



**2017
ARKANSAS
ANTHOLOGY**

PREFACE

The year 2017 marks the 17th volume of the Arkansas Anthology. Sponsored by the Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts (ACTELA), the goal of the Anthology is to encourage and reward the writing and creative excellence of students and educators throughout Arkansas schools. In the tradition of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) ways of lifting up student voices through the language arts, this publication of creative works by young authors, artists, and photographers honors excellence in writing—both prose and poetry—as well as multiple mediums of art. Every piece of writing, photograph, and artwork are submissions from students.

ACTELA board members edit and produce the Anthology each spring. This year marked the first year that the anthology is native to digital platforms. Created using iBooks Author, the optimum version of the book is available for free through the iBooks store. It is also available on our website at www.actela.org.

We encourage students and teachers to plan ahead to submit writings to next year's Anthology.

The authors published in the Arkansas Anthology retain all the publication rights of their respective works.

Editor's Note: In 1855, Walt Whitman sent a copy of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* to one of his idols—Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson, a literary giant and arguably America's intellectual and philosophical leader, responded with a glowing letter of appreciation for Whitman's writing. I included an excerpt from this letter in every acceptance e-mail sent to students who appear in this anthology: "I greet you at the beginning of a great career." Like Emerson, I so appreciate the works created by these young writers, photographers, and artists. But there's another part of the letter I want to dedicate to those students' teachers; Emerson also wrote that Whitman's writing "must have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a start." The students who appear in this anthology must have had a long foreground somewhere—and it was in your classrooms. Thank you for everything you do with and for our students throughout the state. You are creating the future leaders of our nation and planet. As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Or as Woody Guthrie would say, "This machine kills Fascists."

Member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement

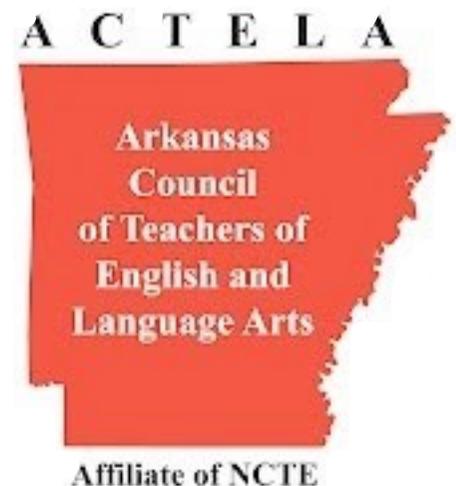


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This year's cover art, "Nightmare Tree" is by Keri Bewington, a 5th Grade student from Courtway Middle School taught by Monica Flowers. Various editor's choice selections appear throughout the 2017 volume. The creations chosen for this honor are simply the favorites of the editor—poetry and photographs not easily forgotten. Editor's choice winners are denoted by ^. This year's editor's choice recipients are Mackenzie Hodge, Jerry McDoniel, Francesca Redditt, and Kensley Soffos.

Certain writings and creative works fit into categories or fostered certain moods. This year's anthology is organized according to those: an initial chapter that represents a hodgepodge of submissions; a second on the topics of life and death; a third on the theme of nature; a fourth of themes of darkness or despair, a fifth on light, hope, and joy; and a final chapter containing spotlights on editor's choice winners and authors who were chosen to appear multiple times in this volume.

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2018 ARKANSAS ANTHOLOGY CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We showcase and publish the writing and creative work of Arkansas students!

Submissions accepted through March 18, 2018

Send all submissions to ARAnthology@gmail.com. Format requirements: WORD Document for written works, JPG for images, MP4 for video, MP3 for audio.

Include ALL contact information including email and phone number and a statement verifying that you wrote or created the piece (that it is original from you).

Publish Date: May-June 2018

For 17 years, the Arkansas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, a state affiliate of NCTE, has enhanced the excellent work of ELA teachers in Arkansas by opening a space for students to publish their creative and information writing, along with artistic expressions of photography, art, and multimedia. The anthology is compiled and edited by Mr. Aaron Hall from Riverview High School.

Ideas for Submissions

Personal narratives or creative non-fiction
Short Stories
Poetry
Descriptive paragraphs
Photography
Artwork
Music
Short-films
Any type of creative work/media

Please submit BEST writing rather than LOTS of writing. Submissions must be edited and polished for publication or they will not be considered. Whenever possible, students should submit.

Guidelines for Formatting

PDFs of text will not be accepted

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

Include titles for all submissions

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

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

Provide a statement of originality: "I wrote this poem," or "this art is my original work." Do not plagiarize.



Photo by Blade Acord
Oark High School, 9th Grade
Barbra Sampley, Teacher



**Photo by Andrew Geels, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher**

The Boy with the Sad Eyes

When you kissed me
I felt the wind rustle through my hair,
like I was free at last.

When you held me
I heard the waves crash on the shore,
like I was in paradise.

When you touched me
I tasted the sweetness of honey,
like it was the first time.

When you decided
I wasn't good enough to taste it,
you ripped all that sweetness away.

**Lexi Spillman, 11 th Grade
Green County Tech High School
Lynnae Kellett, Teacher**



**Photo by Blade Acord
Oark High School, 9th Grade
Barbra Sampley, Teacher**

Human Nature

Humanity is a hurricane that leaves destruction in its wake.
We may pretend to guess its path, but we will never know the masses it will take.
It's the eye of chaos, shrouded by bliss.

Humanity is the fire that flickers in the storm.
Wind may try to weaken the blaze, but it's the breeze that strengthens the flames.

Humanity is the pain of betrayal and the heartbreak it brings.
It's the biting cold that lingers in our very souls.
The hollowness that leads to something more.

Humanity is the insane jealousy that lies in the dormant in the darkest part of the eyes.
It's the envy that latches onto our breath even when logic promises that it's nothing but empty lies.

Humanity is the bird that dares to defy gravity without knowing the power in its wings.
It's the first bird to jump out of the nest it calls home.

Humanity is the rebellion of one single soul who doesn't hesitate to stand when ordered to bow.
It's the tilt of the chin when demanded to look down.
It's the lie on the tip of the tongue.
It's the spark in the eye that refuses to dim.

Humanity is indescribable, yet we continue to define it.

Alexis Carter, 11th Grade
Jasper High School
Rhonda Williams, Teacher

Poetry

Poetry is like music,
Leaping off of the page and into our ears,
Into our hearts, Into our minds.
Each line resonating in the core of our being,
Transforming us in that magical way.
And at the end of the verse we are left broken
and longing to hear more.

Abby Antici, 12th Grade

The Hunting Poet

The poet is like an archer
Hunting for words hunting for game
Searching for life quiet and still
Sitting and waiting for the next movement
Arrows sleek and slim like the pencil that writes
The words that leap onto the paper
Like deer bounding toward water
The archer draws and releases
Like the thoughts coming from the poet's head.

Dylan Rice, 12th Grade
Fordyce High School
Cynthia Green, Teacher

Who am I?

It is interesting that you ask, as if I were one that could even be belittled by assuming that I was seeking your attention. I, as a one that is unknown to those who exist, am more complex of an idea than to seek your attention.

We will encounter each other. You and I. Just as I and many others have. Although, they are hushed with a certain discretion. And I will transfer you past the limits your guise has made you accustomed.

There are times in your life that you have taken on another pair of eyes to view creation with. In those times you have come so close to the complex understanding that awaits your homecoming. I can hardly wait your return. Ah, yes. Your return. We will speak more of this later.

You see, I am home. To so many. And to an eventual sum of all that ever had, does, will, and would happen. Some fight me, some force me on themselves and others. Some are confused and fall into my lap, but as each comes, I guide them all according to their souls. Some are naturally linked with ecstasy from their making and all the rest are born attached to perdition.

The moments in your life that you have known to the very lengths of your soul that you are who and what you are, you will find glimpses of me. Maybe in the moment and maybe after your mind has had the opportunity to be of an otherness.

Until then... I will await you.

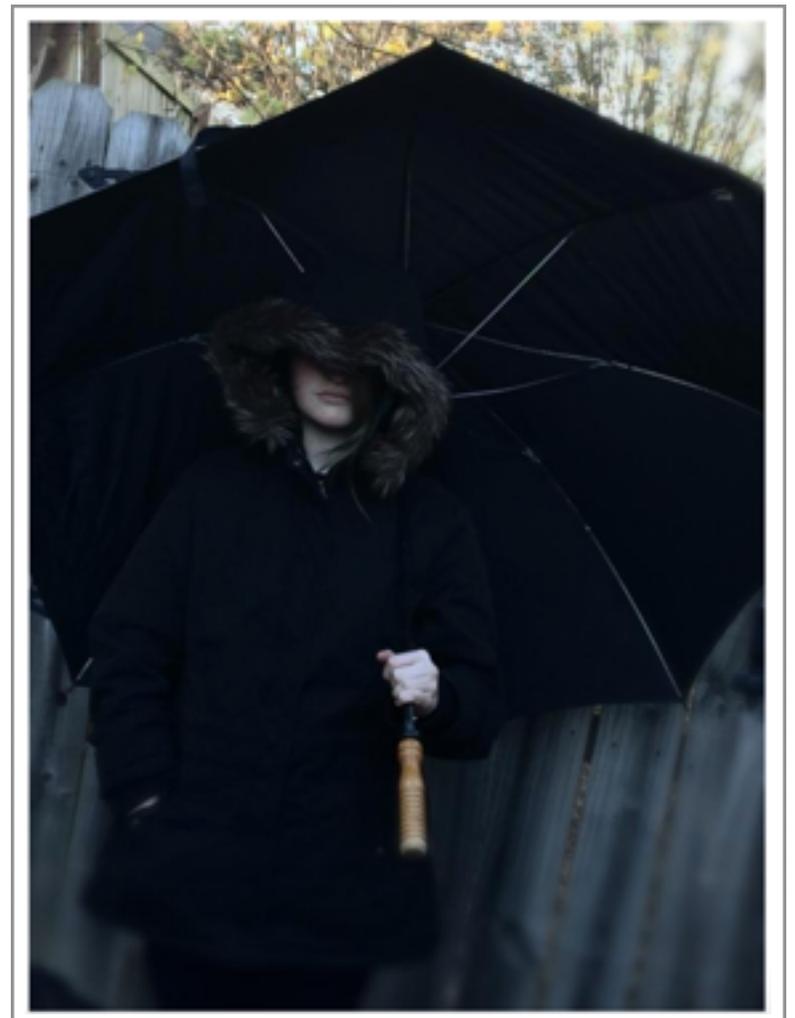
Patiently, carefully overlooking your path and keeping you in the center of your expedition to otherness.

I haven't answered the question have I?
You should know by now, and if you don't....

You will.

Alexis Brown, 12th Grade
Pangburn High School
Cindy Green, Teacher

Mckenna
Elizabeth Dekunffey, Age 12
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher





Bookstore

**Hanna Cravens, 8th Grade
Oark High School
Barbra Sampley, Teacher**

Love

Love is something you feel
It's like electricity going through you
When you feel it you can't let it go
It's like a name that you love
I've never felt love before
But I bet it's great
People say it is
Love is in the air

**Aucktavia Schneckloth, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Art

It's complicated,
Art's a form.
Not like music,
or dancing,
Or even poetry.
Just color on a piece of canvas.
It sounds so simple.
But what's under that layer of color,
Are feelings,
Feelings that can only be shown through color.
The color is what brings these feelings to life,
Letting the artist bring the deepest parts of their mind,
To life

**Shannon Burt, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

The Machine

The frantically busy poet's mind is a machine.
Organized like an assembly line,
Constantly assembling the same thing,
Constantly assembling in the same order,
Because he knows it works.
Day in.
Day out.
Words come.
Ideas pass.
Pen meets paper.
Work is done.
But he thinks that there are still many poems to be
made,
And his work is not complete,
And how can so many things be made by hand alone?

**Darrin McFall, 12th Grade
Buffalo Island Central, Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher**

Glory

As I seek for glory
I thought about time
I thought about sympathy
What would I find
With all this glory
Would it be money
Nationality
Simple love
With all this glory
I see a stump
With no glory
No nationality
No love
Nothing for me to seek
No glory
But I will find a way
A way to find love
A way to find Nationality
To find love
With no glory

Courtney Kawcak, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Rocky Mountains
Madison Long, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

The War of Poetry

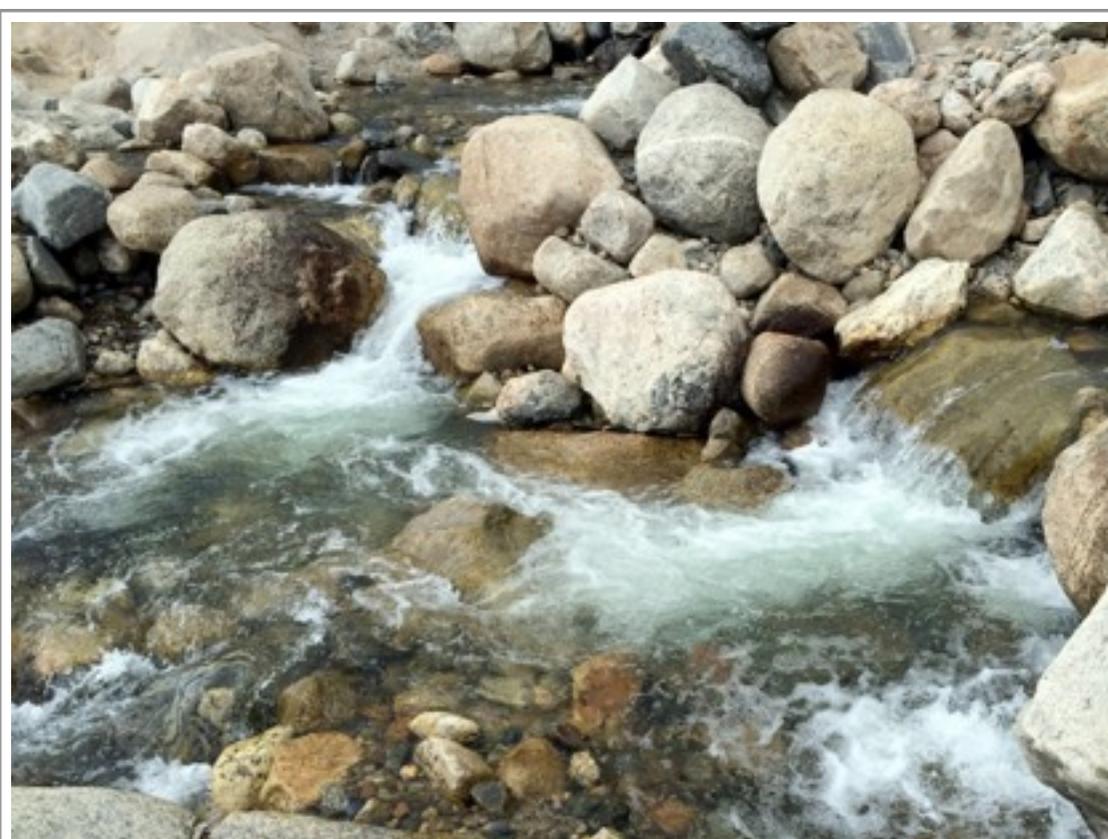
Poetry is protected by the armor of figurative language
And wields the sword of metaphors and similes
With its army of Lyrics and Dramatics
English sonnets, Odes and Ballads
Fighting the enemy.

Who is the enemy?
Understanding
Minds trying to slay the dragons of imagery
And canons of connotation
Trying to fire with logic and past understanding

A beast that cannot be slain
Poetry is immortal
Impenetrable
A fortress of paper and ideas
Hiding truth in words and stanzas

The new respect for poetry I have
The strong kingdom built
Around tones and personification
Only some can enter the gates of the kingdom
And I ask myself, am I worthy?

Segovia Lucas, 9th Grade
Lisa Academy North



Free

I will always go wherever I want to go.
I will never be stuck in one place.
I will always be free.

I will always speak my mind.
I will never be shut up.
I will always be free.

I will always dress in my own way.
I will never be forced to wear something,
I don't want to wear.
I will always be free.

Gracie Fason, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

Imagination

It is soaring high in the sky
It is riding a flying fish
It is talking to animals
It. Is. Thrilling.

You hear the cry of the centaur
You hear the roar of a griffon
You hear the song of a siren
You. Hear. Adventure.

You smell a narcissus
You smell the skunk ape
You smell dragon's breath
You. Smell. Bravery.

You taste ambrosia
You taste Dionysious' grapes
You taste the moon
You. Taste. Victory.



A Fresh Breeze

Jake McClain, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

You see Medusa
You see Pegasus
You see Olympus
You. See. Excitement.

You feel scales of a two-headed snake
You feel the blade of King Arthur's Excalibur
You feel the bottom of a bottomless pit
You. Feel. Prodigious.

Imagination is the key to life.

Keri Brewington and Mia Webb, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

A Fading World

Islands in the sky never gave me
fears a

And never a waterfall of tears

Until I turned and saw

My teammate broke a law

The law to help your teammate

Through matters thick and thin

By the time I turned I was too late,

I can't believe we were as close as

kin

Yet you still pushed me off

Without a single thought

You used the sword I made you

Shining through light and dark

The sword so brand new

And the friend that left a mark

Now I stare up, falling

I see you walking away

I wished you were stalling

The truth as clear as day

We never were allies

You never cared about me

You never heard my cries

Or what I wanted to see

The world as soft as silk

The clouds the color of milk

The islands fading away

As my sight begins to sway

Shawn Chen, Eliana Pope, and

Autumn Hong; 7th Grade

LISA Academy North

Jordyn Murray, Teacher

Life is a journey

You should live with no regrets

Life is a journey

Fear is a mindset

Don't be afraid to take risks.

Throughout life people will doubt you,

Life will go on no matter who is around you.

One decision can change your journey

Since this is so, you must choose wisely

Money, friends, and fame will come but these things

are timely.

