his socket. Adulis took a step back with a half smile and looked at the new face hesitantly.

"Pardon me, I forgot to tell you who I am, my name is Terrimani," he exclaimed expecting some recognition sign from Adulis but unfortunately Adulis still has a look of confusion set upon his face. Noticing the shorten success of saying his name to Adulis, the young man continued.

"I was the small kid that the kids used to pick on all the time, they use to call me wood bird" the young man said softly hoping not to cause himself any embarrassment.

Adulis suddenly recovered a glimpse of a young boy small and scrawny with a large pointed nose resembling the beak of a bird. He returned his view to the tall, slightly muscular young man and laughed at the differences of the two.

"So wood bird..... Terrimani grows up to be someone like yourself how did this happen" he said still not believing the two incredibly different characters between the childhood Terrimani and the one that stood before him.

"I'm not sure, I got tired of being picked on so I thought I would go and work with my father in his farm to build up the structure of my body and I decided that wood bird will not be my name anymore," Terrimani said still smiling like he has just found the sun and moon right in his lap.

Adulis continued to examine the new character. There Terrimani stood long and tall, yet thick and muscular as some of the older warriors at the temple. He still had the pointed nose but it seemed much smaller compared to his large stature. Adulis could hardly believe the transformation but his intuition told him that this young man was Terrimani for some unknown reason. He shook Terrimani's hand once more satisfied with his old associates transformation.

"How about I show you around the village, I guessing your just back from your training with the wise men of the temple," Terrimani said as he walked Adulis down the rough dirt street. The two reach a much more peaceful part of the village where the cattle grazed undisturbed by the two young men walking happily towards them.

"This is my favorite destination to come sometimes when I just need to relax and think of the world in front of me," Terrimani said slowly as he sat down on a large log, watching the water rushing through a small stream below. Adulis never noticed this beautiful side of the village. The trees still bearing flowers from the spring, and the glow of the sun skipping through the forest only to reflect away off the cool water of the stream. There were many different colors in the forest area now due to the transformation of the fall.

"I must say this is the type of area that makes me homesick all over again" Adulis said as he watched a beautiful red leaf float through the stream like the clouds glide across the sky.

"Oh yes, I meant to ask you how is your training going, are you approaching the prophecy of the chosen one" Terrimani continued as he threw a small stick across the sea of multicolored leaves.

TO BE CONTINUED

Analysis

Writing has significantly affected the way I express myself during the past few years. I took creative writing last year to improve my writing skills, but instead of learning new grammar techniques, I developed a type of expression that may last throughout my life. This year I am taking creative writing two, in which I write my own book instead creating different writing pieces throughout the semester.

My purpose of writing my own book was to give myself a challenge in something I enjoy. I usually write in the field of sports nonfiction and fiction, but I decided to test myself and try some field of writing that I have never attempted before. That's when I came across this novel, *The Heart of Aksum*.

It's a story of a young boy who has to take on the destiny of becoming a warrior in the ancient empire of Aksum, located in Northeastern Africa. I believe this novel will help boost my writing experience to another level. I am a very competitive character, and this gives me a challenge in which I have the ability to overcome

CHRIS "CJ" STARKEY *is a senior at Jordan High School. Born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, he never strays from the lessons taught by his home town experiences. C.J is very passionate about athletics, but he also notices the significance of getting a good education. After graduating from High School, C.J plans to attend a four year university and continue his passion of playing football at the collegiate level. He is considering majors that tie in to his academic interest such as psychology or sports management. Although he rarely enjoys the long hours dealing with the writing process, he has begun to appreciate the opportunities given by using words to express himself. One main motivational tool for C.J is the sacrifices his parents made for him in the past, in which he hopes to repay in the future. C.J is a very sociable guy, who enjoys making others happy and hanging out with his friends. He will miss his high school years, but he is ready to take on the responsibilities of college and living on his own.*

DANA TOSCANI

Hope

It's been nine months since Christy last talked to David. This couple was so passionately in love with each other; what happened to them? Let's go back and see what really happened.

Christy was a beautiful young lady. She had lovely brown eyes, a nice curvy body, and the prettiest smile. David was muscular and tall. He also had beautiful eyes too, but they were a hazel-green color. Together they were the perfect couple.

Christy and David have known each other since kindergarten. He asked her to be his girlfriend at the Jr. prom. last year. He's asked her to be his girlfriend more times than she can remember. Every time he's asked, she's said no. They went to the Jr. prom as good friends. When they left, they were boyfriend and girlfriend. He had a way with being romantic. While they were slow dancing, he whispered in her ear "will you be my girlfriend? We belong together Christy." At that very moment, she melted into his arms. They have been together ever since. Their love is strong and no one or nothing has or ever will come between them. That is, until, the day.

