

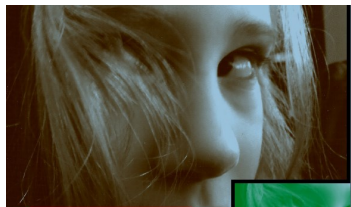
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# *Arkansas Anthology*

*"I feel my heart beat in sync with the rhythm of the ocean tide..."*

*Brooke Weaver, p. 6*

Submit  
now for  
2016



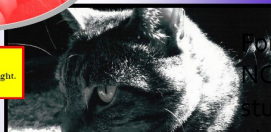
She stood there,  
Shimmering brighter than the sun  
And flashed her magical smile.



Arkansas Anthology 2012



And together,  
Together we went into the light  
—Tee Nigbe



We showcase and publish the writing of Arkansas students and educators!

Submissions accepted through March 20, 2016

Send as WORD Document to: Co-editor, Dixie Keyes at [dkeyes@astate.edu](mailto:dkeyes@astate.edu)  
Include ALL contact information including email and phone and a statement verifying that you wrote the piece (that it is original from you).

Publish Date: May-June 2016

For 15 years, the Arkansas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, a state affiliate of ACTE, has enhanced the excellent work of ELA teachers in Arkansas by opening a space for students to publish their creative and informational writing, along with artistic expressions of photography and art. The anthology is compiled and edited by Drs. Dixie Keyes and Rob Lamm from Arkansas State University, and various guest editors are invited to help each year.

### Categories of Writing for Submissions

Follow guidelines for formatting--

#### ***Personal Narratives or Creative Non-fiction***

Write about an event from your life, from family stories, or other actual events and experiences. These writings can be reflective, thought-provoking or humorous; they can represent lessons learned or questions about life choices. 1 page, 12 pt font word limit.

#### ***Short Stories***

Consider submitting short fiction pieces that have well-developed plots or strong characters. Witty with tight description and dialogue, short stories are often tragic, scary or adventurous and ironic. Same word limit as above

#### ***Poetry***

Poetry pieces can be lyrical, imagistic, rhyming, free verse and more. We accept a limited number of patterned poetry, and most often publish free verse with strengths in imagery, voice, metaphor and tone.

#### ***Descriptive Paragraphs***

Sometimes submissions can be brief writings, in paragraph form, that offer readers a significant thought or that captures a moment in time meant to be shared. These pieces can originate in journals or writers' notebooks, or can be reading responses that dig deep into meaning gained from a piece of literature.

#### ***And...Photography and Artwork, in digital formats***

Please avoid Google doc links and PDFs.

We prefer single spacing, 11 pt font text with 14 pt bold for titles, Calibri.

Try to include a title to the piece.

At the end of the pieces, please list: Author's name, grade, school, teacher's first and last name

Provide contact information: School and author addresses, phone numbers, email addresses (include zip codes).

Provide a statement of originality: "I wrote this poem," or "This art is my original work."

Arkansas Authors Shine! Editor's Choice Award Winners share their writing and art

Date: Thursday, Nov 5, 150-250 pm  
Location: Grand Marriott, Caraway III

# PREFACE, Volume 15

The *Arkansas Anthology* has been an annual publication since 2000. Sponsored by the Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts (ACTELA), the goal of the *Anthology* has been to encourage and reward the writing excellence of students and educators throughout Arkansas schools.

The first *Anthology* editors were Dr. Robert Lamm of Arkansas State University and Donna James, a teacher at Sloan-Hendrix Schools, Imboden. From 2004 to 2005, Lauren Bradshaw of Marion Junior High School served as editor. In 2006, Emily Tipton of DeValls Bluff High School was editor. Rob Lamm resumed his editing role from 2007 to 2008. Dixie Keyes and Rob Lamm of ASU collaborated as editors for the 2009, 2010, and 2011 volumes. Dixie continued as editor in 2012 and was honored to have the assistance of two guest editors, Kerri Bennett and Teri Spillman. Three more guest editors joined us over the past two years, Jill Layne, Grover Welch, and Jessica Lange, all teachers in Northeast Arkansas.

We are pleased this year to provide 48 pages of writing, photography and art from students and teachers. If it were possible, we would have published more, but constraints of cost and space forced some difficult editorial decisions. ACTELA continues its support of a top-quality state collection of writing for students and teachers. The *Anthology* is published in the Printing Department at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro.

Each published author receives a certificate to honor the achievement. In addition, each author and teacher receives a complimentary copy of the *Anthology*.

We encourage students and teachers to plan ahead to submit writings to next year's *Anthology*. Consult the ACTELA website for more information: <http://actela.org/>. Also, seek out the online versions of the *Anthology* on the website.

The authors published in the *Arkansas Anthology* retain all the publication rights of their respective works. ACTELA, an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, is a non-profit, professional organization.

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Professor of English  
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## Member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement

*\*This year's front cover art is by Bhavya Lenin ("Six Strings of Sound") and the back cover is by Karis Scott ("The Everlasting Meadow").*

*Below are the **Editor's Choice** selections for the 2014 Volume. The writings chosen for this honor are simply the favorites of the editors—poetry, prose, and photography with images not easily forgotten.*

"Winter Fox" and "Six Strings of Sound" by Bhavya Lenin, p. 12 & Cover

"Boxed Mountain View" by Briasia Jeffers, p. 28      "Ballad of Moonlight" by Shawna Emmons, p. 18

"Puff Pass" by Alantra Betts, p. 16      "Today and Tomorrow" by Elena Ramirez, p. 30

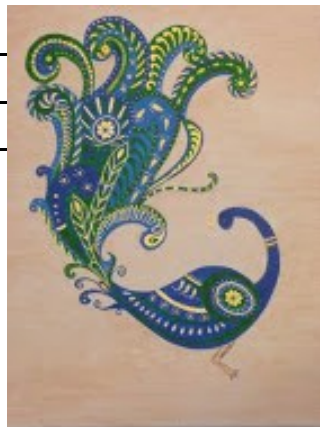
"The Conversion" by Michael Snavely, p. 40

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Art by Sreelakshmi Raghev, LISA Academy, Shannon Martindale, Teacher

## A Coming Storm

Moon rings moon rings  
Say it isn't so  
Two stars are shining in your pretty silver glow.

Moon rings moon rings,  
Say it cannot be,  
When I look up at you, one star is all I see.

Moon rings moon rings,  
Say that life goes on,  
Because I looked up to you tonight, and all the  
stars were gone.

—Helen McKinzi Stewart, 12th grade at Oark School  
Barbara Sampley, Teacher



Photo by Lexi Spillman, "Wolf Moon," 9th grade at  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher

Photo by Nandini Vinta,  
"A Touch of Yellow," Courtway Middle School  
in Conway, Monica Flowers, Teacher



## Outside the Window

Outside the window,  
the sky is blue,  
the air is fresh,  
the grass is new,

Outside the window,  
the children play,  
they sing their song,  
they dance and sway,

Outside the window  
is a lovely place,  
of wonderful beauty,  
of passionate grace.

Outside the window  
is where I'd rather be,  
than inside and cold,  
when I could be free

Outside the window  
is a place in my mind,  
a place I imagined,  
for I am blind.

—Bree Swanson,  
Rogers New Tech High School  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher

## Guardian Angel

There once was the ghost of a young boy. He hid away in the shadows as to avoid confrontation with the living. He watched over his younger sister with a careful eye, and she knew he was there with her. Thanks to him, she wasn't afraid of the dark. She knew that that's where her brother hid.

Her favorite time was nighttime because that's when she spoke to her guardian angel, her brother. As the days went on, their conversations grew longer and longer until one day they started to speak from dusk to morning sun. Each day she would come home and go straight to her room. She would go to her bookshelf and pick out a special book, one that her brother always read to her before he passed away. The book had a homemade cover.

She would open the cover and stare at the picture of her brother. Every day, his face seemed to be different to her. That one night, he looked older than he normally did. His honey colored hair was longer than it used to be, and his brown eyes were dull. As the day grew darker and the sun sunk down on the horizon, shadows flooded in through the windows and her brother emerged from the darkest corner of her room.

She told him about the day, as she always did. She reminded him what it was like to be alive. What it was like to breathe, how the sun felt on his skin. As she spoke, she reminded herself that she was alive.

The next morning as the sun crept up from the east and her guardian angel sunk back into the shadows with the moon and the sun, she said goodbye for the final time.

—Carly Capps, 8th grade at Annie Camp Junior High in Jonesboro  
LaTwayla Knowlton, Teacher

### A Simile

Will you still remember me  
now that I am like the sunset  
who you never see anymore  
with its rosy colors  
with its warm embrace  
with the light fading out  
with its fleeting beauty  
the one you used to love

—Isabella Wood, 9th grade  
at Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher

—Gracie Fason, Photo "Hidden Sun"  
Courtway Middle School in Conway  
Monica Flowers, Teacher

### Untitled

I am eccentric and eclectic.

I wonder how everybody sees me.

I hear the music of the natural world.

I see beautiful sun-kissed landscapes.

I want to go back in time and change my mistakes.

I am eccentric and eclectic.

I pretend that I can see the world anew with the dawn-  
ing of each new day.

I feel my heart beat in sync with the rhythm of the  
ocean tide.

I touch the wrinkled skin of a loved one.

I worry that I won't be successful in life.

I cry thinking of world catastrophes.

I am eccentric and eclectic.

I understand that nothing lasts forever.

I say go after what you want in life.

I dream of better days.

I try to make everyone happy.

I hope for a long life full of joy and adventure.

I am eccentric and eclectic.

—Brooke Weaver, Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher





## Teenager

I am a teenager

One through twelve my mind was clear, I could be myself

But now all that has left because I'm in my teenage years

I try being good but the media always comes along and interferes

So I'm stuck in the middle. It's like an angel and a devil both whisper in my sweet little ears

I HEAR, that the world ain't what it used to be back in the older days

So older folks think I should be stuck up in their older ways...

I plead the 5<sup>th</sup> because I'm in my teenage years

I can't be understood

I try being myself but always painted the way others think I should

So I'm confused

My heart is screaming out help while my mind is telling me I don't need it

So I'm putting on the shoes of others, but can't seem to fit it

So where do I turn now?

Do I get on my knees and pray when I don't even know how?

On the other hand I'm all stressed out

Trying to balance my education and the pressure my peers puts out seems to be the root of my anger elevation

And that can be a bad situation

Especially, because all of the ignorance in my 90s generation

But then again, all we need is love, patience, and communication.

So yes, I am a teen

And I admit that I can be a little mean

But I'm just trying to make it in this world, and I need your guidance to guide me

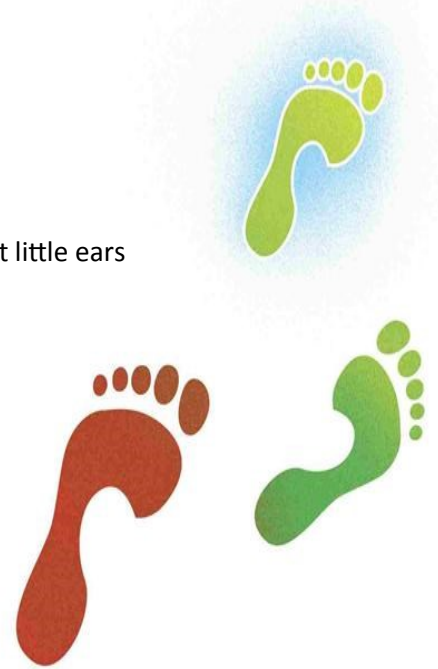
Not your money to spend

But with a little prayer, I promise I'm gonna be okay in the end.

—Andrea Clinkscale, 12th grade, Lee High School

Jackie Dean, Teacher

—Photo by Karis Scott, "Barrier" 5th grade at Courtway Middle School in Conway; Monica Flowers, Teacher



## Leaves

Slowly floating down to the ground when the weather gets cold  
Cracking, crinkling, crumbling beneath your feet as you walk

Soon they begin to pile up beneath the trees  
Swaying, swishing, and swooping through the air as you kick them up when you walk through them

—Shawna Emmons, 9th grade at Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher

## Where are you Grandfather?

Day after day waiting for you,  
Missing your warm hugs  
Crying when I think I hear you.  
Remembering the times you ate all of granny's Oreos,  
And you watching *Soul Train* TV shows.  
Playing Pac Man in your favorite chair,  
Only to come visit and you're not there.  
Missing your pretty smile, I've been thinking this for a while.  
Where are you Grandfather?  
I need you here,  
You're the only man that caught my tears and was around to help me through my fears.  
Grandpa, you're gone and I can't bear the soft tears when I come and see stone over your bed.  
Singing your songs in church with despair because the man I love isn't here

***Where are you Grandfather?***

—Taysia Johnson, 8th grade at Annie Camp Junior High in Jonesboro  
LaTwayla Knowlton, Teacher

## Lennon

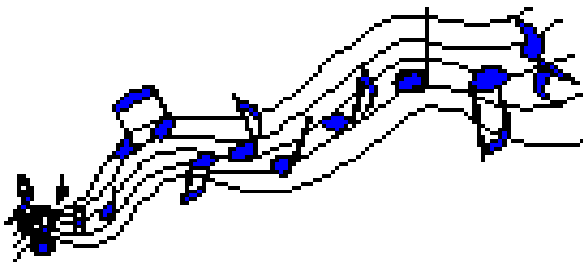
He made music for generations.  
He understood the human condition.  
He was just a man.  
He will be admired for centuries.  
He was the spokesman of a generation.  
He was a culture of his own.  
He inspired.  
He changed the game.  
He was the walrus.  
Lennon.

