

THE ALPINE PATH

Volume 3, June 2022

From the Editor

Summer is here, a time when we will enjoy setting out on trips, sleeping in, and swimming. More importantly, summer also means there will be more time for reading. As the poems and stories in this issue carry the echoes of books read during the school year, we look forward to your summer's reading experiences being reflected in the next issue of *The Alpine Path!*

"Read a thousand books, and your words will flow like a river."
— Lisa See


The Harsh Moon

Joanna Malone, 15

By summer she danced in the bright shining sun,
By summer she danced in the hay
But I feared the harsh moon
Would steal her too soon,
And the harsh moon has stole her away.

By autumn she danced in the bright falling leaves
But winter came cold, overnight.
And the harsh moon, beguiling,
Took my blossom, all smiling
And soon hurried her light-footed flight.

Will you say that the sun shines yet somewhere, so bright?
That still summer and autumn are born?
But the harsh moon on me
Sheds, wherever I be,
The same moonlight my flower has worn.

Will you say that the day still conquers the night?
That the seasons still change out their hues?
But the harsh moon I know
Only shines down on snow
And the silvery prints of her shoes. 

The Halloween Trick

Angela Koturbash, 10

Jonny was in bed, peacefully sleeping, when his big brother Liam screamed, "Wake up!"

Jonny, thinking it was already evening and that he had slept in late, jumped up. However, he soon saw that it was 7:34 a.m., and relaxed. He started getting ready for another day of homeschool, but it was Saturday – it was Halloween! His day was free! Well, there was still a page of math he didn't do yesterday.

He was very excited to go trick-or-treating and the day flew by.

At night, he and his friends met, all dressed to go trick-or-treating. Jenna, was dressed as a queen, Devin, was a pirate, and Jake was Superman. The group went from door-to-door collecting yummy treats, when something HORRIBLE happened - Johnny disappeared!

The group was nearly half-way through trick-or-treating when Jenna noticed that Jonny was gone. "Where'd Jonny go?" she asked.

Everyone looked at her. They, at first, were totally dumb-founded, but then it hit them. The air was soon filled with "Where's Jonny?"

They sat down and wracked their brains. Finally, Jenna had an idea. She told them how her plan worked. "Why don't we go check the houses that we've been to, and maybe we'll find Jonny."

So that's what they did. But everywhere they checked they couldn't find Jonny. As they were nearly ready to give-up they heard Jonny's voice shout to them, pleading to help him out.

They looked around wildly and spotted him caught in a white Halloween web. He had walked right into it! The web had, by misfortune, been sticky.

They rushed to help him. Jonny was glad to be out. So they went on with their search for candy, and had a great time. And although they did not find any spiders, they all agreed it was the most webby night of all!

THE END. 🏔️

The Day Thornycroft Was Born

Lia Nicole/Joseline Penn, 17

The snow fell softly as the eight kids huddled around the window, watching in awe as winter made its home in the Meadowbrooke Lands. After five seconds, Tiger got bored watching the white stuff fall outside, so he ran off to find something to destroy.

After a few more seconds, Molly Mae felt the urge to break the silence. "When are Ma and Pa coming home?"

"Molly Mae! For the last time, they left just this morning! They aren't coming home any time soon." Agricola crossed her arms and frowned upon her little sister.

"You mean they ain't ever coming back home?" Molly Mae's mouth fell open then her lip started quivering.

"First of all, don't use the word 'ain't', cause it isn't even a word! Secondly, I didn't say they weren't ever coming back. They just won't be home within the next five minutes." Agricola looked back outside and sighed.

A few more moments of silence passed. Then Maverick spoke up. "If this baby had been a sensible baby, it would have known not to wait till winter to come out to explore the world and ruin our winter holiday traditions."

"For the love of maveroli Ick, the baby had no darn choice! It just comes out when it comes out and that's that," Lenny retorted.

"Don't call me Ick!"

"Shall I call you Maverick instead?" Lenny slyly replied.

"That's only my code name! And you're not part of any of my missions!" Ick sternly said.

"Then I suppose I shall have to call you Ick," Lenny replied. And Ick began whining at this.

"Guys, all this quarreling isn't doing any good. I hear the cows mooing. I think I'll get the chores done. Y'all can stay inside and I'll do all the chores tonight." With that, Jib left the snowflakes-falling-outside-

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window-watching group and went to get dressed for the cold weather.

“We should get something done too,” Agricola said absentmindedly.

“Like what?” Ick asked.

“Yeah, like what?” Jerzy repeated like a parrot. Ick glared quickly at Jerzy but stopped as soon as Agricola cleared her throat.

“Well, we could clean the house as a nice gift for Mama.”

“Cleaning’s boring!” Molly Mae whined.

“Well it’s got to get done eventually!”

“What else can we do?” Lenny asked, pushing his glasses up against his eyes.

“We could cook some go-to meals for Mama. Then she wouldn’t have to do so much work, since she’ll be busy taking care of the baby.” Agricola scratched her chin and looked up to the ceiling.

“Can we bake our winter cookies?” Molly Mae asked excitedly.

“Yeah, let’s do that!” Ick exclaimed.

Jerzy replied, “Yeah, let’s do that!” Ick glared again at him.