My journey is almost over

I must say that I'm proud

A wife, nice house

Fame has come, but it was not free

Now every time I go outside-even the ravens flee

See I have done something terrible

If I told you, you would hate me

The thing you should understand is on it's way is my

new baby.

I hope this child can right my wrongs.

He and my wife shall live joyous and long

I had to end him

It was a must

His life threatened my own due to greed and lust.

Sometimes I don't understand my own feelings

I should've surrounded myself with better people;

In the inside of my heart there's a frolicking wicked fire

He shouldn't have stabbed me in the back-

He was supposed to be my best friend:

Now his body sleeps with the worms

And his bed has no one to tend.

My journey is almost over

And I know taking a life isn't manly,

I just want the world to know

I did what I could for my family.

Dillon Duncan, 9th Grade

LISA Academy

Britney Flud, Teacher

Where He Used to Sit

The beat-up plastic chair is still in the yard,
Weeds snaking up its legs.
The old radio is still sitting on his table,
Dials hanging by thin wires.
We'll never touch his half filled glass.
Mama says he'll come back for it,
But me and brother know that's not true.
She's trying to protect us, but we know the
truth.
He didn't want us.
Brother told Mama that, and she swore it
wasn't true.
But I heard her crying that night.
Just like the day he left.

All that Matters

Mama looked at me, melancholy in her
eyes.
She pulled me close, and didn't let go for a
long time.
I layed my head against her shoulder,
inhaling her cheap perfume
I could hear the gentle snore of Brother in
his room.
She let go and we locked eyes.
"What was that for Mama?"
She sighed, then went quiet
"Everybody needs to be loved,"
She spoke in a gentle whisper, tears in her
eyes.
"I wanted you to know you were."

**Tanner New, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher**



Late Night Carnations
**Sarah Vaughan, 12th grade
Eureka Springs High School
Christine McInerney**

First Sight

I have never opened my eyes
I have a son that helps me through it all,
But I've never seen his face

I have never seen the colors but, I've only
dreamed,
That someday, I will see daylight

My doctor says the day is soon,
The day I see for the first time

Open your eyes
I see my son's face,
Full of joy
He hugs me and now I feel alive

My son showed me the world,
But now, I say goodbye,
Goodbye to my son that showed me light,
The world,
The color
My dreams

But now... I close my eyes,
and say goodbye to light
Once more.

Lilly Reynolds, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Forgotten Youth

Sarah Vaughan, 12th grade
Eureka Springs High School
Christine McInerney, Teacher



Infinite

This book is longer than the longest wedding
dress
This book is so long you would
Rather read then go to sleep
Your parents would think it's a faze
You would sit at home all of
Your summer days
Just trying to just make it one page shorter
You made it one chapter in
And then you
Missed prom
Even the new version
Of King Kong
Long after that
After you moved away
When you lost your dog
When you
Sat at home and cried
And tried to make

Something
Of what has come
Throughout your life
Then you
Find your self back
Where
It began then you put
Away the book
Even though
The librarian
Told you that all of
Your hopes and dreams would
Come true when
You read the
Very last chapter
You desired
To keep it to your imagination

Stone Ross, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Escape

Dear Diary:
Run, run, and don't look back.
I can hear the heavy footsteps behind me.
They're getting closer every time I blink.
I can't keep running from THEM.
Eventually they will catch me.
And I will have to go back.
To the horrible orphanage that held me captive.
They keep telling me my parents are dead.
But I know they're lying to me.
I saw THEM take me away from my parents.
They're not dead but there is something wrong.
Something they aren't telling me.
I will find out what they're keeping from me, and
I will find my parents.
I overheard THEM talking about me, and I know
they are not human.

That is why I call them THEM because they are
strange.
It's like they brainwashed all of the other
orphans to believe anything they say.
But I won't let them do it to me, because I'm not
like the others.
I have been around the whole world and they
keep finding me.
I don't know how they do it.
I see them and I think they see me.
I have to hide from THEM.
They've FOUND ME.....

Jaylin Mckinney, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

On The Run

I could hear the voices of my parents fading away. It was the 5th time this week that my parents were arguing about some stupid reason. Last night it was about whether dad ate the last slice of pie or not. Mom usually works, and dad's always drunk sitting on our couch in our tiny apartment. When I usually see mom, a fight breaks out. The only place I could really find peace was the terrace on the 20th floor overlooking the Los Angeles. I pushed the up button on the elevator and waited patiently thinking about what could be happening with mom and dad. The elevator doors opened and I saw Mr. Rodriguez with his tool belt and two boxes with a bunch of tools in them. Mr. Rodriguez is literally the coolest guy I have ever met. He skateboards ever weekend with me at the local skate park around the corner. If we need to hang something on the wall or electrical issues, we call him since he's a certified handyman. He lives on the 21st floor and has his own terrace.

"Another fight between your parents Noah?"

"Yeah. I'm sick of it. Every night I hear them arguing in their room."

"Let's go to my place. I have something that will cheer you up real quickly," he replied.

Mr. Rodriguez's room was real nice. It wasn't too over the top. It was modern with a black and white theme going on. He set down his boxes and told me to take a seat on his couch while he gets my present. He went back into his room. I could hear the click of something I wasn't sure of. Before I knew it, I was at gun point. I couldn't believe it. Mr. Rodriguez was holding me at gunpoint.

"How in the world is this supposed to cheer me up!" I screamed at the top of my lungs. I thought quickly and did a bicycle kick, knocking the gun out of Mr. Rodriguez's hand. I grabbed the gun and bolted out the door shooting at him. Luckily the gun had a silencer so it made no noise, but I had real bad aim, and I missed badly. I ran down the stairs all the way to the parking lot of the apartment. I looked back, and saw Mr. Rodriguez catching up. I went to the alley behind the pizza place and hid in one of the trash cans. I could hear footsteps coming closer and closer than stop. I held on to the gun ready to fire at any second. I peeked out to see if he was gone. There he was. Staring right at me. I jumped out of the garbage can and pointed the gun at him. At this moment I would do anything to go home and listen to my parents fight over some stupid reason. I Peaked out. There he was. Sitting there staring straight at me. There were three more people in black suits. One of them took out a wad of money and handed it to Mr. Rodriguez.

"What's going on? I thought you people are going to kill me."

"Noah, you passed," one of the men in the black suits said.

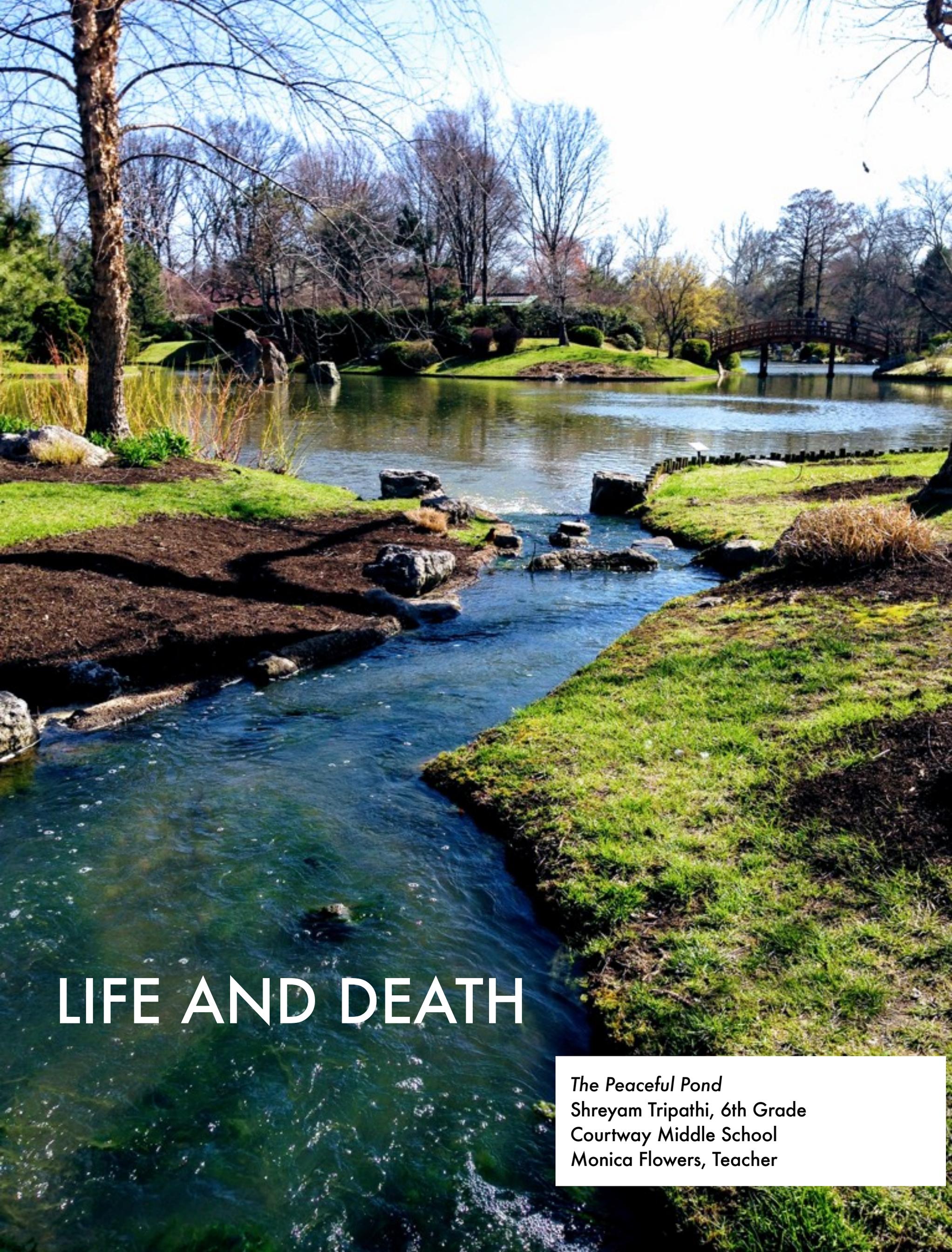
"We want you to be in the Kids CIA. Kids from all over the world are part of it protecting their families, friends, and towns. That was all set up to see if you are worthy enough to take part in Kids CIA. Well done Noah."

From that instant, my life changed from being an ordinary kid, to a world-class agent.

Shreyam Tripathi, 6th Grade

Courtway Middle School

Monica Flowers, Teacher

A scenic view of a pond with a stream flowing into it, surrounded by green grass and trees. The stream flows from the bottom left towards the center of the pond. The pond is surrounded by lush green grass and several large rocks. In the background, there are many trees, some with bare branches and some with green leaves. A wooden bridge is visible in the distance on the right side of the pond. The sky is clear and blue.

LIFE AND DEATH

The Peaceful Pond
Shreyam Tripathi, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

What is life?

Life is something we take for granted
Life is short and is gone like a vapor
Sometimes life can be fun
But more or less life is hard

Battles come and life is taken away
Cherish your loved ones
Because time does not slow down
Life is a word people love

Death is a word people fear
But they are both words that are so dear
Why do we take life for granted
Is it because we have no fear

Or is it because we fear too much
Live to the fullest and love with all your heart
One day your life will fade
And love and memory will be all that's left

Katlin Taylor, 12th Grade
Woodlawn/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher



Whistling Branches
Isani Patel, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Thomas Goodrich, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher



Life

As the wind blows my hair
My life shows me
What I am truly
Without a doubt
I know that my life is
One that will make
A change in society
Even if I don't make history
I can take my mistakes
And learn how to improve them
The wind blows my hair
I don't care
what the past may hold
But I will take
what makes me whole
Life is different no matter
Who you are
a mother
a father
a brother
a sister
Life will bring love
And love will bring happiness

Courtney Kawcak, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Ode: Life is a Chance

The second we enter this world starts a chance.
A chance to make our short time here unforgettable.
Although at first, life is of an unknown importance,
We grow to learn how miraculous each day is.

Life is the process of growing.
The weeds, trees, flowers, and mammals progress second by second.
Striving to make the most of the single shot allowed.
Focused, hard as stone, on making every chance count.

Seeing each day as it is truly a blessing.
The golden opportunities and artistic design prove to be sacred.
Hands grasp the spinning globe of existence, and anything is possible.
Wondrous fantasies compose a variety of achievements and struggles.

We are on a continuous roller coaster, spreading fast as lightning.
Some days we'll be at the highest point, grinning down at the clouds.
And then comes many loops that dangle us with discouragement.
The downfall takes away our breaths, leaving our souls empty.

It may seem at times, an unending battle of tears and scars.
But the chance lies in the depths of hopefulness.
Hope to carry you out of the ashes and into the light.
Life is worth facing the dark times, when there's always times to succeed.

It is a gift wrapped in many colors and ribbons.
No two boxes are the same, and each contains a chance.
An opportunity to take your gift and build and prosper on it.
Building, and building until you reach a satisfactory design.

It's important to taste each breath with mouthwatering affection.
And savor the time you spend in joyful existence.
The power lies in the ability to live in one's choice of manner.
The chance to see life is none other than a flourishing process.

Hannah Tisdale, 12th Grade
Woodlawn High School/ Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

Ode to Life

Life is a mysterious thing,
Having an equal and opposite reaction
For every action that you do.

Sometimes it is a happy thing
Sharing it with those you love
And surrounding yourself
With all things that bring you joy.
You have parents and siblings
Aunt, uncles, and cousins too
And you will also be able to make
A family in the future
With a spouse and children
To fill your days with endless happiness.

But storm clouds can appear in life
Causing pain and grief.
Loved ones can disappear
Never to be seen again.
Hearts can be broken
And sins can be committed against you
Giving you hurt beyond compare
And making you want to be gone
To get rid of the unbearable ache
And begone all the tears.
You constantly grow and age
Learning more everyday
Until your mind is filled with thoughts
And will not stay quiet for a second.
Life has its ups and downs
Bringing out smiles and frowns
Tears of joy and sadness
And thoughts of happiness and despair.
Emotions run as rapidly as a rollercoaster
Letting you completely feel life.



The Lonely One
Audrey Rawls, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

It can be a gift or a curse
Depending on how you decide to live it
And on who you surround yourself with
And how you decide to let things affect you.
You can make wonderful memories
With views of a beautiful world
Filled with visions of your loved ones.
Or you can see things from the dark
Filled with negativity
And despising all that is good.

How life is seen depends on you
Because you have a choice
To make you or break you.

Linh-Chi Ho, 12th Grade
Batesville High School; Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

Life

We only have little time on the earth.
Tick Tock, goes our clock.
Every move that we make, amounts to our
worth.
Struggles and heartache are on this day to day
walk.
But if we believe, they can be replaced with
mirth.
Everything counts, especially the words that we
talk.

Life is short, so always take chances.
Try your best in everything.
Don't worry about the world's acceptance.
It isn't always about the bling.
Though you may seek vengeance,
Life is merely just a fling.

Enjoy the life you're living today.
Remember, tomorrow may never come.
It's okay to not feel brave,
Everyone has a bad day, and then some.
If you're feeling down, look up and pray.
For He has the answers, and he holds your
freedom.

Treat everyone with kindness
And avoid all strife.
Don't get caught up in unnecessary stress.
For these things are key to happiness,
And a successful life.

Casey Parker, 12th Grade
Woodlawn High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

Ode to a Life

I am completely mesmerized by the beauty
of life
With its many colors and smells
With its so-called ups and downs
And with the many people that are willing
To share the experience of this gift together.

O what a joy it is to be filled with this
miracle
Given to me by a loving being from the
heavens
Who looks down on me now to see my joy
And love for the thing that has given me
purpose
So that I may live happily in its entirety.

We are truly lucky and blessed
To have obtained this beautiful phenomena
That exists in an ever so natural world
Filled to the brim by its creatures
Who also share this allure of life.

O how great it is to experience this gift
Here on this gorgeous Earth
With its ever-changing seasons
Creating rain or snow, clouds or sunshine
To give this existence something
marvelous.

How short it is! How it must end!
Why must this beautiful thing meet an end?
Maybe it's a lesson of appreciation
Or maybe it's a punishment for past sins.
Whatever it is, it is great to live such a life.

Britton Hargrave, 12th Grade
Woodlawn High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cynthia Green, Teacher

An Ode to Life

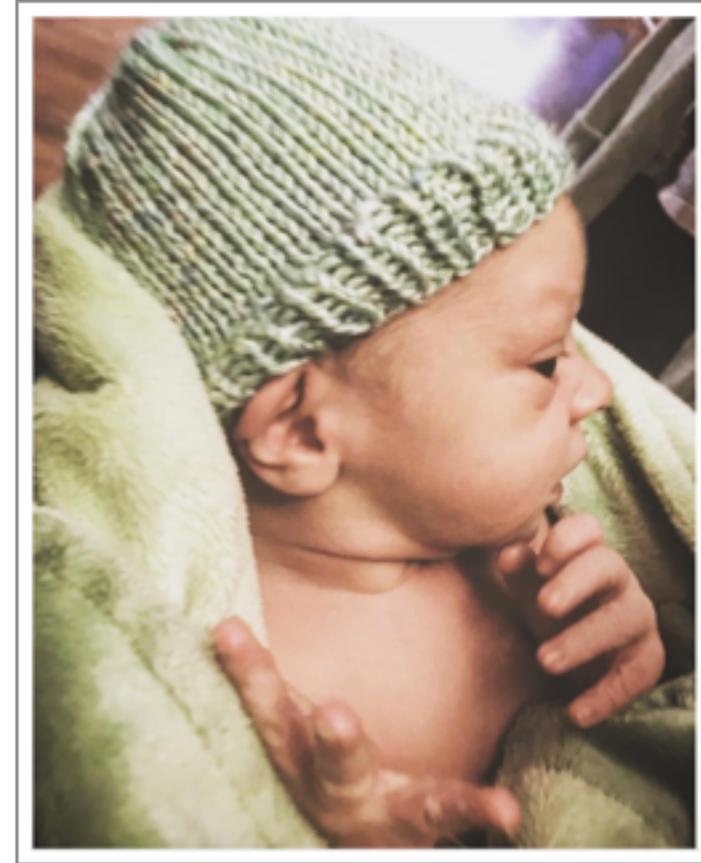
A newborn deer opens his eyes to the first light,
And birds, ever so graceful, spread their wings and take flight.
These are the beauties we have to witness;
Something that can't be tainted by the world's sickness.
Life is a wonderful gift you have been given,
A once in a lifetime offer.
So while you have it, you'd better start livin'.
Don't let life's trifles towards you be a bother.