—Walt Reynolds, 9th grade at  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher

## Ventilation

Rose in the concrete  
Tupac Shakur  
These are my damaged petals  
The society tore  
Constantly bombarding with rules and regulations  
Trials and tribulations  
Identities and reputations  
Everyone claims to realize the problems of the world  
But who stops to revive it  
Because no person can survive it  
Like a curse  
The witches and wizards who placed them can be found  
easily  
By looking in the mirror  
Now my ventilation comes to rest.

—Kayla Jones, 8th grade at  
Annie Camp Junior High in Jonesboro  
Latwayla Knowlton, Teacher





## Fading swings

A happy memory.  
One chain dragged the ground,  
The other held taut.  
A cracked rubber seat hung in between.  
Rust had grown on any available surface.  
The paint was cracked and chipped away.  
It gave a pathetic sound when the wind tried to make it sway.  
It lay there broken and crippled.  
The dream of children laughing and smiling was a fading memory.  
The rotten plank of wood with handles on either side was no different.  
The plank was barely held together by the bar supporting its middle.  
Its paint had disappeared long ago.  
The holes in its wood, due to wood boring insects, had taken its sturdiness and strength.  
It was a dream fading away.  
The rusted bars jutting from the dirt floor was the same.  
The verity of connected bars resembled a tormented cage.  
Its multicolored paint was covered with a layer of brown rust.  
A select few bars had been eaten through by the rust.  
The dream was a faint remembrance  
It towered over them all though it was not spared.  
Most of the rings of the tall ladder were broken.  
The paint was faded to begin with.  
Now it was just rusted, curved, metal leading from the tower to the cold hard ground.  
The dream could not be remembered.

—Poem and Photo by Samantha Sampley, "Pulley and Metal," 12th grade, Oark School  
Barbara Sampley, Teacher

## Mornings

The sun follows its path,  
The Birds take a bath,  
Some people take walks,  
While others talk,  
Midday is such a happy place.  
Now up in the sky,  
The sun shines goodbye,  
people head home,  
To watch the light roam,  
The moon grins maliciously,  
Doors lock suspiciously,  
All the happiness evaporates.  
Blood drips off walls,  
Meat eaten raw,  
Monsters that hide during the day,  
Come out at night to play.  
Eyes glint in the darkness,  
The farthest from harmless,  
Claws drag on the ground,  
A menacing sound,  
Don't get attached to your heartbeat.  
They cause you no end of pain,  
Then suck out your brain,  
You'll be gone in a flash,  
If you think you can clash,  
Your only trace is your scream.  
As the monsters finish their work,  
And they stop going berserk,  
The sun's rays come out,  
So the monsters take their route.  
And the reason no one likes the sun-up  
Is because the mornings are for cleanup.

—*Francesca Redditt, 7th grade at  
Courtway Middle School in Conway  
Corey Oliver, Teacher*

## Focus

I think of him  
But he always walks away  
I think of the sun  
But night always takes away day

How can I focus  
On one thing  
If that one thing  
Keeps leaving me

I'll tell myself  
He's not the one  
At least I have my friend who always comes  
back  
The sun

Now I can see  
What I need  
Now I know  
Love isn't for me

Now the boat that is my life  
I can steer  
Now my mind  
Is clear

Now I can  
Focus

—*Anna Shain, 9th grade at  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher*

*"Starless Night" Art by Lexi Spillman, 9th grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher*



*"Winter Fox" by Artist Bhavya Lenin, 7th grade Courtway Middle School in Conway; Corey Oliver, Teacher*

*Poems below by Nick Cordero, 10th grade at Rogers New Tech High School  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher*

## Possibility

Penguin in the sky

"Isn't that not possible?"  
"Just if you say so."

## Mask

I stand among jubilant people,  
Jubilant. Or so I seem.  
Inside, my body pushes against the boiling hot steam  
So close to blowing, my face betrays it all.  
Airs must be put on, I tell myself.  
No one will know of my crumpling sense of self.  
The demeanor must go as well.  
What good is a disguise without acting, after all?  
The infrastructure holds, but the interior is left to fall.  
Left to decay, there's no reason to maintain this alternate reality.  
As my insides collapse, one thing is left:  
The mask, left behind  
becomes my new mind.

## Winter

Everywhere you look,  
is a covering blanket of snow.  
Resting with a good book,  
by the fire all aglow.  
~~~

Next to me cuddling,  
a puppy so sweet.  
Filled with wonder  
and a love so complete.  
~~~

When it's time to go out,  
I'll start a snowball fight.  
There is no doubt,  
I'll be the victor of the night.  
~~~

We'll then walk down the street,  
watching stars fill the sky.  
Only to see,  
one magical star fly by.  
~~~

I make a wish,  
like they told me to  
of a winter so full  
of joy washed anew  
—Jennasis Whisenant and Faith Lusty,  
Courtway Middle School in Conway  
Monica Flowers, Teacher

## The Fireplace on the Second Floor

When I was younger, I always loved the fireplace on the second floor of our house. I would watch as logs were placed in the pit, and my mother would bark at me to back away from the flames when I got too close. It seemed only right to sit all cozy by the fire and read a book. I felt no need to hum a tune or listen to the radio as usually I did because the fireplace provided the sound. The fire cracked and snapped as it reached its high point before becoming a small, weak flame that would soon disappear and become nothing more than a small old fire with no bite. At first, I only liked the fireplace in the winter. When it was too cold to go outside and when the rest of the house was becoming just as cold, the fireplace was like a ball of warmth and hope surrounded by a dark world. But when I got older, the fireplace lost its charm. I could only think of the summer when the fireplace would let hot air into the house and I would avoid it entirely. Soon enough in the winter, I started to avoid the room as well. It no longer gave me the same comfort. It became merely a room with a dusty, unused fireplace.

When I graduated from high school, the diploma was placed on the mantle above the fireplace. It was a room rarely touched, but soon the diploma had a new place. My small dorm room at the local college didn't have a fireplace. Not that it bothered me at the time. I had no use for one. My roommate was from California. She had never seen snow nor felt the true cold of winter. She was envious of me. I told her stories of the old fireplace in my parents' home, which was only an hour north. She came with me on Christmas break. I showed her the fireplace on the second floor late one night. Her face lit up and despite the fact that no fire was ever lit in the fireplace, it became her favorite thing in the house.

On the last day before we left again for classes, I found her sitting in front of the fireplace. She wasn't reading or doing anything. She was just thinking, her legs propped up with a blanket surrounding her body. There was a small fire lit, and the flames left shadows dancing across her face. I sat on the small lounge chair next to her. The familiar feel enveloped me and it left me feeling safe.

When classes returned, I missed the fireplace. It was the strangest feeling as the simple room at my parents' house hadn't crossed my mind in a long time.

When I got the internship at my local newspaper the next winter, I often worked late at night. Like Bob Cratchett in the Dickens' classic, I often longed for a fire when the heat would turn off at night. It was the first time in years that I had longed for the fireplace on the second floor of my parents' house.

—Hope Lindner, Rogers New Tech High School  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher



## Painting Within Life

The colors swirl with illumination all around the canvas.  
They bring forth a world of such joy and imagination.  
The brushes mix and create a place where there is escape.  
The paint now forms stories of adventure, romance, and mystery.  
Whether clear or blurry as sand, such beauty is there.  
This is a dazzling world where people feel and show their expressions.  
Painting brings forth life to the world.

—Rhiannon Plummer, Southside High School in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher



Life is a kitchen table  
Where we meet  
Where we converse  
Where we share our day  
Where life and laughter take place.

—Hailey Henderson, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Karen Hodge, Teacher

## A Simile

What have we been through  
That now we are as wolves  
Who stay together  
With muscles tense  
With fur standing straight  
With eyes narrowed  
With claws ready,  
ready to fight back.

—Alissa Moore , 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Carol Surber, Teacher



Photo, "My Dog" by Francesca Redditt, 7th grade at Courtway Middle School in Conway, Corey Oliver, Teacher

## Popper the Cat

His eyes are thin slits  
He quietly prowls  
His whiskers twitch  
He loudly growls

He might be gone in a flash  
Or sit lazily in the sun  
His claws may slash  
Or his paws may carry him in a run

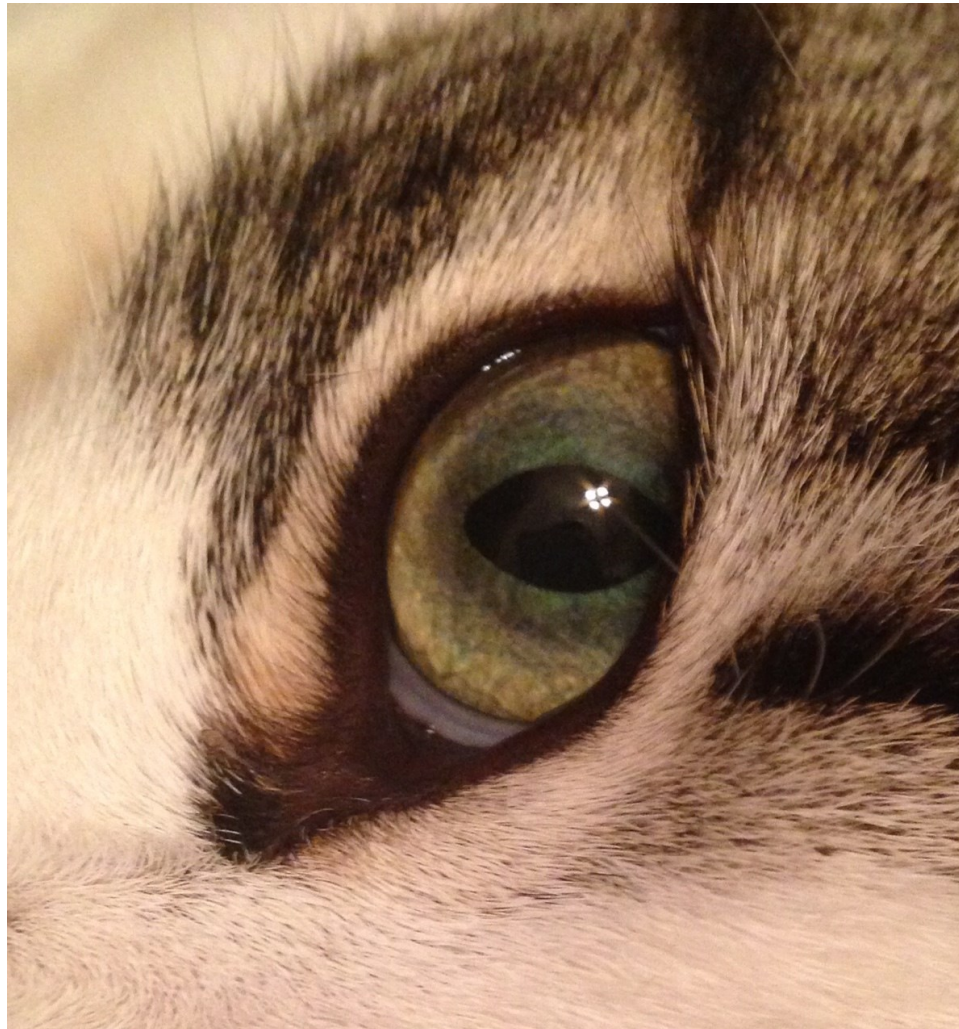
Through your ears  
He may not make a sound  
Through the years  
He may not kill a pound

Of bird  
He is a lazy cat  
But I have heard  
Him fight the neighborhood rat cats

He is mine  
My cat  
My Popper

—Erin Rachel Morgan, 8th grade  
Greenland Middle School  
Tyler McBride, Teacher

Photo, "The Eye of the Tiger," by Bhavya Lenin, 7th grade at Courtway Middle School in Conway, Corey Oliver, Teacher



## Terrain Change

“Why do you talk like that?” inquired my baffled peers. The rich southern drawl that lingered on their lips took time to comprehend. How was I to explain to them that as a Colorado native, born from a Jamaican mother and a Nigerian father, my dialect would not match theirs?

“Why don’t you like sweet tea?” they hollered. The obsession with extremely sweet tea, given out for free with each meal at Bojangles, was a norm; I failed to conform. My taste buds preferred wholesome juices, and other beverages offered at Jamba Juice.

“You don’t listen to hip-hop?” they gasped in unison. I possess a versatile taste in music. I tried to explain that as long as there were soulful lyrics or an infectious beat, I jammed to anything and everything.

My responses aroused judgmental glares and suspicion. Linguistics, food and music were cultural aspects that made my elementary and middle school classmates question whether or not I was a true African-American. The move from Colorado to North Carolina was my first dose of culture shock. I went from being the shade of minority to the shade of majority, where it became easier to get lost in the crowd.

The only way for me to stand out was by accepting who I was, rather than stifling my uniqueness trying to fit in. I rebuilt my confidence by expressing my fullest potential through academics and extracurricular activities. I strove to use my “strange voice” to socialize. Somehow, I managed to establish an amalgam of friendships. Though the critical questions continued, I remained unfazed.

Looking back, I am thankful for the experience. I learned to maintain an open-mind about culture. Living in this world of diverse cultures, I accept what makes me special and respect what makes other individuals unique.

