A Celebration of Stories in the City of Literature

March 6-8, 2015

Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature's

ONE BOOK

TWO BOOK

A Celebration of Children’s Literature in the City of Literature
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Thank you to the roughly 800 students who submitted writing for the 2015 One Book Two Book Children’s Literature Event. In addition to including writing by students chosen by leaders at their schools as outstanding writers to represent their schools, this booklet also contains writing submissions that were selected by judges at Pearson in the categories of “The Write Stuff” and “From the Heart.”

* School Representative, selected by each school.
** “The Write Stuff” category winner, selected based on language, clarity, structure, and emotional impact.
*** “From the Heart” category winner, selected based on creativity, passion, and expressiveness.

The students selected as school representatives read their work at the March 6, 2015 One Book Two Book evening event. “The Write Stuff” and “From the Heart” winners read their work at the March 8, 2015 “Write Out Loud!” event.
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One Penny, I Held

One penny, I held. One penny, but very shiny. One penny so flawless it could make any wish come true.

Over the wishing well I held it, hoping one day in my life, this wish would surprise me, jump at me, making me cry, oh joy! Even if I were a hundred years old, I would know, waking up every day, that this wish would come true.

I would go by the wishing well to look at the pennies in the water, wondering which one was mine. I would sit by the wishing well, on a sunny day bench, watching kids, teenagers, even adults, throwing shiny pennies into the fountain. Yes, I would observe all of it. A smile so big, so wide, so friendly, would come to my face, knowing that all of those delightful wishes would come true.

That wouldn’t be all. For extra help, I would wish on a star. The star would twinkle, like the penny I held. It would be the perfect star. A masterpiece, really, for me it would be. High in the sky like the most beautiful diamond, I would stare at it in awe.

I am a hopeful person, with dreams as big as the earth. I have a big imagination that cannot be destroyed. If you mind me I would defiantly not care; for those who hate, do not get happiness; for those who don’t try, fail; for those who make wrong decisions make their lives miserable; for those who are selfish and ungrateful, make their lives difficult.

I tossed my penny into the water, and once it hit, I saw a spark. I smiled as I thought of my wish I had made: world peace.
This is me. My name is Alex McPhee and I think I just rhymed. This is the story of both me and the only remotely interesting thing that has gone on in my life since I got my first job. After I graduated from Dartmouth College, I decided to stay in Hanover. I prefer a small town. I quickly got hired to do what I never would have guessed would be the most boring career in history: Crime Investigator.

It may be partially my fault for not realizing that they were trying to bust criminals in Pleasantville, USA, where everyone was practically bubbling with joy and innocence. No person in this town could even think about doing anything more intense than some lighthearted mischief. It was my dream job from when I was not much taller than a coffee table so, here I am. However, this was the most infuriatingly boring job on the face of the Earth. And when I say was, I’m talking about before the phone call I got exactly one year ago next Tuesday.

I was simply wasting away another Saturday morning, stuffing myself with chips and Ginger Ale in my basement when, oddly enough, the phone rang. Perfect. Just perfect, I thought, there’s a classic way to ruin a nice, relaxing weekend day.

“Alex, we have some unfortunate news. The Bank of America downtown has been robbed. More than half a million has been stolen by the Cheeto-Fingered Thief. He left his signature orange stains and everything. We need you to do something no one has ever been able to do before, identify and catch the Cheeto-Fingered Thief.”

“Got it,” I replied calmly, “I’ll do my best.” There is only one word to describe how I felt just then. OK, two words: pure and joy.

This is me. I’m commonly known as the Cheeto-Fingered Thief and I’m now as rich as those people who buy mansions and think that it’s no big deal. For years I’ve been doing all the big name cities: Boston, New York, Philly, but I’ve never come across as easy a job as this one. No security cameras, no locks on the doors and not a security guard in sight! They got the technology, they just don’t use it. They need to realize there’s more to life than local college sports and random acts of kindness. So, of course, I just walked in, took my fair share of the Benny Franklin, left my signature orange Cheeto fingerprints on the front door, smudged ‘em, and walked out. Ah, it feels good to be bad.

As I was walking into the office, flizzing up to the edge with excitement, my boss, Jack, stopped me in the hall and introduced me to three people of questionable trustworthiness.

“Hello, Alex,” these are our three Cheeto suspects. Interrogate them and make them admit everything.” Slouching in front of me were three scruffy-looking people: two men and a woman.

One of the men had a small scar below his left eye that made him look a bit haggard and unsettling. However, he walked right up to me and introduced himself as Harrison St. Andrews. He seemed too nervous of any disagreement to be a legendary criminal. His eyes were a sort of blue slate and his natural orange hair was fairly long but clean-looking at the same time.

The next man was... large. He, after some pressure from me, said his name was Robert Yobbo, but he goes by Bobbo. Bobbo Yobbo. Sounds like the name of a rogue circus clown. Not much of a talker, he had large feet, large biceps, and a large amount of hair. He could’ve robbed any bank at any time.

The woman was not really someone you would have a friendly conversation with while sauntering down Main Street. Her name was Bunny Smith and she was short and portly with so many piercings that I couldn’t even imagine being able to count them.

“Alright, follow me. We’re going to find out which one, if any of you, is the Cheeto-Fingered Thief.”

Harrison eagerly walked into the interrogation room, waiting to answer any questions. That can’t be a criminal I thought, directing my attention to Harrison. Plus, I continued, the Cheeto-Fingered Thief has been robbing the New England area for a good decade now. If it’s him, he must’ve been committing crimes as early as the third grade.

“You know what, Harrison?” I asked after our extremely short questioning session, “I think that you can just go home.” Great, I thought, there goes our one cooperative suspect.

When that excuse for a detective let that Harrison kid go, I knew that he would question me and whatever that thing was that was standing right next to me. He called me in next. I kept the act up, knowin’ it would help him get nowhere, and then I left. I can’t believe that they haven’t eliminated that other person yet. It doesn’t take Sherlock Holmes to figure out the difference between some fat person and a criminal mastermind, uh, of sorts.

The next day, I stepped out into the cool spring morning to get a fresh perspective. I ran their stories in my head, word for word. They spoke so poorly that I had trouble understanding them. I guess they’ll have to be questioned again – and again.

Yet again, I was interrogated and, on this occasion, more times than I can count. I don’t even remember what story I started with to cover what I was doing on the night of April 28, the night I robbed the Bank of America. I have a really bad memory.

As I walked into the building, I received some positive news. It only took a dozen people to get a few good explanations from Bunny and one good one from Bobbo. Although Bobbo’s story stayed pretty much the same, Bunny’s changed from person to person. Once, she was watching TV, another time she was walking around downtown and saw someone breaking into the Bank of America (which would make her a suspect and a witness), and I’m not even permitted to say what she was supposedly doing a third time. One person had a theory that both of them were the criminal, each taking turns. Another said that it could be possible that Bunny just had a bad memory and forgot what she was doing the night of the crime. Everyone seemed to have his or her own theory. We decided to take a vote on who we thought was the Cheeto-Fingered Thief. Things didn’t look good for Bobbo Yobbo.

After an unproductive week, it was finally time to examine the crime scene. After a few hours, we found a hair on the floor. The bank is usually cleaned twice a day but hadn’t been dusted since the 28th. The hair we found was long and oily, which could have been either person’s except for the fact that it was pink, the colour Bunny dyed her hair. To make absolute sure it was hers, DNA testing was the next step. The results left us confused. It matched Bobbo Yobbo. He must have dyed his hair pink for the crime and then changed it back afterwards.

The very next day, we had Bunny and Bobbo come in for some more “questioning”. I really only wanted to get a look at Bobbo’s head. It just has to be Bobbo. Everything points directly at him. Even if they don’t see pink, we still have the DNA match, and the prints were possibly his. Even if they weren’t Bobbo’s, they certainly weren’t “Bunny tracks”. (This is where you groan at my bad humor.)