There are songs of joyous expression to be heard;
The sweetest found in nature, from the mouth of a bird.
Get out and explore, go now while you can;
For the most magnificent things are not created by man.
However, we do have paintings and music and laughter,
Which are quite pleasant. But the simplest things in life,
Like the sunrise or the stars, are the things we miss after
We have been taken from this world by death's cold knife.

Babies and smiles and love mesmerizes
Us even more so than life's best surprises.
Even the tease of the bitter sweetness of death
Is something that gives us a thrill with every breath.
So take chances when the opportunity presents itself.
Overcome your biggest fears,
The only thing stopping you is yourself
And you are limited on your years.

You only live once, so do as they say
And treat every day as if it were your last day
To smell the fresh air and feel the sun on your skin,
Or to open your heart and let love in.
Life is only pleasurable if you choose to let it be.
Take the high road and don't be drawn into negativity.
Life is a seed, plant it and let it grow,
And to this creation you can pass on everything you know.

Kailee Hutchison, 12th Grade
Batesville High School; Virtual Arkansas



Eli King C
Emily Batty, 7th Grade
Bob & Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver , Teacher

Baby

You treasure it
And nurture it
You give it all your love
You cradle it carefully
To make sure it is safe
You patch up the cuts
That injured it a bit
And make sure to help
When it has thrown a fit
And when it has grown
Out of you and your care
It's suddenly gone
Like a feather in the air

Lizzie Clark, 6th grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher



Photo by Blade Acord
Oark High School, 9th Grade
Barbra Sampley, Teacher

We started planting the wheat today.
Its early in the season, but the plow easily slits
the ground.
Dad watches with pride
As I drive for the first time.
Following in his footsteps

Dew gathers on our legs as we step
Out amongst the sprouting wheat.
It'll grow above my knee in time.
If the conditions are right this season.
I stand over my work. pride
Invested in the dark cold ground

Dad says there's not enough in the ground
To take the crop to the final step
But i have too much pride.
My grandfather and father planted wheat
Long before this season
Long before my time

But we run out of time
And today we laid grandpa in the ground,
After too short a season.
I step out of my field of wheat
Not crying, for foolish pride.

Dads eyes burn with that pride
When the banker comes. "We need more time.
We need higher prices for the wheat."
He comes to take our sacred ground.
"I must take the final steps."
He says "you have one more year"

But it didn't rain very much this year
The sun scorched the crop. My Pride,
burned the imprint of my footsteps
Forever in time
In the ground,
Alongside my dying wheat.

Ethan Pennington
Woodlawn High School/Virtual Arkansas

Mortality

Please take a moment and wait for her

I know it's difficult when she's like this. She needs a moment
To collect her thoughts. In time the tears

Will pass, and then she'll pass the night in peaceful sleep.

The concept is a difficult one for her, you

Know; the thoughts of death and eternity and mortality
It plagues her and she's afraid to even

Bring it up to anyone; she hates to dwell on the idea
The idea that her life here is limited and

Will pass her by in no time, that she will some day
Cease to be aware, cease to think. The

Idea of eternity is a difficult one, I'm sure you're
Aware. We aren't certain what will come

When we leave our mortal plane. We don't
Know what we will see. No one has ever

Come back alive. But does that mean
That we should fear it? Some say that

We should celebrate death, that it
Signals an end of suffering. But can we

Say that with certainty? Can we
Take comfort in knowing that the time will

Come when we will all have
To face off against that fiend: Death. It is

A necessary evil, and its
Movements are marked by the passing

Of time. But can we
Take comfort in it? Should we fear it?

Should she pass
Night by night in tears, counting the

Seconds that
Tick by, fearing the day when she can

No longer
Listen to the tick, tock, tick, tock, until

The bell
That will toll for all of us, will toll for
Her?

Carol Pollard, 12th Grade
Osceola High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

LIFE

When Life throws obstacles
you dominate them

when life gets hard
you make it better

If you think life hates you
you are not the only one

People come people go
they pass and leave

even the ones you love

When they're gone you can still
feel their presence.

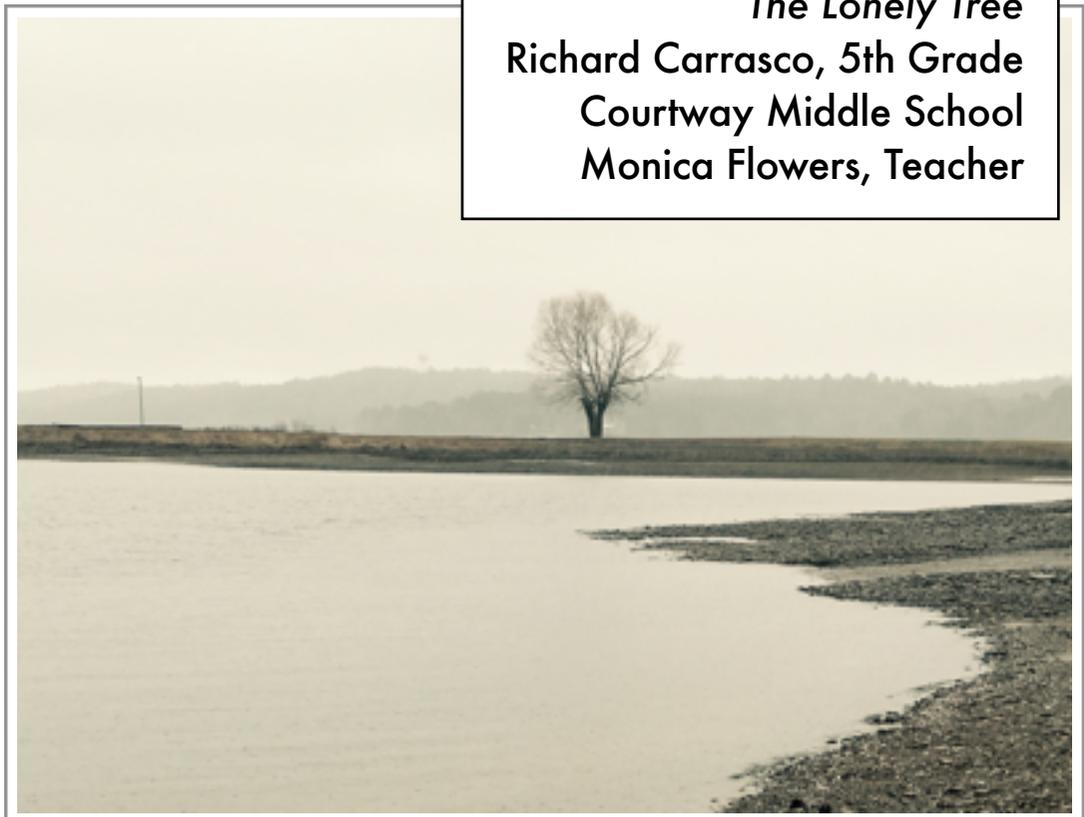
They are the ones who rid your bad
dreams

they are the ones who send a soft
spring breeze

They are the ones that you love.

Jeremiah David Bryant, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

The Lonely Tree
Richard Carrasco, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher



Who Are We

I believe that we
Are what makes up the mass
Of the World
We are everything
That we want to be
Things
That we imagine
Come true
Maybe not at
The snap of your
Fingers
You have to work
Hard
To make it happen
That is life
But that is
Life

**Stone Ross, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Life

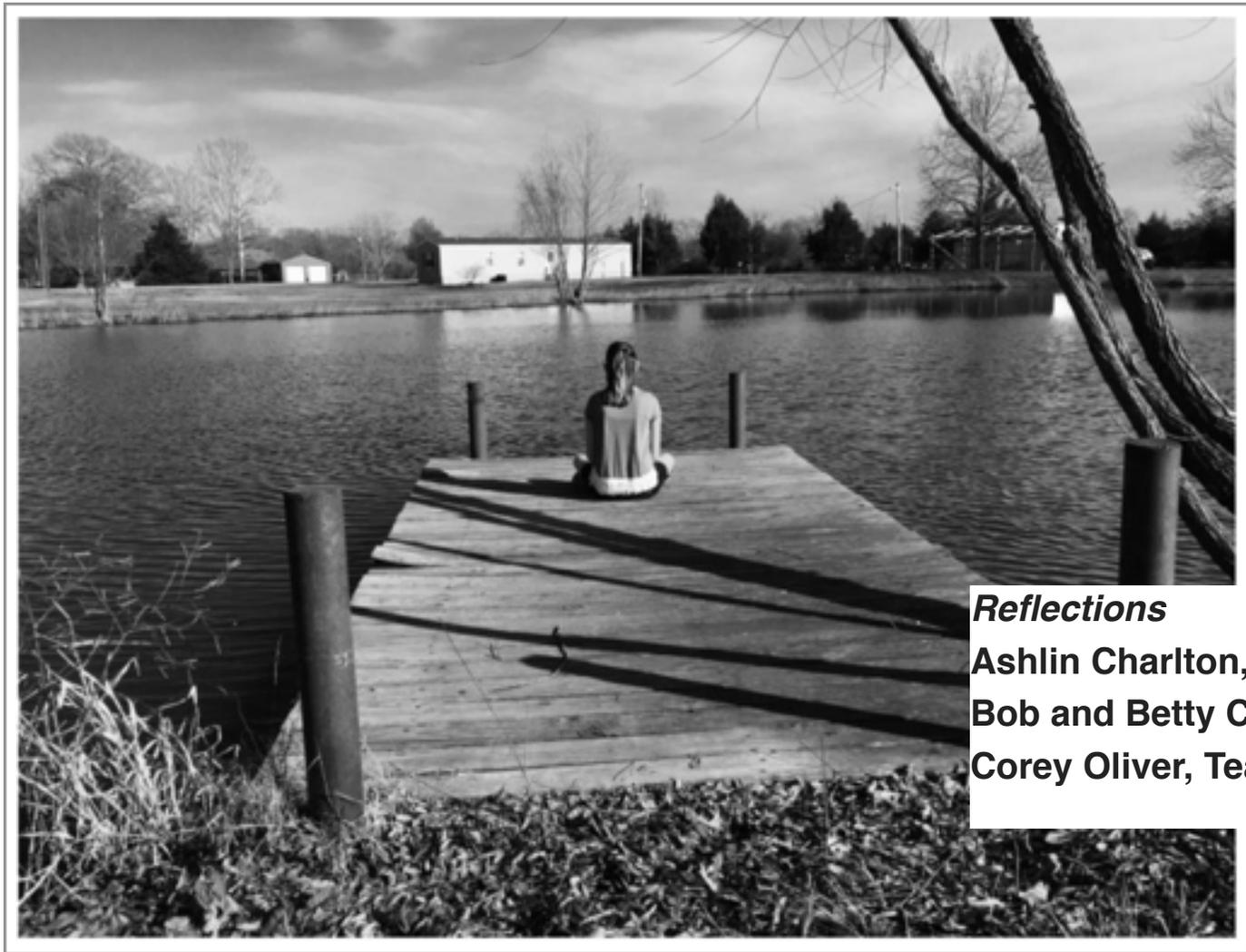
Running around with cousins and friends, on a hot summer day.
Going to baseball practice on Tuesday evening.
Walking in the woods with leaves crunching beneath your feet.
Fishing in a creek with your family.
Playing teacups with your sister because your momma says to.
Doing homework on the kitchen counter.
Swinging the bat early on Saturday.
Going to church on a beautiful Sunday morning.
That is life to me.

**Davis Mulhearn, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Hope

My misfortune, gone
Regaining all that I lost
I believe again

**Phillip Hardwick, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**



Reflections

**Ashlin Charlton, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher**

Life

What is the meaning of life?

That's a question that you might've have been asked. You feel as if you could answer that one as if it was like walking... but suddenly, your mouth closes itself immediately. You can't answer, so you leave. You ponder this question, As you sit silently on your bed

What is the meaning of life?

You ask your friends and family what they think.

They give reasonable answers..

but they don't seem right to you

You go on with your day, playing videos games, eating Lays chips while drinking a delicious dairy drink.

Then you realize, that the meaning life is what you make of it.

Like playing sports,

Or creating programs

These are things that make **you** happy

That, is the meaning of life.

Phillip Hardwick, 6th Grade

Courtway Middle School

Monica Flowers, Teacher

Shadow Bench

Mia Webb, 5th Grade

Courtway Middle School

Monica Flowers



Never Take for Granted Life

Never take for granted, life.
Take advice from others, but do it your way,
Sorrow and heartache cuts like a knife.

Toxic people can cause life strife.
Their actions can make a person sway.
Never take for granted, life.

Someday I hope to make a great wife.
We will build our life, and make our own way.
Sorrow and heartache cuts like a knife.

People don't know you, they start a rife.
Things can be different as night and day.
Sorrow and heartache cuts like a knife.

Life can be loud and high pitched like a fife.
Life can bring struggles and it may.
Sorrow and heartache cuts like a knife.

Keep your head up and be shife.
When life gets hard, you have to pray.
Sorrow and heartache cuts like a knife.

McCallie Hall, 12th Grade
Woodlawn High School/Virtual
Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

Fire

It is light by man'
To love it you can.
Fire is to be kept in our control,
But it can destroy.
It can also be an emotion.
That rage inside when you are mad.
We all need to learn to control it,
That is if it can.
Fire can burn in many places,
Everything is at stake.
Fire can bring joy and light,
But it can also bring pain.

Davin Jones, 6th grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

Firehouse

Gracie Fason, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher



Fire

It can be destructive,
It can hurt,
It's *Fire*

It constantly hungers for fuel,
Powered by wind and dry things,
It's *Fire*

It leaps from house to house
Destructive as can be
It's *Fire*

It only has one weakness,
But if you let it grow,
You may not see,
The light of day,
Ever again,
'Tis *Fire*

The Spark

The start of a *Fire*
You don't realize it...
But within a second,
It's an *Ember*

The Spark...
Friend of The *Ember*
You don't realize how easy it is,
To stop the whole thing from happening,
And yet...
It does...

Elijah Goodrich, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher



Competition

Alekhya Kavi, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Life is a lit match
At first the fire burns bright and hot
Able to burn the world
But eventually, it will go from
A bright torch to a dwindling flame
And from a dwindling flame
To a dull lifeless nothing

Dustin Sipes, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech Junior High
Karen Hodge, Teacher

Life is a coloring book
Starts out empty and
boring
No colors to bring the
picture alive
But after the years
The pictures all tell
stories
A clown sitting with a
sad child
A mother, father, and
child all singing

Dogs and cats sitting
together looking at
birds
Life is a coloring book
Dull and boring at the
start
But at the end is
colorful and happy

Alex Jeter, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech
Junior High
Karen Hodge,

A Purpose?

What does it mean to live?

Can it be decided, determined?

Is it different for each person?

Do some people know

Or does the meaning even exist?

Is it simply the stalling

Of the inevitability of death?

Is it pointless to create memories?

Are we simply forgotten, discarded?

Insignificant, irrelevant

Inconsequential, insubstantial

Is it the setup for a next life?

Heaven or hell, afterlife or reincarnation

As all consequences fall

To the point of your death.

Redemption, reincarnation

Reinvigorate, resuscitation

Is it a time of enjoyment

Rather than a time of purpose?

Having fun, creating an oeuvre,

Making a change, enjoying life.

Enjoyment, entertainment

Endeavors, enthusiasm

Or, perhaps, it is a little of all?

An inevitable death, full of fear

A chance of hope or purpose

A time for memories, creations,

Thoughts, legacies, and fun?

A mix that varies among

Each of us, as different as we are.