“No, we can’t do the traditional winter baking until Mama and Papa are here,” Agricola began, but, in everyone’s excitement and rush, no one heard her. They all ran off to the kitchen, yelling and shouting and making a ruckus. Agricola groaned. ‘Well, I didn’t feel like cleaning anyways,’ she thought to herself as she picked up little Rosie, who was sucking on her thumb with her doll tucked lovingly under her arm, and followed the herd of kids into the kitchen.

Molly Mae was already getting out the pots and pans and other kitchen tools, and Agricola would have

stopped her from making a mess if Tiger hadn’t rushed through with one of Papa’s good shoes in his mouth. “Bad Tiger, no! Give the shoe back!” she yelled as she set Rosie down and rushed after him.

“What kind of cookies should we bake?” Lenny asked.

“Sugarcookie!”

“Chocolate chip!”

“Chocolate chip!”

“I vote molasses.”

Rosie said nothing. But everyone knew that if she spoke, if she ever did speak or could speak, she would probably reply, “Honey” or “Mama”.

So after some more quarreling and fighting over whether molasses cookies could even be

considered cookies, they all agreed to take all the winter cookie recipes and mix them in one big batch, to save some time baking. And Lenny added that “it would be a good scientific experiment as well.”

Agricola was finally coming back with a slobbery shoe in her left hand and a restless Tiger in her right arm. Setting the shoe on a high shelf, she locked down Tiger in his special chair and turned to the others. “Alright, so what kind of cookies are we making?”

“All of them!” exclaimed Molly Mae.

Before Agricola could ask, Lenny said, “We are performing a scientific experiment to see what will happen if we mix all the different kinds of cookie dough into one batch.”

“What? How is that going to work? That’s not how you bake cookies!”

“Have you ever tried it before?” asked Maverick.

“Yeah, have you ever tried it before?”

Maverick would have slapped Jerzy if Agricola hadn’t stayed his hand.

“No, I guess not but still! It probably won’t work!”

“Well, if you ain’t e’er tried it before, how ya know it ain’t gonna work?” Molly Mae questioned.

Well Agricola hadn’t thought of that, but instead of saying so, she said, “Stop using the non-word ‘ain’t!’”

They continued baking, taking out different ingredients and adding them to the big bowl. Now, Lenny and Agricola said they should use a regular cookie recipe but add all the ingredients that are unique to each recipe, but Molly Mae, Ick, and Jerzy all insisted on doing the complete recipe for each kind of cookie. They pointed out how they outnumbered Lenny and Agricola, but Lenny and Agricola also pointed out that Jerzy’s vote couldn’t really be considered a vote since he always went with what Ick went with. And after a few more moments of quarreling, they asked Rosie what she wanted to do, but obviously, she said nothing. So they turned to Tiger, who only replied, “Raw! Raw!” So, in the end, they combined the complete recipes for each cookie kind.

Now since they were making so many different kinds of cookies (sugar cookie, chocolate chip, molasses, gingerbread, candy cookies, cookie cookies, oatmeal cookies, quick cookies, and dumpling cookies (special request from Molly Mae), but not raisin cookies, as no one except Lenny liked raisins), they began to run out of flour. Molly Mae went straight to work digging through all the cupboards, looking

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for some more flour. Agricola was about to stop Maverick and Jerzy from getting out the hammers to punch out the floorboards when she looked over to Tiger's chair and realized he had escaped. "Tiger, where are you?" Agricola cried as she dashed out of the kitchen, following his trail of slobber.

Ick and Jerzy were about to destroy the floor when Molly Mae exclaimed, "I found some flour!"

Ick exclaimed, "Really?" and immediately got up to see the flour. He dropped his hammer on Jerzy's head in the process, which then caused Jerzy to hit his hammer and face on the floor.

Molly Mae was scooping out the flour into a measuring cup while Lenny took the bottle and examined it. "Molly Mae, this is not flour. It is yeast!" But Lenny spoke too late, as Molly Mae had dumped three cups of yeast into the cookie dough batch. Lenny opened his mouth to say something but instead calmly nodded his head. "This would make an interesting scientific experiment," he simply said.

Now Molly Mae, Maverick, and Jerzy were all fighting over who should mix the cookie dough. Lenny was trying to explain to everyone how to equally divide the work using economics, but no one understood a word he said. Meanwhile, Rosie was sitting on the floor, quietly watching the fight as she sucked on the hammer.

Agricola came tiredly back into the kitchen with Tiger in her arms. He was happily munching on an Isenetta plant, fascinated by the bleeding-heart-shaped flowers that glow various bright colors. Once again, Agricola locked the now glowing boy into his chair, then turned to the others. "Well, are the cookies ready to be baked?"

"I want to stir it!"

"I think Ick and I should stir it!"

"I'm not going to stir with you, you little pipsqueak!"

Jerzy would have punched Ick in the face if he hadn't liked him so much. He didn't want to ruin his beautiful face.

Agricola yelled above the racket, "Guys, quiet!" Everyone continued fighting. "Quiet please!" she said. Still no silence. Agricola, now getting very frustrated, snatched the spoon from everyone and yelled, "BE QUIET!" And everyone shut up and stared at her. "I will mix the dough." And despite everyone's protests (except Lenny, who was focusing on how big the dough was starting to get), Agricola began mixing.