Jimmy Parker looked at Bobbo’s head from behind. He discovered a small pink patch above his right ear and a few strands near the top of his head.

“Perfect,” I said when he told me.

They took me and my fellow inmate into court, handcuffed. I’m a robber, not a murderer. Even though I’m a crook, they should treat me differently than them bums who commit violent crimes. I take stuff, I don’t hurt people. Well, not often, that is.

I was ready to make my announcement. We had the thief. This criminal not only steals, but leaves orange stains that are very hard to get out.

“Thank you everyone. Today I would like to put these robberies to an end.”

Here it comes.

“The legendary Cheeto-Fingered Thief is...”

My time has come.

“Bobbo Yobbo.”

Hanover has been the only city or town to even bother to try to figure out who I am. They are also the only town to ever try and fail.
**Autism**

What is autism? Autism Spectrum Disorders are a disability that some adolescents and children have. There are many different ways autism is shown. For example, people with autism can be self-abusing, nonverbal, very talkative, nonsocial, or just not understand how to be social. People with autism also can have a hard time with sensory problems. For example, they can become very upset when they hear loud noises or have certain textures that they strongly like or dislike. People with autism sometimes have a hard time not taking things literally or might be overly sensitive. For example, if their favorite restaurant closed they might get very sad as if you had just told them someone died. Those are just a few examples, but in this paper I’m going to talk about my best friend who has autism. Peyton is 10 years old and has severe autism. Sometimes he does not like to talk unless you are a close family member or friend. Sometimes he might just whisper. Some of his favorite things to do are watch Blue’s Clues, make marble tracks, and watch videos on the computer. Peyton is great with computers and the on IPad. He loves to do science experiments. People see Peyton and think “what’s wrong with him? Why won’t he talk?” I see Peyton as someone with no disabilities. When I’m with him, we have loads of fun. We love to play chase and play on the Wii. Peyton has really opened up my mind on how I treat people. He has shown me everyone is special in the world and that just because he has autism doesn’t mean he can’t do anything anybody else can. He is the most caring, smart, and loving person you’ll ever meet. Peyton loves to give “squishy squishy hugs” when he gives you a big hug! Peyton’s brain works a little differently, but that gives us no reason to not like him. Everyone needs to learn to love everyone for who they are. I love Peyton more than anything else in the world. Everyone should treat everyone with respect no matter what their disability may be.
I stopped at the end of the sidewalk and the beginning of a big empty field. I didn’t stop because that’s where the sidewalk ended, but I stopped for what I saw. I saw an extremely underweight husky with a string collar that was digging into her neck and was bleeding. Her tail was crooked and her fur was matted. Although the husky’s cries for help were unspoken I could see them in her eyes. Most of me wanted to let the husky go, but the rest of me knew it wasn’t smart to do that. I didn’t want to have to wait for someone else to notice and do something. I knew what I was going to do. I would have to wait until it was dark out. As I dodged street lights and people, I wondered if this was the best thing to do. I came to where the sidewalk ended and there was the husky. She paced her little cage. I walked up to her trying to be as silent as possible. I opened the gate and held out a treat. She took it happily. I held out another. Now she followed me home and into my old garden shed. I had laid out some blankets and a bowl of water. She went straight to the water and drank until there was no more water. I got my scissors ready and called her over to where I sat. She laid down in front of me. I snipped the string gently pulled it out of her neck.

“Good girl. Very good girl.” I cooed to her and gave her a treat. I laid down a bowl of dry dog food in front of her. I watched as she ate every last piece of food and licked the dish clean. “I think you need a name. How about Lily?” Then I heard faint sirens. I watched as Lily’s ears perked up, she lifted her head and let out a loud howl. A minute later my parents came running through the shed door and saw Lily. “Why is there a dog in my shed Lizzie?” My dad asked. My mom looked around. “Where did you get her?” she asked as she continued to look around. “I saved her....” I didn’t know what else to say.
The Discovery

"Please?" Emmie pleaded, she wanted to go out to the garden so that she could see the new bird bath. She was going to set up a chair so that she can draw the birds for art class. "Promise you're not going to mess with the water?" asked Emmie's mom "I won't, I promise" she said crossing her heart.

She ran upstairs, grabbed her window lookout chair, a notebook, and her pack of colored pencils. On the way down the porch she reached up to the birdfeeder and grabbed some bird food to try and lure the birds with so that she won't have to sit and wait all day. She set up her chair, got comfortable and waited. About 10 minutes in she saw a bird swoop down and perched right on top of the fountain Emmie quickly but quietly started scribbling away frantically at her paper trying to get the basic shape down when all of a sudden the bird flew away, "Aw man!" yelled Emmie she set her notebook down on her chair and got up to go get more bird food but when she went to go put it into the fountain she tripped halfway there sending the bird food flying all over the place, she scrambled to get up while she was picking up the food by the fountain she saw a mound of dirt sticking up and out of the ground. In the mound of dirt something brown was sticking out, she reached out to pull it out only to discover that there was more, a lot more to be exact.

She went into the garage and came back out with a shovel. After she dug up the dirt she discovered a small brown chest that was about as big as her head. She wanted privacy when she was opening it so she ran up into her room and slammed the door shut locking it in place. She sat down on her bed and set the chest down in front of her. As she opened it she saw that there was a paper, she lifted that out and set it to the side at the bottom of the box there was a small plastic figurine of a bird bath next to that was a round bracelet filled with a blue green gel with glitter in it she immediately slipped it onto her hand. It was nice and cool.

She then took the paper next to her opened it up and read it, it said that Mary Binzel had been chosen before her to go back in time after she died and set up a time capsule for someone else to find. Apparently she picked her. She is now basically her fairy godmother there for her whenever she needs it. She just needs to hold her bracelet whenever she needs her and she will come. She tried it, it didn't work so she kept reading it said that she will only come out when she knows that she really needs it. "Well what's the point of that?" Emmie said thinking aloud as she kept on reading she soon found out that the fountain is a key to the Scroll of Choice. But there was a problem Emmie didn't know where the key went.

She decided to try the most obvious place, the fountain of course. So she ran out key in hand to the fountain and sure enough there was a hole that had not been there before. She quickly kneed down beside the fountain jammed the key into the hole and jiggled and turned it around. Whoooshhh! The sir went bursting out of the drawer that opened up and inside it was a scroll, a leather, and a little jar of ink. She opened up the scroll and skimmed through it. It had ten kids on it 5 girls 5 boys and a little check box next to each name. She wanted to be fair so she closed her eyes and dropped her finger down on one of the names. She landed on Cassidy Downer, she picked up the jar of ink unscrewed the lid and dipped the feather into the goopy ink and made a checked the box by Cassidy's name leaving a few dots of ink across the page while doing so.

The day after Emmie's death

She was transparent, she felt a breeze all the time but it didn't make her cold. She was currently looking over a chest similar to the one she opened when she was 13. She wrote the note in her best handwriting and filled it with a bracelet this one is purple with stars in it and a little plastic hawk figurine. She dropped down through the cloud she was standing on and found Cassidy playing in the yard having a tea party with the new hawk statue. She said something inaudible and ran back in the house. Meanwhile Emmie quickly went over and buried the capsule next to the hawk and went back up to the clouds to watch. Two minutes later Cassidy returned dug up the capsule with one of her tea spoons and opened it up. She struggled with the key for a minute or two but got it open in the end. Emmie couldn't quite make out the name that Cassidy picked but she soon found herself in a white room no longer looking over Cassidy looking at a chair like the ones in a dentist's office. There was a sign on the wall that said "SLEEP" she slowly walked over and lowered herself onto the chair and as soon as her head hit the pillow she was instantly asleep.