*--Jacqueline E.Guy-Okonji, 12th grade at LISA Academy West*

## Alive

I am alive, I am breathing

I wonder if this could last forever

I hear the infinite chatter of the human race around me

                  muted, only there for decoration

I see the buildings pass me as my feet slap the

                  concrete, twirling and leaping

I want this to last forever

I am alive, I am breathing

I pretend I am a leaf scraping on the sidewalk

A ball rolling down a hill, unstoppable

I feel bulletproof as my surface brushes the rock

I touch the rough pavement beneath me

I worry it will end

I cry for the moment that could soon leave me

But I remind myself

I am alive, I am breathing

I understand nothing lasts forever

I say it’s fine, for at least it feels infinite

I dream of an eternity within my stance

                  somewhere between beginning and end

I know the numb will return

But for now

I am alive, I am breathing

And I feel everything

*—Carson Reeves, 8th grade at Ridgefield Christian School*

*Kristen Higgens, Teacher*





## Puff, Pass

I like to puff puff pass.  
I love the feeling of helping my fellow neighbor  
it makes me strive to do better and even GREATER things!  
I'm a individual who is generous and loyal,  
having the compassion to empower others  
to follow their goals and aspirations in life and not end up a statistic.  
In addition I am the person that will preserve through any task that any person puts in front of me.  
May take time and dedication but as always I am up for a challenge.  
Knowing that the color of my pigmentation defines the character of  
A person I am automatically to authority and CEO's  
Without a meet and greet is absurd,  
Simply crazy!  
Based off the rate of my race that actually graduates  
Do something constructive with their lives is low  
And that's what these people look at  
But I dare to let it be me and the rest of my black people!  
*She's from the Delta , that little town call Marianna*  
I'm from Marianna and I love it  
This place may be filled with some ignorant people  
Some that just don't care  
But living in the Anna I learned and saw a lot  
And I made a vow to make this town the extraordinary  
A place many could never imagine it to be, opposite of the usual boredom  
I'm a trendsetter, go-getter  
I know the strengths and weakness I possess  
Instead of being the "lazy nigga" that society and even my own race sometimes  
Expects me to be  
I am too busy becoming the successful young lady I know I'm destined to be.  
Yeah I'm different I just puff puff pass  
Not talking about the marijuana and thangs.  
PUFF to overcoming adversity  
PUFF to the negative comments of others  
PUFF to becoming my own person.  
Inhaling all those puffs and I EXHALE .  
Exhale positivity to help the next  
Encourage others to not settle for less  
But instead find your gift and show  
To all of the world what you are capable of being.  
And after all the puffs  
I get high  
HIGH off higher learning  
HIGH by thinking BIG and ideal  
HIGH by having the drive to be a leader instead of a typical follower  
And I pass that on to the next generation!



—Alantra Betts— 12th grade, Lee High School  
Jackie Dean, Teacher

## Beautifully Bitter

Reflective red  
Shimmering from the sun's beauty  
On the clear water's wave.

Riding bikes  
With a soft breeze blowing calmly  
And laughter in the air.

Barely cold  
Still enough for her to shiver  
With a sweater on.

—*Madison Mitchell, 9<sup>th</sup> grade*  
*Greene County Tech Junior High*  
*Carol Surber, Teacher*

## Where Are You Now?

Where did you end up?  
Like the Monarchs who migrate but never come back  
Who fly away  
With wings in the air  
With legs on the trees  
With the cold coming to claim them  
With their lives on the line  
In a place with others alike.

—*Abbey Newell at Greene County Tech Junior High*  
*Carol Surber, Teacher*

—*Photo by Laney Sellers, "Wonders of Nature"*  
*Courtway Middle School in Conway*  
*Monica Flowers, Teacher*



## Ballad of Moonlight

—Art by Victoria Freeman, “Wolf Drawing”

LISA Academy, 8th grade

Mrs. Richardson, Teacher



Soft breeze in the wind  
Flowers blooming every now and then  
Around the bend I hear a patter of paws  
Pale as moonlight from which she gained her name sometime back then  
Sloppy, slimy, silky kisses are given around every bend  
Even as an animal I thought of her as kin  
She scratched with playful claws  
And she always had love in her eyes, warm like a den.

As sweet as she was, she was still a dog and had garbage to tend  
Even barking at the people that came over with things to mend  
Eating whenever she could it seemed as if there was no stop to her jaws  
But she still was my little baby and I never wanted her to end

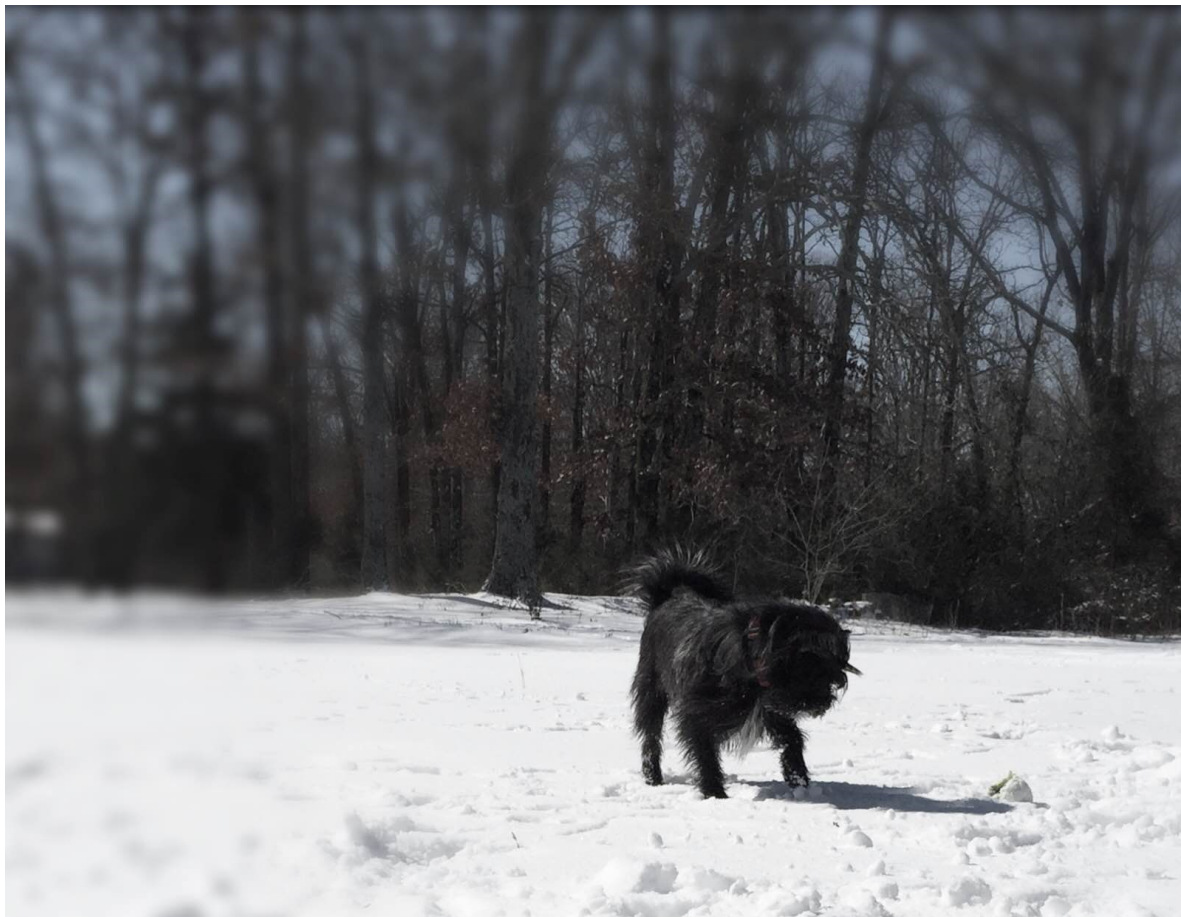
Then the day came when she got sick and started to bend  
I never knew why but I couldn't think about that back then  
Until her last breath she began to draw  
She was my angel to the very end.

—Shawna Emmons, 9th grade at Greene County Tech Junior High

John Baldwin, Teacher

—Photo by Haley Erickson, “Puppy in the Snow”

5th grade at Courtway Middle School, Monica Flowers, Teacher



## It is Time

It is time to sit outside  
To brush the horse's hide  
It is perfect weather  
For the bird's feather

When the trees start to turn  
Leaves start to burn  
People pull up their guns  
The deer start to run

You hear baseballs pop  
And you see the bat drop  
You spend Friday nights  
Under football lights

—Kirsten Grubb, 9th grade at  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher

—Photo by Kennedy Chloe, "Spring Trees," Courtway  
Middle School in Conway; Monica Flowers, Teacher



## "Kind of" For You

I've got a skyline in my mind,  
And I've named it after You.  
It shines brighter at night,  
So I never see the sun.

In the morning it rains  
And the lights turn to paint.  
They spill through the streets  
And spell out Your name.

I've got a city behind my eyes  
With Your name on every sign.  
It's defended by an army  
By which Your voice commands.

There are no crowds to get lost in,  
No lines for which to wait.  
Only eyes to get lost in  
And distance for which to hate.

I've got a globe between my ears  
Where I keep all my thoughts,  
The lands are made of my worries  
But they float on our memories.

I read books with my eyes closed  
Because memories are sweeter.  
I pass payphones on street corners  
And each one rings for You.

I live in a city of dreams.

At night, it gets brighter  
So I never wake up.  
In the morning, it gets better  
So I never leave.

And I think to myself,  
"This is kind of like love."

—Cupashia Dyni Covey, Arkansas Virtual Academy  
Cindy Green, Teacher

## The Necklace

I swear I'm not a thief....It was so shiny, and it used to be my mom's. She passed away four years ago, but to me, it was just this morning. The object was her heart-shaped necklace that she wore every day. It had a picture of my siblings and me on one side, and the other side had a photo of my parents. After she passed, my dad got rid of everything. Including the necklace. I can't get it back.

It was March 11, 2011 the day she died. I was 12, my older sister, Amy, was 13, and my younger brother, Bob, was 9. She was taking us to school, when a semi truck ran into the side of us. She didn't make it, but we did. My mom was my best friend, —we talked about everything together. She gave the best advice I had ever received....Can you imagine laughing and singing loud in our horrible voices, and with one snap of your fingers, your world was destroyed? I lost my best friend, and everything that she had ever touched...

I was watching television (the mayor was giving a speech on the local news), eating pizza, when I saw Mayor Greg Hines' daughter next to him. She was wearing my mom's necklace. That snotty brat was wearing my mom's necklace. I jumped in my car with my older sister, and we raced through traffic to get to the public speech before the mayor and his daughter left. I arrived there just in time to see them walking off the stage. Amy ran off and immediately distracted the Mayor while I talked to his daughter.

"Hey, pretty necklace you got there," I stated.

"I guess, I don't really want it, it's so ugly," she said.

"Let me take it off your hands. You can just say someone stole it. He'll never blame you," I said as calmly as I could.



I could see that my sister was about to lose the Mayor's attention, so I needed to hurry up. Next thing I knew the necklace is in my hand. I hugged the little girl and ran.

Amy jumped in the car not five seconds after me.

"Did you get it?"

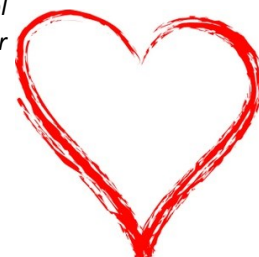
"Yes." We didn't say anything else the entire way home. We went inside, and there was my dad watching the news.

"Someone stole her necklace," he stated angrily. He hadn't been the same since her death, and I was terrified to say anything. I'd be back in the hospital because I fell down the stairs again....That's what I have to tell everyone anyway. All us kids went upstairs and sat on our bed. We shared a bed since my dad didn't want to go in their old room and wanted an office. We told Bob about the necklace, and he was so excited. After some talking about it, we decided to trade the necklace every night. Amy got it the first day since she was older. We fell asleep, woke up, got ready for school, went to school, came home, did our homework, did our chores, and went to our room. It was finally my turn. When I woke up, I immediately put the necklace on; I hid the chain under my shirt. We couldn't let anyone see it—the Mayor was really mad about his little girl not having the necklace.

I went to school, and after gym I went to the showers. I took the necklace off and hid it in my clothes in my locker. Police came and searched the school for the locket. They found the locket. I was in so much trouble.

They interrupted my shower and waited for me to get dressed. I was pushed against the wall, and they put handcuffs on me. I was being arrested. I just wanted her locket back. I'm sorry Mom, I knew you'd be disappointed in me.... I didn't steal it. She gave it to me. I couldn't tell on her though; her dad was way too strict. I'll take the consequences. I just hope I don't fall down the stairs again....

—Rebecca Pierce, Rogers New Tech High School  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher



## Becoming Important

### *Sixteen Years Old*

*I am unnecessary. Not to put a downer on the piece, but it's undeniably true. I grew up being told that I was a kind and mature young girl. Well, that's because the more chaos you make, the more negative attention you get. Even as a child you pick up more than they think you do. The stories and side looks don't pass your attention. That is the brilliance of being a child. They overlook you and your childlike innocence. The innocence you don't have.*

There has not been innocence in you for a long time. At eleven, you experienced your first catcall. You are an early bloomer. You have some of the biggest breasts in your school, and you wore a tank top one hot day in May. The man was middle aged and gray. He was driving by the park where you played basketball with your friends. You don't remember what he said but your dad punched him. You stopped wearing tank tops.