They've always told each other everything. There were no secrets in their lives. They were not only boyfriend and girlfriend, but best friends. Inseparable. Even though they were passionately in love, they have never

made love before. To them it wasn't just sex, it was a true expression of their love, and they knew that it could wait as long as they needed it to. David was a good boyfriend. He understood Christy and didn't want to rush her into anything, especially sex. When the time was right, they would both know. The love was there, as was the understanding, patience and caring. Though he wasn't a virgin and she was, he, too, wanted it to be special.

One beautiful spring day, they were walking home from school together. David usually walked Christy home, but this time they decided to go to his house instead. When they got to his house, no one was home. Usually his mom was home, but she left a note on the door to let him know that she had to go into work early that evening. David's mom and dad are divorced, so his mom does everything that she can to have a nice house and put food on the table. David always understood. They didn't expect anything to happen, but what happened next was beautiful.

He shut and locked the bedroom door behind him. He turned on the radio and their song was playing. She knew the time had come to have sex with him. Everything just felt right. She could see by the look in his eyes that he felt the same way she did.

"I love you baby" he said. "I love you too David" she replied.

They leaned forward into each other's arms and kissed as if it was their last kiss together. They started to kiss harder and harder and at that point Christy knew she was ready to make love to David. David started to caress her body as he looked deep into her eyes. They made love for what seemed to be hours. Tenderly kissing and gently touching. David was very gentle and sweet, making sure he didn't hurt Christy. He made her feel safe and he made her feel loved. This was the happiest day of her life.

A few weeks had passed, and Christy wasn't at school. During lunch, David called her house to see what was going on. "I don't feel so good David. I've been sick; I think I have a bug or something. I've been puking all morning." David assured her that he would come by after school to see how she was feeling. After school, he came to see her. She was feeling better than

she did that morning, but still not feeling great. She was very tired and just wanted to sleep. David kissed her good night and headed home.

Christy called her friend Kate to get a homework assignment. While they were talking, Christy was telling Kate how she was feeling. Kate asked lots of questions, and when she was done, she asked her if she and David had unprotected sex anytime lately. Christy was shocked at her questions, but answered her and told her that she and David had only had sex once, and it was without a condom. Kate told Christy “it sounds like you might be pregnant.” Christy couldn’t believe what she told her. Pregnant? IMPOSSIBLE! We only did it once. How could that happen? Then the fear set in...what if? What would I do? What would my parents say? What would David say? Would I keep the baby? She was so scared.

When she got up the next morning, she still felt sick. Instead of going to school, she headed to the pharmacy and bought a pregnancy test. Her period was due the day before, but it wasn’t unusual that she was a little late. It never came precisely on time, so she wasn’t really worried. Thank God pregnancy tests now predict days before you miss your period! She felt, deep inside, that it would come back negative, so she wasn’t worried.

When she got home she raced for the bathroom and took the test. Two minutes of waiting seemed like a lifetime. POSITIVE. “Oh my God, I’m fucking pregnant!!!” She cried for what seemed to be hours. “I NEED DAVID” were the first things that came to her mind. He’ll know what to do. He loves me, and he’ll understand. We’ll get married and have this baby and the baby will be raised in a houseful of love.

When David came by to see her that night, however, the fairytale ended. He was like a different person. He denied that he could possibly be the father. He called her a slut and a whore and told her there was NO WAY she was a virgin. He had heard she “did it” with lots of guys. That night, they went their separate ways. David wanted no part of the baby’s life.

Now nine months later, having decided to keep the baby, she waits and waits for her baby girl to be born. Her mother and father weren’t happy with

her decision to keep the baby, but they understood why. Christy continued to go to school. She took extra courses and online courses to get her high school diploma. She **WOULD** go to college, no matter what.

While watching TV with her mom one snowy night in February, she stood up and said to her mom “oh baby...I think my water broke!”. Off to the hospital they went. At 5:32 p.m. on a beautiful snowy night, Hope was born. She was beautiful. She looked like David, yet she looked like me. She was amazing.

Christy sat up in her hospital bed holding her beautiful baby girl. Out of the corner of her eye she saw a face appear behind the door. She looked up to see David standing there. She said “I knew you’d come. I had Hope”.