Cassidy and Emmie soon became good friends and when Cassidy passed away they were partnered up to be Helpers together and soon came to be the presidents.

They may have had tough lives but they are both now helping others using all of their powers to help people in need.
Detective Garrett

I heard about this cool costume shop where each costume takes you on an adventure. So I got this detective costume for $5.00. When I put it on I felt like Sherlock Holmes, I even got a magnifying glass.

When I got home I showed it to my mom and dad. They thought I looked cute. I went up stairs and got ready for bed. I dreamed I was a real detective solving a crime. When I woke up, I didn’t know where I was. I went outside and all I saw were wagons. I smelled something weird, it smelled like garbage.

Then I started to walk down the street when I heard a scream. I ran to where the sound came from. When I got to the lady she told me that someone had kidnapped her son. She told information about the guy. He had a scar shaped like a heart. She also told me he had a limp.

Now it was time to get to work! I found some footprints in the alley. I followed them to a door which was ajar. When I went inside I saw a guy on the floor. I asked him if he knew the ladies name, he said it was his mom’s name.

I helped the lady with her case. She asked how much it would cost, and I told her it was free. Then everything around me started to swirl and I felt myself lift off the ground. Then a bright light appeared, and when I could see again I was in my room. The time on my clock was the same as it was when I went to bed a couple hours before. I ran downstairs and told my mom and dad about it. They told me it was just a dream, but I know it was real. So I went upstairs and went to bed.
They yelled "you are different
They stared in a mean way
They tripped me on purpose
each and every day.
I was always kind to them
What did I do wrong?
Why do I have to be alone?
When they all get along?

Then my mom said to me
Next year we have a change
I have a new job now
and soon we'll move away.

My first day at Borlaug
I didn't look at their eyes
But when I got to the door
I looked up and was surprised
girl smiled at me
She had a happy grin
She opened the door and said
"C'mon, let's go in!"

My heart is not broken here
I'm not hurt, scared or alone
teachers and kids care about me.
I finally found my home.
The Joy of Flight

Sunlight flooded through the narrow slits in my blinds. My eyes were closed and my body was warm. My light brown hair fell in tangles across my face. I smiled and remembered that I wouldn’t be picky with meals. Today was my birthday! I was turning ten—finally into the double digits! I slid out of my bed, leaving my covers in a tangled mess. When I looked at my face in the mirror, my hair was snarled. I combed it out with my fingers. As I hopped down the stairs, my mom called, “Breakfast, everyone!” I smelled pancakes and scrambled eggs. When I took a whiff, it smelled like sausage, too. *Pancakes smell like cinnamon, eggs scrambled smell like eggs, and finally, the sausage smell, pepper is the one!* That’s a poem I heard. It’s all true, trust me.

After breakfast, my family sang Happy Birthday and I sang a verse that I had made up. Then my sister said, “It’s time to open presents,” and handed me a long, wide box. It was wrapped in blue paper embroidered with gold. Taped onto the middle of the box was a card. It said, “*From your sister Caroline*” with a smiley face next to it. I ripped open the wrapping paper and found a white box. I cut open the box. Inside there was a pair of… what was it? Wings! The wings had Imperial gold feathers attached to a capsule. The capsule had straps attached to it. “Can I test it? Now?” I asked. “Definitely,” my mom said. I took the wings outside. The cool spring air had joy hovering everywhere. I strapped them on, trudged up a hill, and walked to a fence. I turned and charged. At the edge of the steep hill, I leaped. Down, down, down I fell. Then I spread the wings. I glided over houses and twisted and turned. I even did an awkward backflip, but I got my balance just before I fell. The gold wings glistened in the bright sunlight. I started to glide back toward home. Blue roof, red roof, pink roof, black roof, gray roof. I plummeted toward the gray roofed house. My heart beat with excitement, joy, and fear all at the same time. “Maren. Maren, wake up! Time for breakfast.” My eyes snapped open. It was a dream. I was disappointed that it had ended. But then something strange happened. When I groggily slid out of bed (my real one, that is), three gold feathers were scattered around the floor. I wonder…

Maren Edwards
3rd Grade
Weber Elementary
The Pie Pig-Out!

By Ben Faden
5th Grade, Longfellow

"On your marks, get set, go!"

Ralph Squash was watching some contestants doing a competition for unlimited glory and bragging rights: the Pie-Eating Competition. He was sitting in front of his TV. The shiny black rim flashed along with the light of it.

"There they go! Jeez! That kid's only ten and he's already wolfed down three! I didn't know that was possible!"

Ralph knew that next year, that was what he had to do too. After a lot more pies being eaten and a few people passing out, the judge declared this boy to be the winner. "This boy. This amazing boy, Kevin Chip, ate 23 and a half pies in a minute."

Everyone cheered. Kevin stepped out of the camera's path and Ralph turned off the TV. Ralph thought to himself, "I know I can win. But the question is will I? I don't know if I'll beat that."

After a lot of jaw exercises and new pie-eating records, he was ready. His mom drove him to the Johnson County Fair. It was the longest half hour of his life. It was so exciting but frightening at the same time. Pins and needles traveled up and down his body the whole way there. Then when they finally got there, the aroma of hot dogs traveled as if by magnet to his nose. His eyes scanned the stands and quickly found it. It was decorated with a giant blue banner that said, "Pie-eating for 25 years." It also had balloons and ribbons of every color.

He went to the judge and registered. He went to a large, fenced in area and saw a table full of colorful cherry, apple, peach, rhubarb, strawberry, strawberry rhubarb, blueberry, grasshopper, pumpkin, pecan, raspberry, pot, kiwi, pomegranate, lemon meringue, apple rhubarb, cinnamon, mixed berry, quiche and chocolate pie. A bunch of other contestants were huddled together, talking. Then Ralph saw him: Kevin Chip. He only caught a glimpse before the announcer blared through his megaphone, "Good afternoon folks, and welcome to the Johnson County Fair Pie-Eating Competition! Everyone take your seats and we'll get started." A bunch of pie-eating fans scrambled to find a place to sit, while all the contestants went to their places. Ralph saw two pies in front of him.

"Someone must have to reload once I finish one..." he thought.

"On your marks, get set, go!"

Ralph immediately went in the zone. All he could see were the pies in front of him. He gobbled up the first pie in three seconds, then the next pie in two. The judge quickly replaced them. The next ten pies deteriorated after about fifteen seconds. He glanced at the clock. Only 10 seconds left! He guessed time passed faster than he thought. To win, he got an adrenalin rush. His jaw moved faster, his tongue slugged up and down, and his hands moved swiftly with awesome epicness. He gobbled twenty more pies in the last ten seconds, before the judge told everyone to stop. The judges put up the scores on a giant pie chart. Kevin had eaten thirty-one and a half pies and Ralph had eaten thirty-two. That meant he won! Everyone cheered. He got a trophy! His mom ran over to him and kissed him. "Let's go honey," she said.

Ralph and his mom headed to the car. "Wait!" he told his mom. "Can you get me a hot dog?"

"Fine," his mom said. And finally, Ralph ate the most delicious hot dog of his life.
11/23/14 (Free)

Rain pounds the windshield of the car.
It is dark out.
Music is blaring through the speakers –
Nirvana is playing loudly.
I am singing along
trying to drown out my thoughts.
The bass shakes the car – rattles my soul.
Suddenly all I want to do is stop the car and
scream into the night.
I want to cry.
I want to yell.
I want to curse.
I want to let it out.

It is still raining.
I pull over to the side of the highway and
stop the car.
I sit there for a moment.
Green Day is playing now – a sad tune.
I can hear but not comprehend.
It’s all noise in the background.