You were thirteen when you first realized that people were crueler than you first believed. Another student said you were fat. For the next few weeks you slowly stopped eating until it was only a bit a day. No one saw you cry when you caved one day and ate from your favorite restaurant. Your parents were expecting you to eat it. It was one of your first real meals since you began to starve yourself. At thirteen and a half, you have lost ten pounds but still feel fat. People have started to notice. You know your ears are red when the counsellor gives the annual talk on eating disorders and self-harm. No one said anything to you.

At fourteen you were first sad enough to think about killing yourself. You look up methods, but you know you will never go through with it. You haven't gotten that desperate; there was still something to live for. At fourteen you also begin to dabble in self injury. They are small and well-hidden. You are ashamed, but it stops the aching numbness that takes host in your stomach and spreads throughout your body like thick syrup. It leaves you exhausted every time. You have told no one about any of these things. You have done more research. It is considered a medical emergency to have any of these thoughts. But no one knows, so you keep this to yourself.

Fifteen years old is when you start to feel better. You have healthily regained the ten pounds. There are ups and downs, but it feels more like ups. It feels like you might actually be recovering—you begin to feel good about yourself for the first time in a long while. At fifteen and three quarters you relapse. It is horrible. You knew that this would happen, but you didn't want it to. You were doing so well.

At seventeen your self-esteem is so damaged you have a panic attack at the mall. Everyone found out about what you have been doing to soothe yourself. Your method of stress relief. They act like you are disgusting, something you know already. You are seventeen and a quarter when you are diagnosed and medicated. *Clinical Depression. Social Anxiety. Anorexia.* Words that mean so much but so little to you. They call it an addiction—the only addictions you can think of are drugs and alcohol, but you are not like them. You are expected to act like an adult. They don't realize you have been acting like one since you were young.

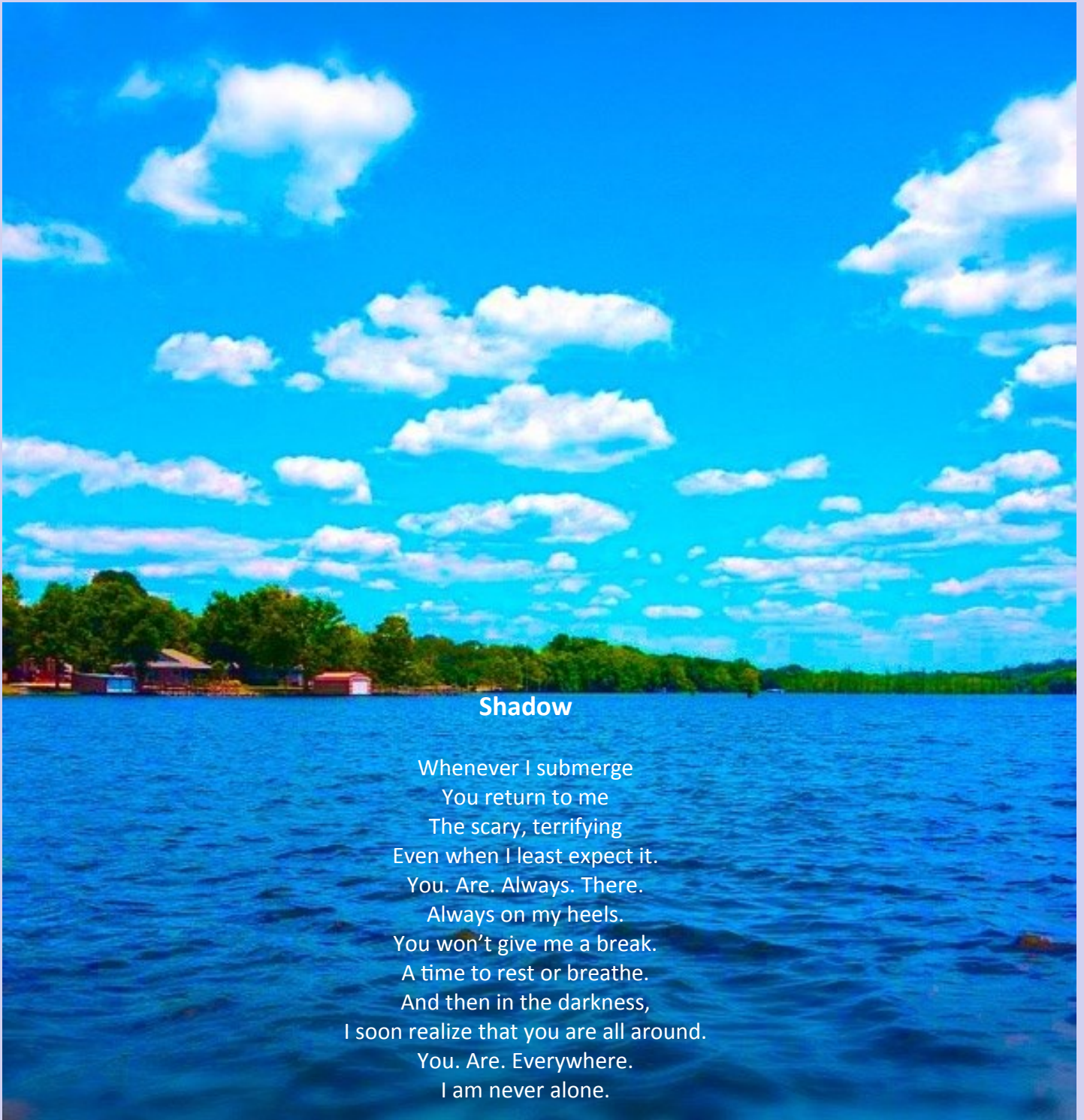
You are eighteen and five months when you leave your home. It has given you so many bad memories, and you are unsure why you had even stayed that long. You leave for college to major in English. You still take medication and starve, but you have not hurt yourself in ten months and four days. You take pride in that. Take pride in the fact that you have not caused anymore scars. The older ones have almost faded completely from your arms and hips.

You are twenty when you meet him. He is kind and he helps you when you still struggle. Twenty was not a good year, but he still stuck around. Even when you pushed him away. You are twenty-three and a half when you marry him. At twenty-six you have a daughter. You have been taken off medication and haven't had a relapse in thirty-eight months. You still attend therapy. You raise your daughter as if she is the world. Because she is, she has helped keep you alive.

You are thirty when you begin to teach your daughter about being important, something you never thought you were until you were nineteen years old. But you weren't going to let her go down that path. She will not understand now, but she will thank you when she grows up. And when you turn thirty-seven, you show her the writing about being important—the one you wrote when you were sixteen and still trying to figure out how to breathe.

—Hope Lindner, Rogers New Tech High School  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher





## Shadow

Whenever I submerge  
You return to me  
The scary, terrifying  
Even when I least expect it.  
You. Are. Always. There.  
Always on my heels.  
You won't give me a break.  
A time to rest or breathe.  
And then in the darkness,  
I soon realize that you are all around.  
You. Are. Everywhere.  
I am never alone.

Go away please.  
Just let me close my eyes and rest.  
Please.  
The ghostly, the horrid  
Please float far away from here.  
So I may rest my eyes.  
And lift my fears.  
Please.  
Please, my haunting, unmerciful...shadow.

*Poem by Alyssa Bates,  
Southside High School in  
Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher*

*Photo by Briasia Jeffers, "Cloudy  
Lake," Courtway Middle School  
Monica Flowers, Teacher*

## Dancing in a Field of Sunflowers

Bright, vibrant  
Waving, greeting  
Golden, glowing.

Boastful in the least,  
Without the dependence of  
A gentle whisper to assure  
The utmost beauty,  
As golden as the luminous  
Sun.

Though no mockery  
Is necessary.  
Unapologetically lacking the  
Intense gleam,  
Brilliance is all that  
Is given.

Lifted high above the  
Soil that nourishes  
The beauty within the  
Many petals,  
Appearing invincible.

Bright, vibrant  
Waving, Greeting  
Golden, glowing.

—By Ciara Harmon. Southside High School in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher

—Photo by Emily Walton, “Unloved Flower”  
Senior at Ridgefield Christian School  
Kristen Higgs, Teacher





## Life is an Ocean

Life is an ocean  
With torrents and tempests  
Currents and hurricanes  
But there are also beautiful creatures  
Coral reefs and sunken wrecks  
Mixtures of both good and bad  
In the same  
interconnected  
pool of water

—Erin Gammill, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Karen Hodge, Teacher

## A Day in September

Do you remember?  
I do.  
a day in September,  
You were in lying in her arms  
all wrapped in pink,  
you were her precious jewel,  
So beautiful and sweet  
She praised your every movement  
like you were an idol but  
*daughter*  
was just your title.  
The beating of your heart  
danced around in her head like her favorite tune.  
She was love-sick and immersed with you.  
The love you shared was more than a bond,  
it was infinite  
never-ending.  
*twenty-eight*  
until you reached your point and you let go.  
She knew it was the right choice because she didn't want  
to see you hurt.  
Do you remember?  
I do, a devastating day in September.



—Poem by Kyle Brister, Lee High School  
Jackie Dean, Teacher

—Photo by Francesca Redditt, "Treetops,"  
Courtway Middle School in Conway  
Corey Oliver, Teacher



## Fireflies

Starlight glitters in the night sky  
Rainbows of darkness settle o'er the trees  
Painted with deep dark greens an' ebonys

Gold light flickers, dances, and gleams  
Little stars shine way up in the night  
Satin blue, foreboding, stretched across th' sky

Indigo is shifting, morphing to black  
Silken an' smooth, lovely an' cold  
Birds are singing, pretty virtues extolled

Fair maiden's dance  
And sing in the glen  
Around a scintillating, crimson flame

Cloaked only in blankets  
Hair braided with beads  
Chanting and crooning alluring melodies

Calling is answered by orbs in the night  
Softly glowing, oh so bright!  
Prancing around as birds in the trees

Gilded lights sparkle and glow  
Buzzing an' humming along like bees  
Little bugs come to dance on a breeze

Softly, quietly  
Joining the fair maids  
Chanting and dancing till dawn brings a new day

—Helen McKinzi Stewart, 12th grade  
Oak School, Barbara Sampley, Teacher

Photo , "Reynolds Lake in Paragould" by Mackenzie Hodge, 6th grade at Greene County Tech Middle School, Karen Hodge, Teacher

## On the Trampoline

Sitting on the trampoline  
Tasting the midnight sky  
Awake and waiting, we  
Rise up and gasp, as a  
Shooting star passes by.

Jennasis Whisenant, Courtway Middle School in  
Conway  
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Photo, "Little Girl on a Trampoline," by Murray Pringle, 8th grade at Annie Camp Junior High in Jonesboro, LaTwayla Knowlton, Teacher



*Photo by Francesca Redditt, "Clovers of the Not Quite So Deep," Courtway Middle School in Conway, Corey Oliver, Teacher*

In the place no man goes is a being,  
In the wilds untamed is the Source  
Of the river that flows through the ages  
And flows right through men's hearts.

It flows past all, past every good thing,  
And gives life to any who stop and drink  
Of its waters untainted by wars or greed  
In a land of many false springs.

But many are they who live in its sight,  
Yet build up their cisterns of tainted right  
And deny the Source that gives them wealth,  
And bids the grass come from the earth.