Analysis

I don’t know why I wrote this story at the time, but then I found out that this might be a lovely exciting piece to write about. Many things have happened in my life so far, but this situation had stuck out the most in my mind. This is an inspired story about a friend of mine. She has gone through all this stuff in the story, but it has never been told by anyone except for a chosen few. She had a lot of bad situations at that time, but tried to make the best of it. She didn’t go through all the situations in the story, but it was kind of like that. She is now living in New York with her boyfriend and her new bouncing baby girl. I try to keep in touch with her as much as possible, but I haven’t talked to her lately. As far as I know she is doing pretty well and is going to get married soon. I have also gone through a lot of stuff in this story, but not exactly like it. I have also been inspired to write this piece about my other friends and the situations they go through with their boyfriends and girlfriends all the time. In the end of the story it was kind of exaggerated. I am now writing a longer version of this story and making it into a book. Hopefully it all works out with the people in my story and the life of my own.

*Her name is **DANA TOSCANI**, also known as Day. She is 15 years old with a bright future ahead of her. She is a talented writer with dreams to*

become a famous author one day. She was originally born in New York and had a great life there until she moved to North Carolina. She had to adjust to the new lifestyle, but found it to be quite easy. Since she moved down to Durham, she has made plenty of new friends, a wonderful boyfriend, and a closer bond with her family. She writes poetry and short stories daily concerning her life and daily things that happen. She also writes about her friends' lives and finds it to be quite fun actually. Her life has been a struggle the last couple of years, but she is getting the attention and help that she needs. She tries new experiences and learns new things every day. She now tries to live life to the fullest and also to live, laugh, and love at the same time.

YESENIA TRAVERS

Selected Poetry

You & I

My heart beats to your name,
and if I could change anything,
I would keep it all the same.

You mean the world to me,
you are my everything,
you help me function,
and you keep me going.

You make my world go round,
and you always bring me up,
whenever I am down.

You're the sun to my day,
the moon to my night,
the stars to my sky,
and whenever my world is dark,

you are my light.

I gave you my heart,
and I gave you the key,
I gave you my life,
and now you're part of me.

I hold you close,
never wantin' to let go,
I would never hurt you,
because my heart says no.

You gave me your heart,
and you're trusting me,
I'll take care of it,
just wait and see.

I promise you my all,
I promise you love,
I promise you trust,
and I promise you us.

I know you're scared,
but baby bear with me,
I'll prove to you,
that we're meant to be.

I guess I'm done,
not much more left to say,
I tell you all this,
because my heart says to,
but there's one more thing,

I love you.

Only innocent

I was only innocent,
when you took my life.
I was only innocent,
when you decided to let me go.
I was only innocent,
when you made him more important.
I was only innocent,
when you made the decision.
I was only innocent,
when I grew to love you.
I was only innocent,
when you argued over me.
I was only innocent,
when he hit you because of me.
I was only innocent,
when you started to miss me.
I was only innocent,
when you wished I was there.
I was only innocent,
when you started regretting it.
I was only innocent,
because I was only 3 months.
I was only innocent,
when you were supposed to be my mom.
I was only innocent.

Analysis

Both of my pieces are two different styles of short poems. "Only

Innocent" is about abortion. Anyone that knows me knows that it's a topic I'm very passionate about. I believe that every child is entitled to their life and no one should be able to take that away from them; regardless of the situation. "Only Innocent" was a part of a poetry packet that counted as a major assignment, and many people seemed to like it, so I figured I'd submit it as a part of this book. "You & I" is pretty self explanatory. It just pours out feelings and emotions from one individual to another. It was inspired by someone named Je'Michael Torain, who will always have a special place in my heart regardless of which path our lives take us. Although both of these poems were major assignments in my creative writing class, neither one of them were written without purpose. When I wrote them, getting them done wasn't my mentality; it was more of trying to get my point across and expressing the way I felt. I've always kept a collection of poems, but some seem to have a greater effect on people than others do. Personally, I value opinion, and that's why poetry is my way out. You can argue all day with what my poems say, but in the end my point was made and I've given my insight to why I feel a certain way. Expressing myself with writing when spoken words aren't an option is just a part of me.

YESENIA TRAVERS *was born in Madison, Wisconsin, but her family originated from Nicaragua. Her first language was Spanish, but she is now fluent in both Spanish and English. Some may say she's hard to get along with at first; she generally doesn't give people the benefit of the doubt and first impressions stick with her forever. She doesn't trust many people because the world is filled with fakes, but those who aren't are guaranteed her respect. She's open-minded and accepting to new things, but no one can, in any way, shape, or form, change her. She is who she is, and regardless of what others may think, she's true to herself. Regrets are guaranteed in life, but rather than regretting the past, she focuses on how to improve in the future. Overall she's a person who loves life and is ready to overcome any obstacle that crosses her path. She takes life one day at a time and lives it to the fullest.*

LOUISE WALTER

Selected Prose and Poetry

The Coldest Winter

Dedicated to both of my grandfathers: to Willem Brand, who inspired this story, and to the memory of Joseph Walter, who served bravely in World War II. You are both heroes.