Connar Savage, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

Owen Hardin, 11th Grade

Deer High School/Virtual Arkansas

Cynthia Green

A Hero to Remember:

He never saw the possibility
All he saw was an end
He was handed the token of adversity
And with it not a friend
The bonds of family broken
His life was torn apart
His voice was still not spoken
Stuck within his heart

7713 was the title he had bore
His hope still living on
Though the rugged clothes he wore
His voice was still not gone
He got out of his trial
And used his voice for good
He wore a great big big smile
Through his life he understood

He helped us all see peace
And stood for what was right
He never took a cease
And through dark he was a light
He stood for me and everyone
And wore the bands of equality
Though his life is done
He still lives within a memory

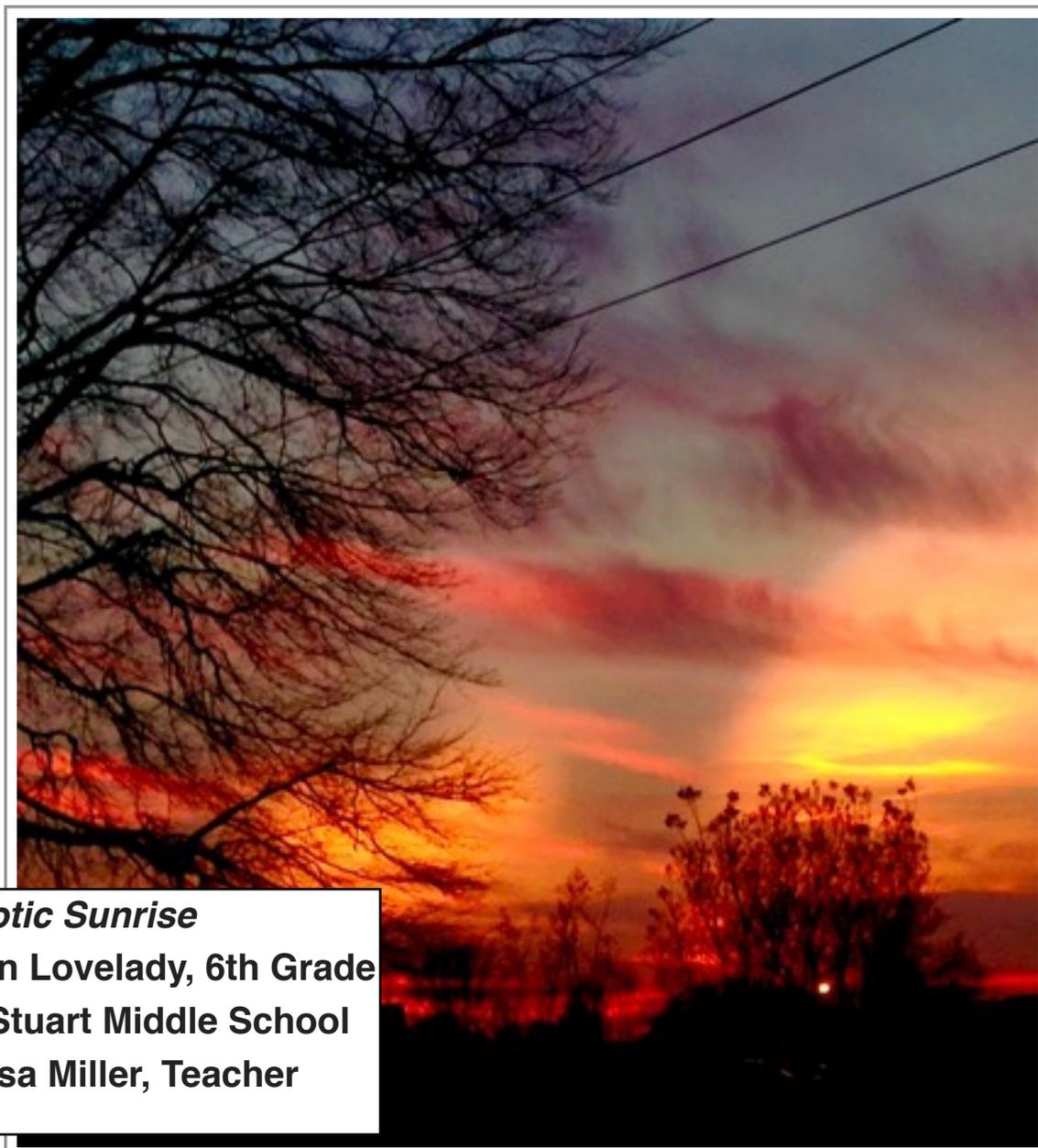
**Ashlin Charlton, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School**

I Will Never Forget You

I will never forget
Your warm smile
And your deep blue eyes
I will never forget
Your amber hair
Brushing against my cheek
I will never forget
Your amazing advice
About my friends
I will never forget
The beautiful clothes

You chose
For me to wear
I will never forget
Your true love
Even when
Times were tough
That is why I will never
forget you
I miss you mom
Come back
I am nothing without you.

**Shreyam Tripathi and Chad Curtis, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers**



***Patriotic Sunrise*
Masyn Lovelady, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher**

Always Remember

When I was a little girl
My daddy always told me
Never lose that beautiful smile and your
gorgeous twirl
One day he took me down to the apple tree
He said "always remember one thing
When i'm gone, I will still love you
I just want you to know that"
I smiled and jumped on the swing that hung
from that apple tree
and he pushed me for hours
Every night, before I went to bed he would
always say to me,
"I will always love you,
Even when I'm gone,

Always remember that"
When I got older and he got sick,
I always crawled in bed with him and said
"I'm here for you no matter what,
I will always love you, even when you're gone,
Remember that"
When my dad passed away
I told the gravestone carver to put
"always remember one thing,
When i'm gone, I will still love you
I just want you to remember that,
Dad and Me, will always be."

Isabella Healey, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

The Sky Mourns

The sky mourns an ended life
With tears we know as rain
But if someone dies everyday then why doesn't it always rain?
The sky has loved
The sky has lost
But never has it known the pain of losing someone special
The sky mourned his death
With a cold shoulder
Stricken with grief at his wake
It blew up a storm
At his funeral it broke, near the point of falling
Though hurt it will not stay torn

He lived

And the sky...

Lived with him

Autumn Miller, 12th Grade
England High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

No Goodbyes

A heartbeat that was once at a normal speed,
Grows slower and weaker with each passing
day.

You were always as stubborn as a weed,
But I don't want you to go so please just stay.

I beg you not to forget me,
Your dementia is taking over you.
Your mind now letting go and emptying out
into the sea,
When your soul flies up to heaven my heart
will turn blue.

The doctors say there isn't much they can do,
Your family refuses to leave your side.
The cancer is now pulling you in and we pray
for a medical breakthrough,
Taking care of you every step of the way to help
your pain subside.

Your eyes no longer open for anyone and your
mind has gone black,
But your heart is slowly going with every breath
you take.
I wish there was something I could do to bring
you back,
Seeing you this way just makes my heart ache.

A couple days have gone by and I haven't
come to see you,
My mom tells me she isn't sure how much time I
have before I have to say goodbye.
The long walk from the entrance of the hospital
to your room seems to have grew,
The door to your room opens and I can see you
have already become an angel in the sky.



Rocks

**Klayton Soffos, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Tears stream from my eyes, from everyone
around me, and it's all the more saddening,
I want to turn back time and go back years from
today.

I want to tell you what your future holds so you
can stop the cancer from happening,
But my mom tells me it doesn't work that way.

**Toni E. Breshears, 11th Grade
Cutter Morning Star HS/Virtual Arkansas
Cynthia Green, Teacher**

With Me

You have gone away now
You have left me for a better place
Though sometimes, if I try hard, I can see
your face
I can see your smile, happy and bright, it
carries on
In my memories and many others we miss
and remember you
I hear you telling me what to do when I go
wrong
I hear your thoughts and words of praise
when I do great

You are with me, but I don't see you
You tell me things, but you're not speaking
My memories show me you
With all the life still in you
With joy and happiness
The great times filled with love
I will miss you, but you are still with me

Sydney Hammond, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

Mourning

Through the darkest days
Lies several broken lies
Mourning is done different ways

Death is made into plays
Most of which are wise
Through the darkest days

Many break down or get away
Some even patronize or publicize
Mourning is done different ways

Our mind betrays
The will of the dead defies
Through the darkest days

Some people even turn to praise
Which is their emotions disguised
Mourning is done different ways

Setting their souls ablaze
Strictly ensures their demise
Through the darkest days
Mourning is done different ways

Kaylin Hopper, 11th Grade
Cutter Morning Star/Virtual Arkansas
Cynthia Green, Teacher

The Reason I Am Me

As life goes on, everyone makes hard choices. From those choices there are consequences, whether good or bad. For me, I made a bad choice that had overpowered my life. During that period of time I did things that I am partially ashamed of. The part of why I am not ashamed about what I had done is that it made me the person I am today. Now I bet you're wondering what I had done that impacted my life greatly. Well, I had self-harmed. Many people can say that they thought about self-harm, attempted, or actually did harm themselves. Not everyone had a bad life that leads them to harm themselves, whether it be physically or mentally. For me, it was different. I know a break up is a lame excuse to hurt myself, but that was mine. I was broken up with from a long relationship by the guy I thought I loved. At that point of time, I was devoted to him. What I thought was normal in relationships was that everyone was possessive and controlling with their significant other. With this being my first real relationship, I believed everything he said, so when we broke up, I was devastated to say the least. All I had on my mind that day was to find a way to end the pain and I had found my solution.

When self-harm is brought up, everyone assumes that they mean cutting. In addition to that, I brought myself down to the lowest of the lows. In my head, I did not deserve anyone's affection, the compliments they gave me, not even when someone would give me something. I was told by the tiny voice in my head that I was unworthy. I was and sometimes, depending on the situation, still am struggling with self worth and self-image. I cannot see what others see in me. No matter what they say to me. They can say something a million times to me but it will never register in my brain. Someone could look at me and say, "You look good today Gabby" and my automatic thought is "What could they possibly want from me? I have nothing to offer them." That is no way anyone should live. Regularly thinking someone has an ulterior motive than them just being nice.

It is hard to act like nothing is wrong with you when all you want to do is break down and cry. The question that I was probably asked a lot is, "It's so hot in here, why are you wearing a long sleeved shirt?" I could not just come right out and say, "Oh that? I have cut marks all over my arm." and smile like it is normal. If anyone were to just come out and say that, there would be a hundred questions asked. I did not want that. I do not think anyone would want that. From that little, but to me seemed so big, break up, those simple two cuts turned to ten and ten turned to twenty. Twenty turned to fifty, fifty turned to two hundred, and it progressed from there. Soon the cutting became an addiction to me. I needed help desperately but I did not notice it until it was almost too late.

Now for the worst, but at the same time, great part of my story. One night, the pain was just too much for me to bear. I did not want to share my pain with others, because I always felt like such a burden on others. I took upon myself to end it all. With a knife in my right hand and tears running down my face, I slowly started to drag the knife vertically down my left forearm along the vein. Then I saw it. There was a small packet on my floor and the cover had a small smiley face on it. I put the knife down and wiped the tears from my eyes, I looked at my arm and made sure I only did the line that would show me where I needed to cut down. I picked up the tiny packet and began to look through it. Something inside told me to read this little packet before I decided to do anything else. Inside that packet were the ABC's on how to get saved. Packet in hand, I cried for hours upon hours for help. Not help that my parents could give me, but help from God. I threw the knife across the room and did not touch it. I got off my bed and kneeled beside it and I prayed. I prayed for hours for God to take control of my life and lead me down the path he intends for me. That night instead of committing suicide like I had originally planned, God used that to get me to dedicate my life to Him.

Not everyone has an awful thing that impacted their life like mine, but I do not regret anything that I did. From making that decision, I gave my life to Christ, I got help, got closer to my family, and I'm running on a little over year being clean of cutting. I use this story, or sometimes I call it my testimony, to help other people that are either going through what I did or that are considering doing what I did. I have stopped five people so far from either cutting or committing suicide. I have become a youth leader in my youth group. I encouraged the people at my church to tell others about my story so maybe we can prevent others from hurting, no matter physically, mentally, or emotionally. This is my story. This is the biggest thing that has impacted my life and it had both good and bad consequences.

Gabby Franqui, 12th Grade

Riverview High School; Jennifer Hicks, Teacher



NATURE

Helicopter Seeds
Cole Robinson, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher



I understand you all alone in the meadow
I understand you all alone in the fields
I understand you all alone in garden
I understand you all alone in the world

Alone—photo and poem
Chloe Caffey 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

Nature is what we see
Blossoming flowers and willow trees
The breeze is powerful but peaceful
Birds are chirping in the air
The night sky is vibrant
Outdoors is blissful

Sun-kissed days with a vibrant glow
Breathtaking mountains that have a slope
The woodland areas with a slight dew
Refreshing smell of honeysuckles
Leafs blowing in the air
Lushess blue clear waters

Nature is art
Its beauty is fascinating
It's landscape is beauty to the eye
Both outer and inner worlds are unique
People are always in awe and wonder of nature
The amazement of nature gives us absolute
pleasure

Nature has glorious animals
Butterflies, lady bugs, and bumble bees
Bunnies, squirrels, and kittens
Frogs, snakes, and alligators
Dolphins, sharks, and sea turtles
The earth was made for all beings in nature

Nature is seasonal
Summer is full of vibrant arching rainbows
Autumn has red falling leaves from the trees
In winter has crystal rays of sun in the snow
Spring is the bleakest season of the soul
Seasons are endless

Nature in the sky is spiritual
A perfect harmony that's above the world

Brooklyn Burress
Pangburn High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cynthia Green, Teacher

The Light of the Flowers

I am a flower.

I may seem small, yet not one of you
will dress as I.

I am the small light in the large wood.

I am an inspiration, to every kind of
good.

I am a small light in the world, but the
star of the meadow.

I am the voice of the jungle.

I breathe vibrant colors.

When we are few, we seem of many.

Because of our color,

We burst out from the others.

I am the light of the wood.

I am the light of the meadow.

I am the light of the jungle.

I am the light of the world...

because I am

a flower.



Exotic Flower

**Alekhya Kavi, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Stephen Chesshir, 5th Grade

Courtway Middle School

Monica Flowers, Teacher



**Kyla Ausler 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher**

Lilac Covered Field

I ran around in the field,
With the smell of lilacs in the air.
I smiled and laughed,
As happy as can be.

The sun was high in the sky,
The very end of the afternoon.
I screamed as I collapsed,
Into the lilac covered field.

I didn't realize I was sweating too
much,
Until I had fallen into the lilac covered
field.

I didn't realize I was panting too much,
Until I had fallen into the lilac covered
field.

I should've had screamed for help,
As I did not realize I was about to die,
Until I had collapsed into the lilac
covered field.

My scream was not heard, however,
As my vision started getting darker
and darker,
The only thing lighting up in the
darkness was the faint light.
I was not to be seen or to be heard,
As my body rested in a bed of
flowers,
In the lilac covered field.

Isabella Galloway, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

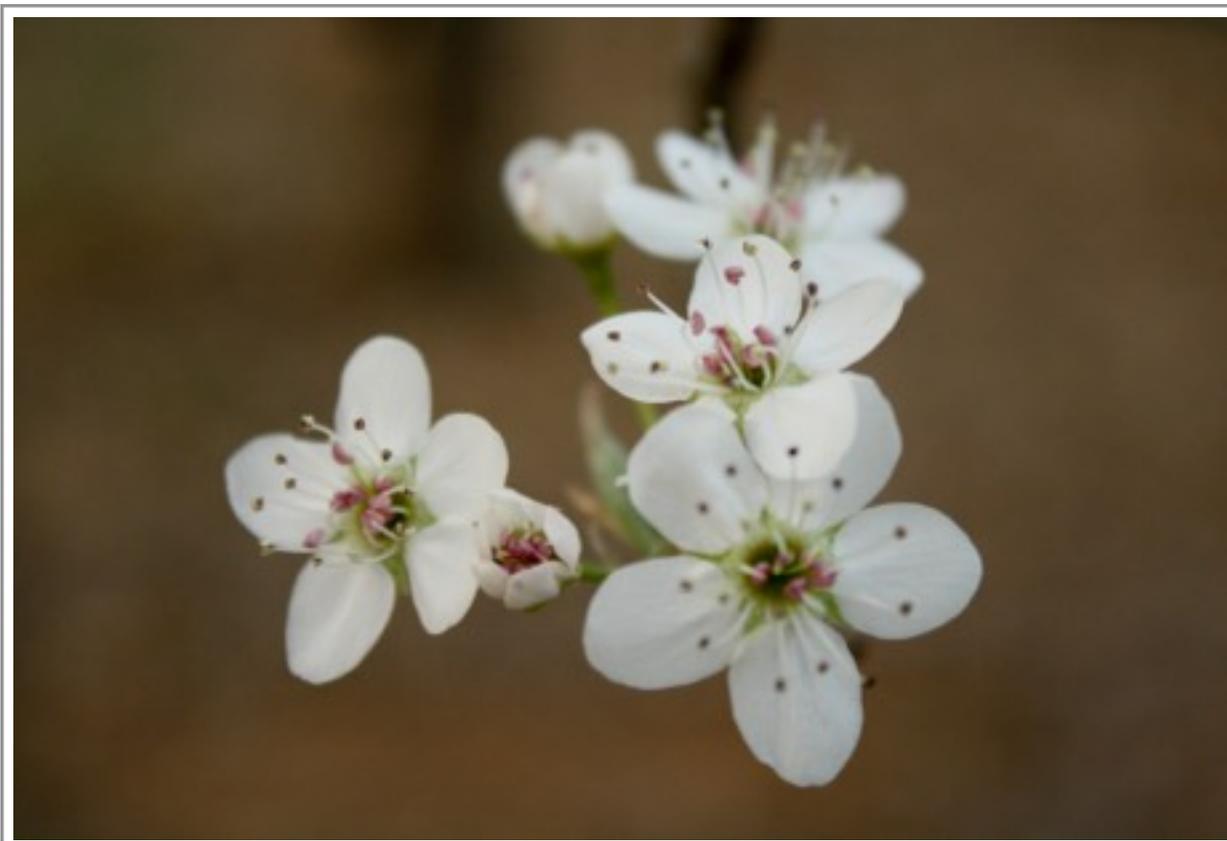
Dandelion

They are bright as a light
Beautiful alright
You blow the top
To Make a beautiful wish
If your wish comes true your dandelion
Was true
Hope tomorrow
You find a dandelion
Cause if you do
There goes another
Wish to come true.

Ruben Ortiz, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Dream

Morgan Robertson, 6th
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher



Tiny Pink Flowers

**Morgan Robertson, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**



Nature

**Emily Blair, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers**



A Beautiful day

It's a beautiful day for the sun to shine,
Beautiful for the birds to fly,
Flowers blooming and growing bright,
How the beauty tears my eyes,
A beautiful day,
A beautiful day,

The wonders of life come out to play,
All over the world,
It's a beautiful day,
We watch all day and we watch all night,
The beautiful creatures that can fly,
You might be asking this one simple
question,
YES, It's a beautiful day outside!

**Tanaya Deshpande, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Amphiba
Elizabeth Dekunffey, Age 12
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher



Floating

I float on my back
And look up at the sky
And then thoughts attack
My heart and my mind.
What would happen,
The little thoughts say
If you sank to the bottom
And stopped breathing today?
But the water will hold me
I know that it will
I'll just keep on floating
I don't want to be killed.
Out in the deep ocean
That flows in my head
I will never stop floating
While worries sink like lead.