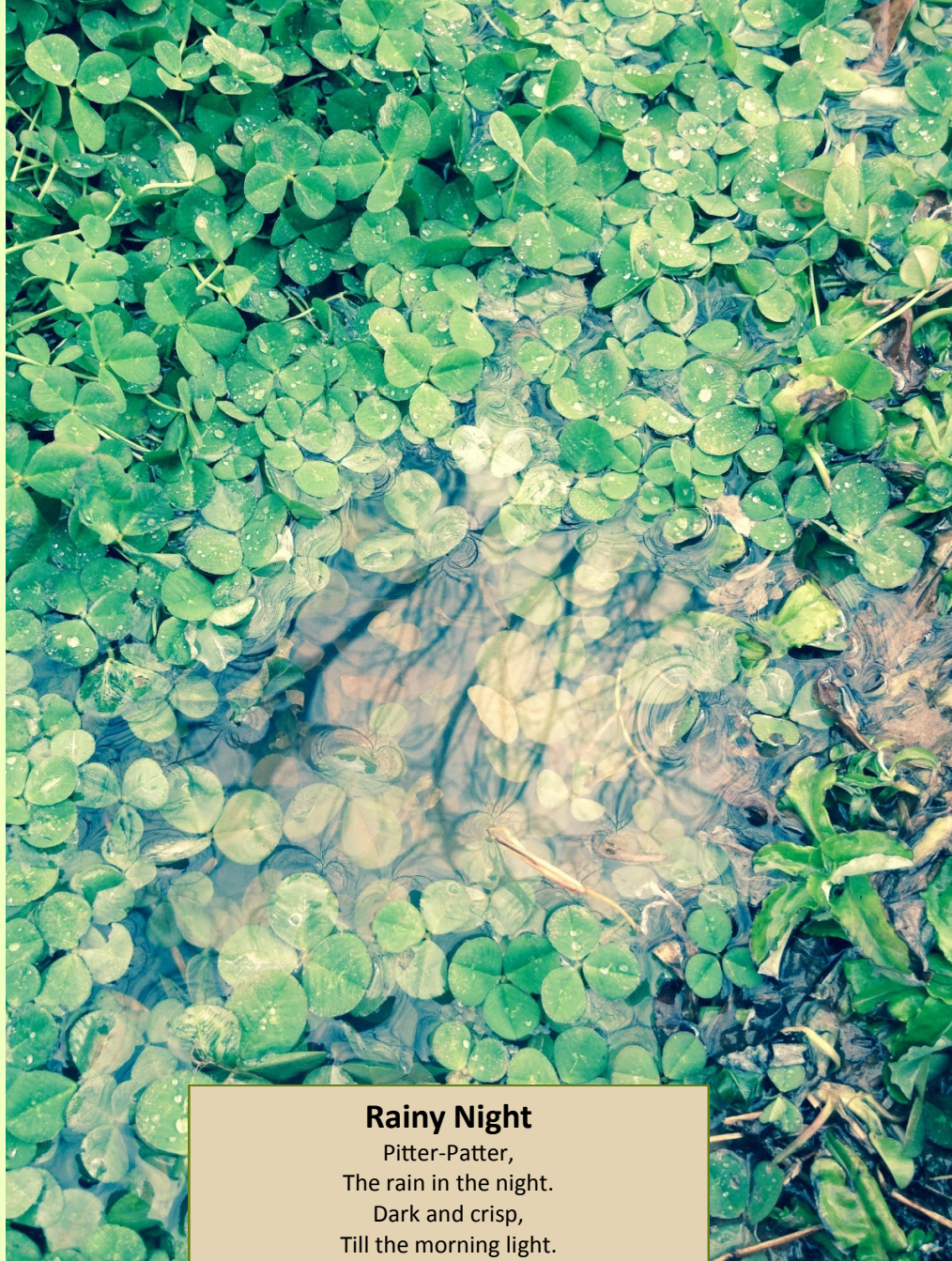
Woe to them, those selfish men,  
That declare their glory and wealth;  
Woe to him who does not drink  
While the river runs open and clear.

For the day will come when the Source is closed  
To all who denied its power,  
And all the good they thought was theirs  
Will be burned up in the fire.

But blessed are they who deeply drank  
From the Source's living water,  
For they will be gathered in joyous peace  
And fill their broken hearts forever.

—Andrew Adamson, 11th grade  
Jasper High School, Mollie May, Teacher

—Catherine Hankins, 9th grade at Greene County  
Tech Junior High, John Baldwin, Teacher



### **Rainy Night**

Pitter-Patter,  
The rain in the night.  
Dark and crisp,  
Till the morning light.

Pitter-Patter,  
The cat at the door,  
Begging and pleading to come in.  
He yelled and cried,  
The door opened  
To his surprise.

Pitter-Patter,  
The bird in the tree,  
She cares for her eggs and nest.  
When the wind blows strong,  
Down goes the nest,  
Devastating the poor birdie.

Pitter-Patter,  
The last drop hits the ground.  
The sun shines bright in the sky,  
Not a damp spot to be found.  
Goodbye rain.

## A Color Poem

Some days I'm a vivid yellow,  
Loud and spontaneous  
Daring and outgoing  
Lively and energetic  
Making the best out of every situation  
Other days I'm a sky blue  
Lonely and exhausted  
Lazy and independent  
Seeking peace in this hectic, confusing world

—Addie Piercy, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Karen Hodge, Teacher

Photo (right) by Quynh-Giao Nguyen, LISA Academy West  
Jessica Wright, Teacher



## Waterfall

Hear the water burst  
Into a cascade of darkness  
Hiss, hiss, hiss  
Until it pushes past  
The limits of its edge.  
The water bellows  
With its mighty lungs  
Roar, roar, roar  
Wildly rushing about  
Into a pit of hums  
With no fear of falling.

—Ashlyn Adams, 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Carol Surber, Teacher

—“Mystical Waters” Photo (left) by  
Suzzie Eubanks, 7th grade  
Courtway Middle School  
Corey Oliver, Teacher



—Photo by Briasia Jeffers, “Boxed Mountain View,” Courtway Middle School  
in Conway, Monica Flowers, Teacher

## The End

The end is like falling out of a picture frame  
Shocked you were there, but even more shocked that you got out.  
Fell out,  
You were pushed and now you’re free falling  
Because it never ends in peace or happiness  
It ends in sadness,  
In lost days  
In lost years.  
That thing that you always wanted to do but never got the chance to.  
All gone.  
Lost in a never-ending void filled with memories of a time too far past to remember.  
How do you feel about the end?  
The end of anything  
The end of it all.

—S. Elizabeth Daniel, Rogers New Tech High School, Casey Bazyk, Teacher



*Photo by Emily Walton, "Sharp Radiance,"  
Ridgefield Christian School in Jonesboro*

### **My True Colors**

In the early morning I'm a hazy gray  
Sleepy and cold,  
Quiet and crumpled,  
Dragging myself out of my bed and slowly rising up  
Like the moon alone in darkness.  
By noon I'm bright yellow  
Vibrant and lively,  
Funny and awake,  
Laughing at everything I see.  
Everyday it's the same routine  
But even when I'm tired I'm still me.

—*Samantha Padalino, 9th grade at Greene County Tech  
Junior High School  
John Baldwin, Teacher*

### **-A lifetime.**

A single raindrop forms in the sky.  
It falls as fast as a blink and then it is gone.  
Many others will follow and do the same.  
All forgotten, none remembered

*-Untitled poem 1*

I see a light and try to save it with my eyes  
but I fail so now I sit in darkness.

*-Untitled poem 2*

The snow may conceal the earth with a layer of cold  
But at its core a fire burns like the hope of a child  
and when the snow goes away the earth will be young again.

*-Untitled poem 3*

A tear is conceived, waiting to be set free.  
Then it is released and I can forget my sorrow, grief and sadness  
for they own me no longer

*-Untitled poem 4*

I see the leaves on the trees and admire their beauty.  
The wind calls my name, beckoning me into the lush seclusion.  
I know nothing else but the earth under my feet and will never leave.

—*Anthony Mackey, 9th grade at Greene County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher*

## Today and Tomorrow

"I will not return, I will not return."

I keep telling myself this, but I want to go back. Knowing that if I do go back, the same cycle will happen, and I'll forget how to smile. I push myself through the wind and all these strange people, wondering if each passing face craves the same yearning for someone to hear the screams in their head.

Honestly, I have no idea why I made the mistakes I did. I knew what I was doing was wrong, but the rush at that moment made me feel more alive than ever. If anything, I was the happiest at those moments than I had been in months. I don't know why I didn't accept the things I did and just live with them. Sometimes it's harder to face the truth head-on when the world around you has always had a helmet on. Now, I've been kicked out of my own house. The people I cared most about and that I thought cared for me just completely dropped me like a raindrop in the ocean. I don't know where to go from here.

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving. Tomorrow is a new day. Today, everything that could go wrong went wrong. Today, I realized that sometimes when you need those most in your life they won't be there. A year ago today life was better, life was easier, life was exciting the moment I woke up--even if it was 5 am and I had two hours of sleep. Last year, life gave me a better today and a secure tomorrow. Now, the only secure things I have are my wallet with enough credit cards to help me stay at a few motels, a key to a car that is no longer in my possession, and a paper heart I stumbled upon. This paper heart is pink and has the initials E.A.R. on it. I saw this paper heart was on the ground, and I don't know why I picked it up, but I feel like E.A.R. is the only person who might care about me even if I have no idea who he or she is. *Don't worry for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* I know I'll be okay in the world, and I know that love comes in many ways. Sometimes you stumble upon love written on a paper and you have to keep it.

The next day found me in a cheap motel at the crack of dawn. The memories of the night before replayed in my mind all night long, and I didn't sleep. I was looking for the moments that went completely wrong; the worst part about replaying those moments was that, even if I had found all the wrong buttons I pushed, I can't undo any of it. I figured watching the sunrise might give me some relief. The moment I walked out, I was greeted by a cool wind chill--it probably recognized me from last night. The wind was probably the only company I had last evening.

I took out my pack of blacks and of course, just my luck to have one, my lucky cigarette. I've always made it a tradition to make a wish on my lucky cigarette, and at this moment I'll use any wish possible. I noticed the pink heart fall out of my pocket, and the moment it hit the ground I felt that maybe everything would be alright. The sun was rising above the Arkansas River. All I can think is how lovely it is that I get another chance to see this happening. I just hope this feeling lasts forever.

—Elena Ramirez, Rogers New Tech High School  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher

—Photo by Tara Ray, "Backyard Sunrise," Courtway Middle School  
in Conway, Monica Flowers, Teacher

### DROP

Drops of tears on her book  
Remembering the good  
and bad times  
Only wishing she could forget the  
Painful memories of the past

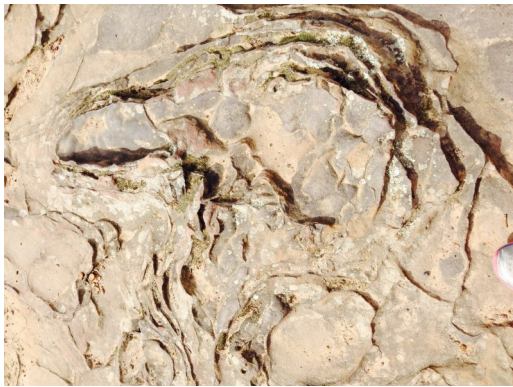
—Kierra Witcher, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Karen Hodge, Teacher



## This Simple Drink

This simple drink  
makes him feel Pleasant  
it provokes his attitude  
he goes from calm to outrage real quick  
in our eyes he's destroying himself  
in his eyes he's entertaining himself  
up all night  
belligerent  
insomnia  
Drunk Driving  
Jail time  
bond money  
my uncle says it's just a simple drink  
rehabilitation is needed  
kidney failure  
doctor appointments  
it's getting too late  
still no change  
but it's just a simple drink...

—*Delisha Butler, Lee High School*  
*Jackie Dean, Teacher*



## Insanity

*As defined in the dictionary as “doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results”*

Pluck  
wax  
pencil  
paint  
smudge  
dye  
straighten  
curl  
wave  
braid  
hold in  
show off  
tighten up  
slim down  
All  
for a quest  
popularity  
beauty  
lust  
attention  
love  
an illusion  
repeated  
Insanity

—*Jaclyn Dean – Teacher, Lee High School*

—*Photo by Audrey Rawls, “Rocky Roads”*  
*Courtway Middle School in Conway*  
*Monica Flowers, Teacher*

## Dreams Amid the Dust

Dreams are the thoughts that occur when your mind is not at full alertness and your soul has just awakened.

Dreams are the desires that rise from even the dustiest corners of your broken soul.

These thoughtful desires are often not brought to the minds of creative thinkers for temporary entertainment,  
but as encouragements to foreshadow what the future holds.

Every individual holds inside them a creative thinker, but not all search the soul's untouched corners.

When you seek out the soul's unknown, you will find your heart's true desires, and more importantly, discover yourself.

—*Lauren King, 9th grade at Greene County Tech Junior High,*  
*John Baldwin, Teacher*



## Becoming a Heartbeat

The multipurpose room, also known as the cafeteria, is at the very heart of Ridgefield. With its high ceiling and concrete floor, the multipurpose room is home to school lunches, indoor recess, science and history fairs, and other Ridgefield events. At one time, the multipurpose room even hosted all of Ridgefield's indoor sporting events. With its halfway-carpeted walls, spotlights, and small stage at the back of the room, the multipurpose room hosts several school choir and drama performances. It is normally a quiet room, but for two and a half hours in the middle of the day, the multipurpose room is filled with the chatter, squeals, and laughter of students. Traces of hot lunch aromas sneak out the four doorways of the multipurpose room and into the halls. Students long for the bell to ring just so they can race down to the multipurpose room for lunch. This room, the heart of Ridgefield, has been the background setting for a wide majority of my life. From early mornings waiting for school to begin, to my first encounter with the sport I love, to late afternoons waiting for someone to pick me up, to homecoming dances and decorating for prom, the multipurpose room has been there. The heart of Ridgefield has become my heartbeat.

It is standing room only, mostly because there are not any bleachers or chairs to sit on. So here we are, my mom and I, leaning up against the scratchy carpet walls watching some sport that involves a soccer-sized ball and an elevated tennis net. It is my first time to experience this game my mom calls volleyball, and already I am engrossed. At first, I am confused by the chipped lines on the floor, but I quickly dismiss the thought because what is going on inside those lines is much more interesting. Six girls are on each side of the net, and they are moving, pushing, and hitting the ball back and forth to the opposite side. This trend continues until one side lets the ball touch the concrete floor. Immediately, I cover my ears due to the long, loud screech of a whistle made even louder from high ceilings, bare walls, and, of course, the concrete floors. The carpeted walls do little good absorbing the sound, so I am left with a slight ringing in my ears. No matter, though, because I am taken in by the game. I can feel myself bouncing on the balls of my feet like the girls on the court. I can feel the sting on my forearms from where the ball hit. I can hear the splat of the ball hitting the floor. And I can see the ball appear in my hands, just waiting to be served across the net. This is my game now, and there is no turning back.