I turn the music up louder, to the max.
I am shaking now.
Trembling.
The music fills the car,
pushing out everything so there is nothing
but Billie Jo’s voice.
I can feel the music in my bones.
Without warning a tear slips down my face.

I get out of the car and stand there in the
pouring rain at the side of the road.
Then I scream.
I scream and scream and scream until my
throat is raw.
My voice covers the music.
I start to cry,
earthquaking sobs.
I feel something inside me let loose:
Something negative –
Something so full of dark energy I am sure
it’s going well up and explode inside me.
Now I am screaming and sobbing and
cursing.
The sound is not human.
It is the sound of an animal.
A beast.
A monster.
It is me.

I look up to the sky.
I let the rain fall on my face, washing away
my tears.
It is cold out. I can tell because my breath
shows in the air,
but I do not feel it.
I am on fire.

I am not screaming anymore.
I am just standing in the rain, soaked— my
hair a mess falling into my face.
I hear the music still coming from the car—
*Alive and Amplified* by
The Mooney Suzuki is blaring at max
volume into the silent night.

I laugh at the irony.

I am still laughing when I see the glow of
headlights and pickup pulls up beside me.
The driver leans out the window:
"Are you ok, miss?"  
His eyes show concern.
I realize how ridiculous I must look,
my hair wet and tangled, my clothes soaked
and clinging to my body.

I start to laugh again.
"Yes, sir, I am quite all right!"
I smile at him and wave.
He studies me again, rolls up the window
and drives away into the night.
I stand outside until I can’t see his taillights
anymore.

The rain starts to let up.
I get back in my car not caring that I am
dripping rainwater everywhere.
I take off my sweatshirt and start the car.
The music on my playlist has stopped.
I pick up my phone and hit shuffle again.
It comes on loud, too loud.
I turn the stereo down and listen to the
words of the song:
*Now I’m free, free fallin’*
I smile and pull on to the road again,
I am no longer trapped inside myself.
There is no more dark energy.
I
am
free.
Birds,
Loud, crazy
Flying, pecking, singing
Wings, feathers, scales, dorsal fin
Swimming, pushing, blubbing
Calm, strange
Fish
I froze on spot.

The scene unfolds before me: Annabelle points her fragile, long finger at my thin, pale ankle. Everyone around me, trying to get out of the room, afraid to breathe the same air that I do. The teachers start to panic. I am released from my shock and awkwardly adjust my sitting arrangements so that my ankle is covered by my dress. Annabelle’s face quickly loses its color. She stutters when she accuses me.

“Y-you! Y-you’re a w-witch!” She starts to shake frantically.

I respond to her as calmly as possible. “I’m sorry, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

My hands start to sweat. I knew clearly that I didn’t practice witchcraft, and I also know the consequences of even being accused by someone: being burned at stake. Most of the accused are found guilty even if they are innocent.

Annabelle looks very faint, like just standing is killing her. “S-she has the mark! The bite of the D-Devil!”

The room finally snaps out of it. Two men grab my elbows and raise me up. I panic and start to kick but their restraining hold takes out all my energy. My classmates go crazy and start to run out of the room. But before Annabelle leaves through the door, she turns to look at me. My former friend gives me a look that chills my spine. It’s not her usual happy, carefree smile that always makes my worries go away, but a smile that makes me stop strangling. An eerie, manic grin that makes me shiver in fear. The innocent Annabelle is now gone. She leaves the room holding her head high, to join the hysterical kids in the hallway.

Now I am locked in a prison cell, awaiting my trial. Suddenly alone, the situation sinks in and I feel afraid. What’ll happen to me? I curl up on the cold, hard floor while tears run down my face. I look at my ankle where there lies a small scar from a burn when I was young. It was when I carelessly bumped the hot pan that then fell onto my foot. I badly remember the small accident and close my eyes. I thought that it would be hard to fall asleep, but surprisingly, it was quite easy to cry myself into a restless unconsciousness.

I see the ground disappear when I am shoved into the lake. The whole town watches me fall, the ominous dark clouds filling the sky as I look up. The children watch with wide eyes while the adults chant, “Witch! Witch! Murder the slave of Satan!” In that crowd, I see my family, shouting with them with no sign of heartbreak. I am shattered by the sight of them; each had the same cold, dark, deadly glare. In the crowd I search for Annabelle, but I can’t find her golden curls and icy blue eyes.

I look at the lake underneath me and see my reflection, a girl with unraveled dark brown hair and she is there confidently and there is no trace of the tears from last night. I finally relax, since I have realized I am asleep. But when my body touches the surface of the chilly lake, I am baffled. I can feel the water, this is no dream. I scream in panic but that results to water entering my lungs. My lungs burn, they beg for air but I have none. I hurriedly move my arms and somewhat paddle to the surface.

The first thing I hear is, “She floats! Get her! Burn her at stake!”

Men come to surround me, but I grab onto an abandoned branch and pull myself to the land around the water. I clumsily get out of the lake, my soaked clothes slowing me down. I ditch my shoes and run into the forest. I shout whenever my dress or hair gets caught and when I prick my feet on thorns. I finally see a small river and kneel next to it. I wash my face, while focusing on my reflection in the stream.

I let out the breath that I have been holding in but then yelp in surprise. I can feel a sharp thin blade cutting between my shoulder blades, my blood drips down my gown. I don’t dare turn around but instead, search at the reflection the lake provides to identify the person behind me. I see nothing, but the handle of the blade floating as I take in a sharp breath.

“Sorry, but I didn’t decide your fate. He did,” she said.

I feel the knife plunging into the back of my heart. I knew that “He” she was referring to wasn’t God but Satan the Devil himself. Before I fell into the water, one word escaped my lips, the name of the only person that voice could have belonged to, “Annabelle.”
A Dream
By Sullivan Hall
One Book Two Book

Even after 30 minutes of tossing and turning in my bed, the drowsy feeling of unconsciousness finally drifts through my body...

I find myself in an eerie darkness. I look around, trying to find where I am, when out of the corner of my eye, I spy a miniature light. I ponder over to it, flabbergasted by the fact that I wasn’t walking on solid ground. A few yards away from the light, it shines brighter, causing me to stumble backwards. As it gets brighter still, I’m on my back, shielding my eyes from the blinding light.

Suddenly, the world I’m in shifts into a tall world. I see apps of all different colors lined from top to bottom. I try to walk out of it but a thick layer of something see through blocked my way. I started to feel claustrophobic because I was trapped in this horrid place with its palm tree background and its calm music came from an app that read, “I tunes” below it.

I started processing everything that was happening. What do backgrounds, apps, and music all have in common? I asked myself. And then I figure it out, I’m in a phone.

Figuring out that banging on the glass for help had no use, I swiftly turned around and started exploring. Since I got shrunk to fit inside of the phone, climbing the apps wasn’t so easy. After getting to the top row, (which was a tough feat) I found a game that I thought was pretty cool: Minecraft PE. I press it, making the world change again into a very pixelated game.

My body and everything else around it turns to blocks. I know this game really well, so in a situation like this, I’m going to have to find Steve. He wasn’t that far from spawn so I could him pretty easily. I saw him on his bed eating some cooked chicken. He and I decided that we would hunt for creepers because he needed gun powder. So that night we went out to get him 6 gun powder and naturally, he thanked me, afterward. After that I left him because I was still curious on what this phone had to offer.

I climb out of the app and jump to another one. I miss it short and fall into the one below it. Rubbing my head, I slowly stand up and scan the area surrounding me. I see a wide rode and some towers on the side, four different ones actually. My clothes turn to armor, I feel the cold metal of a sword in my hands.