Finally, the dough was ready for baking. Now, the question was how to bake all the cookies. Should they bake them individually or bake the whole dough batch and then divide the cookies after they had baked? Agricola wanted to bake the cookies the traditional way, but Lenny insisted on baking the whole batch together in the big bowl as a "good scientific study." The others agreed with Lenny, but only because it sounded like fun. Agricola eventually gave in, but only because Tiger had managed to chew off a piece of the wooden table.

Lenny put the bowl of cookie dough into the stone oven and then sat down to watch it rise, taking note of every little change. Molly Mae watched for three seconds, then yelled, "Who wants to play tackle?" Jerzy refused to play until Ick had agreed to play, but Ick was more interested in sneaking around the house on a secret mission. So Molly Mae and Ick began to quarrel, and eventually, Molly

Mae got so upset that she bounced right on top of Ick and began fighting with him on the floor. Jerzy began chanting, "Ick! Ick! Ick!" then decided to join the fight as well.

A few minutes passed before Lenny spoke up, "Guys, I think something is wrong."

Agricola was desperately trying to get the piece of wood out of Tiger. "What's wrong now?"

"I think the cookie dough is about to explode."

Now, Jib had finally finished the chores and was trudging back through the snow to the farmhouse. He looked up and saw the lights in the house shining brightly in the night when he noticed something in the kitchen. The stone oven seemed to be leaking some strange stuff, but Jib couldn't make out what it was. Just at that moment, a loud bang was heard from the kitchen. Jib stumbled back, gaping in horror. Without a second thought, he ran as fast as he could to the house. He whipped open the door and then slammed it shut. Not bothering to take off his wet boots, he dashed into the kitchen and stared at the dough-covered walls and floor. Lenny was lying down on the floor just below the stone oven, shocked by the explosion. His hair stood on end and was a spikey, doughy mess. He really did look like a mad scientist. Molly Mae, Maverick, and Jerzy were all a big cookie dough mess, tangled together on the floor, their mouths wide open. Agricola was cowering under the table, trying to protect her hair. Tiger was somehow on the ceiling, dangling on a thread of dough. Rosie was still sitting calmly on the floor, sucking on the hammer.

"What in tarnation happened?" Jib exclaimed.

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After everyone had shared their perspective on the story all at once, Jib got out some spatulas and other scraping tools, and they all got to work scraping the kitchen clean.

Finally, they had gotten all the dough back into the bowl. At that moment, Molly Mae looked outside and exclaimed, “Ma and Pa are home!”

As Mama and Papa opened the door, eight kids came rushing like a herd of wild buffalo. Pa immediately jumped in front of Ma. “Don’t you kids dare go near yer Mama and upset her precious bundle of joy!” he said, the wheat stalk in his mouth drooping down past his chin.

“Whaddya mean precious bundle of love?” asked Molly Mae.

“He said bundle of joy, you dipstick,” said Maverick.

“Yeah dipstick,” said Jerzy.

“Well, where’s the baby?” asked Agricola.

Mama smiled and opened up the bundle of blankets she held in her arms. There was the chubbiest, baldest baby the kids had ever seen. His big blue eyes stared widely at everyone, wondering who the heck these messy kids were.

Everyone went “awww” and “ooooh” and “raw! raw!”, except Lenny, who carefully examined the freckles on the baby’s face.

After everyone had a chance to pinch the baby’s cheek and count how many freckles he had, Jib asked, “What’s his name?”

Ma and Pa smiled at each other, then looked at their kids and replied together, “His name is Thornycroft.”

“Thornycroft?!” everyone said, some shocked, some confused, some disgusted.

“Where ever did you get a name like that?” Lenny asked.

“Well you see, when the doctor took that thar baby and slapped his cheek, he exclaimed, ‘My what a thorny baby!’ And that made me think of my crops and so we put two and two together to get Thornycroft!” replied Pa.


Everyone blinked and stared at the baby, who innocently smiled at them and slobbered on the blankets.

Finally, Ma and Pa came into the kitchen and began to make themselves at home once more when Pa said, “What’s this here bowl of food?” He took a nearby knife, stabbed it, and began to eat. He munched for a couple of moments, then after gulping, his eyes went wide, and his mouth watered. He began greedily eating from the bowl while Mama asked, “What’s that you’re eating?”

“I don’t know, but it sure is tasty!”

Mama came over with the baby and began eating as well then her eyes lit up. “Children, what did you make while we were gone? This is the most delicious thing I’ve ever eaten!”


The kids looked at each other and shrugged, not knowing what to say. Then Molly Mae exclaimed, “It’s all the cookies!”

So from that day on, the Farmets have made the giant batch of all the cookies every winter holiday. It became a new family tradition, one that everyone would remember for ages to come. As they all sat down to eat their cookie dough feast, Ma turned to Agricola and asked, “Agricola, why is Tiger glowing different colors?” 

Our Puppy Wook

Angela Koturbash, 10

Our little puppy Wook,
The fluffy little thing,
Barks so loud that our ears ring.
(That’s how he likes to sing.)
Though the smallest family member,
He still likes December,
He gets a little treat,
And finds a seat,
And begins to chomp,
And after that, he starts to romp,
In the backyard,
And doesn’t discard
The thought of the next
Christmas day.

It’s really kind of funny,
When he lies down on his tummy,
And does a roll on his back,
With his feet up in the air,
And then we start to stare,
Is he really dead?
Or is it just an itch on his head?
Ah... he’s alive,
He is the light of our lives. 

Love

Emily Roberts, 15

Love comes in many forms.