Grace Kim, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher



Chercher
Savannah Huddleston, 10th grade
Riverview High School
Barbara Haynie, Teacher



Colors

**Alekhya Kavi, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

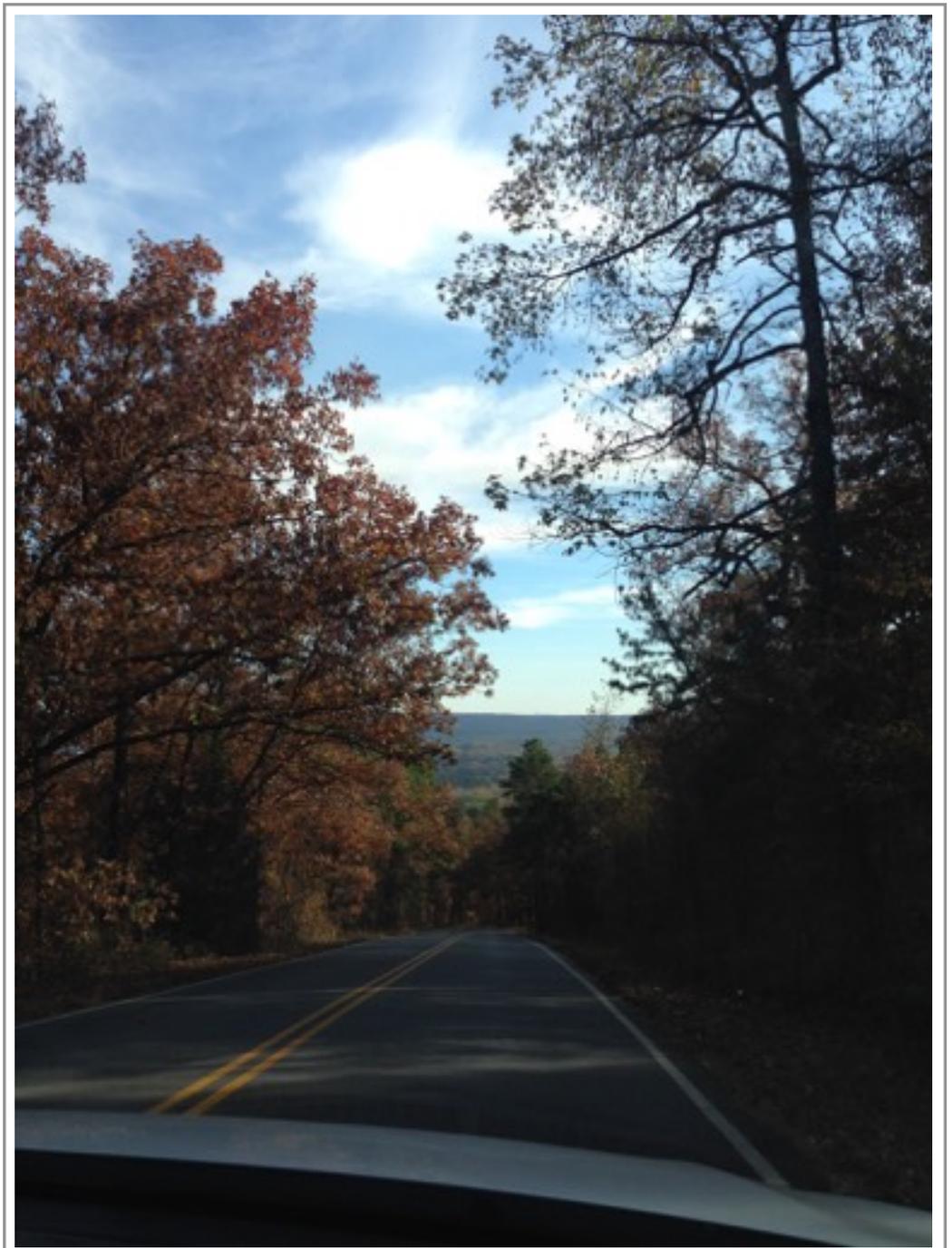
August

August springs into life
Brightly and loudly
He trudges through the heat
Sneaking in the new school year
Slowly cooling down for the fall
It gives rest to the heat
And continues the road to beautiful
colors

**Emma Graham, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech Junior High
Karen Hodge, Teacher**

Road Trip

**Anna Wish, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**



The Rainstorm

The rain drops falling from the sky
The sound of wind rushing by
The lightning strikes extremely close
The loud thunder quickly grows
The shining sun is on its way
But the storm is here to stay.

Morgan Robertson, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

The Weather Outside

The wind blows and whistles through the trees
The rain hits the metal tin roof of the house
The snow lays a white blanket on the ground
The clouds let our brains run wild with imagination
The crazy storms give us a feeling of fear
That's just the weather outside

Madison Long, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Wild

Jameson Tankersley, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher





Sunrise over the Lake
Abigail Beauchamp, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

Fire in the Sky

Starts with a glow
Grows to a blaze
Orange splashed across the sky
A fade of blue turns to purple
The colors swirl together
Producing an immeasurable pattern
Of light & beauty & hope
You can almost touch it
Your entire body can feel its warmth
And sense its dramatic display
The remaining gleams of sun
Peek through the clouds one last time
Creating a canvas in the air
No photo can do it justice
No artist can recreate it
To see it is to know it
To know it is to become a victim
To its enchanting glory
Capturing you in its flames
Giving you light & beauty & hope
A feeling of inner contentment
Comes from that fire in the sky.

Hannah Margis, 11th Grade
Junction City High School
Christine McInerney, Teacher

Sun Rising Spider Web
Stewart Pearson, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher



Shark Bait

I am shark bait, but I don't care.
I smell of sunscreen and salt.
My hair could never be more tangled.
I can taste the salt water in my mouth, but I
can also feel the presence of a fish.
Maybe not the small ones you see at
aquariums, but the much larger ones that can't
be held in aquariums.
It could be my imagination, or it could be real.
I am shark bait, but I don't care.
I am here.

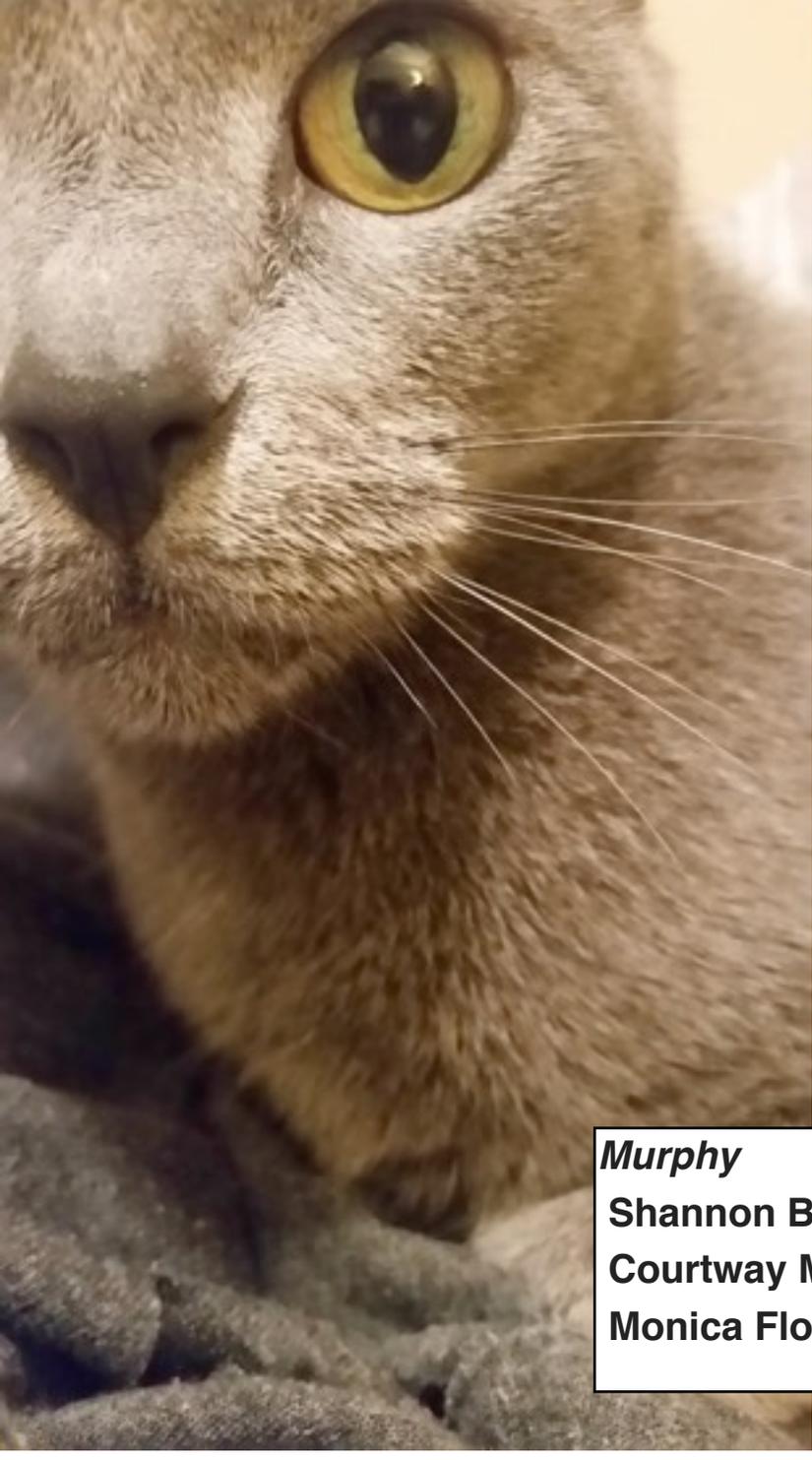
With the brightly colored beach houses.
Where it always is warm.
Where flip-flops and bathing suit are your
clothes.
Where sometimes jellyfish get you before the
sharks.
It is my happy place where the sand is
between your toes.
Maybe it is the beach or the seafood.
I guess I am shark bait, but I don't care.

Jameson Tankersley, 7th grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

Aloha

Sarah-Elizabeth Anderson, 7th grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver , Teacher





The Cheetah

You travel swiftly through the night,
And no other animal will put up a fight,
You will pounce whenever you feel,
And with that you have a meal,
You can run very fast,
And every animal you've raced has placed last,
You prowl low in the field,
And when the grass sways you are revealed,
And your prey will run away,
And you will hunt another day

**Noah Dykes, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher**

**Murphy
Shannon Burt, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers**

Butterflies

Butterflies

They have the wings like angels,
sometimes they make you feel nervous or sad.

Butterflies

Are ethereal and beautiful,
They are lagniappe.

Butterflies

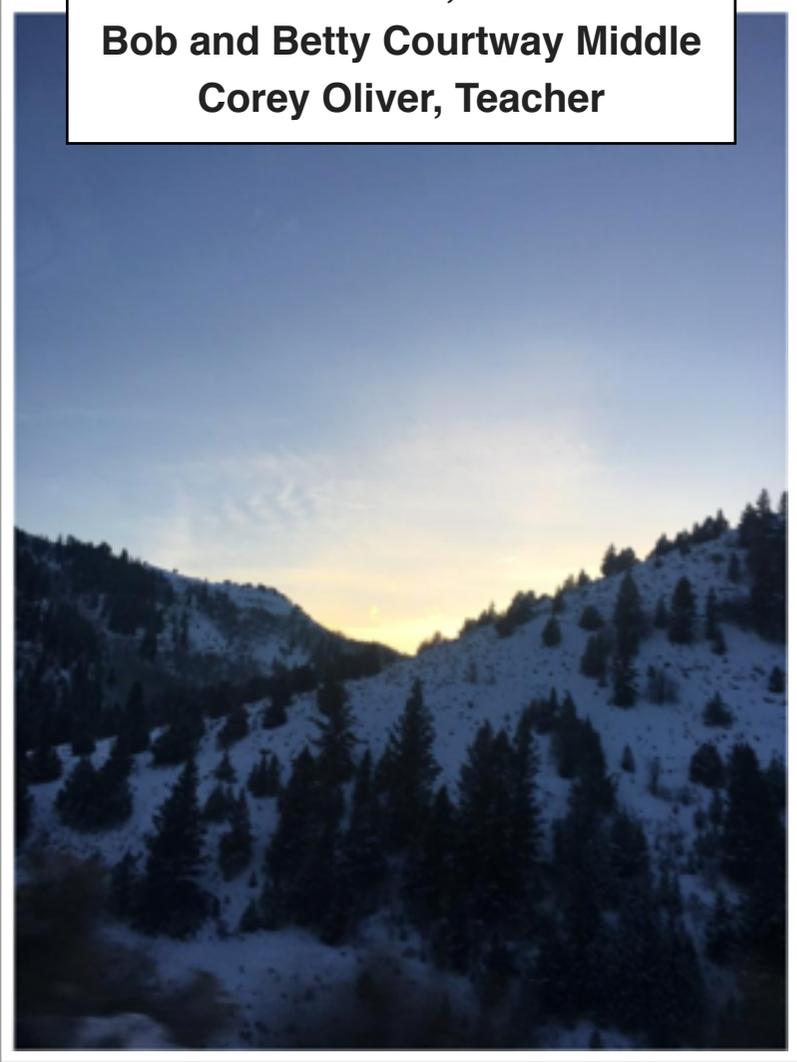
Are like a dream,
Mysterious and beautiful.
Butterflies are a dream.

**Mia Webb, 5th Grade:
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

**Sidney Weiser, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher**



Through the Mountains
Ashlin Charlton, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle
Corey Oliver, Teacher



Everest

Icy winds from the North slice
Through me,
As my heat leaves to the South.
Layers of coats can't keep out
the cold dripping down my spine.
My fingers slash colors;
red, to blue to purple.
Ice sparkles at my feet, but causes pain.
So much pain.
But pain is a price I'll pay
To be on top of the world

Camille Lambert, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

Winter

Icy snowflakes falling from the
sky
Feeling cold tonight
Leaves and grass are dying
The ground is colored white

Animals in hibernation
Flowers waiting for the sun
People going on vacation
Now that fall is done

Hot chocolate by the fireplace
Is our tradition now
Reading everything on the
bookcase
We need a better snowplow

January

January stalks silent,
Watching with icy blue eyes
Glowing at its prey
Ripping branches from trees
Burying the ground under
heavy layers of snow
Choking grass and flowers
Tearing at clothing with
freezing teeth
Its fatal, frostbitten kiss of
death
Pressing against defenseless
victims,
Burdening people with
unbearable sadness,
Throwing hail at innocent
people

Christmas is almost here
Presents will be hidden
beneath the Christmas tree
When we get up the cookies
will have disappeared
Santa has a master key
That is hidden in his beard

Morgan Robertson, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Noses turning red; lips
growing blue
Gnawing at coats and scarves,
Its icy chill penetrating skin
and
Seeping into bones, hardening
hearts,
Freezing souls, eventually
leaving a path of
Destruction, cold, icy
destruction,
And leaving bright, youthful
flowers
To choke on its fury

Brynna Moslander, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech
Junior High
Karen Hodge, Teacher



Web

Arhely Ortiz 7th Grade
Corey Oliver School_ Bob
and Betty Courtway Middle

DESPAIR AND DARKNESS

A New Howl

The Dark Ages 1230 Brasov, Romania.
The Lichen werewolves roamed the lands feasting on lamb, cow, and humans. Howls pierced the night like nails on a chalk board. One night the villagers picked up their torches, pitchforks, and clubs and marched into the forest. Anger clouds judgment like humans werewolves have young Katara the Alpha female was giving birth to a young pup named Taka. The first and last words Taka heard from his mother were "I'm always with you" then she gave Taka to Baltow an Omega who refused to help the clan. Baltow ran off with the young pup in his arms Taka had to watch his den burn while his mother and father died. Taka's first words were "power" as Baltow leaped into the darkness along with the new Alpha male with him.



The Sleeping Trees
Arhely Ortiz, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

Ray Tolliver, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

The Trees

The trees sway in the wind as you and I sway through life
Slowly and Peacefully.
The trees grow just as you and I do
Quickly and Gracefully.
The trees sprout leaves similar to humans
In a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes.
The trees, like you,
Are beautiful!

Ellie Rackley, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher



Ellie Rackley, 6th grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, teacher

Humans

Ground, lying under pavement,
Forgotten,
Replaced.

Trees, strewn across land,
Felled,
Destroyed.

A lion, trapped in a cage,
Cared for,
But enslaved.

Waters, tainted by waste,
Polluted,
Dying.

Bryan Crockett, 6th Grade

Carl Stuart Middle School

Melissa Miller, Teacher

Northern Lights

Kyla Hallman, 7th Grade

Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School

Corey Oliver, Teacher

Fluorescence of Night

When the sun touches the horizon,
And the light fades away,
The wolves howls echo,
Bats come out to play,
There is a certain feeling,
Out in the air,
A feeling so cryptic,
So obscure,
To explain I don't dare,
But now it is time,
To do something I can't,
For, all of these years,
I've said no, never, I shan't,
The feeling can be eerie, ominous, or dark,
Sometimes warm, comforting,
As peaceful as a quiet park,
But when the sun comes up it all goes away,
Then again there is a good feeling,
That comes from starting a new day.