Someone starts yelling at me, “Hey, you, come over here, we need as much help as we can get!” I run over to the person who I think is calling me. “Dude we need you for the final wave,”

I say, “Um, I’m sorry, what is happen...”he cuts me off right there.

“I get it, you’re just one of the newbies at kingdom rush. But hold on, final wave!”

I die almost instantly amongst that final wave. I didn’t think that I was fit for living in a phone and exploring it got me beat. I go back to Minecraft and Steve invites me into his house and makes me a wooden bed. And when I fall asleep, I wake up, in real life. Getting up I think about what happened.
I'm not a poet, I'm a basketball player.
Both of them are forms of art, but they are very different.
But I guess in a way they are similar, too.
You run through a poem just like
you run down the court,
the through-the-legs is an allusion,
the around-the-back is an alliteration,
the spin move is an idiom,
and the crossover is a simile.
You need to surprise everybody about what's coming next,
but also make it look nice.
And the ending,
the ending is the shot.
If the poem is good
the shot will go in,
so I'm just hoping this poem
is a swish.
Life

People sometimes say that not everybody can be a writer. The truth is, it's true. Not everybody can write a decent story down on paper. Some people can, but the truth is, most of us can't write a good story to save our lives.

Now, keep in mind that I said most people can't write a good story.

What people don't realize is that you're creating a story every day. Every single day. You're writing an infinitely complex story without even realizing it. A story that nobody can copy or steal. One that no one can duplicate. I don't know what you may call this story, but I call it..."life".

Your life is the perfect story. No matter who you are, no matter where you come from... you are a walking novel. A New York Times Bestseller with legs. Whether you're a middle-aged single mom with five kids or an eighty-year-old college professor from Harvard with cancer or an outcast twelve year old trying to survive junior high school, you have your own story already written up in your brain, and nobody can steal that from you. And the best part? It's still being written.

Your life is the most original story anybody could ever create, one with endless possibilities. You are the author of your life. You decide where the plot takes you next. Some things in life are decided for you unexpectedly, but it's the way you deal with them that really counts. You have the setting of your story; wherever you are right now. You have your own thoroughly developed, complicated characters; your friends and family, the people sitting around you right now, and even the people you truly despise (your own personal "bad guys"). And you have the plot – whatever it is in life you have been trying to accomplish. Has something ever happened to you that has changed your life forever? Like moving, or marriage, or a tragic accident? Those are life's ways of saying, "Surprise! Plot twist!"

You see, it's true that not everyone will be a published author. But the simple truth is that we are all authors. Authors of the most complicated, moving stories life could throw at us.

Not everybody is a writer. But everyone is an author. And that is life's only constant.
Lost in Minutes

I take a moment to think. I am so scared right now. I frantically look around. Is my life over? I sure hope not but I don't know.

About a half an hour ago, I was sound asleep safely in my cage. Then Charlie came thumping into the room, loudly opened my cage, and picked me up and carried me downstairs to the basement. I wanted to go back to sleep. The boys know that I'm not allowed in the basement. Grace would not have let them, but apparently I'm not the only good sleeper in the family. When it comes to me, Grace is the responsible person. She feeds me every night, she cleans my cage every week, and she makes sure that no other kids make me do gymnastics or choke me or anything.

As soon as Charlie got down there, Henry started fighting with Charlie over who got to hold me. Twin troubles! Finally they got bored of fighting and started building a fort. They set me on the floor to watch. Dumbos. Hamsters can walk. But would they think about that? No. Like always, when they finished they went upstairs to get the toys and snacks that they were going to store in there. But guess who they forgot? Me! I hoped they would be back soon. That probably wouldn't happen because I heard Grace's voice and also the TV.

I sat there for a minute, deciding what to do next. I figured even if they did find me, it was going to be at least twenty minutes. I could tell because Grace came down about ten minutes ago and turned on the TV. Her shows are about thirty minutes each. If she watched a second show it would be around an hour. What should I do? I could search for food. That wouldn't take me long because those boys leave crumbs everywhere. Or I could catch up on sleep. I could even find a hole in the wall. I decided that my second choice was the best. I found a soft pillow and tried to sleep. I just couldn't though. It felt wrong. I just wanted to be in my cage. I crawled underneath the pillow because it was freezing down there. All of a sudden I heard Grace and her mom run down the stairs. I could tell that they were looking for me. There was no way I could tell them where I was.

I squeaked as loud as possible. It was no use though. No one heard me. The basement was a mess. The boys and their fort destroyed the whole place. I heard an occasional thump from them lifting up a chair or a scream from Grace because she was furious.

Finally Grace's mom found me shivering under the pillow. I was relieved and confused at the same time. We went upstairs where the three forgetful boys sat in front of the TV. Dopes. She screamed at them but they didn't listen. Like I said, they are such dumbos. I was so relieved, and I felt much safer once I was back in my cage and nibbling a yummy treat.
The Richest Man on Earth

Long ago in the time of kings and queens, knights and dragons, there lived a man. He was so poor that he barely made enough money to keep bread on the table for his wife and four kids. He worked as a baker in a small village. The man might have been poor, but that didn't stop him from dreaming big dreams.

Every morning, during his walk to the bakery, he would gaze up at the king's mighty palace and wish that he could have anything he dreamed of. But every night, as he lay down on his only bed with his wife and kids, he felt he that he needed nothing more.

Early one morning the man could not go back to bed. He left his hut and walked out onto his small yard. He peered up at the night sky. There was a sudden flash of a shooting star and there was a faint outline of a woman in front of him. She hovered several inches above the ground. Her blue dress fluttered around her. Her irises were changing from silver to gold. Her wings looked like glass that kept melting and rebuilding themselves.

"I believe you have been asking for a wish for a very long while," Her voice was smooth, but it had a chill to it. Like a nice evening with a soft wind blowing, making it feel cool.

The man didn't even hesitate.

"I want everything I dream of to become a reality!" The man was so caught up in his wish he didn't really know what he was saying. "I-I could have anything I want! I could rule the world!"

The fairy raised her eyebrows. "That is a very greedy wish. Often times, people are blinded by greed." She warned.

"Do it!" the man screamed. The fairy flicked her wrist but nothing happened.

The man decided to give it a try. He pictured something he always wanted. Gold beyond belief! He felt a small pinch on the back of his head. His vision blurred, and by the time it refocused, a mountain of gold up to the clouds was there. The man was so happy, he didn't realize when the fairy went. He ran inside to his wife and kids. They would get presents every day!

He imagined him and his family in finery, with diamond necklaces, and golden crowns. He imagined their house as a huge palace, larger than the kings! Suddenly, poof, all that became true. The man was sitting in a golden throne. His wife was queen. She had a throne too.

The man spent all his days making dreams a reality, until he could not fit anything more in his castle. How easy it was now. He could have anything!

But one night, as the new king made his way to his separate luxury chambers, he felt as though he was missing something, but he couldn't quite put his finger on it.

Then the king remembered what the fairy had said earlier. He might've been poor in possession, but back then, the man was rich. It didn't take money to be rich. It just took a loving family.

Right then, the king wished everything would just disappear, and he would be in his bed with his wife and kids, and everything would be how it used to be. He wished he never got granted a wish. And, once again, the king felt a pinching sensation, and then he was in his bed, sandwiched between his wife and kids.

For the first time, the man felt like the happiest king on earth. It didn't take material possessions to do that. The man truly did have everything he could wish for.
Winter
Air is getting cold
Snow comes falling down so light
Winter comes so fast

Grass
Gets covered in snow
In the winter time all white
Here comes summer green

Birds
Noises when I wake
When I am out at recess
All sorts of colors

Tree
How rough how textured
Finger tips run through your bark
Yes, you are alive
ASH AND CHIMCHAR IN SINNOH

Pokemon are amazing creatures, each has a unique battle strategy. In Pokemon battles, Pokemon have type advantages that can give them the upper hand in battles such as fire types are weak against water types, however, just because some Pokemon are weak against another does not mean they will not win, that’s what makes Pokemon battles fun! Let’s start the adventure...