It can be the family you sit down with to eat.

Or the dog who looks up whenever you speak.


It might be how you feel around old friends,

Or how you feel when a fight between siblings mends.

But the most important one by far is the Love,

Of the Father above.

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now abide Faith, Hope and Love, these three, But the greatest of these is Love. 

The Bridge above the Lake

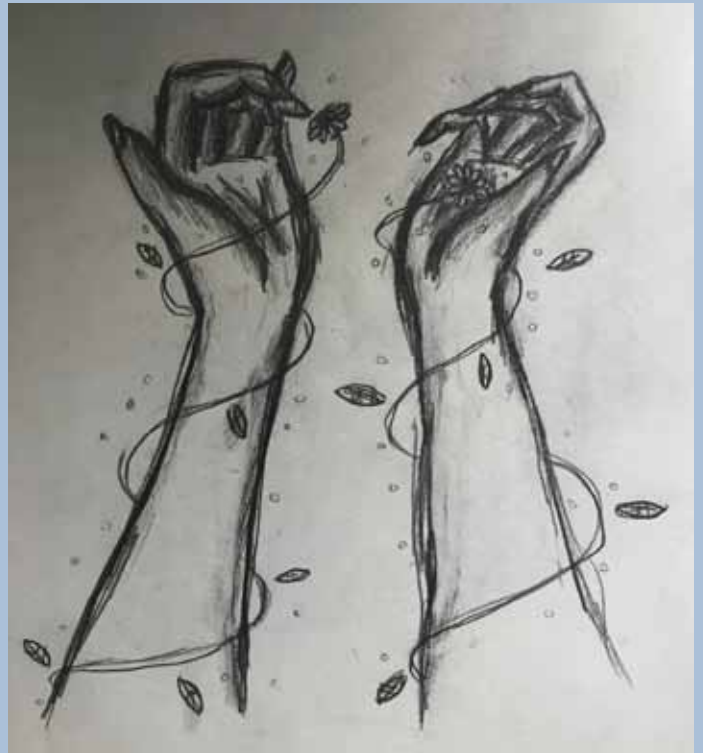
Joel Teoh Zhi Liang, 14

The sun shone bright and hot on everything.
Its dazzling rays shot straight into the world
Below, stressing old trees, wilting young plants,
And cracked the light brown clay pavements below.
The fiery sun heated the pure white roof
That lay high above on the constructions
Of two twin buildings of great size and height,
Wondrously designed by smart architects.

Then came the gale, which gushed swiftly through the
Twin buildings. Before it, clay pavements lay,
And furthermore, beyond the fancy fence,
Lay a great wide lake, glimmering silver
And white reflections of the clouds above.
Opposite of the lake, a hundred giants
Oaks swayed their huge branches in the hot wind.

The sun slowly subsided in the sky.
The wind started to cool, refreshing all
Living things and humans alike. The trees
Straightened their wilting leaves, the birds began
Chirping, and even the tiny mozzies
Emerged. Dozens of men showed up to ride
Their bikes under the setting sun. Riding
Calmly down the road, one can see a bridge
Towering high above the gleaming lake,
With architectural designs mixed in
Both the Islamic domes and arcs with the
Intricate decorations of the ancient
Medieval Europe.

Supposed to be white,
But after years of service carrying
Vehicles across the massive lake of
Water, it was slowly tainted with dust.
The dust and dirt covered it with a shade
Of brown, making it lose its pure colour.
But now, standing here viewing it under
The orange setting sun, its pale brown beamed
Like sparkling gold. It is a bridge that stood
Firmly over the lake despite the rain,
Heat, and weight of vehicles, and it's still
Standing under the brilliant setting sun. 🏔️



Macie Jones, 15

Culloden Field

A Lament for the Jacobite Rebellion

Joanna Malone, 15

The cold wind stirs the last leaf clinging
To that grey rowan tree.
A golden heath with wild birds singing
That's what this used to be.

There's many a heart that's shattered and broke,
There's many a wound unhealed.
Springtime may come, but the nettles will choke
The flowers of Culloden Field.

And they have rejected the heir to the crown,
They have broken our banner and blade,
They have brought us disgrace, and ay trampled
down
The sign of our White Cockade.

Where are the lads who marched in the cold?
Sadly the church-bells pealed.
Defeat took our bonny brave troop in her hold
On the mosses of Culloden Field.

Ay, torn down have they our Prince's rose
And under their boots it's been trod,
And wind sighs a weary lament of our woes
On that bleak and ill-omened sod.

The thorn-tree there that grows alone
It never a rose will yield,
Since the sweet white rose of our cause was thrown
To the earth of Culloden Field.

The dream of triumph have faded since,
And now is naught more than a wraith.
And yet we fought for love and prince,
For homeland, and for faith.

The banner was brave that waved in the blue
And over the meadow was streeled
But `twas torn from its haft and it lies in the dew
In the grasses of Culloden Field.

We fought for all that is true and just
For all that's beloved and sweet.
Why then should the claymore lie in the rust
And the rebellion lie in defeat?

Driven afar, by Exile's curse
Is the Scots heart concealed.
But the worst of our troubles cannot be worse
Than the troubles of Culloden Field.

But never we'll think of our leal battle-host
But we'll praise their bravery.
And never we'll drink a draught, but toast
The King far across the sea.