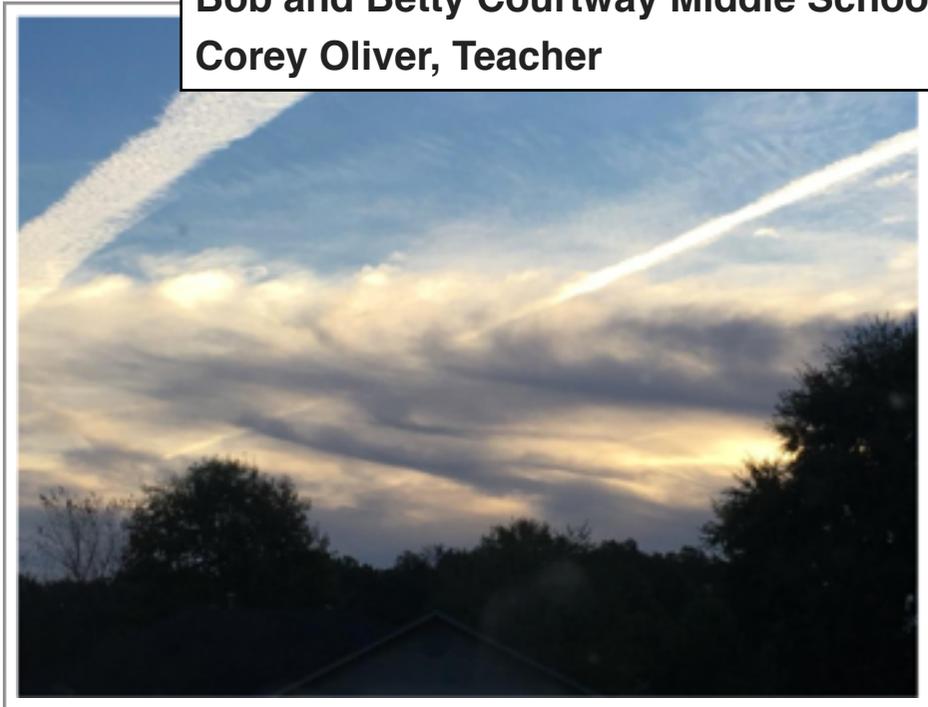
Nandini Vinta, 7th Grade

Bob Courtway Middle School

Corey Oliver, Teacher

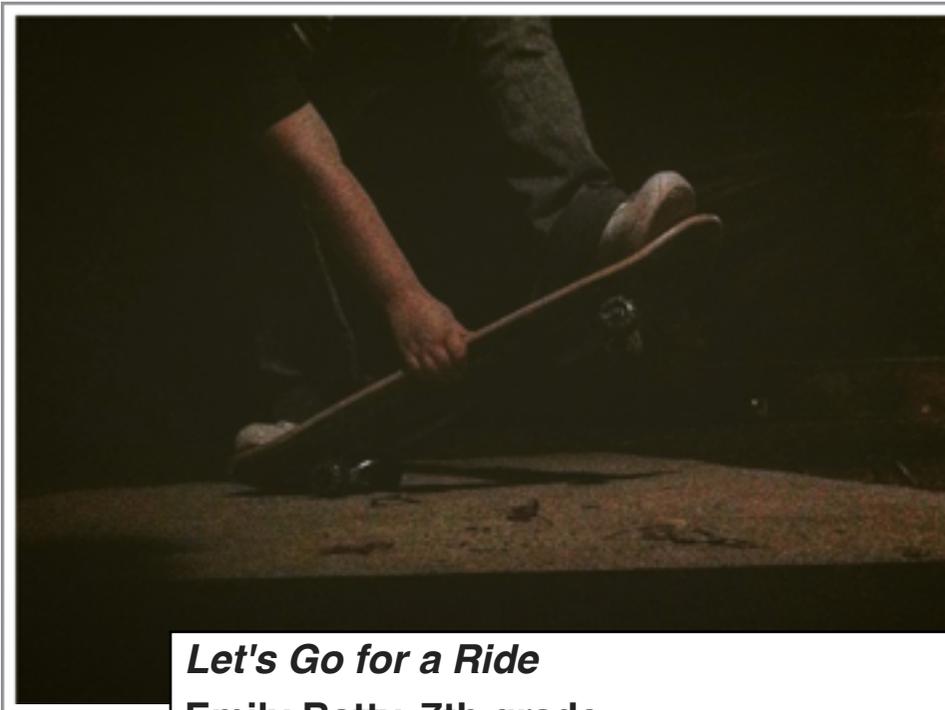


Beyond the Dead of Night
Annalia Walker, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher



The Night is Mine

I prefer my coffee black
I am waiting impatiently for the ready light
The aroma fills the entire house
The coffee warms me like music; like love
Spirals of steam rise from my cup like ghosts
It is time to paint a picture
Art is the difference in my home and a house
I admire the way the paint shimmers in the light
All the colors blend into a beautiful black
As I paint, I listen to voices I love
My inspirations are my ghosts
I put my paints away, happy with my picture
It's as if I'm a queen at a tea party for ghosts
I'm wearing a gown; intricate lace, black
I float in it as if I'm a picture
It came from a shop in the village I love
It is so comfortable and light
I wear it around the house
I am alone in this house
But I am not lonely, I have my ghosts
Her paws are soft, fuzzy, and black
Suzan is a sharp, yet delicate, love
Her eyes shine like gold coins in the light



Let's Go for a Ride
Emily Batty, 7th grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver , Teacher

My beautiful black Suzan is a picture
On the screen are images of a cursed house
I enjoy this divinely haunting picture
I have spent these hours with Vampires and
Ghosts
The credits leave me with lingering thoughts of
murder, elegance, and love
The last episode fades to black
I turn on the lights
Inside myself, I am solid; my strength is love
Eerie sounds complete this midnight picture
The wind moans like the sleepy ghosts
Stars shine against the night, so black
Waiting to fade into the morning light
Fog seeps in and covers the house
I turn off the light, now life is a dark picture
The house asleep, I will dream of love
The silence is a ghost, beautifully black

Brenna Q. Smith, 12th Grade
Fordyce High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher

No More Room for My Heart to Fight

Run on and find your freedom, leave my sight
You have ripped from me my spring and my breath
There is no more room for my heart to fight.

It is your steel heart which holds so much might
To harm me and break me past which tears lie
Run on and find your freedom, leave my sight

In the earliest days you were my knight
More peace present than the heart could bear, but
There is no more room for my heart to fight.

Peace fell that day when your knuckles went white,
Then red, and you declared it was the end
Run on and find your freedom, leave my sight

It is that steel heart, I pray He will smite
Please, Lord, battle for me, for I am too weak,
There is no more room for my heart to fight.

The Soldier stands for me, making things right,
For ever, those red knuckles are seen, but
Run on and find your freedom, leave my sight,
There is no more room for my heart to fight.

**Meghan Cooley, 12th Grade
England High School**

Kingdom of Darkness

On my last breath
I wish I could go back
And relive all the good things
And bad things
In life
Trying to grasp to all the seconds of my short
life
But death keeps snatching it away
Closer and closer I go
Away from life
Towards death
Eyes blurry
Saying goodbye to my family
My friends
My time
My life

Death has come
And cannot escape
It's a prison of darkness
Where no soul escapes
Slowly I close my eyes
And hope for the best
My heart stops
My blood turns to ice
As death holds my hand
And takes me away
To his kingdom of darkness.

**Isani Patel, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Who's There?

There's someone inside my abode.
Shhh - don't make a sound;
My heart cannot be slowed!

My body's in overload
Because I never want to be found.
There's someone inside my abode.

Tears, from my face flowed,
Remaining unbound!
My heart cannot be slowed!

Then, his breath on me was bestowed.
I have to submit to be pushed around.
There's someone inside my abode.

What will happen? I want to decode!
Head, arms, legs: all places for him to hound.
My heart cannot be slowed!

Deceased is now my only mode.
My fate lies underground.
There's someone inside my abode.
My heart cannot be slowed!

McKenzie Smith, 12th Grade
Fordyce High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green, Teacher



Icy Lamp

Elizabeth Dekunffey
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

It

It destroyed nations
It said with glee
"Tis world no more"

It was hated
It was hunted
It was destroyed
Or was *It*?

It is mad
It is sad
It meant no harm
It destroyed the world...

Elijah Goodrich, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Brokenness

Bones breaking
Blood bleeding
Tears Shedding
Death Deadening

Nothing I do can stop
The fight without a shot
It coming so fast
I have no time to prepare

I am trapped and can't do anything
Suicide is not an option
And fighting is a waste
I am cornered

Torture would come
Until I'm done
I ran my whole life
And I am now at the end

Aaron Smith and Connor Villamor, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

War

Shot from far
Here's the scar
I'd do it again
If I could win.

You made me cry
I'll make you die
Come again
And I will win

It was a suprise
To far for my eyes
I did not know
When you would blow

I'll always forgive
But never forget
The time you shot
That little bit

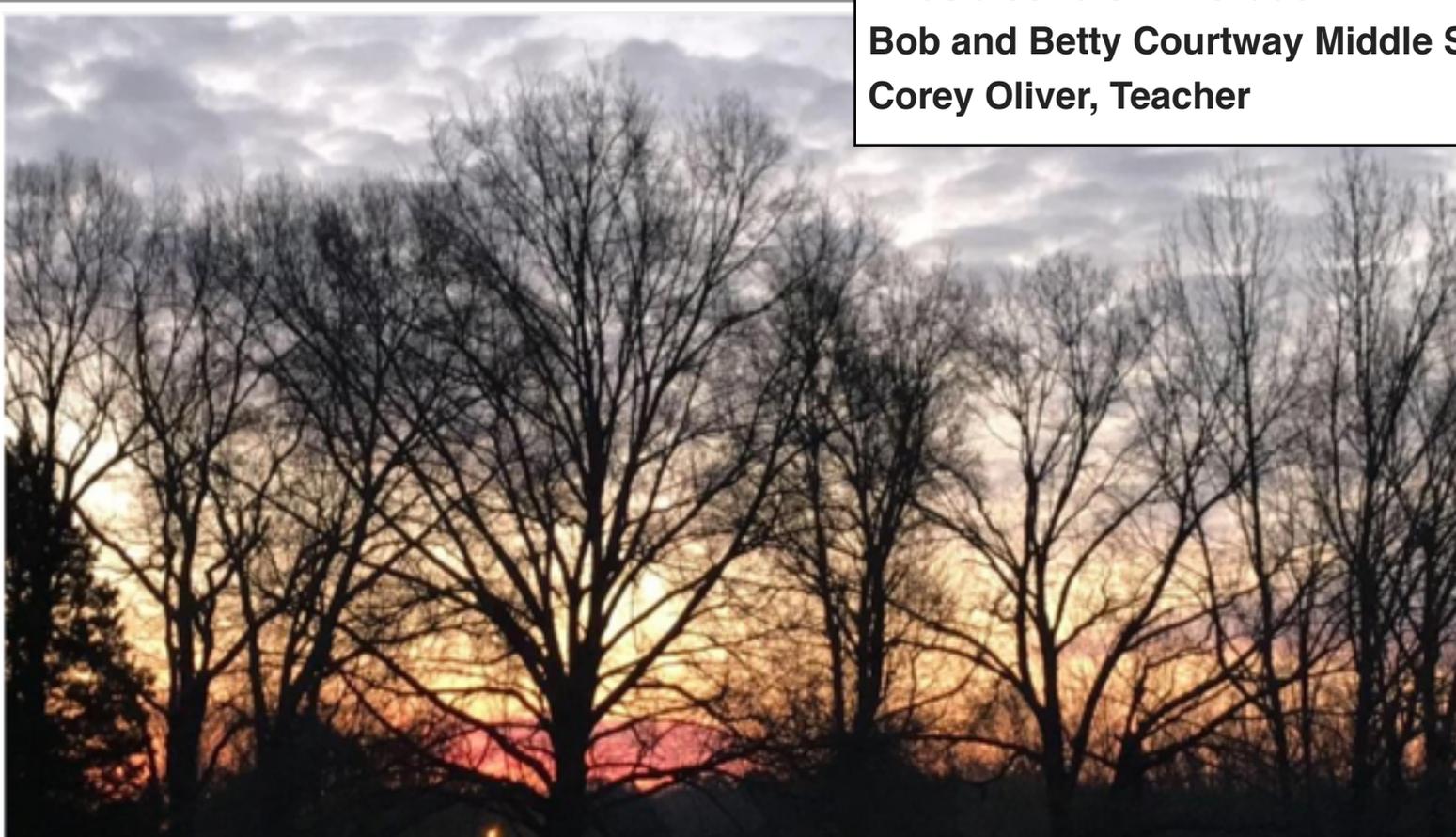
I'll get you back
Wearing black
We will fight
In the night

Aaron Smith, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Rise from Darkness

Briasia Jeffers 7th Grade

Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher



All in a Night's Work

The author lifts his pen,
As he slowly turns the page.
He looks to his clock to check the time.
Already midnight! He continues his work.
Rain, thunder, an abundance of noise,
Just the perfect way to end the night.

The author remains focused on his work,
And intends to be for the remainder of the night.
Forever gliding along the paper, he maneuvers
his pen,
As he continues to write, page after page.
But an unfriendly beast is time,
As the clock strikes one with a burst of noise.

The author is no longer aware of the external
noise,
As he becomes engrossed in his long night's
work.
The timepiece chimes out two o'clock, but still
he moves his pen,
As he no longer is concerned by the restraints
of time.
For out of several, this is only one night,
But still he remains intrigued as his ink fills the
page.

The author nearly jumps as the music of three
o'clock plays to inform him of the time.
The rain has stopped, but he cares no longer
about the noise,
Save for the scratch of the nib as it moves along
the page.
He considers himself a sculptor of words, his
tool a pen,
And although he begins to tire, he strives to
make it through the night,

Because lesser is the call of sleep than that of
his work.

The author licks his finger to flip to the next
page,
As he feels empowered, and free from the
clutches of time.
The clock chimes four and he curses the night,
But simply looks forward to completing his
work.
His eyes begin to close and from his fingers
falls his pen,
But his eyes open once more as he is awoken
by the noise.

The author pushes through his fatigue to
complete his work,
As he continues to move his hand across the
page;
As the clock strikes five and he once more
begins to feel the pressure of time;
As his writing becomes rough and his shaking
hand sends tremors through the pen;
As he begins to sense his own pulse, a chilling,
yet satisfying noise;
As he finally succumbs to the temptation of
sleep and unwillingly calls it a night.

The author is an artist, one with a page and a
pen.
One who will work tirelessly throughout the
night,
And one whose unfaltering determination is
neither harmed by noise nor by time.

Aaron Miller Seward, 12th Grade
West Side High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cynthia Green, Teacher



Lake Sunset

**Mary Caroline Grimes, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher**

Sometimes I'm grey like the clouds
Up where no one can reach me
And I try to keep the angry,
Storm-like emotions inside
Until I can no longer and
They all spill out like rain.
Most of the time I'm a vibrant blue
Like the ocean, ready to wave a
Friendly hand at a new face,
Two different sides, but both
Very much a part of me.

**Kendall Taylor, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech Junior High
Karen Hodge, Teacher**

Atlantis

Black.
All I can see is Black.
I turn on my light, and the beam
slices through the murky water like a knife.
Pressure.
The water is crushing me and I fear I may implode.
Cold
I can see icicles forming inside my mask.
Terror.
I am frozen in awe.
All the pain melts away
as wonder shudders through me.
I would go through this all over again if it meant
seeing the lost city of Atlantis.

Camille Lambert

Sixth Grade

Carl Stuart Middle School

Mrs. Melissa Miller

Dark Dream

I enter a world full of darkness
In which I am alone
I trudge through to find an exit
But suddenly I am surrounded
I scream for help
No one answers
I am swallowed up in my own fear
I feel my body melt
Slowly, slowly I fade away
My eyes jolted open my face dripping with sweat
Suddenly I realized I had a dream
A dark dream

Alekhya Kavi and Isani Patel, 6th Grade

Courtway Middle School

Monica Flowers, Teacher

The madness that lurks within our deepest animal minds

The pretty eyes who tortured her echoes the dismal chords

But anything but silence, anything but silence

Suddenly hypnotized by the bitter winds that make us shiver

Pain trickles into her veins

She's sedated into silence and paralysis

Lightening's of misery choke her body

Submerged, she floats into the deep

Aimlessly, still as death

Suspended in time and fear

Always locked between freedom and insanity

The moment of frozen time aches

Gray, misty fog makes her feel

Dim, dizzy, dull

Numb and heavy

The agony renders her almost lifeless

Snippets of laughter torture her expression

Real, intense, quiet fear of seemingly nothing

The pain makes her too heavy to remain in the air

Maybe I'll pretend it's the end instead

And as she crashes, she utters one last

lamentation

"So... nearly... free..."

Amelia Long, 12th grade

Jasper High School

Molly May, Teacher

His Smile

You woke up to his eyes, you woke up to his smile. You woke to his teeth, then you held him for a while. He showered you with love, something that you had been deprived. He

showed you that he would be here with you, for the rest of your everlasting life. You were never abandoned, even when the walls were filled with tension. So much anger and

frustration, and still it's hard to mention. He was there for you to hold, to cherish, and to care. You never expected it when you came home and he wasn't there. No sweet smile, no

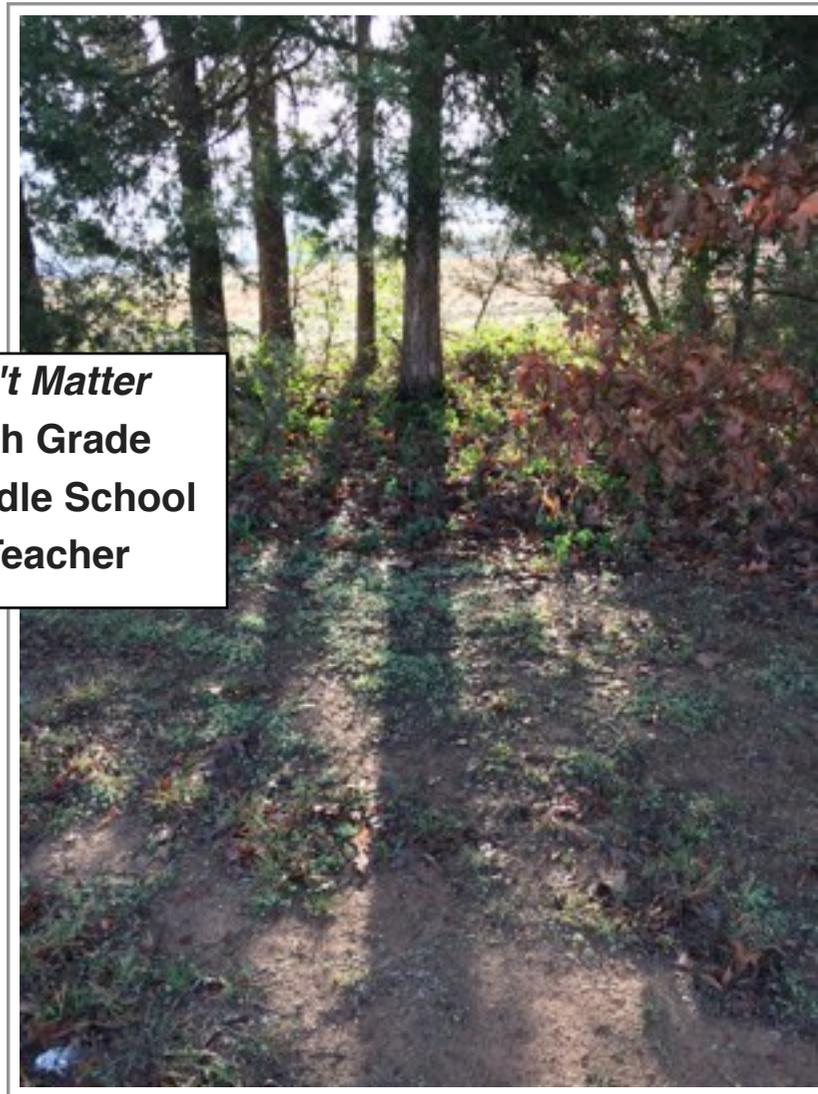
love or care. You fill exposed, deprived, and abandoned, why can't he be here? Never had you thought of him leaving you alone. Everyone else has already left you as a servant to the frightful throne. You are left stranded, in the walls of tension, never to be relieved. You never will be rested from the slumber of sadness, and will never see those eyes of your friend. And if he returns you will be forever gone, never to smile again.