The shivering was so violent that I could have sworn *they* were still hovering over me, slashing my body with whips, hacking my soul to pieces with their cruel smirks. *Can these monsters be called men?* As I hugged a cold concrete floor, studying grey dust and merciless grimy walls, I tried to think of something – anything – to take my mind off the icy winter air that was spreading through my lungs like a slow-acting poison. My mind could shut out so many things – the laughing faces of people I may never see again (*did they even care?*), the stale hunger that rumbled in my perpetually empty stomach; even the horrors I'd endured within these pitiless stone walls I could expel from my memories. *Had* I been tortured? It couldn't have been more than a few hours ago, but it was already a blur in my mind, my unrelenting mind, which could repress anything – *anything* – except this *cold*. Lifting my gaze to a crack in the wall, I could see a sliver of grey light from a dismal

winter morning. Suddenly, my repressed tears erupted with a violent doggedness. Before I had even realized what I was remembering, they were frozen, fearfully clinging to my cheek before they could fall to the stone floor below.

* * *

Pulling back a faded yellow curtain, I lifted my gaze to the grey light of a dismal December morning in Holland. What was I looking for? Who was I looking for? My brother Jan was in the Indonesian Underground, I knew that. He wasn't coming back. Hans was seeking refuge with a farming family. *I'm happy for him, of course I am. He's safe, that's what matters.* After months of repeating them to myself, those words had all but lost their meaning, but this was the only way I knew how to cope. That's all you can do in war: cope. Get through this day, convince yourself you'll never have to wake up to another one. Try to forget how many calendars you've thrown away since this whole mess began.

Calendars. There had been one hanging next to the front door for as long as I could remember – one of the few things in this ever-shifting life that I could rely on. "December 1944," it read. As the days went by, the phrase seemed to scream at me, begging for something, *anything* to give it something to be remembered by. The months fell dead like starving prisoners, marked by nothing but echoes of the infinite, robotic boots of Nazi soldiers. And there I was, only seventeen years old, forced to assume the role of "man of the house" at a time when all I wanted to do was explore the world independently and rejoice in the fleeting years of adolescence. With two of my brothers gone and the other a hungry toddler, my father had pushed me into a role that I was in no way ready for; as the only young, fit male left in the household, I had become the last line of defense between my family and starvation.

It was on that dreary December morning that my mother came to me, Peter howling in her arms, and told me that it was time for me to risk everything – again.

"Villem, look at your brother," begged a thick Dutch accent behind me. Turning around, I saw my baby brother clinging to my mother's shirt, his

soggy eyes boring into mine, pleading for nourishment. “We can’t wait anymore. You’re going to have to visit the farmers again.”

Visit the farmers again. How easy it was to say! But to do...how many more times would I be forced to dress like a girl, ride my bike into the Nazi-infested countryside and exchange the dwindling remnants of our family heirlooms for food? At first, the task had been humiliating, but the raw fear that numbed my bones every time I tempted fate made it difficult for any sense of humiliation to penetrate my thoughts. Would today be the day the Nazis finally stopped me? Would they finally discover that I am no woman but actually a perfectly strong, able man who they would love to have fighting on their side? I couldn’t even think about what they would do to me if they knew that I had spent so long avoiding their merciless grip.

“I understand, Mama.” There was no choice here. I was the last line of defense.

Once again, she helped me craft my disguise: the wig, the cheap lipstick, the delicate, tattered dress. I avoided the mirror. The embarrassment paled in comparison to the fear – the horrible, paralyzing fear – but I thought that perhaps if I allowed myself to retain some vestige of dignity, strength would come to me. Beautiful, fleeting strength...or did it even matter? Either way, I was getting on that bike.

I kissed my brother’s forehead and smiled at him. It was an empty, tragic smile, but I prayed that he saw only strength.

“I’ll be back soon, Peter, OK? Be brave for me.” Turning to my mother, I considered hugging her. Then, pulling back, I realized how silly this was; my mother didn’t like getting too close to her children. She said it would only bring pain. Looking at her now, I saw only hunger in her eyes. She loved me because I could get food. Still, she was better than my father; he had yet to say a word to me that day and had grown cold and distant toward me since the beginning of the war. My mother was the only one I could turn to in this callous life.

I swung my leg over the side of the bike and gulped. This was it.

“Goodbye Mama.”