Fast forward two years, and I am sitting on the red volleyball line waiting to be picked up from school. Every day I sit on the same line in the same spot but not always at the same time. Normally, it takes me a while to get here; I have to wait for everyone to leave before I get my chance. Even then I have to wait until stern Mrs. Rogers is not looking my way, or she will tell me to stop. I am not doing anything bad, but it's not all that good either. I have found a spot where the paint on the concrete floor is starting to chip, and underneath the paint is the gray concrete. So being the bored fourth grader that I am, I begin to pick at the paint. Almost every day I pick at that paint, and what used to be a small speck grew into a donut-sized spot. But my little bit of entertainment soon came to an end because no matter where I picked at or how much I picked at one area, my spot was not getting any bigger.

Three years later, I am once again sitting on the hard, paint-chipped, concrete floor, but this time, everything is different. A hush falls over the mass of people as the history teacher, Mrs. Hutch, clip-clops her way to the center of the room. She stands next to a square table that has fourteen trophies setting on top. Then she begins to announce the winners. As she announces honorable mention, third place, and second place, my heart sinks. I have the horrible feeling that I will not even place. But all of a sudden, I hear my name called followed by a round of applause. In a matter of seconds, I am walking toward Mrs. Hutch who then places a first place trophy in my hands. I actually did it, and that is when I feel the weight lifted off my shoulders. A smile forms, and I breathe a sigh of relief.

Looking ahead, I can only imagine what will happen. I walk into the multipurpose room for the last time, and I am overwhelmed. Tables are set up around the room with senior boards, picture albums, and memorabilia placed on top. A long table is set up in the center of the room with some punch and cake. Soon, my classmates are at my side, our caps and gowns shed to show our pretty dresses and button-downs shirts. We walk in and are instantly welcomed by our family and friends. We talk and laugh and reminisce and eat. And after everyone has left, I still remain. It is such a bitter-sweet moment, and that is when I allow the tears to fall. As I look back over the years, I remember all the times I spent in this room. The friendships that were made and broken, the times of satisfaction and disappointment, the loudness and the silence, the bewilderment and the anticipation all come to mind, and I think of how lucky I am. This room was the background setting for a wide majority of my life, and it has made its imprint. The heart of Ridgefield became my heartbeat of life.

—Emily Walton, 12th grade, Ridgefield Christian School  
Veronica Reeves, Teacher



## Curious and Kind

I am curious and kind  
I wonder if I'll ever have a say so.  
I hear the wing blowing  
I see the trees moving  
I want the world to be peaceful

I am curious and kind  
I pretend I rule the world  
I feel we should have peace  
I touch the hearts of many  
I worry there will be war  
I cry for freedom

I am curious and kind  
I understand there is war  
I say the world should be peaceful  
I dream of the day we have peace  
I try to help everyone  
I hope everyone is happy  
I am curious and kind

—*Destiny Dancer, 9th grade at Greene  
County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher*

## What do I do now?

What do I do now?  
That I am as the beagle  
Who lies without movement  
With eyes open  
With head held down  
With ears perked  
With body pressed tightly to the  
ground  
In whose body there is slight curiosity.

—*Braden Hatley, 9th grade at Greene  
County Tech Junior High  
John Baldwin, Teacher*

## From Whence I Came

Isabella Baumfree lived up to her names  
Best known as Sojourner Truth whom she later became  
She fought for the rights of the people who were scorned  
A champion for me even before I was born

Harriet Tubman freed many slaves  
She risked her life so others could be saved  
The Underground Railroad was how she did it  
With help from many and God is how she hid it

Rosa Parks was a special woman  
She sat so I could take a stand  
She held her ground and didn't back down  
Now any seat on the bus is open to any woman or man  
Daisy Bates was not a quitter, and she was so very brave  
Strength and inner peace from God  
The image of whom she was made  
In my very own state she became so great  
And because of her leadership the schools did integrate

Gwendolyn Brooks wrote poetry  
And truly inspired me  
Now I'm following in her footsteps  
To be the poet I know I can be

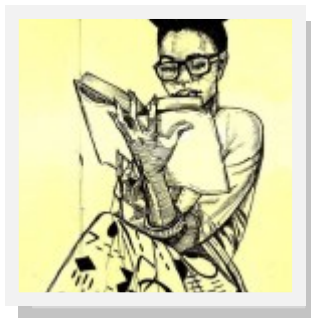
Maya Angelou also wrote  
And inspired many souls  
Her writings are like a warm blanket  
That shelter me from the cold

Mae Jemison was a physician;  
Who dared dream to fly  
Then one orbit let her know  
There was more beyond the sky

Oprah Winfrey is known throughout the world  
But just like me, before TV, she was a dreamy little girl  
She chased her dreams and with hard work  
She's not just on TV, she has her OWN network

These women have made it possible for me to dream  
None of them I have ever met, But I know them deeply it seems  
But there's one woman who's my hero without a doubt  
For my hero is my mom, and she lives with me in my house.

—*Elise Harris, 5th grade at Health, Wellness & Environmental Studies  
Magnet School in Jonesboro*



## The Black Hole

A star nears  
the end of its life.  
Fusing scandium and vanadium,  
Chromium and manganese,  
Struggling to remain alive.  
But atomic fusion can only do so much.  
Iron accumulates in the core,  
its atoms unable to be united.  
And the star's life-sustaining process of fusion  
Stops.  
The star begins  
to inflate.  
Growing massively,  
Glowing luminously.  
For an instance, the brightest star in the universe.  
Then, a supernova.  
A massive explosion  
that rattles the universe on its hinges  
And the once bright, luminescent star  
Collapses.  
It shrinks,  
Smaller and smaller, to its Schwarzschild radius,  
Until all that remains  
is an infinitely dense,  
inconceivably small singularity.  
Its density so great,  
Its gravitational pull so powerful,  
That anything that passes the event horizon,  
A galaxy, a person, a beam of light,  
Is gone forever.

—Anne Li, LISA ACADEMY, Shannon Martindale teacher

## Not Knowing

We don't how strong we are  
Until being strong is the only thing we can be.  
We don't how brave we are  
Until being brave is the only option.  
We don't know how proud we are  
Until that pride is stripped away.  
We don't know our own limits  
Until we go beyond them.  
We don't know what can do  
Until we go out and do it.

—Alyssa Bates, Southside High School in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher



## The Only Thing

Writing  
Is the only thing  
I know how to do.

I am not very good  
At being what my  
Friends and family desire,  
Even if I have tried  
Over and over.

They both just  
Do not compare.  
Merely nothing  
Is able to compare  
To the mixture of  
Twenty-six letters,

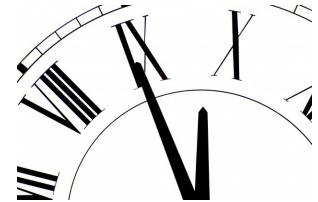
Of the silly words  
That are softly written  
On your own paper.

—Angela Tran, Southside High School  
in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher

## Racing Time

Time is racing now  
It's flying me all too high  
This has made me afraid  
To face the days that lay ahead  
And I don't know how  
To space it out  
This time that  
Eludes me  
Haunts me and  
Controls me  
Maybe someday  
Somehow  
I will find a way  
To break free from  
Time

—Rhiannon Plummer, Southside High School  
in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher



## The Blissful Darkness

"Stay with me!" I bellow, as I firmly hold her still, fading body. "Can you hear me?" I whisper gently in her ear, willing her to hold on, and trying to arouse her inner desire to, stay with me. "I love you. I will always love you. So, please...please stay with me," I desperately plead, trying to hold back the flood gate of emotions. Water begins to falls from my eyes, streaming down my cheeks, free falling off my chin, landing on her perfectly delicate skin.



With every ounce energy she could muster from her frail, failing form, she gave a tired smile and intently with passion and concern, whispering, "I've had a bad beginning, and a difficult middl-" Her fragile body is rocked by a cough, causing me to jerk while she winced and gagged as her crimson blood spewed forth from her oral cavity. "...so pl- plea- please give me a good ending." After uttering her final wish, those sea green eyes which once sparkled, slowly faded like a sunset on the horizon. I cradled her in my arms, sobbed, and rocked back and forth as her breathing went from fast to labored.

"Please don't leave me, my dear," I repeat, as I stroking her matted, brown hair. Ignoring the screaming shrieking sounds of sirens and flashing lights, as best I can. While staring, transfixed on the gaping bullet hole in her center of her chest. I heaved uncontrollably, sobbing even harder than ever, I couldn't regain my breath. My heart in pure agony. Her eyes flutter, trying for me, to avoid the inevitable.

The hard thuds of someone's frantic footsteps interrupt my sorrow. The gunman could easily be coming this way. Perhaps to send me to the same fate as my dearest now faces. Would my death next to hers be half so bad as to have to wake up without the promise of her fluorescent face and kind soul?

"No!!," her raspy voice yells out as she stares over my shoulder. I glance behind me to confirm what I already knew, behind me was the sickening grin of the madman who has killed me once and has come to kill what is left of me. "Bam!" The sound of a gun echoed through my skull as I was pushed forward by the force of what will be my demise. It happened, the gunman of J.K High had heard me, and fired one last shot. And now it was I who was fading.

One look at my only love, and you could tell she was dead. Even as I heard the maniacal laughter of the man, I stare at my faded angel who had given her final breath to a useless plea of caution. I lower my eyes, her image in my mind and smile as I fall into nothingness, entering eternal sleep, the blissful darkness.

—Desirea Harder, 8th grade at Annie Camp Junior High, LaTwayla Knowlton, Teacher

## The Disease

Anger is like a disease.

It grows and sprouts, rotting away and leaving a repulsive essence. It is caught like plague, and can only be gotten rid of by passing on the anger to the next host, breaking yourself free from that heavy feeling on your shoulders, that knot in your chest. Could you compare it to the plague? Yellow fever? Perhaps even to the common cold?

No, because with this disease, nobody has symptoms. And there isn't any medicine, any cure. People don't wear death masks, and place posies in their pockets, and beg doctors for a solution. Anger isn't any of these things. It's never that simple. Anger is a parasite that latches on and doesn't let go until you've found something to take it out on. And when you find that someone or something to lash out on, you lose it. It's like something has taken you over and is controlling you like a mindless zombie.

You regret the things that you will do, but only after you do them, because you don't have any control. And when your heart is beating so fast that it seems like it will burst and everything is black and white, it is then that you look in the mirror and finally know the answer. Anger is not a disease. Diseases spread and host, have problems and solutions, have casualties and cures. But it's in that moment that you realize that anger is not like a disease. For you cannot simply catch anger.

But anger can catch you.

—Alyssa Bates, *Southside High School in Batesville*, Tim Bennett, Teacher



—Photo by Annalia Walker, "Up and Down, Side to Side," *Courtway Middle School in Conway*, Monica Flowers, Teacher

## The Two Monsters Who Lost Their Memories

Once upon a time there was a two-headed monster that loved looking at herself because she thought that she looked good. She looked like a monster with two-heads and she wore a tiger shirt skirt. She had a friend named Emily and they met at the park together. They became best friends forever.

One day, the two-headed monster bumped her head on the tree because she was not paying attention where she was going. Then, Emily showed up and said, "Are you okay?"

"Who are you?" asked the monster.

Emily said, "We are best friends and we've known each other for ten years now. We met at the park when we were four years old."

First, let's try an icepack ...Nope that didn't work. Second, let's try some cream... Nope that didn't work. Third some honey... Nope that didn't work. Fourth, how about trying to talk about your life? As the girls were talking about the monster's life, she finally remembered her life! The two girls then lived happily ever after.

—Chloe Smith, 3rd grade at LISA Academy North Elementary in Sherwood,  
Mrs. Marvin, Teacher



## Leo and the Poisonous Blueberry

One morning, a bear named Leo was very hungry. Leo looked out his window—it was snowing hard. Leo put on his scarf, coat, gloves and hat and went outside. He saw Frog sitting by the river eating some sweet, yellow, delicious honey. Leo loved honey, so he said, "Yummy in my tummy!"

Leo asked Frog, "Where did you get that delicious, bright yellow honey?"

"I got it from the forest," replied Frog.

"Can you take me there?" Leo asked. So Leo and Frog went into the forest. Leo was so hungry he ate a poisonous blueberry. All of a sudden Leo had hives all over him. Frog took Leo to the doctor who said he would have to rest all winter long.

Leo did what the doctor told him, and when Leo woke up, it was spring. Leo was so happy because Frog had fixed him breakfast. Leo's mother came to visit him too. Leo's mother brought fish, honey, and biscuits along with her.

Days later, it was Leo's birthday. He received a lot of presents! Everyone ate cake and ice cream. It was a very happy day. After everyone ate, Leo opened his presents. To Leo's surprise, one of his presents was a jar of honey. Leo was so happy to get a jar of honey because that is the best present he could dream of!