Our young hero, Ash Ketchum, has just reached the Sinnoh Region and he will go to Professor Rowen’s lab to get his first Pokemon. When he gets there, he selects Chimchar as his first pokemon to train. Chimchar is a fire type pokemon that looks like a monkey with fire for a tail. Chimchar refuses to come with Ash and runs off, Ash quickly goes in full speed in search of the missing pokemon. Soon he is confronted with a pack off Aereados, a bug-type Pokemon, Ash commands Pikachu, a loyal friend and companion, to use its exquisite thunderbolt at the Aereados, which destroys these pokemon. After that Ash continues his search for Chimchar, he now can view Chimchar sitting on a tree eating berries. Chimchar also notices Ash and challenges Ash to a fierce battle, Ash accepts and decides to use his first trained Pokemon, Pikachu, in the Kanto Region to fight with Chimchar. Chimchar makes the first move, he charges into Pikachu with a flame wheel attack, Pikachu dodged it and let out a thunderbolt. Then, Chimchar uses dig to get away and then jumps up to fight by using fury swipes. Pikachu follows Ash’s commands to use iron tail, Chimchar is now hit and just then their battle is interrupted by Team Rocket, a group of thieves that want to steal Ash’s Pikachu but they are not very good at their job.

Team Rocket send a robot arm, coming out of their air balloon, heading for Chimchar! Ash put himself in danger just to save Chimchar, he lets the robot arm grab a hold of him and punch him. Pikachu then kicks in and uses thunderbolt which sends Team Rocket blasting off. Chimchar realizes Ash saved his life and thanks him by saying its own name in a cheerful way, this is the way a Pokemon expresses its happiness. Ash returns Chimchar to the lab but Chimchar refuses to stay in the lab. Chimchar now likes Ash and wants to be with him.
Pink Pen

My pink pen is a neon light,
to every eye in sight.
Yet to me my pink pen lets my thoughts go out,
out to the page and to others souls.

My pink pen is pure beauty
for through it
my beauty shines like a sun.
The beauty of my thoughts
are more beautiful than a diamond,
and more thoughtful than love.
What is Freedom?
By Madeline Lanxon

Van Allen Elementary – Mrs. Porter’s Class

It’s the feeling of one hundred seagulls
Lifting off the beach as one.
It’s the sight of an open cage
Being guarded by no one.
It’s looking at the open sky above
And the endless ground below.
It’s that hope of knowing you’re never alone.
Wherever you go,
Whatever you see,
You may not always feel it,
But you’re always free.
The sky looks like it ends,
But it goes on forever.
Your heart may be broken,
Your shoulders may sag,
But the freedom within you
Won’t let your feet drag.
It goes beyond cages,
Beyond gates, beyond locks,
Like a Wi-Fi connection
That will never stop.
Christmas Magic

There once was a Christmas ornament. Now, this Christmas ornament had a very lovely picture on it. It was a picture of Jesus and Mary. It also had a white ribbon on the top. This ornament was very small, but very special. This Christmas ornament was magical.

Every Christmas, the ornament would appear at a house that deserved the real Christmas Spirit. This ornament didn't do much, but its power was to fill whoever deserved the Christmas Spirit with joy and happiness. The one person that got the ornament this year was a young girl named Caroline. She was eight years old. You would expect an older person and a more mature person to get this Christmas ornament. Caroline wasn't only nice during the Advent season, but other times of the year too.

At school, she helped a kid when they got hurt and she helped pick up after other people. Her teacher was very proud of her. At home, she washed dishes, she folded clothes, and she sang a song to her little sister and read her a story before her nap. Her parents were thankful for her help around the house. Every Christmas, she went to her Grandmother's house. She helped cook the Christmas sweets and made hot cocoa for everyone.

Caroline got the ornament because she was being so nice and helpful. She deserved to have the ornament because of all her nice work. In the bottom of her heart, she felt the joy and happiness that the Christmas ornament gave her.
Once upon a time there was a deep, dark forest that no one ever went in. Everybody in town were all too scared to go in. But one day, a girl and her parents moved into a small cottage right on the edge of the forest. She was about eleven and her name was Melissa. The next day when Melissa had finished school, she heard about the deep, dark forest.

"I'm not scared of some dark forest!" Exclaimed Melissa.

"Fine, then why don't you just go in the forest yourself?" Someone yelled from the crowd of children.

"Ok. I will!" She replied. With that, she made her way home. When she got to her cottage, she put her backpack on the kitchen counter and ate a granola bar before she went to explore the forest. She walked outside and peered into the forest. It was really dark, and it looked huge from where she was standing.

"All right, here I go," Melissa said to herself. She walked along a small stream that she found when she had followed some deer prints to it. Soon she came to a large, circular opening that was what she thought was the center. It was amazing!

The stream flowed into a small pond that glimmered a light blue. Around the pond cattails and long, green ferns grew. The color of the grass was a mix of light and dark green that moved softly in the warm, summer breeze. The tall, sturdy trees formed a circle around the beautiful landscape.

Then she noticed all the small animals that looked cautiously at Melissa with kind eyes. Once they saw she wasn't a danger to them, they went on playing and eating. A doe and her faun grazed quietly near some trees.

"Wow! This Is amazing!" Melissa whispered to herself. Then she looked up and saw that it was getting late. She started to head home.

The next day when Melissa was at school, she told the other kids what she had seen.

"It wasn't scary at all," Melissa said. All the other children were astonished. As she told the other kids what she saw, they all oohed and looked at each other. Then the last bell rang and they all went home.

As Melissa walked home, she thought more and more about what she had seen. She thought about the beautiful landscape and cute, little critters she saw. At that moment, she vowed that she would return to the forest someday soon.
My Boa Constrictor

I need it!
I want it!
To give it a home
A Boa Constrictor to call my own.
My mom says, "We don't need more pests."
I protest,
"We used to have over eleven. Now can't we have one more to make seven?
You know I'll take care of it like I always do. Sometimes I even pick up dog doo doo.
I'll help you clean the house and help dad catch that big fat mouse."

I need it!
I want it!
To give it a home
A Boa Constrictor to call my own
My dad says, "We have no space."
I reply with a begging face,
"Aileen's room could be its home when she moves into a dorm room of her own.
Then I'll clean her room with no noise
and even give away some toys.
Or we could put it in place of my bed
so it can curl up next to my head."

I need it!
I want it!
To give it a home
A Boa Constrictor to call my own.
My brother says, "What if the dogs do it harm?"
I reply with my charm,
"I'll buy a lock for the door
and the dogs won't go in the room any more.
I'm sure the snake can defend itself.
And it also might... take its mouth and bite.
Oh, my brother dear, listen here.
The snake is surely scary, can't you see?
I'm sure if the dogs saw it, they'd flee."

Mother, Father, Brother dears
won't you just listen here?
I want a boa constrictor.
Can't you hear me plea?
Won't you just agree?

A Boa Constrictor's a marvelous pet, and, wait, I'm not finished yet.
A Boa Constrictor that needs a home
surely won't mind if I call it my own.
Mr. Snugglewhiskers

December 1, 2014

Hello! I'm Mr. Snugglewhiskers! But you can call me Mr. S. Pleased to meet you! I am a refined long-haired Siamese cat.

I consider myself to be very lucky. I am constantly being pampered by my owner, Miss Scarlett Delaney. She is 25, and lives alone with me in her penthouse in New York City. She feeds me the highest quality tuna, straight from the market, and has me groomed at least once a week.