“Goodbye Villem, good luck. Hurry back.”

“I will, Mama. I will.”

* * *

The bread was in my basket. I had food! I’d succeeded! Peter could eat, Mother could eat, I could eat – we wouldn’t starve, we were OK, everything was OK –

“Halt!”

The word sent a shiver down my spine. I could feel the blood drain from my face. Turning my head slowly, I saw a group of Nazi soldiers walking toward me.

“My, what a pretty young lady!” said one of the men, smirking. I stared at the ground and hid my face behind my shawl. The others sniggered. Trying to get away now would be suicide.

“Aw, why so shy, little girl?” said another greasy voice. “We’re not gonna hurt you -” as the man reached for my shawl, I jerked away, but it was no use; he held me still while another one ripped off the threadbare fabric. I could hear the rest of them chortling in the background. As we struggled, I felt my wig come loose; suddenly, there was no wig. The frozen air whirled around my naked skull. The cold, confused eyes of the Nazis gaped at me ominously.

I didn’t move that first night in the jail cell. There were too many bruises.

* * *

“Boy! BOY! Wake up!”

Blurily, I forced myself to open my eyes. I couldn’t remember dozing off. How long had I been in this hellhole? Surely it had only been days, yet the scars, the bruises...they seemed to scream of torturous years. These days had been longer than any year I’d ever lived.

“You’re getting out of here,” said the guard. “Don’t ask me why, something about your information or age or...something. Bottom line is that someone up there likes you, boy.”

I stared at him in disbelief, my mouth hanging open unconsciously. I couldn’t believe it! I was free! I wasn’t going to die in this grey dungeon! I

began to weep in spite of myself. No more cold, no more whippings, no more grimy grey floors. I was going home.

* * *

When I walked through the old, familiar front door, my heart told me I hadn't seen it in years, but I knew it had been fewer than two weeks since that fateful day when I had mounted my bike and ridden into the grey morning light. I smiled at the thought of seeing my family again. What would my parents say? *It must have been Papa who got me out*, I thought to myself. *I can't wait to thank him!*

Closing the door behind me, I smiled and called out into the empty house.

"Mama! Papa! Everyone, I'm home! Peter! Come see your brother, Peter! I'm free! I'm OK!"

I heard a door slam, followed by the drumming of feet down the hallway; my mother appeared, looking me up and down anxiously. She eyed my outstretched hands.

"Mama! Oh, Mama...you don't know how good it is to see your face! My God, I was captured by the Nazis, I almost died, I...oh, I don't want to think about it, I just...I'm just so happy, I -"

My mother just stared at me, withered arms crossed, calloused toes tapping the dusty floor impatiently. I stopped talking. Her eyes were cold.

"Well? Where's the food?"

Just Another Night in the Projects

I saw her through a tattered screen
 Stirring a pot of cheap cuisine
 Upon a dirt-encrusted floor
 Cracked by shoes and stained by more.

She noticed nothing from her perch,

A weary stool of fractured birch,
And glancing from her steamy brew
She laid her eyes on city's view.

The wrinkles on her face drew taught
As she became so lost in thought
That almost half an hour passed
Before she returned to her task.

Her chest heaved with a sigh as she
With callused hands shifting swiftly
Removed her boiling pot of stew
And poured it into bowls for two.

But moaning she, letting tears run,
Remembered she needed just one.

Analysis

“The Coldest Winter” is a true story about my maternal grandfather’s harrowing experiences during World War II. While I have embellished some of the details of this story in my retelling, I have attempted to stay true to the essence of my grandfather’s family situation and traumatic experiences in a Nazi prison. Fortunately, his father was able to illegally change the birth date on my grandfather’s birth certificate so that he was thought to be too young for a work camp, where the Nazis intended to send him, and he was released from the prison after a week or two. Nevertheless, even within this small time period his body suffered immensely from beatings and a severe lack of nutrition. He would have most likely died like many of the other prisoners had his father not been able to fake his birth certificate. Despite this heroic act on the part of his father, however, the description of my grandfather’s parents is mostly accurate based on what I have learned from my other family members.

My paternal grandfather was also involved in the Second World War; he was an American bomber pilot, and although he died a few years ago, the stories of his own courageous experiences will always remain close to my heart. Due to my background, I have always been interested in the time period of World War II as well as in the motivations and consequences of war in general. This familial interest, along with the fact that my mother's father was exactly my age when he experienced suffering that most cannot even begin to imagine, inspired me to tell his story.