Remember the day when we stood, true and strong,
Remember the banner and shield,
Remember our just cause, and all your life-long,
Do not forget Culloden Field. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

America; Paved in Gold

Kerry, Ireland

April 1911

Maddie Wray, 12

As I walk out of the house, I hear a wagon pull into the yard. I look up and squeal. "Rosie May, Mary Margaret," I practically scream, running toward the wagon. "Nora Rose," my sisters cry in unison. I reach Rosie May first, hugging her from the side, careful not to put much pressure on her big baby belly. I went for Mary Margaret, but she shrank away. "Nora Rose, what on earth did ye get on yer dress," she asked, eyeing me with disdain. "Mud," I mutter, suddenly embarrassed. Just then, Ma came out of the house, her eyes growing wide. "Rosie May Quinn Riley, when ye said that ye were thinking about coming over, I didn't realize ye meant so soon," Ma scolded, barely hiding her smile. "I've missed ye too, Maureen." Ma quickly wrapped Rosie May in a hug before asking, "Did ye bring Oscar and Liam with ye?" Hearing their names, the twins ran around the wagon, latching themselves onto Mas' legs. "How are ye, Mary Margaret," Ma inquired. "Just fine, though the ride was a little ruff." I smile at Oscar and Liam. It had been nearly two years since I had last seen them. They had chestnut hair, from Rosie May and grass green eyes, from Philip. "Hi," I hear behind me. I turn around to find Bridget standing behind Mas' legs. "Let's go inside. Nora Rose, will ye take Mary Margarets' bags to her room, please." "Yes, ma'am," I respond, hurrying inside.

Not long after I got Mary Margarets' bags put away, Da came home. "Well," Da bellowed, "this is a mighty fine surprise." Before

Da could say anything else, Oscar and Liam grabbed him and dragged him over to show off their toys. "Girls, will ye help me with supper," Ma asks. I start toward the kitchen, grabbing an apron. Rosie May starts to get up, but Ma waves her back down. "No, not ye. I meant Mary Margaret and Nora Rose." Hearing her name, Mary Margaret looks up. "Excuse me, Maureen, but ye asked for the girls. I don't believe that includes me." Ma looked startled before quickly regaining her composure. "Pardon my mistake, Mary Margaret. I meant all non-pregnant women." At this, Da looks up. "Maureen, doesn't that mean ye should sit down?" Everyone turns to stare at Da, who has turned beet red. "Ma, does this mean what I think it does," I ask, my chest feeling like it might explode from excitement. "Aye, Nora, it does." With that, cries of joy explode throughout the house. "How far along are ye," Rosie May asks. "Three months," Ma responds, smiling. "When are ye due," Mary Margaret inquires. "December," Da says, grinning like a boy on Christmas day. "Maureen, ye must sit down. Mary Margaret and Nora Rose can handle supper," Rosie May scolds, patting the chair beside her. As we start dinner, I'm lost in a daze of joy.

As dinner comes to an end, Da clears his throat. "I'd like to say something if it's all right with ye, Maureen?" Ma nods, clearly excited. "Yer Ma and I have discussed the matter at length, and after much argument, all of it from me, we have decided to move to Amer-

ica." The silence was deafening. "When... when are ye moving," Philip asks, clearly shocked. "The end of the week," Ma declares, "which means, when ye leave, we leave with ye." Mary Margaret looks near tears. "But Da, how could ye leave Ireland, leave home? Rosie May and I grew up here. Grandpa built this home from the ground up. He was so proud of this home, and now yer going to sell it to some stranger. "Mary Margaret, don't ye dare bring this home into this. I am doing what is best for my family, and in time, yer going to come to love America," Da said, doing his best to keep from yelling. "What do ye mean I'm going to love America? I'm not going," Mary Margaret asks, confused. "Sweetie," Ma said, trying to break the tension, "yer Da and I have decided yer coming with us." Mary Margaret scoffs. "Da, I hate to burst yer bubble, but I'm not going. Ireland is my home, end of story." Da closes his eyes before responding. "Mary Margaret, yer fourteen, not forty, and until yer eighteen, ye have to do what I say. That means yer coming with us, whether ye like it or not." Before Mary Margaret could retort, Da barked, "Girls, go to bed. That includes ye, Mary Margaret." Bridget and I dutifully climb the ladder while Mary Margaret remains unmoving. Finally, Mary Margaret climbs the ladder.

A week passes, and the fights between Mary Margaret and Da grow more intense. Finally, the day of departure arrives. I walk around the house. While I'll miss the house, I'm even more sad that

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Bridget wouldn't remember anything about Ireland. We pack up the wagon, and Bridget waves to the house as we ride off. "So, Mary Margaret, are ye looking forward to working in America," I ask, trying to ease the tension. Before she could respond, Da said, "She won't be working; she'll be going to school. So will ye and Bridget." Bridget smiled. Mary Margaret, on the other hand, is less than pleased. "What do ye mean I'm not going to work? I've been working since I was eleven." Da looked at Ma. "Yer Da and I want ye girls to have as many doors open to ye. If ye go to school, ye have the option of college or a stable job. Maybe ye could be a teacher or a secretary," Ma said, a hopeful look in her eye. "So," Mary Margaret growled, "this is just another decision ye have made for me."