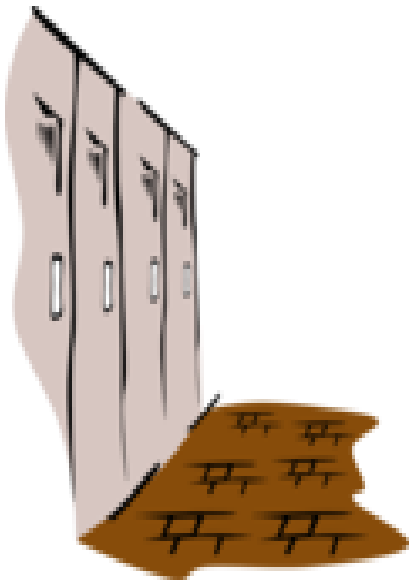


—Sanai Britt, 3rd grade at LISA Academy North Little Rock, Mrs. Thomason, Teacher

## CHATTER

Cheesy conversations in the hall  
Heading to math together then  
A lot of drama  
Too much to bear  
Telling lies and spreading rumors  
Ears tickled by whispers of hate and jealousy  
Real friends are hard to find

—*Olivia Beaverson, 8<sup>th</sup> grade*  
*Greene County Tech Junior High*  
*Karen Hodge, Teacher*



## Overcoming the Struggle

As soon as I close my eyes,  
My mind opens –

To a dreary scene;  
The beast is unleashed – following me – hunting me;  
The emptiness lashes out –  
The screams screech so loud,  
Deafening my real-world surroundings;  
Broken shards shatter against the walls –  
My mind is befuddled, confused, horror-stricken;  
My heart is racing, pounding,  
Searching for safety,  
But it is impossible to hide from my inner self;  
Doors all locked, bolted, shut –  
The dark corridor is never-ending;  
The walls cave in, shrinking around my feeble, claustrophobic body;  
Breaths – last breaths become impossible to breathe;  
Walls, no longer walls – prison bars, imprison me;  
Coughing – gasping – panting – longing for death to accompany me –  
Instead I lie bound, deadly asleep,  
Yet the thoughts, they never stop coming;  
The pain never stops hurting;  
The horrific memories keep reoccurring;  
And, somehow – ironically, I am winning  
Because for some odd reason –

I keep going...

—*Dakota Franks, Southside High School in Batesville, Tim Bennett, Teacher*

## -----Hannah

Tall, athletic, crazy, unique  
Sister of Tyler  
Lover of amusement parks, social media, and braces  
Who feels joyous when with family and friends, great when listening to music, and happy with a phone in my hand  
Who needs best friend time, summer nights, and food  
Who gives encouragement, friendship, and support  
Who fears losing people I'm close to, never seeing someone again, and spiders  
Who would like to see respect for our country, peace for the wars, and a better environment  
Who lives in a rock house in the peaceful countryside

## -----Reaves

—*Hannah Reaves, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Greene County Tech Junior High, Karen Hodge, Teacher*



## Elven Girl

Mirror, Mirror  
Who shall stand  
And be the ruler of  
This forsaken land?  
M'lady, my Queen  
The elven girl sits  
Upon your throne of jewels  
Despite your charm and wits  
Brandishing her scepter  
The woman fumed  
And you know of  
Her name, I presume?  
I know so little,  
But I know her face  
With hair like flames  
And pointed ears of her race  
Her eyes shine a forest green  
With wooden beads and  
A charm of quartz  
Her earrings made from Oak of Woodland  
Her dress is brown  
And embroidered  
With shrubby green thread  
That costs but a quarter  
Bring me the child!  
Bring her at once!  
And let's test her  
Test her at once!

—*Tralee Ellington, 8<sup>th</sup> grade*  
*Greene County Tech Junior High*  
*Karen Hodge, Teacher*



## The Hatter's Logic

They think me mad,  
I think so too,  
Don't be so serious and sad,  
After all, I'm just like you!  
Lunatic, bonkers, off my head,  
Crazy, deranged and downright silly,  
Some love the madness, others wish me dead,  
All I do is think to myself, oh really?  
If I were gone, vanished, disappeared,  
Who'd entertain and make laughs,  
Who'd keep away the things you fear,  
With laughter, fun, and entertainment,  
Where would you find a better replacement!  
Listen to me, to what I told Alice,  
Don't mind the hate and insufferable snots  
Keep in check your serious meter  
And temperature of malice  
It's those ingredients that make  
your heart and fun rot.  
Trust in them? I think not!

—*Hannah Schrachta, 8<sup>th</sup> grade*  
*Greene County Tech Junior High*  
*Amy Sloan, Teacher*

## Wicked Witch

There's a flock of goop and a pot of soup.  
She laughs and goofs revealing her one rotten tooth.  
She stops and "whoos," then drops her tool and watches it move.  
She wanders, ponders, how anyone can become dumb or even dumber.  
To come while she's alone and humble.  
She fumbles to the sound of thunder.  
"Who be it?" she mumbles. Doom Doom Doom!!!  
The door continued to rumble.  
Her heart decreased beneath her feet.  
She started to breathe, repeat, then sneezed.  
She arched her back and reached, her heart pounced as the knob  
squeaked.  
She opened the door and released nothing but the sound of rain and the  
wood's peace.  
She closed the door, turned around and witnessed a wicked witch with  
jagged teeth.

—*Antonio B., 10th grade, Consolidated Youth Services, Jill Layne, Teacher*

## Haiku

When I go to sleep  
Darkness conquers my vast mind  
But Light defeats all

—*Dakota B. 12th grade, Consolidated*  
*Youth Services*





## The Conversion

Poetry.

It is something I have a loathsome feel for.  
Sure, it can be beautiful and well-stated at times,  
And it can speak thoughts that only I think,  
But I care not for Poetry. It is Darkness.

Poetry.

Though considered beautiful and beloved by some,  
Poetry does not appeal to my senses. For it is a Disease.

Poetry.

Poetry can be a rare sapphire stone, priceless in monetary value,  
For some,

But to me, it is like a road-side rock; useless and  
Undesired.

Poetry.

It is a thorn that is continuously stabbing deeper and  
Deeper into my inner being. It will not leave me alone.  
It is Relentless.

Poetry.

Like a character trait, Poetry is now a part of me.  
I do not desire it. I wish it would go away.

Poetry.

This Disease has full control over me now.  
I now see things in a new perspective. I can't think for myself.

Poetry.

How could I have been so oblivious towards this Beaming  
Star, this Light that has now illuminated my soul!

Poetry.

The Beams are shining through me now.  
I need to reach the others who are like my former self.  
I must breach the Darkness with the Light.

Poetry.

My once cold, dead fingers are active and alive.  
They are writing words,  
Words that I used to hate during my  
Ignorant days.

Poetry.

Let there be Light within your heart and soul, my friend.  
Don't try to fight it, like I once did.  
Let there be Light within your soul.

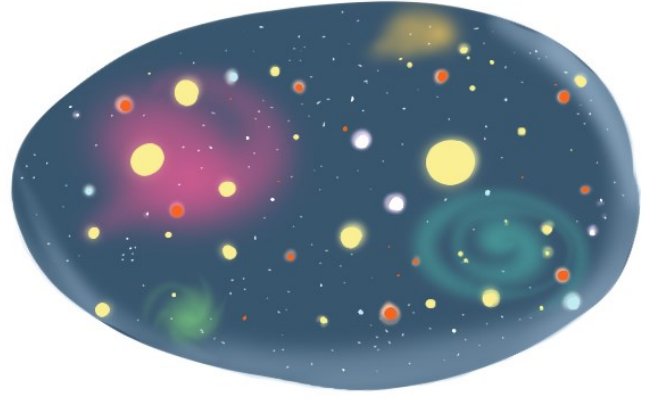
—Michael Snavely, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Greene County Tech Junior High, Carol Surber, Teacher

Photo by Annalia Walker, "The Keyboard," Courtway Middle School in Conway, Monica Flowers, Teacher

## Poetry

Poetry is the only window compatible with the human soul,  
A raging inferno whose winds pull at our burning flesh,  
Stripping it layer by layer,  
Until what dwells underneath is unearthed.  
A gentle cooling breeze,  
A pitiful dying scream,  
A bubbling stream,  
A sobbing widow.  
An unconquered snowy mountain,  
A struggling child drowning,  
A boiling hot spring,  
A putrid stale miasma,  
Poetry is a vast emerald forest,  
Engorged with life,  
And a stretch of black scorched earth,  
Where life cannot thrive.  
Poetry,  
Like the starry infinity of the universe,  
Encompasses all of creation.  
There is no emotion that cannot be called forth,  
Whether as a blessing from  
the cloudy heavens above,  
Or a cacodaemoniacal  
beast from the  
deepest of hells,  
By the immeasurable  
power of  
the poet's  
pen.

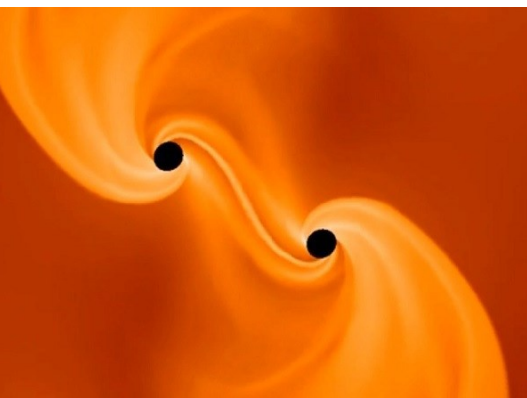
—Logan Smith, 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech  
Junior High  
Carol Surber, Teacher



## Poetry

POETRY quickly and calmly captivates you,  
Capturing you and bringing you into its world,  
Teaching you its secrets, showing you all that it has and knows,  
Giving everything the poem has to offer,  
Subduing the reader and letting him see these sought after sights that so many  
Secretly desire to experience,  
Because POETRY restores you,  
It brings you from the valley to the mountain,  
POETRY lets you understand the emotions of the Poet,  
Helps you relate this to that and that to this,  
Like a broken home this poem has no rules or regulations,  
No hindrances to get in the way of the beauty,  
No errors in POETRY  
In POETRY only the Poet's Truths exist,  
Only the beliefs of the beauty in the poem exist,  
Drawing you in and welcoming you to that world like a gatekeeper,  
Drawing out your breath and causing the time to pass at such a slow rate,  
Allowing you to enjoy the world of the poem until you return home,  
And find that you ache to be back there,  
You ache for that brief moment you were caught off guard and sucked into a  
Poem.

—Garrett Brown, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Greene County Tech Junior High,  
Carol Surber, Teacher



## No One Knows

Everything started out okay  
But then she lost her way  
The smiles were all fake  
But she didn't tell for his sake  
"Help me," she said  
But no one goes  
Now there's scars on her legs  
And no one knows  
Can't you see her sinking?  
Can't you hear her pleading?  
She kept on going down  
Where she couldn't be found  
She kept on saying, "I'm fine"  
But she was far off the line  
"Help me," she said  
But no one goes  
Now there's scars on her legs  
And no one knows  
Can't you see her sinking?  
Can't you hear her sinking?  
She feels so low  
She feels so alone  
All she sees is rain  
All she feels is pain  
"Help me," she said  
But no one goes  
Now there's scars on her legs  
And no one knows  
Can't you see her sinking?  
Can't you hear her pleading?  
*Doesn't anyone see her? Doesn't anyone hear her?*

—A song by Amelia Long, 10th grade,  
Jasper High School

## adnamA

Her eyes are like fire,  
**Rampaging** through the night,  
Dressed in simple attire,  
She proved to be a beautiful sight.

Hair as dark as the soul of a liar,  
I follow her light,  
She allowed me to become a survivor,  
And showed me my might.

*Soul* as lovely as wire,  
With skin so pale and so white,  
She's reliable like a spare tire,  
And makes my spirit soar like a kite.

—Garrett Brown, 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
Greene County Tech Junior High  
Carol Surber, Teacher



## Olivia Does Not Exist

Olivia does not exist. The snow beneath her crunches, but it is not making a sound. Her warm breath blows white puffs against the cold air, but it only lasts a second. When she reaches out to fill a cup of coffee, the hot black liquid fills steadily, but it remains untouched. Her kitchen glows in warm yellow light and it gives off a homey atmosphere. Olivia rested her body against the counter as she drank her bitter coffee. She didn't need to eat or drink, but it gave her a sense of living. Olivia would like to exist, but she cannot. She doesn't know why. She has yet to see or hear or touch or speak or feel, for Olivia does not exist. "It sucks," said Olivia. "I wish to exist, but nobody seems to notice."

Olivia looks out a window watching the world outside move. Red toasted leaves break from their brown twigs and fall towards the ground in slow motion. The girls who live across the street run and try to catch the falling leaves before they hit the ground, and even though they are falling so slowly, they have yet to catch one. The skies were gray and they looked like they were painted, and Olivia could see the paint strokes that colored the sky. The road outside the house was light blue from being run over thousands of times before, and for a second she felt bad for the road. *(continued on next page)*

## Seasons

Leaves golden bright—they shine on the trees tonight,  
When winter hits, they fall off.  
They'll be back when spring comes, but they'll be green.  
Summer is the hottest season; you better drink lots of water.  
In winter you can make a snowman or a snow angel!  
In fall you make leaf piles and jump in.  
Spring is the time to go to the park and smell flowers.  
Now summer is the time you really need to take a dip.  
Spring you can make beautiful garden.  
Fall—see the squirrels gather nuts for their hibernation.  
Winter is the time for some to hibernate.  
It's almost close to Spring Break in the spring.  
After summer you're in a new grade!  
Fall time is school time they say.  
During the winter you might be out of school if it snows.  
April showers, spring flowers is the old saying.  
Summer time—go outside and run through the sprinkler.  
Even though each season brings something different, I like them all, do you?