When I moved to Durham five years ago, I was thrown headfirst into a culture vastly different from the conservative, small-town culture of the Midwest to which I had grown accustomed. This poem, "Just Another Night in the Projects," was inspired by the issues of poverty and gang violence that I have been exposed to while living in this urban setting. I intentionally decided to make it vague so that it could be interpreted in a variety of ways, but while letting these words flow I personally pictured an elderly, impoverished woman mourning the loss of her only grandson to gang-related violence. I believe in the possibility of capturing the core of a circumstance through writing without having any direct experience in the matter, and that is what I have attempted to do in my pieces. To write, I think, is to see a situation, to embody its soul, and to put that soul into words.

LOUISE WALTER is currently a senior at C.E. Jordan High School. In the eighth grade she left her small Midwestern hometown in Ohio to come to Durham with her mother, and she has since come to think of the area as her home. Louise has been writing creatively since she first learned how to put words on paper; she still remembers her first written story, which was about a poor boy, a bullying rich boy, a twist of fate, and an unexpected display of magnanimousness. Taking this class in creative writing has inspired her to pursue it as a more serious hobby. Her other passions in life include playing piano, singing, speaking French, and reading literary fiction. As an only child, Louise developed a fondness for animals as well as the environment at a very young age, and she hopes to make a career out of

improving the conditions of current endangered species as well as of the fragile ecosystems they inhabit.

RACHEL WISLER

Selected Poetry

Dreams

Hey Mommy, remember that time our cat ran away and got hit by that truck?

No honey, that must have been a dream.

Hey Mommy, remember that time daddy overdosed and almost died?

No honey, that must have been a dream.

Hey Mommy, remember that time we had to live at the Durham Rescue Mission because we got evicted?

No honey, that must have been a dream.

Hey Mommy, remember that time we came home from the beach and daddy wasn't there? He had left us.

No honey, that must have been a dream.

Hey Mommy, remember that time we got robbed and our car stolen? Remember how scared we were that they would come back and rob us again?

No honey, that must have been a dream.

Hey Mommy, remember that time you told me all the bad stuff that happened to me

was just a dream?

And then you comforted me and prayed with me.

You prayed that God would watch after me

And place his loving hand upon me.

Well now you're gone.

Now I have no one to comfort me and pray for me

And assure me that I'll be okay.

I miss you, Mommy.

Oh how I wish I could open my eyes and see you before me.

With your arms around me.

And my head on your shoulder.

And you wiping away all my tears.

More Time

You were my only sunshine

You were my only joy

You helped me through the hard times

It's you I'm fighting for.

And when they took your life, boy

I swear I almost died too.

What will I ever do without you?

It gets harder every day

The day you went away

Keeps playing over and over in my mind.

If only we had more time

If only we had more time

Happiness

Happiness is sunshine
happiness is running wild
the way your stomach flopped when he smiled
hard work being paid off by dollars
happiness is a cool fall day
a long a walk
a deep conversation
a new inspiration
happiness is your favorite meal
eaten with your favorite people
dancing around crazily
when you realize you haven't had any drama lately
happiness is watching old couples walk by
hand in hand
kids laughing
hugs from a loved one
happiness is a new puppy
a chick flick
when your daddy you haven't seen in three years calls
beautiful scenery
completing a goal
happiness is hanging out with friends
sharing a good laugh
happiness is knowing you are loved
you are loved.

Analysis

When I wrote "Dreams" I was in a bit of a sad mood. I just thought of a lot of the hardships that people have to go through and incorporated them into

this poem. It's pretty depressing. I apologize for that. I chose to add it in the book because its topic is something that people tend to not write about too often. The topic is unsafe. It is an anthem out there for all the children living in broken families.

My inspiration for "More Time" actually came from my little brother, who died from cancer when I was six. We were best friends and every time I have a difficult obstacle in my life that I have to get around, I think of him and how hard it was for him to be in the hospital, hooked up to a million different machines, and I become braver. If he could survive through that as a little kid, then there should be no reason why I cannot do the same. I miss him more than words can explain. Not a day goes by that I don't think of him. The line "the day you went away keeps playing over and over in my mind," refers to that day when I was in the hospital outside of his room and my mother came out crying, bearing the news that he had died. I just remember feeling as if I was having a bad dream. It didn't seem real. It didn't seem fair.

I decided to put this poem in our class book because a lot of people read over it and said that it was a very strong piece. It is, by no means, happy, but it should make the reader think. Not many people know that I had a younger brother who died, so I feel as though it is finally time to let the world know. I had kept it a secret for so long and its time to set this secret free.

I also added the poem "Happiness" because I felt that people would think of me as a very depressing person after reading the first two poems. Happiness is just a cute, happy poem about all the good things in life.