Da handed the reins to Ma before swiveling in his seat to stare at Mary Margaret. "Mary Margaret, ye don't have the sense God gave a goose. I understand yer obversion to come to America, I genuinely do, but yer not wanting to go to school is just plain idiotic. School gives ye options. Options provide ye with freedom. I didn't have the choice of staying in school. I stayed just long enough to know my letters and numbers. That's it. Now ye have the chance to further yer education, and all ye want to do is complain. Well, ye know what? Complain all ye want, yer going to school whether ye like it or not." Mary Margaret was trembling with rage when Da finished, but thank the heavens; she held her tongue. The rest of the ride was uneventful.

By the time we reach Rosie May and Philips' apartment, Bridget is in a deep sleep. "She can sleep through a tornado," Ma mumbles,

handing her to me. I stumble up the steps, barely managing to keep from falling backward. I finally reach the apartment, and Rosie May has already put Oscar and Liam to bed and set one out for Bridget and me in the boys' room. Rosie May gently takes Bridget from me, motioning for me to get ready for bed. I hurry to undress behind the curtain she set up for me. By the time I finish, Da, Ma, and Mary Margaret have come upstairs. Ma gently kisses Bridget and me goodnight before heading back toward the kitchen. I hear conversation start but am far too exhausted to listen. I fall into a deep, dreamless sleep.

"Nora Rose, wake up," Ma whispers. I dig further into the feather mattress, ignoring her. "Nora Rose, heaven help us if ye make us late for America." Hearing the word America, Bridget sits up and drags the covers off both of us. I moan but sit up, glaring at Bridget. "Nora Rose," Ma whispers harshly, drawing my attention to her, "I need ye to get yourself, and Bridget dressed, then help Rosie May pack." I nod, then realize she said to help Rosie May pack. She's not coming, I think to myself. Ma must see the question on my face, for she whispers, smiling, "Rosie May and Philip decided to come with us. Da just got back from buying the tickets." Hearing this, I jump up and hug Ma, realizing that we get to stay together. I hurry to get dressed, suddenly full of energy.

We enjoy a delicious breakfast, though I can't taste a thing. I'm so excited. "Alright, Quinn and Riley clan, here's what will happen. Our ship, the SS Adriatic, will arrive in an hour. I plan on us being there when she arrives so as not to miss her. It's a ten-minute ride, for I'll hire a cart to bring our stuff.

I want us to arrive ten minutes early, so we need to have everything packed in forty-five minutes. Do I make myself clear?" Nods went up around the table, even from Mary Margaret. "One more thing," Da continued, "Mary Margaret, yer going to be hanging with me to make sure ye don't mess up leaving. No debate." She stared at him, her amber eyes growing dark. I hurry to clear the table, attempting to get out of dodge.

Fifty minutes later, we are ready to leave. Da and Philip load up the cart while Bridget and I help entertain the boys. Just as Da is about to call everyone down to go, Ma and Rosie May walk down the stairs. "Everyone ready," Da asks, looking around nervously. Everyone nods, except Mary Margaret. Oscar and Liam wave goodbye to the apartment as we start down them street, causing tears to flood Rosie May's chestnut eyes. "Ye don't have to go," Da says softly, "ye can sell the tickets back." Rosie May quickly shakes her head. "No, we're not staying." Da nods and lets the subject drop.

Finally, we arrive at the port, the journey taking longer than we had expected. Da looks nervous, but we see the ship has just come, and Das's nervousness dissipates. We get in line to board the boat, a line that is going quicker than I expected. Da hands a man with a clipboard our tickets, and we're allowed on board. I look around, amazed at the sea of people swarming the ship. After a few minutes, the boat takes off. People wave and cry, both onshore and onboard the vessel. A few men start singing a drinking song about Ireland. Both Ma, Mary Margaret, and Rosie May practically weep. Da and Philip shed a tear or two, though they try to hide it. Finally,

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Ma shoos us down into the bunking room and finds a few rows of bunks. "Yer Da and I will share a bunk. Mary Margaret, Nora Rose, the two of ye will take turns sharing with Bridget." I nod, still in awe over being on a boat heading to America. Mary Margaret stares into the distance, refusing to acknowledge any of us. "Can we go back up," Bridget asks hopefully? "Let's get settled in first. There will be plenty of time for looking at the sea on the voyage," Ma says, putting one of the quilts down on a bunk. Bridget sighs, plopping down on one of the trunks.

I sit up, gasping. I look around dazed, still breathing heavily from a nightmare. Finally, I get my wits about me and lay back down. "I'm aboard the SS Adriatic heading toward America," I whisper, reassuring myself. The bunk room is dark. I slip out of my bunk, careful to be quiet. I quickly pull on my shoes and tiptoe to the ladder leading to the deck. Climbing, I'm careful to avoid the rung right before the top. It makes too much noise. I step onto the deck; the sky is a grayish gold, the color right before dawn. "Morning, Miss Nora Rose." Says a gruff voice behind me. I turn to see Mackey, a sailor I had befriended the first day of the voyage. "Morning," I say, yawning. Before Mackey could respond, he was called by some other sailor. I make my way over to the railing, smiling at the sea. It wasn't long before Mrs. Daly came up the ladder to pester the sailors with endless questions. Mrs. Daly is my signal that I need to head back down. Before I can, though, a sailor calls out the words that everyone had been waiting for, "Land ahead."