—Gabrielle L. Poole, 2nd grade, LISA Academy North  
Denise Crace, Teacher



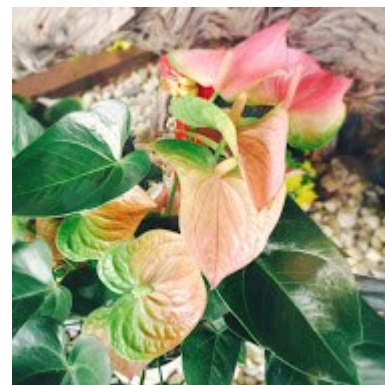
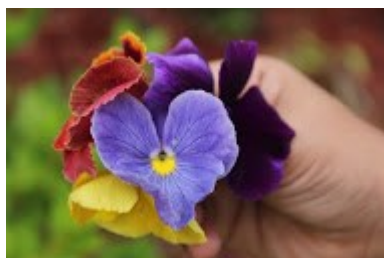
—Photo by Gracie Fason, "Sunset Trees," Courtway Middle  
School, Monica Flowers, Teacher

**Olivia Doesn't Exist**, continued....

Cars with colors of blue, black, white and gold drove past with plans for a funeral. She knew this because the people inside wore solemn faces, looking out the window at nothing in particular. Their thoughts were plagued with grief, and their emotions displayed through their black clothes. Olivia couldn't feel for them because she had never felt the emotion of grief before. Olivia watched as the day went by. First a morning sun that was kidnapped by the gray clouds that loomed over the Earth, then a gust of wind that swept the light away when it was time for tiny toddlers to sleep, and lastly a moon that revealed its superpower and fought the clouds away, letting other suns shine in far away space. Olivia sighed, "It's a story that has been told for centuries, yet no one ever notices."

Olivia shouted, "Laissez les bon temps rouler!" (*let the good times roll*) though her voice could not be heard; she jumped into the pool behind her house, creating a giant wave that never rippled. Olivia swam through the pool, and everything looked so blue. The water around her fizzed just after she jumped into the water, and Olivia stared as she watched the tiny bubbles disappear just before they reached the surface. The world above her looked distorted as she remained underwater. The trees above her were blurred with water lines that were whiter than the sky. They looked so lively with light greens mixed with dark. Birds were flying past with a duty to go somewhere she wouldn't know, and she didn't really want to know. Those birds are free and they can go where they please, though they might get hurt if they go somewhere unsafe. "So sad," Olivia thought to herself, "They have freedom yet people kill them without even knowing it."

Flowers snuck in during the night, and they sang sweet notes of pink, orange and blue. Olivia woke at the sound of flowers thriving in the night, and she saw them blooming through her window. When the morning came, she was still staring at them, for she was entranced by their beauty. They grew from a seed and bloomed in a mere week, so they must be strong. Olivia liked looking at the flowers, but she knew she had to work on the cleaning that would never be done. She knew that the cleaning would not stay, but she wanted to do it anyway. "It's tradition," she thought.



She brought a bucket with her to the kitchen and filled the bucket with water, then added some soap in there too. Olivia heaved the bucket off the counter and headed to the front yard; she had spilt some soapy water here and there. She drew in a breath and reeled the bucket of water back to launch it forward, making the water fly towards the house. The house was drenched in soapy water, and it was clean. As Olivia headed back inside with her deed done, a person called out, "It's a pity that nobody else knows how to do spring cleaning."

*Story by Jaqi Vaughan, Rogers New Tech High School, Casey Bazyk, Teacher*

*Photos (all untitled, left to right):*

*Afrak Quereshi, LISA Academy, Shannon Martindale, Teacher*

*Afrak Quereshi, LISA Academy, Shannon Martindale, Teacher*

*Quynh Giao, LISA Academy West, Jessica Wright, Teacher*

## We All Fall Down

Duty, you lithe servile men:  
brooks of honor, patriotism creep piteously through your veins.  
While the Children with Smith and Wesson tucked into their pajama pants  
flock in the trenches.  
Hide-n-seek, Captain. Ring around the Rosie, burlap pouches  
camouflaging posies  
spilling like infant tears while  
toddlers,  
delicate curls of hair, black as rubbed soled boots  
link uncoordinated arms, a unified legion,  
baby fat swaying in radioactive breeze.  
Upon sparrow shoulders, military ambition assembles  
Fly sparrow, fly to your Captain  
Disregard the children in an eternal stagnation below,  
porcelain spidered, flaws  
hiking into those same midnight hues curls  
Fly sparrow, fly to your Captain  
circumvent the pillars of ashes, swirling to Heaven.  
they all Fall down, We all fall down  
This is Conflict.

—Madison Waite, *Maumelle*



## The Closet

Its shape given by wooden frame,  
Space small to fit life's belongings,  
But not too small to fit his shame.  
Its handle his hopeful hand clings.  
Known inward whispers overflowed  
Its door with messages of hate,  
Make impossible his damned escape,  
The rust upon the handle glowed.  
Seeping shadows slowly showing,  
Like tears running down his pale cheeks,  
Stronger than his weakening knees  
And weaker than his knobbed wring.  
His wrists cried red teardrops,  
Caused by those woeful wounds worsened  
By daunting screams of so-called love,  
His lamb-like flesh fit like a glove.  
Those whispers and shadows  
Hurt by their pasts, hate flows.

—Cody Jackson, *Arkansas State University in Jonesboro*



## Camping

The smell of smoke and the buzz of a zipper woke me up. The sun was warm on my face as it filtered through the screens on the tent. I fumbled a little with my sleeping bag, and then sat up. I took a deep breath and smiled. "It's morning, and a gorgeous morning," I thought to myself. A joy filled me like only a cool, bright early morning can. When the joy was overcome with a rumbling, I stooped to my feet, grabbed my shoes and left the tent. Dad was already flipping pancakes on the Coleman Stove. The bacon was already cooked. There was some hot water on the other burner and some hot cocoa packets on the edge of the food pile. "I love camping," I said to my parents, as I took another deep breathe and stretched my arms. I sat down in a lawn chair by the fire and I grabbed out my Bible. As I waited for breakfast, my joy was made complete with the word of God and a beautiful view of God's creation.

—Emily Adamson, 10th grade at Jasper High School, Mollie May, Teacher

## The Clouds

There's a moose  
Look, a goose  
All these wonderful shapes  
Wait just a minute  
The rain,  
it's taking the shapes away  
I am so sad,  
my glorious clouds are gone  
But the sun will come and they will be  
back  
My shapes will be here once again

—Emma Elrod, Courtway Middle  
School in Conway  
Monica Flowers, Teacher

—Photo by Tara Ray, "Pine Cones,"  
Courtway Middle School in Conway  
Monica Flowers, Teacher



## Cupid

Bathing in the ethereal light  
Stars shining in lustrous eyes  
Dancing along the rings of planets  
And treading through asteroid belts  
With stardust in your lungs  
The galaxy welcomes you home after  
Long trips to explore our neighbors  
Gravity reaches out to you  
In passing of lovesick planets  
Stars hum in your presence  
And burst brightly into oblivion  
In sorrow of your absence  
The black void of space  
Swallows you  
In the hopes it will never lose you  
Worlds turn  
 Meteors burn  
The universe beckons  
For your return into its grace  
For who better  
To yearn for  
Than our celestial enamor—  
Cupid

—August Patrick, Rogers New Tech High  
School,  
Casey Bazyk, Teacher



## A Whole Other World

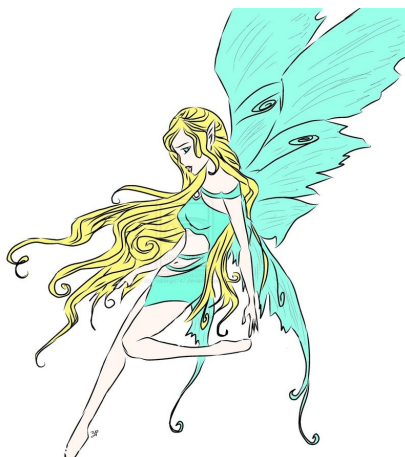
The small, trickling of the drops reaches my small ears.  
Cooling breezes caress me wonderfully.  
Tiny bits of salt in the air dance on my tongue.  
Smooth, slick, and gentle, it forms all around me.  
Under the surface another world lies.  
Colors change and cloud the eyes.  
Beautiful creatures move every which way,  
Defying the laws of gravity.  
Air fills lungs again and  
The drops still clinging begin to dry.  
One last look  
At the most wondrous world left behind.  
Ocean.

—Rhiannon Plummer, Southside High School in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher

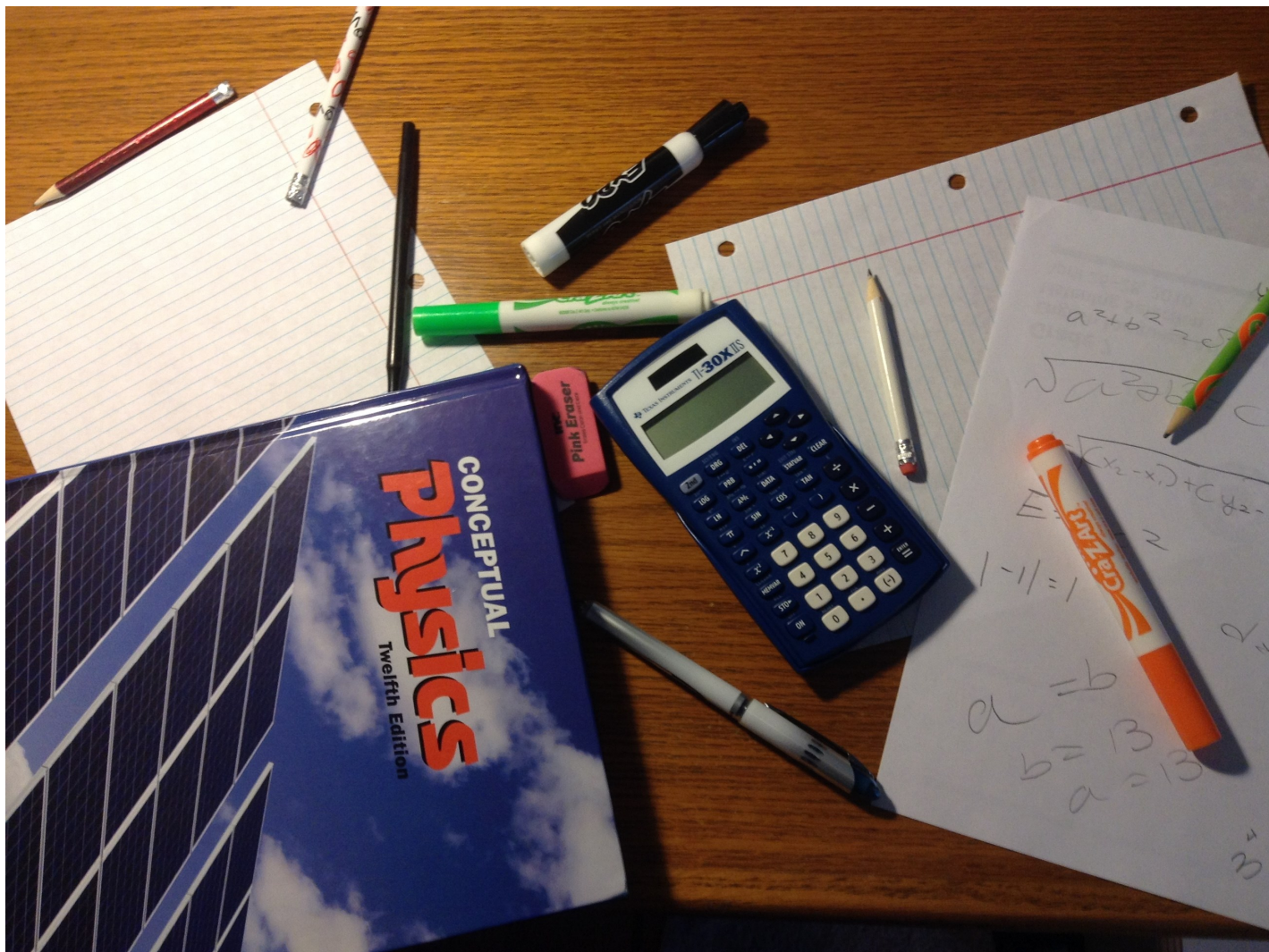
## Pixies, Fairies

Flutter, flutter by the pond  
Dancing, dancing till the dawn  
Old and young alike they come  
Play, play all throughout the day  
Bouncing from mushroom to mushroom  
The laughter rings, the sound of tiny bells  
Pixies, fairies, both the same  
In this hollowed wood they stay  
Playing and laughing with joy throughout their days.

—Rhiannon Plummer, Southside High School in Batesville  
Tim Bennett, Teacher







*Photo by Alex Borengasser, "A Day of Homework," sixth grader from LISA Academy West*

## School

School rules!  
It's better than bulls.  
Make good grades  
because that's how you get paid.  
Read books,  
and get looks.  
Get an education  
to increase your imagination  
and gain determination.  
School rules!

*By fifth graders: Anjel Gomez , Briya Patel, Jeremiah McFadden, Quinton Garcia, and  
Osiel Rodriguez , all from LISA Academy North Little Rock*

*Lena Mayo, Krystle Hula, and Glenda Bryant, Teachers*

A C T E L A

Arkansas  
Council  
of Teachers of  
English and  
Language Arts

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*Photo by Karis Scott, "The Everlasting Meadow," Courtway Middle School in Conway,  
Monica Flowers, Teacher*

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