RACHEL WISLER *was born in Durham, North Carolina. She has lived there her entire life. Sounds boring, right? Wrong! She has actually had numerous adventures in her life which are usually the topics of her writing. Her mother, Alice, is a published author and has a novel coming out in the fall of 2008 titled Rain Song. Rachel has three younger siblings, Daniel, Benjamin, and Elizabeth. Daniel is no longer alive. From a very young age, Rachel has been writing. Poetry, short stories, songs, etc. You name it, she's written it. Her favorite color is pink and she could survive for the rest of her*

*life on macaroni and cheese alone. She absolutely loves it. Rachel is a proud resident of the Bull City and she aspires to be an Elementary School teacher because she loves working with children. She is a very optimistic person who has a contagious smile. Even though Rachel appears to always be happy, she attracts a lot of bad luck. High School has **flown** by and she is now a senior at Jordan High School. She is going to miss Jordan when the school year is over, but she is ready and, hopefully, prepared for whatever may be thrown at her in college and the years to come.*

SAMANTHA WONG

Mountain Trip

I would like to dedicate my story to my family, parents and Chelsea Joy

The Clark family was driving from New Jersey to the Adirondack Mountains in New York. The children were really excited for the camping trip. Rob kept smiling the whole eight hour ride and Sue was really annoyed by her older brother who was 10 years old. He was a skinny little kid with long brown hair down to his ears and big goofy oval glasses. Sue told Rob to imagine a kid like himself with a huge smile on his face. She asked him if the boy's face would break a window or not, but Rob and Sue just kept arguing back and forth until they arrived at the parking lot of the Adirondack Mountains.

Rob's father Bob and his mother Betty began unloading the car and then loading everything into the canoe. It was actually a very remote place, and they had to take a canoe through the lake to reach their campsite. When they arrived at their campsite, the ranger seriously warned them about bears, but they didn't believe it. After getting out of the canoe they unpacked and set up their expensive, sophisticated tent. The tent was huge enough to fit at least four people, and it was a struggle to set up. It took an hour and a half to figure out the pieces and everything. The instructions were hard to understand so

they decided to build it the way they felt that it was supposed to look like, and they succeeded. It took about thirty minutes just to fix up the tent their way instead of the useless confusing instructions. And soon the Clarks were all set and ready for their adventure.

The first night of their camping trip, they went fishing and canoeing. It was immensely fun, and Rob caught more fish than his sister. Rob's favorite hobby was to go fishing, and it was no surprise that he had caught twenty-two fish. His favorite type of fish was trout. He caught fifteen trout, three angels and four red heads. During the night, they heard loud panicking screams. The screams were decisively boisterous, and everyone could hear them from miles away. There was also a loud banging of pots and pans, and the Clarks were clueless as to what happened at the other camp site, but they guessed it was the bears. Then a shock of intelligence hit them. "BOOM", they remembered that the ranger warned them about bears, but they weren't so sure that what they heard was the obnoxious animals.

The second night of their trip, they went hiking and heard bird songs and different creatures in the woods. It was pretty exciting for Rob. He had never seen nature like this before in his life. Bob and Betty told their children that they were going to stay in the Adirondack Mountains for about six or seven nights, and they were pleased. After the hike, the family hit the hay. Later that night the tent began to shake violently. They heard growls, and Bob began to yell loudly to his son right in the ear, "Wake up Rob!" Rob woke up with drool from his mouth, and he jumped straight up maintaining his karate position. He looked clueless as he saw that his father had a gun strapped around his waist. Rob looked out the tent and saw a great big bushy bear. The Clarks were terrified and they began to panic. Rob's mother told them not to worry. She took the knife and cut a hole in the back of the tent. The whole family escaped through the back. Rob was the last one to come out of the tent, and he stopped to take a look at the cool amazing bear, and the next thing before Rob's eyes, the bear came chasing directly right after him, and the bear was right behind his tushy. His mother, father and sister told him to hurry up while they were running into the woods. Rob was right behind them and then

he tripped over a vine. His parents and sister had no idea that he had tripped over a vine, so they ran to an outhouse and hid there for awhile. Rob got up and the bear chased him. He began screaming his lungs out in fear. The bear was about six foot tall and his teeth were unbelievably sharp and the bear was not cuddly at all. The bear's claws were long enough to rip Rob's shirt right off his chest. Rob did not know where his family was, so his sister peeked her huge basketball head out and whispered to him. She said, "Pshhh in here at the outhouse." He ran faster and leaned over to get into the outhouse, and the bear was two inches behind him. Rob yelled to the bear and said, "Hey Mr. unattractive beast, what's over there?" The bear looked at Rob bewilderedly and then he yelled "Look, it's Brittny Spears!" The bear looked miraculously with a "oh-my-god, that girl is hot" face. Rob had tricked the bear with his slick moves, and he ducked into the outhouse where he was safe. When the bear reached the outhouse, Rob's legs were so wobbly that they knocked together. He kept whispering to himself with a horrified voice, "Please don't rip this outhouse apart." He repeated the phrase over and over again. Everyone was terrified!