December 3, 2014

I noticed today that she seemed to be spending less and less time with me. This couldn't have come at a more distressing time. I recently lost my favorite catnip chew toy. His name is Bobert. I have a high stress level that Scarlett is now contributing to. I'm worried.

December 4, 2014

The worst has come! Scarlett brought home a boyfriend! I'm mortified, because he seems quite, how do you say... neanderthal. But then I'd be insulting neanderthals.

"Mr. Snugglewhiskers, meet my new boyfriend Brad!" Scarlett said to me, like I care.

I suppose it's about time she has a boyfriend. I mean, I find her fairly attractive (to human standards), what with her auburn hair, freckles and green eyes.

I am so deflated.

December 6, 2014

Oh, hello again (sigh). I have been searching for my toy for days. I miss Bobert dearly. He is my only friend other than Scarlett. Where are you Bobert?!! Haven't I searched everywhere for you! I looked in every room in the penthouse, and under Scarlett's bed, in all the closets, in the shower, and every other possible place I can think of! I don't know what else to do.

December 7, 2014

I usually love when Christmas comes around, but this year, Scarlett seems to be spending more time with Brad than with me. She's even bringing him home on a daily basis. He's hogging my lady! How rude is that? I think I need to go nap off my rage. Excuse me.

December 8, 2014

A most extraordinary thing happened today! Brad found Bobert!! So this is how it went down: Brad sat down on my favorite chair (you know, the blue velvet one with the golden trim). He looked as if he was uncomfortable. So he got up, lifted up the cushion and found Bobert! I was so excited I jumped up on him and started purring. I guess boyfriends aren't that bad after all.

Signed,

Mr. S.
The Curse of Thought: A New Mexican Folktale

By Gentry Otero

Many, many years ago when the deserts were white, there was a small Navajo boy. His mom was a jewelry maker and his dad was a hunter. The boy’s name was Soaring Eagle and he loved animals. Soaring Eagle was very curious, and every day when the other village boys were drawing things in the dirt or pretending to be hunters, he would climb onto the great mesas of the white desert. He watched the great hawks soar around the sky, wondering how they were able to take flight and wishing that one day he too could fly. Every day while the other kids ran and laughed and played together, Soaring Eagle sat alone thinking.

As he grew, and the other boys his age joined in the hunts or helped the crops prosper, Soaring Eagle retreated deeper into his own mind. As he thought, his mind started to go mad. One night, when Soaring Eagle’s dad was out hunting and his mom was asleep, Soaring Eagle got up (for he could not sleep) and went outside.

The cool desert night made him shiver, but Soaring Eagle did not care. Suddenly, a strange figure caught his eye. It was a white mountain buffalo! Soaring Eagle had heard legends of such a creature, but thought those were only stories to keep small children away from the mesas. The ghostly creature was looking straight at Soaring Eagle; and his mind, worn from all his thoughts, broke. As Soaring Eagle fell to his knees, the white buffalo charged! When it was just a grass blade’s length from Soaring Eagle’s pale body, the white buffalo turned and flew straight up the mesa. Driven by madness, Soaring Eagle grabbed onto the buffalo’s foot and refused to let go as the beast dragged his body over the rough desert and deep into the mesas. Ever since then, the blood of the Navajo boy has dyed the deserts red. You can still hear Soaring Eagle scream at the dead of night when the white buffalo runs through the mesas of New Mexico.

Author’s Note: Gentry Otero was born in New Mexico, along with his mom and dad. About this story, the author says, “I wrote this story because I wanted to get a point out there that kids need to have fun and that they shouldn’t always be deep in thought.”
BLANK PAGES

Warm And Hollow
I put my hands near the hot thick flames. As I close my eyes I see light and colors dancing in my mind orange glowing ashes float up to the great sky. You see your fire's light in the devastating darkness.

Happy
What makes it? You feel this, this joy and excitement, but it can go as fast as a gust of wind. You feel it when you are close to a loved one, the relaxation of peace in one emotion.

City
A scent of asphalt and concrete. You look up at the sky and make out a lone star in the orange mist. The wind whipping around on a summer night. While you feel like a giant on your apartment building.

Peak
I place my hand my freezing hand into the chilled rocky uneven handhold I turn around which was a mistake. The arctic wind touches my face and I can see snow and only snow. I am on top of the world.
Princess Jamie and the Evil Witch

Once upon a time, there was a princess whose name was Princess Jamie. The princess and her brother Prince Everett lived in a towering castle made of gray brick with ivy running down the walls. Princess Jamie loved flowers, especially the singing flowers which grew in the garden across from the castle. The singing flowers were magical...their magic was that they could sing when someone was sad. Princess Jamie had discovered the flowers after her parents were lost at sea when she was young. Whenever the princess was sad or lonely, she would visit the garden and the flowers would sing to her until she felt happier.

One day, Princess Jamie was feeling blue so she decided to go to the garden. Usually the garden was quiet and peaceful, which made it her favorite place. Today, however, the princess heard laughter the moment she walked in. It was the evil witch, and it was coming from where the singing flowers were. This was not the first time Princess Jamie had seen the evil witch, and she recognized her right away. The witch had ugly warts on her face and long fingernails, and she didn’t like princesses or flowers.

Princess Jamie ran over to the flowers as fast as she could and saw the evil witch taking them out of the ground. “Give me back my flowers!” said Princess Jamie. When he heard the princess screaming, Prince Everett came running and drew his sword. The witch was frightened by the prince and ran away, dropping the flowers. Prince Everett chased her until she was caught, and put her in the dungeon.

After the witch had been captured, Princess Jamie decided that she should not keep the flowers to herself any longer, but would share them with others who wanted to feel happy. So from that day on, the Princess welcomed all of the villagers to the garden whenever they were sad, or if they just wanted to see the pretty flowers. Sharing her garden with others made her even happier than hearing the flowers sing.

The End
Mango Gets Lost

About a year ago my family had a problem, my brother, Nick, my dad, and I went outside to play baseball. I must’ve forgotten to shut the door because when we came back inside it was open.

We have an indoor cat named Mango, and when we came in we couldn’t find him. We assumed he had gotten out the door. We looked inside to be sure he wasn’t just hiding, but he was nowhere to be found. We all went outside and looked for a while, but we still could not find him. We decided it would be more efficient if we all split up.

I stayed outside and searched the backyard, and my brother looked in front while my dad kept looking inside. It started to get dark, so we got some flashlights and continued the search. We looked all through our yard and the edge of our neighbor’s yard, but my dad thought we should wait until the morning to do a full neighborhood search. We searched a little while longer, but then my dad said it was getting late. It was time to head in and give up until the morning.

You better believe I wasn’t happy about this! I was really, really worried, and didn’t want to stop looking until we found him. Still, my dad told me it was too late. I wasn’t happy, but I agreed anyway. I decided to relax and watch some TV. Then, all of a sudden I heard my dad shout from his closet. Nick and I rushed in. Behind an old poster board, just barely awake, was our sleepy kitty, Mango, looking at us like he was thinking, “Hey! Why’d you wake me up, I’m tired!”

It looked like Mango had slept through the whole thing! Next time, we’ll check the closet before we panic!
Escape

Once upon a time a girl named Emma was walking in New York. When it was midnight almost nobody was outside. Well not a lot for New York. Her parents did not know that she was on the streets of New York. The sun wasn’t up yet.

Then she had an idea. She hated her life because of her parents. So then she wanted to go somewhere else. She decided to go on the subway. She knew her parents wouldn’t find out that she was missing until lunch at least cause that’s when they wake up. It was now 12:02 and she went to the subway. She brought some hand sanitizer and some baby wipes. She knew how gross it is in the subway.

She went on there and it was gross. She felt weird. She was grossed out. People were really gross. Then she got off. She found herself was far away from where she was before. Then she looked at her watch. It was 12:20.