I run toward the hatch and jump to the ground. "Land ahead," I yell. "A sailor just called it." The room,

which had been quiet, except for the occasional snore, suddenly came to life. I make my way over to my family, fully expecting a scolding for going up without supervision. When I finally get over to my bunk, Ma gets Bridget dressed while Mary Margaret pouts. "I would be very cross with ye if ye hadn't been delivering such glorious news. Now help me get Bridget dressed," Ma says.

While I get Bridget dressed, Ma sends Mary Margaret up to verify that Ellis Island is ahead. When she comes back down, all she does is nod and go back to lying on her bunk, even though Ma took up her blanket. Instead of letting her lay there in self-pity, Ma grabs one of Mary Margarets' arms and drags her out of the bunk. "That's it, young lady, yer going to help yer Da and Philip get the trunks and stuff up to the deck, no argument," Ma stated firmly. Mary Margaret glared but got up and went to help. As I finish with Bridget, Rosie May and the boys walk over. "Are ye ready to continue the adventure of a lifetime," Rosie May asks, smiling more than she has these last two weeks. We nod and head up the ladder.

On deck, everything is abuzz with excitement and nervousness. Mothers scold children for running around, while others tell them not to hover. Cheers of joy go up as we pass the statue of liberty. Nerves abound as we pull up to Ellis Island, all while prayers of thanks are said. Sailors lower the gangplank and tell everyone to form a line; the ship won't leave till everyone is off. Still, that doesn't stop mothers from yanking children and men telling people to hurry up. In the rush to get off the ship, Oscar tripped over something and began to cry. I quickly scooped

Oscar up to keep him from getting lost in the crowd. After what seems like forever, we finally get off the plank, only to be hurried into a large building. We are separated into several long lines. Before I can comprehend what's going on, a nurse walks up and asks my name. "Nora Rose Quinn," I answer, confused. She then does the same with Bridget and Oscar. Suddenly she grabs Oscar right out of my arms and tells him to walk. He hesitates, looking at me for instruction. I nod, though I feel like yelling at the nurse about what right she has to tell my nephew to do anything. Oscar steps like normal, but soon the nurse stops him and quickly writes something on his back before waving us forward.

After enduring several more tests, we're ushered into an empty room with a large window. As Oscar begins to cry for Rosie May, she walks into the room, followed by Ma, Da, Philip, Mary Margaret, Liam, and a doctor. "Doctor, what's the problem," Da asks, nervous. Walking forward, the doctor takes one look at Oscar and asks, "Who's child is this?" "Our's," says Philip, putting an arm around Rosie May. "Young man," the doctor says to Oscar, "can you walk for me?" Oscar nods and takes a few toddling steps. "I've seen enough," the doctor states gruffly. "How long has the child limped," He asks, looking at his clipboard. I'm startled by the question. I was so used to Oscar limping; that I didn't even think about it. I'm not the only one surprised by the question. "Since he was born," Rosie May says nervously. The doctor nods before saying, "I'm afraid the child can't stay in America. It would be a different story if the limp were new, but he must have some kind of defect since it's not. He must go back to Ireland."

continued on next page

“No,” Rosie May gasps, “not my baby! Please, doctor, there must be another way.” The doctor only shakes his head. Rosie May cries out and crumples. “The next boat to Ireland leaves in five minutes. You best figure out who will accompany him back.” With that, the doctor walks out. The room is silent except for Rosie Mays’ sobs. Mary Margaret opens her mouth, but Da beats her to it. “Mary Margaret, ye won’t be going back with Oscar. I will.” Ma stares at him in shock. “Before any of ye say anything, this is said and done. The girls will stay here. Maureen, ye were seasick the entire time. Rosie May, yer due date is too soon. Philip, yer going to have a better chance of getting a job than me, and ye have another youngen on the way. I’m the only option.” Ma looks near tears, but she nods. Philip scoops up Oscar and lets Rosie May kiss him, but before she can grab him, Philip hands Oscar to Da. Da kisses Ma goodbye and whispers something in her ear before Oscar and Da hurry out of the room. “No,” Rosie May screamed, running toward the door only for Philip to grab her around the waist. She claws at his arms, screaming for her baby, before finally going limp in his arms. Ma and Mary Margaret rush over to try and help her. I look out the big bay window that looks out onto New York and can’t help but think, “I guess America isn’t paved in gold for everyone.” 🏔️



Verity Evans, 16

My Imaginary World

James Teoh Zhi Xin, 12

I always imagine when I have nothing to do or during my free time. Imagining has been my hobby since I was small. Imagining is interesting and is a fun thing to do.

One of the imaginary wonders is the Pirates of the Atlantic. I imagine myself being part of the crew of a merchant ship. The British captured me and other crews to be soldiers to fight the pirates. Later, I was captured by the pirates and was sent to do the navigational work that I had learned on the merchant ship. I did a good job and was promoted to commander of the gun powder room. For two years, I have been working for the pirates. I attacked ships and ports, found treasures, and got promoted to a higher rank. Some pirates drank wine and had extremely bad tempers. Some were quiet and humble, yet they were also brave and aggressive fighters. I was finally promoted to officer of a mini war ship when the last battle came. The whole pirate fleet sailed toward the British navy. The canon fired. The battle began. I loaded my small vessel with explosive powder and barrels of oil. I sailed straight into the ship and bombed it.