Karis Scott, 7th Grade

Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School

Corey Oliver, Teacher

No Sun, Doesn't Matter
Adam Lewis, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miler, Teacher



The Legend of Camp Lake View

“It only took three seconds for them to disappear into the horrifying night.,” the campers at Camp Lake View surrounded the fire that filled the sky with red and orange flames.

“Then what happened? Come on Alison. Tell us. What happened to Martha?,” Kacy asked pulling my arm while wrapped in a blanket like a little Christmas present.

I was telling an old myth about a man who use to own this camp. He was a 34-year-old man that went by the name Jack Volt. He took a young child named Martha and they both disappeared, but a few years later they found Jack. They took him away then a few years ago, he died.

“No one knows, but Jack died in prison and some say he came back to this here camp coming for the offspring of Martha Jane.”

“Finish the story, Alison,” Kacy said gripping my shirt as I got up from the rugged ground, “Tell us more, please.”

Should I continue the story and stay up all night answering questions about this spirit kidnapper or get a snack and be well rested for archery tomorrow? “I’ll pass.,” I said smiling. I grabbed my drawstring bag and took out my wallet. I waved the other campers goodnight and headed to the vending machines that were in the lunchroom. The vending machine was under a flickering light. At that very moment, the feeling of nervousness shot up from my back and made all the hairs on my neck stand up, but I was hungry so I went to the machine anyways. As I pulled my dollar from my busted wallet, I heard something bang on the window next to the trash bins. I tried ignoring but the noise only got louder as if it wanted attention. Bang. Bang! BANG! I dropped my wallet and money on the floor and covered my ears. I didn’t know what was going on and my knees gave up and I fell on the floor. Then the banging stopped.

I got up off the dusty floor and then a hand touched my shoulder. I jumped and turned around but nothing was there. Fear flew over me like the birds that fly in the sky. I couldn’t stand it anymore. I grabbed my things and raced to the door. I tried pulling on the door handle but the dumb thing wouldn’t budge. I wondered if I just forgot that it’s a push door so I pushed the door but nothing happened. Suddenly the flickering light above the vending machine turned off.

“It’s normal. The light was going to burn out anyway. I’m sure someone will notice that I’m gone and they’ll be looking for me.,” I tried convincing myself that I will get out of the cafeteria soon even though I was shaking out of my mind. My voice and all couldn’t stop trembling. Out of nowhere I saw something in the corner by the lost and found at the far end of the room. Could it be just another coat? Or a skeleton from the science experiment we did earlier? Or was it... Again I dropped my things on the floor. I put my hands on my mouth before I could scream.

“It couldn’t be,” I thought to myself, “I thought it was a myth. He can’t be here. It’s all in my head.”

I wiped my eyes and then looked around. It was gone. Where did it go to? At this point, I really didn’t care about my imagination. I wanted to wake up and say “it was just a nightmare”, but I know deep down I was not sleeping. I tugged and pushed on the door some more, but I failed to even make it move just a little. I felt a cold wind rush against me. I turned around and then everything went dark. All I could hear was, “Hahaha! I’ve got you now little Martha. I win again.”

Janiya O’Neal, 7th Grade

Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School

Corey Oliver, Teacher



Xavia Greenwood, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

As If They Never Learn

There they hang,
Fresh and new
Vague to the world below
Their whistle by the wind
Longing for attention
From the ground they want to know
They are stronger now
But still trying
Giving way to the gates of failure
Eventually the leaves fall,
Caught up by emotion
Only to find that
they are not loved
Their dreams disintegrate
as do they
And their corpses are stepped on
Without bothering to grieve
But still they are given another chance
Another guess in romance
But take the same path
Following in yearn
As if they never learn.

Laney Sellers, 7th Grade

Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

When The Night is Awake

As we are sleeping, the night is awake,
the stars and moon playing in the sky,
and the crickets humming their tunes aloud,
for everyone to hear

Although many people aren't awake to see, the
stars shine so brightly,
and the moon dazzles as bright as the sun.

Sometimes you just need to open your eyes and
see.

Morgan Robertson, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

The Moon

I see it shining
In the night sky
It lights the world around me
I stare at it wondering why

Why it does what it does
And why it just sits there
It changes shapes
And puts on a window; a glare

We sleep with our blankets
And stare up to the stars
The sky is purple
I think I see Mars

It soon gets dark
The circle comes out
It tells me to sleep
It gives me a doubt

This circle is amazing
How it comes up at noon
I think people see it
Or call it, the moon

Alekhya Kavi, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

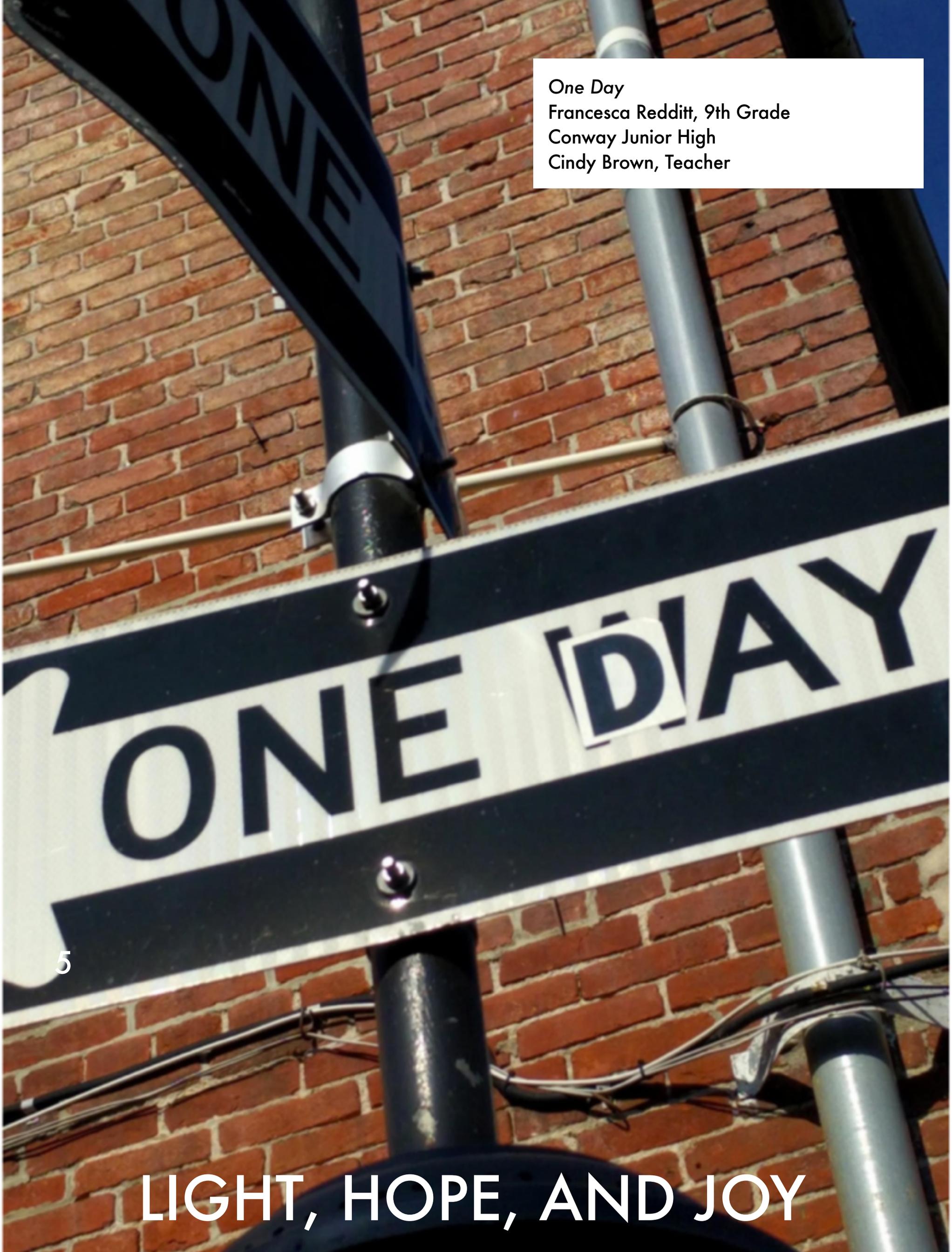
The Moon

At night you shine upon us
Big mystery in the sky
I go to bed but outside you fled
All I can ask is why

You are an inspiration
Looking of so much power
You may not realize the statement you make
To shine on everyone during their darkest
hour

I wish you were out in the day
I notice your beauty and you're gone so soon
It may not be your typical answer
But when I grow up I want to be just like the
moon

Audrey Kendrick, 6th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher



One Day
Francesca Redditt, 9th Grade
Conway Junior High
Cindy Brown, Teacher

5

LIGHT, HOPE, AND JOY

If These Walls Could Talk

Sitting quietly in our broken home, the air still, no words at all.

My, oh my, if these walls could talk. My, oh my. With hail damaged hearts and slamming doors, too late come our affections.

Accustomed to words like knives, how strange kindness can sound.

Broken spirits are common in this family, floating through our home ever so ghost-like.

Learning to forgive is hard in this drought of apologies.

My mind is like a prison, trapped with no company but my thoughts, that's all.

My, oh my, if these walls could talk. My, oh my. If the tornadoes in my stomach ever subside, could I freely express my hatreds, my affections? Silenced by a whirlwind of emotions, I can not make a sound.

Will I ever be heard, will they believe? I fear what their reactions may be like.

Tainting his image with truth, who will be expected to administer apologies?

Many tears shed, still flashing a smile for all.

My, oh my, if these walls could talk. My, oh my. With death comes flowers, casseroles, fleeting sentiments and affections.

The comforting words crash like waves, dissolving into a meaningless sound.

The loss of a parent is an experience with no similes; no "as" or "like"

There is no possible replacement, and for my lack of acceptance, you'll receive no apologies.

His expressions of care and love proved not to be love at all.

My, oh my, if these walls could talk. My, oh my. Love and trust seem nearly impossible, never truly believing these affections.

Some may say the heart breaks silently, but still lingering is that thunderous sound.

I pray that those I love never know what this feels like.

Forever accused of being distant, lost in a forest of my thoughts, I offer my apologies.

What made you think you could come in and ruin me? Or did you think anything at all?

My, oh my, if these walls could talk. My, oh my. Filled with fear, hurt, and loneliness, I became void of audible affections.

The walls of my mind quaked and collapsed, the walls of this home are no longer sound.

This is not how love works or how life works; this is not what growing up should be like.

If the storms of my mind rattle the windows of your happy home, I'm sorry, my apologies.

My mother is often a weakness of mine, and sometimes my only strength at all.

My, oh my, if these walls could talk. My, oh my. Blind to the damage we both sustain, often lost in translation are our affections.

Strict curfews really mean "I love you", regardless of their sound.

Her love is worry and mine is the word "sorry", our love is so much a-like.

After funnel cloud fights, we are both still learning the importance of well-timed apologies.

With affections and apologies like our tools, our only tools at all

We'll rebuild this home, with a foundation so very sound.

My, oh my, this house may once again be a home. My, oh my.

Brittney Crutchfield, 12th Grade
Fordyce High School/Virtual Arkansas
Cindy Green

Joy

Joy is everlasting
It keeps the earth at peace
Joy is why we dream
Joy shows me good in everything.

Joy is humble
It is lovely, it has no wrath
But sadly, it leaves to fast
In a flash...it's gone.

Joy can be solemn
Joy can be silent
Joy can be a whisper
It can soar through skies.

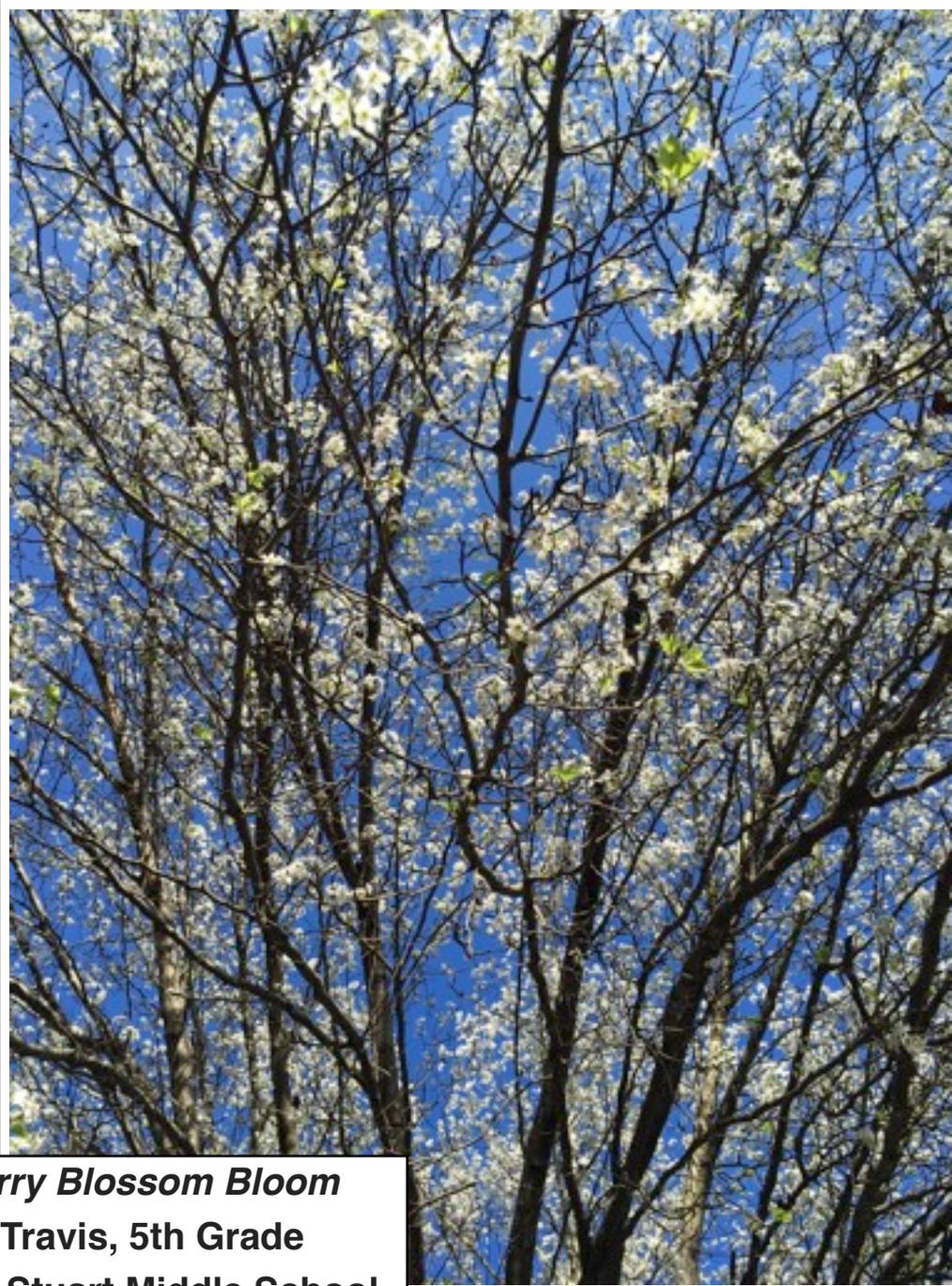
Joy can make you laugh, it can make
you smile.
Joy can spread goodness for miles.

Lucy Stillman, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Hope

Hope is something that people crave
Something that people want
Something that people...
Hope for.
It gives them faith
It makes them feel better it makes them...
Hopeful.

Richard Carrasco, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher



Cherry Blossom Bloom
Zoe Travis, 5th Grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

Home

I hear a crackling fire,
Warmth spreads over me,

I smell buttery bread baking,
I can almost taste it in my mouth,

I feel as happy as can be,
Tears of joy in my eyes,

What do I see?

I see home

Nandini Vinta, 7th Grade
Bob Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

Adventure

The life that lies before us,
with nothing else behind.

Something new to learn and something new to find.

Knowing this is scary,

But I know you'll do alright.

The days and years flew by,
but, you future does look bright.

Open your wings and fly,

Like a bird into the sky,

fly fast, fly straight, fly strong, fly proud,

I know you can do this, and I know you can do it now.

It went by too fast I know you know that's true,
but right now you need to be as happy as the ocean
waters are blue.