She needed money because her parents would find out that she went out of the house. Then she saw a cash machine. She went to it and got money and the machine was broken but it gave her millions of dollars.

Then she saw someone selling a car. It was for 100 dollars. She coughed it all up and it was 80,000 dollars so she bought it and she still had millions of dollars.

She drove the car and she didn’t really pay much attention to where she was going. Then she found herself at an airport. She looked at her watch. It was 1:00. She had lots of time until her parents would wake up.

She ran in the airport and bought some snacks. She found a plane and got on. It took eight hours to get there. Then she got off and didn’t know where she was. She looked at her watch. It was 9:12.

She did not hear English. She heard French. She looked around and saw the Eiffel Tower and then she knew she was in Paris. Then she saw so many cool things. She found an apartment and loved it there. She bought a car and grew and forgot all about her parents.

The End
A Real American Hero

Some heroes are born. I was made. Since then, I’ve always had some meat on me. Unfortunately, I’m currently trapped in a glass cage. It’s not as hard as it seems. Strangely, I am sustaining well without any food. I know one cellmate that isn’t. Don’t tell him, but he’s starting to look green. There’s also a fellow prisoner who hardly has any color left. The three others and I would help them, but we’re all paralyzed. What’s that rumbling I hear? Oh, it’s just a giant clawing hand. Every so often a giant hand grabs one of my cellmates, but by now, it’s nothing unusual. Now the hand is reaching for me. I try to move, but I can’t. The hand grabs me and tries to smother me in slippery brown paper. Fortunately, its attempt fails. Another giant hand grabs me. I am carried over to a strange machine. Is it a torture machine? No, of course it isn’t. Ha! Torture machine? What a preposterous idea. The hand grabs something. Could it be a hat? It turns the potential hat upside-down and brings it over to the machine. A strange liquid flows into it.

Now I am carried over to a strange landform that may be the monsters’ lair. It has a tall, wide pole at the bottom, and a flat surface at the top of the pole. Perhaps the monsters carved this as a place to hang out. I find a huge, dark, cave. It is damp inside, and big white rocks line the entrance. Perhaps this is the monsters’ lair. I am lifted inside. Even though it’s damp, it is warm and cozy. As soon as my head is inside, the big white rocks start to close in on me. And then… my head comes off.

You may think my story ends here, but I have one more thing to tell you. I’m a hero sandwich.
Leonardo Da Vinci has once said, “Water is the driving force of all nature”. When I read this quote, I stopped for a moment and several thoughts came to my mind. I started asking myself, “Can we imagine life without water?” “Has someone tried to live without water for extended period?” Since water is the basic necessity of our life, living without water would be bit of an extreme but I know that 1.2 billion people in today’s world lack access to clean water. Considering the fact that world has current population of 7 billion people, it is very hard to imagine that a large percentage of world’s population can’t even have access to clean water.

While these thoughts were puzzling me, my school principal Mrs. Ann Langenfeld introduced my school to “H2O for life” program. I was excited to know that “H2O for life” program provides clean water throughout the world to those who need it most. So how exactly can we make the clean water available to them? Thankfully the solution was simple; by raising money. We did three interesting fundraisers to raise money for this program. The first was the “Penny wars” fundraiser; the second was the “Greeting card” fundraiser and last but not the least was the third “Walk for the water” fundraiser. So let me explain the “Penny wars” fundraiser first. The Penny wars was where the kids from my school brought in assorted amounts of money to their own classrooms and tried to collect more money than other classes in their penny jars. Then, whichever class fills their penny jars first earns a party. It was like a war between all of the classes but for a good cause. Amazingly we raised over $1000 just from the penny wars. When our class was explained about the conversation rate of dollars and pennies as compared to currencies of African countries that was mind boggling for me. I was proud to know that even a single penny can make a make a difference in someone’s life and we had a whole jar full of pennies. Next up, was the “Greeting card” fundraiser. For this fundraiser, kids made blank greeting cards using various styles of art like collage, water colors and even normal drawing. I love art work, so it was a fun experience for me. We sold our blank greeting cards to the people in bundle of 5. And this time, we made over 250 greeting cards and raised $511. Our next project was the “Walk for the water” fundraiser. For this fundraiser, the whole school walked around the perimeter of the entire school. After weeks of hard work, the team effort finally paid off. Generous donations resulted in a grand total of $5400 which was more than my school’s original goal of $4000. All my schoolmates were proud to know that this amount will be used to build wells in Sudan, which will help the native people over there.

This whole experience changed my way of thinking about water. We take water for granted but several people around the world have to walk miles daily just to get access to clean water. I also visited India last year to meet my grandparents. I saw that water is treated precisely over there and water conservation is part of daily chores at everyone’s house. I also saw several poor families living in slums over there and I could imagine that they did not have access to clean water every day. That made me sad but also determined about not wasting water. Even though taking a bath is fun for me, I take it for less time now and I have politely asked my parents to do so as well. When I first heard about the H2O for life program, I just kept thinking about the penny jar and the efforts in my school. But soon I realized that it was not just about the penny jars and me, but it was actually about the teamwork and how to make it happen. What makes me happy is that our teamwork and the efforts will make changes in the lives of people in Sudan by getting wells built over there. I will end my writing with a quote from a famous writer Thomas Fuller who once said, “We never know the worth of water, till the well is dry”.
My First Year in Fourth Grade

(A poem dedicated to my Grandpa who tells me stories of repeating 7th Grade)

My first year in fourth grade
Didn’t go so well.
My first year in fourth grade,
Was the opposite of swell.

I couldn’t do the multiplication,
My test I got a D.
I couldn’t read quite right,
And thought I got a B.

In class I didn’t listen great,
I could not do eight times eight.
I looked out the window more,
Boy, school was just a bore.

I finally got a problem right,
The hundredth day of school.
Then got so bored I fell asleep,
And unfortunately started to drool.

So now you see why I didn’t pass,
My first year in fourth grade.
But next year will be different,
For good grades I’ll get paid.

My first year in fourth grade,
Didn’t go so well.
My second year in fourth grade,
Will hopefully be swell.
Columbia Lake

I'm in the middle of Columbia Lake. I see and hear the crashing waves and smell the salty lake air. I hear the motor of the pontoon and feel my hair whipping back to the same rhythm as the American flag. I smell the smoky aroma of people on the beach grilling hotdogs and hamburgers.

Imagine the bright sun and the cool water brushing against my fingers. As we roar back to the dock I feel overjoyed and so anxious to feel the warm sand between my toes.

I hear my parents call, "Time for lunch!" I hurriedly run up to the little white cottage racing my cousin and feeling the sharp rocks beneath my feet. My family is the best part about this day!
Falling, falling ev'ry where, quiet, quiet with out a sound, wooshing wooshing all around. Breath of its own mind of its own, It has many forms, one puts the world in a blanket, second we use it and we thank It, the third makes a foggy foggy mist, but the one I'm thinking of can always consist, SNOW
Soccer Day

Adrenaline was in the air,
The crowd's cheer could be heard from miles around,
All felt as though they were on their last breath.
Spectators, on the edge of their seats,
Players, speeding across the field.

A kick of last resort is made,
A dive to stop it.
The goalie is like a wall,
The players are like thrown pebbles.
The Goalie thinks of himself as an invincible force

Before it happened,
Until, it flies past him,
Until, he dives too far,
Until,
GOAL!
Dear Bully

Stop I say!
I don’t want to hear it today.

Your words are hurtful and mean,
They make me want to scream.

Sometimes I feel sad,
And other times I get mad.

I will find the strength to take a stand,
And reach out a helping hand.

I won’t give you the power you want.
I won’t give you the power to taunt.

Stop I say!
I don’t want to hear it today.