One hour later, Mr. Clark went to see if the bear was still at their campsite. The freakishly brown bushy bear was gone. The Clarks ran down the woods and jumped into the canoe and paddled back through the lake at night to get to their car. Mr. Clark did not want his whole family to stay at the campsite, so they stayed one night in the car. It was midnight and it was really dark. Rob had said that it was the creepiest canoe ride ever, and it looked like a scene straight out of a horror movie. When they were paddling through the lake, white mists were rising slowly up to the yellow moon, and the winds were still and cool.

The next day after the bear attack, the Clarks went back to the campsite and the tent was gone. It had been shredded up into tiny pieces by the bear. It looked like it went through a cheese grater. While they were at the parking lot the previous night, the bear came back and attacked their campsite. Everything was gone. To this day, the Clark family has never gone camping again. Rob thought the bear was going to eat him up, and he thought it was a

strange trip but a fun adventure. The Clarks actually ended up staying for two nights, but Rob's mother was planning for six to seven nights. But after the bear attack, they packed all their stuff and decided to head straight home.

Analysis

First of all, I chose this piece because I thought I put a lot of effort into it. I felt that I was really focused when I wrote this piece, and I added many details to this piece of writing. The topic our wonderful teacher, Mr. Albright, was teaching us was creative nonfiction. When this topic hit my noggin, I thought to myself that I could come up with one story that occurred in my life and just throw some interesting, vigorous details. Out of all the topics which Mr. Albright assigned us, I would have to say that this was one of my favorites.

Creative nonfiction is actually a topic where you can take a real story which happened to you and turn it into an exciting story with many details. This topic is one of the topics where you can just throw details and describe ever single little thing, no matter if it's the smell, hand movements, or what each character looks like. It is kind of like a movie but on a piece of paper written out. I could write this piece and keep on going no matter how many words because I love to describe every single little thing, and I hope that one day I will pursue my dream and write a novel based on creative nonfiction. I have never heard this topic before, but I am glad that I enrolled in creative writing. I thought this was going to be a boring class with just a lot of work, but I actually like this class and it turned out to be fun and different than I thought it would be.

I was influenced by myself, my family, and a teacher at my school, Mr. Clark. The reason why I said that I influenced myself is that I thought I wasn't a great writer at all until I took this class and I improved more. I understand the concept more about writing now than I ever did before, and I am pretty proud of myself. My family also of course influences me. I know that they believe in anything I do and they know that I will succeed. My mother told me that I was not very good at writing, and now I showed her all of my

writing pieces that I had wrote and she knows that I kept trying and trying and I succeeded. And lastly Mr. Clark was someone who influenced me also. I thought his story was one of the most interesting stories I have ever heard from a teacher. I never thought bears existed in the woods, but when he told me his story, I was laughing away. This is one of my learning experiences that I will take with me whichever path I choose to go, whether it's college or majoring in writing/literature.

SAMANTHA WONG *is the youngest of two children. She is the daughter of Peter and Lily Wong and sister of Alex Wong. Her parents own a Chinese restaurant near Duke University, and she already has training in business. "Wong #2" or "Mini-Wong," as she is sometimes called, is a huge fan of Duke. When she was a child, she wanted to attend Duke University and major in the medicine area, but now she has no clue what college she wants to attend and what types of subjects she wants to major in. She enjoys walks and biking with her friends at the lake. She is currently a Junior Varsity cheerleader at Jordan High School. Samantha loves to dance, and it is one of her admired hobbies. She dances passionately in her spare time, and she never gives up. She keeps trying and trying until she achieves whatever she plans to do. Samantha is also a soccer player, and she has just gained interest in Photography. She loves to take pictures of many beautiful scenes and gorgeous colorful flowers or anything life-like. Samantha also just gained interest in writing, which used to be her least favorite subject. She is now taking Creative Writing with Mr. Albright, and she thinks he is a great inspiration for writing. Samantha was said by Mr. Albright that she was an Enthusiastic student and she is always prepared for class. "Wong #2" hopes to succeed in life and she will take all the learning experiences from Mr. Albright wherever she goes, whether she's attending college or in the nearest future.*