If you hold on tight,

with all your might,

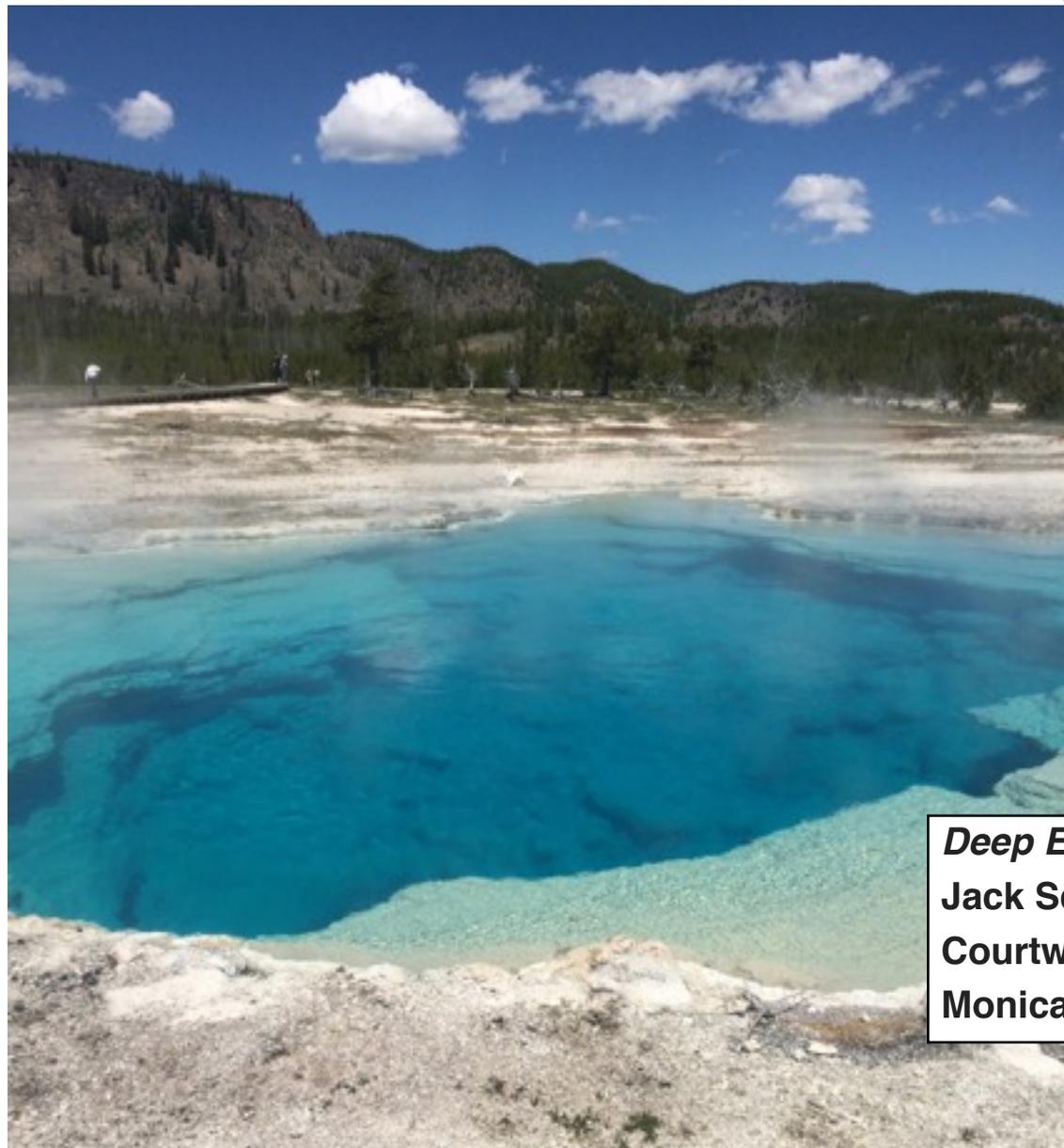
Your adventure will await.

**Cole Robinson 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**



Fading Feathers

**Mariah Hodge, 7th Grade Greene
County Tech Middle School
Karen Hodge, Teacher**



Deep Emotions

**Jack Schriver, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers**

The Jeweler

Death is like a thief in the night
Unexpected, uncertain, and unwelcome
But the repossession of a soul is not a crime
For God is not stealing your treasure, just simply
reclaiming His loaned jewel
He let you admire it for a while
Allowed you to experience its beauty
And love it for it gave you joy
Although you may miss the sparkle that jewel brought
you
Death is not a crime
Indeed, it is unwelcome to those who experienced its
flare
And though you mourn, you forget it is not gone
forever
It is just relocated
Shining brighter than ever above you
With the Jeweler that reigns over all His loaned
treasures
Forever.

Emma Cheek, 12th Grade

England High School/Virtual Arkansas

Cindy Green, Teacher

Alice Pellham, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech Junior High
Karen Hodge, Teacher



Friendship

Something you can't taste or smell.
Something you can't see or hear.

But I can guarantee you
With this, you have nothing to fear.

-Andrew

Friendship is something that you do not
receive, but something you earn.
Friendship is like a tree, if you can
withstand the storm, you will grow a great
bond.

It is your decision, to make this a friendship
grow into a great tree,
or a whittled-down puny sprout.

Friendship

-Phillip

Andrew McCray and

Philip Hardwick, 6th Grade

Courtway Middle School

Monica Flowers, Teacher

Heaven is Near

Soaring on the wings of angels,
Realizing life is no longer painful.
Soon I'll be walking on streets of gold,
While my body is on earth, cold.
Heaven is near,
I shall have no fear.
The LORD I will see,
Right in front of me.
Standing on the edge in awestruck wonder,
I see my loved ones waiting for me yonder.

Savannah Lamb, 12th Grade

Fordyce High School/Virtual Arkansas

Cindy Green, Teacher

My True Friend

You're the one who always makes me smile
And I've never felt that feeling
In a while
You've been there with me
Through thick and thin
I would never change the fact
That you are my true friend
I don't know how
You know the secrets
I can never tell
When I'm quiet
You always find a way
To break through my shell
We have our ups
And downs
But we find a way
To fix our frowns
You pull me aside
When you sense
Something isn't right
Which makes me know
That everything is going to be alright
I know that you are going to be there
Till the end
Which is why, you are my true friend

**Brijhen Cremen, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**



**All Star
Brijhen Cremen, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers**

Friendship

A great friendship can't be bought,
for every great friendship must start in the heart.
You must care for the other and act like his brother.

When someone unpopular finds a new friend,
for them, a whole new world is about to descend.
These friendships can be quite valuable to those who possess it,
It may be their only chance.

Those who are popular have many friends.
Though some keep tight relations, other relations are poor.
They're all over the latest trends .
Their bonds aren't as strong since they have nothing to lose.
They have many chances.

**Stephen Chesshir, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**

Boyfriend and Girlfriend

You talked to me once
You talked to me twice
I didn't respond
But I thought you were nice

You laughed with me once
Like we were mates
I ran away scared
But I wish we could date

You talked with me once
You talked with me twice
I tried talking back
It went as smooth as ice

We laughed and we talked
Having fun all the way
I'm glad I decided to talk
On that day

Soon came the day
When he asked a big question
Will you go out with me
I had a big huge expression

He was down on his knees
Tears of joy down my face
I answered him yes
With one big empase

Boyfriend and Girlfriend
Finally at last
We talked and we laughed
Boyfriend and Girlfriend at last

Myra Mangum, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher



Tapping Feet

Myra Mangum, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Fairytales

You never hear stories of princesses that save themselves
You never hear stories of princes needing help
This is why they're called fairytales
Men can need help too
Women can do things on their own
And when these stereotypes are broken we might live happily ever after

Makyla Pirtle, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

Chairs

There are four legs,
And one seat.
Our satisfaction and standards it meets.
It rests our legs,
when they are tired.
Magnificent chairs,
I have always desired.
Maybe red velvet,
Plastic too.
Wood is great,
I can't choose.
Backrest or not,
Cool or hot,
Chairs are amazing you see.
However you like yours,
I don't care.
As long as everybody has a chair.

Davin Jones, 6th grade
Carl Stuart Middle School
Melissa Miller, Teacher

The Sun

Sometimes you just want to run,
And to feel the sun shining upon you.
You just want to escape life,
And you just want to run.
Not like a race,
But to feel the wind on your face.
It's hard to live with mistakes,
But you have to—it's life.
And that's the secret of living life to its fullest.

Jaxon Charlton, 5th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher

The Falls
Jack Schriver, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers

Growth

It happens to us all
It can be at the dusk of day
Or during the night fall

A change in our lives
Is what we apprehend
It is the change in life
In which we call our friend

Short or tall
No matter the size
We all will fall
but eventually rise

I say this
with open heart,
Growth is the best position
In which to start

Camille Davis, 7th grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher



The Things We Do Not See

There are things that we do not see,
There are things that we wish to be,
Sometimes we wonder why,
We have to say goodbye,
To the things we do not see.

We sit on invisible thumbtacks,
We say things that we do not mean,
We always see things,
Things that should not be seen,
But never the things we should see.

Many times we are forced to flee,
From the things that we do not see,
We cry out for someone,
To make us undone,
From the vicious spider,
Whose webs grow wider.

We claw and fight at the things we do not see,
We kill ourselves over things we wish to be,
We fight the urge to cry,
As we lift and try to fly,
Away, away, from the things that we do not see.

But it's the good things we never see coming.

Elena Esquivel, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

The Right Road
Gracie Fason, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher





Land of the Free

In the “land of the free”
We accept you but exclusions apply.
We don't care for you if you're a minority, Muslim, Gay or, Bi.

In the “land of the free”
Where we are supposed to love one another,
But deny our middle-class, female, or “illegal” brother.

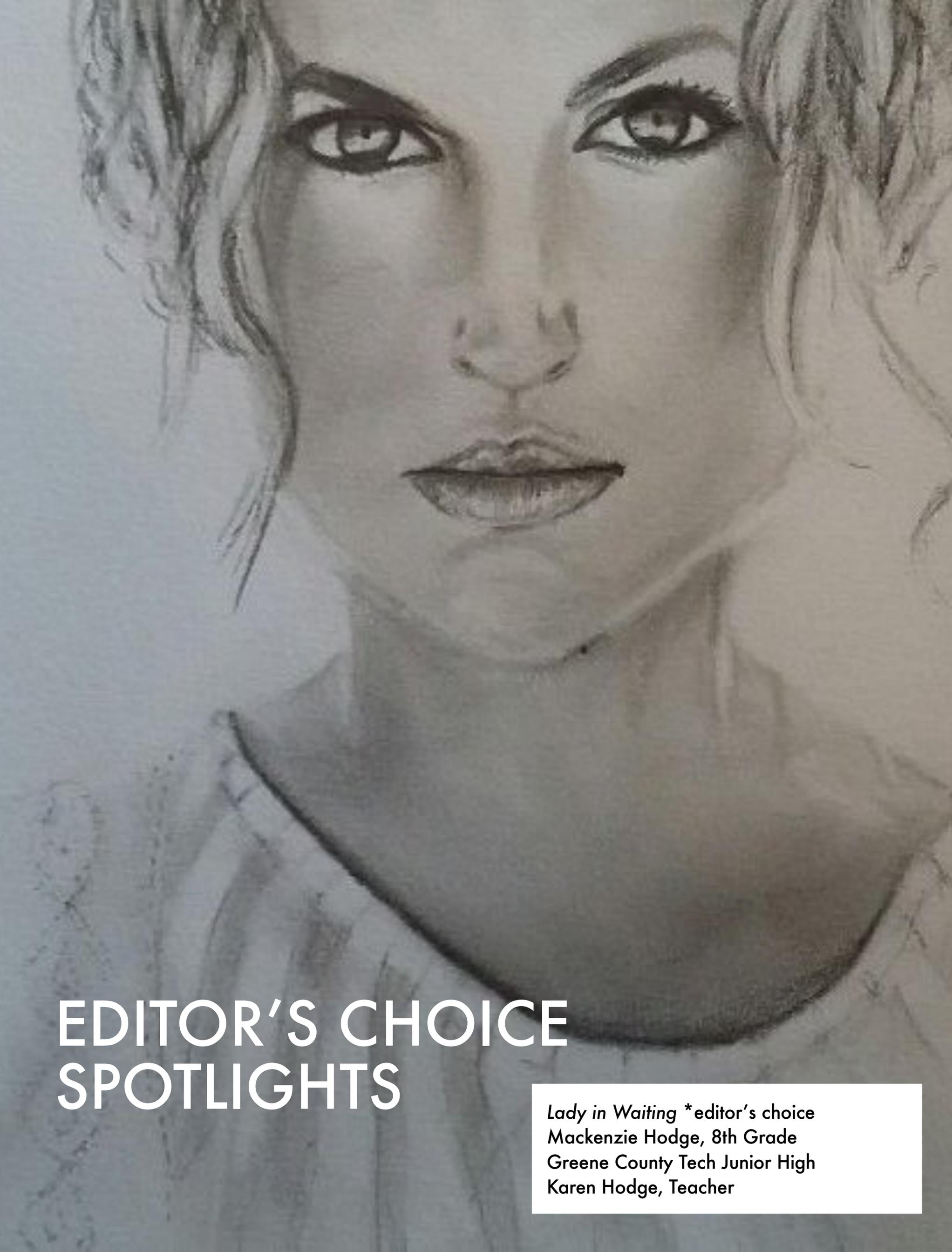
In the “land of the free”
Where a racist, misogynistic, pervert can be our President,
and wants to kick me out of America when I am a resident.

Is this the America you want?
Where your kids laugh and play?
Where our leader wants you dead and for the poor there's great hell to pay?

I pray God leads us to right
And He will hear our plea,
So America can truly be the “land of the free”.

**Stephanie Itzel Giblin, 8th Grade
Watson Chapel Junior High School
Gina Andrews, Teacher**

***The Path*
Alekhya Kavi, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher**



EDITOR'S CHOICE SPOTLIGHTS

Lady in Waiting *editor's choice
Mackenzie Hodge, 8th Grade
Greene County Tech Junior High
Karen Hodge, Teacher

Keys to Paradise *editor's choice

Unknown paradise of unseen beauty,
Never seen by those with sheltered souls,
Hiding behind the shell of humanity,

Paradise where no one mourns,
No earthly pain or hunger eats away the soul,
No earthly desires that blind the soul,

Paradise is not found easily by mortal eyes,
The keys to paradise outline our lives,
The keys are found within ourselves,

The key of pain that breaks our hearts,
Pain that breaks our minds and frees our
thoughts,
Pain that everyone knows and adores,

The key of sadness sings within our souls,
Sadness that cripples the weak,
Sadness that keeps the motivated alive and free

The key of hate that hides in our heart,
The hate of the world that holds you back,
Back from true peace of paradise,

The key of compassion that everyone feels,
Compassion that slowly changes oneself,
Compassion that holds the bonds of love
together,

The key of knowledge that hides,
Hides deep inside our forbidden mind,
Knowledge that can heal or punish the soul,

The key of love opens the last lock,
Love that opens the most hateful of hearts,
Love that frees the sorrowful of souls,

Beauty of the Soul

In the midday air, love hangs over the
lonesome,
Lonesome hearts of wasted beauty,
The ring of fate holds some together, and others
apart,
The darkness of destiny turns many to ashes,
and others to gold,
The beauty of the soul can strengthen the most
hopeless, and save many from damnation
Damnation of the lonesome soul

Forgotten Crimes

The ground cold and bare
The night air cold and still,
Blood surrounds the lines
Lines outline the dead,

The snow falls on the ground
Snow buries the crimson dirt,
The lines disappear into the earth
Pearls of snow hide the nameless dead

The moon shines on
Moonlight reveals horrors to night,
The darkness hiding crimes
Crimes of forgotten men,

The crimes go unpunished
Unpunished and forgotten by most,
But the dead never forget the names
The names of those that banished them,
Banished them with the forgotten dead

Jerry McDoniel, 12th Grade
Trumann High School
Justin Vinson, Teacher

Life As A Slave *editor's choice

I'm a stockholder, young and free,
I don't have a family.
I'm dreaming of a place far away,
Heaven is where I'll stay.
Shepherds say I should go,
But my heart says no.

Everyday 4 to 10,
I dream of the life it could've been.
The drinking gourd is mocking me,
I just love the thought of being free.

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus,
This is what's come between us.
I hope to find a better life,
All I can do is hang my head and sigh.

The wind blows South today,
I need to run, and run away.
My little child had to stay,
Behind where she had to be locked away.
My heart aches and aches,
I don't know how much longer I can take.
This sorrow is left on my shoulder,
I am getting older and older.

One day I will be free,
I can only imagine how that will be.

Kensley Soffos, 7th Grade
Bob and Betty Courtway
Middle School
Corey Oliver, Teacher

Rain *editor's choice

I have this obsession with the outdoors,
But only when it's wet.
My raincoat doesn't usually keep me dry,
But I like to see how lucky I can get.
I feel secure when the muddy ground slips,
Happy when the storm drips off my lips.
Some people might not have my sense of luck,
But I'd consider myself fortunate to be lightning struck.
Soon enough, though, all storms stop.
But before the clouds release their last raindrop,
The rhythm slows to a quiet tiptoe,
And back inside I go.

Francesca Redditt, 9th Grade
Conway Junior High School
Cynthia Brown, Teacher

A Box Car

After it rolls away from a train in a storm, it finds a stopping point in the woods.
While waiting for years to come, It covers itself with vines and moss.
After a long period of time, someone runs upon it.
Behind all the vines is its beauty.
They use it as a play house.
Now the box car knows that he is loved.

Peace *editor's choice

Peace is quiet.
No war is near.
No sadness or madness.
No violence or angry protesters.
There is no fighting for freedom because you already have it.
Everybody gets what they want.
Nobody is lonely.
Everyone has a friend.

Planet Earth

Planet Earth can be a beautiful place.
But it can be an ugly one, too.
He dances around in space with his best friend to moon.
He doesn't eat like we do.
But it has layers.
If we don't take care of him,
He will be ugly.
Take care of him,
And he will take care of you.

Jasmine O'Neal, 6th Grade
Courtway Middle School
Monica Flowers, Teacher