My imagination continues with the Battle of Midway. I became a pilot and fought against Japanese ships, ports, and planes. I also became a member of the navy crew of the aircraft carrier, shooting Japanese planes in the sky. I also imagine myself as a peasant Chinese, untrained enough to fight the Japanese. I may have gone through some cruel experiences fighting the Japanese in World War II. I also imagine myself as an American student who was accidentally sent to Korea during the Korean War. I may be ambushed by some Chinese soldiers or be attacked by Korean aeroplanes. No one could save me because the whole troop, except the officer, were untrained students.

Of course, I will never die after so many dangers because it is just my imagination. I hope that I can be as brave as the person in my imagination. 🏔️

Tastes Good

Maddie Wray, 12

I walk down the palace corridor, wondering what today's lunch would be. Maybe it would be a lovely lamb shank or perhaps a creamy bowl of mushroom soup. Cook had made Rosey dice mushrooms earlier. Poor girl works harder than most in this drafty palace, and for what, barely enough food to keep her from passing out? It's wrong how three chuckle-headed ladies in waiting, who are nothing more than flirty, worthless human beings, do nothing all day except gossip and waste perfectly good air. They are rich and get as much food as they can stuff in their too-tight corsets, while hard-working girls like Rosey spend all day working till they're thinner than a twig and get paid about as much as a barn cat, which is never unless the cat gets a mouse.

As I near the dining hall, I can't help but think of what Rosey said the last time I went on a rant about how much I hated those fools of ladies in waiting and how much I hoped one of them would choke on a carrot. "Cordelia," Rosey said, "you constantly talk about the unfairness in our lives, but what about yours? You are a taste tester, which means you could die at any meal." I couldn't respond for a minute, trying to gather my thoughts. "Yes, I may be a taste tester, but you sacrifice all your wages to that worthless stepfather of yours, which he spends completely on ale, while I at least get full meals," I countered, thinking that Rosey would drop the subject, but alas, she did not. "Yes, you get food, and I don't, but I chose to be here; you did not. You wouldn't be the taster if your father hadn't been a part of that horrible plot for the queen's assassination. I hate to tell you, Cordelia, but all of us servants pity you, given your position and

what happened to your mother." Before I could respond, I had been called away to taste supper.

I snapped out of my memories just in time to ask Hans, one of the guards posted outside the dining room while the queen eats, what kind of mood she was in. "She is rather annoyed for she lost at Bridge to Lady Florence but other than that, she's her normal self." "Thanks, Hans," I say before heading into the dining room. After I walked in, I did the customary bow and took my seat beside the queen. "Good afternoon Cordelia. Today we have braised lamb shank with a side of..." I tune out the queen, listening just enough to know when a nod was appropriate.

My thoughts travel to what Rosey had told me. They pity me. Boy, do I hate that word. Because when people look at me and learn what happened to my mother, all they do is pity me: my mother, my dear sweet mother. After everyone in the servant's quarters knew that my mother had been burned at stake by Queen Mary for being Protestant, they all pitied me. Even people who, at one time, couldn't stand to be in the same room with me were extremely friendly to me. The only reason I wasn't killed was because I had converted to Catholicism a few days before my mother's death. How people treated me only got worse after my father was beheaded for plotting to assassinate the queen. You see, my father was a good man, but after my mother died, all he wanted was revenge. "So, Cordelia, I want to start with the plum and mushroom soup." With that, I swallowed a spoonful of soup, trying not to smile, for what could be more ironic than a queen's taste tester who's immune to poison. 🏔️

The Kingfisher

Joyous Teoh Zhi Yue, 9

One late evening, I saw a kingfisher. I felt so excited when I saw it, because it's very hard to see one. I always try to spot them whenever I have a chance to be in nature.

The kingfisher I saw was standing on a pole with its big beak pointing out. It was a beautiful, large bird with blue feathers and a chestnut head. It has a brown body and belly, a white throat, and a white breast. Can you guess what species it is? It is a white-throated kingfisher.

I have seen kingfishers many times, and they are always standing on a pole. Why are they always standing on a pole? Maybe it is waiting for a mate. I don't know for sure. Maybe I will become a scientist one day and find out why it is always standing on a pole. 🏔️



Joyous Teoh Zhi Yue, 9

ration our tears and sighs (never die young)

Macie Jones, 15

[this poem has lyrics taken from the song "Never Die Young" by James Taylor.]

we were ring around the rosy children.

i think it almost made me cry at the end of that one book, when Phoebe rode the carousel in the rain in her blue coat. only because it made me realize it's gonna be a long long long time before i'll forget what happens. the things today choke all the inbetweens of the shades of reds and blues, because if you're not red or blue, you're a coward! the foreign sighs of a strangled place have finally reached our ears. the last time it happened it was only on your feed for a few weeks. those kids are still gone, by the way. could someone rip the blankets off? because sometimes the cold is all that wakes us up. sometimes it takes more than money. it's so easy to hit the button one more time.

they were circles around the sun

with the yellow and blue stage lights in the footage my dad made he could have gotten fired. he said to the ones above him "you have to call evil what it is!" instead they forced him to go back and change the pixels. the skin tone of the guy in the video was all messed up after that. and this is the world we live in. the American dream, i wonder, will it ever be realized? and if so, would it forget the sighs behind its back? is this the land of the free? the young, spotless hand on the screen falls out of pink curtains stained with grayness, standing out upon the scattered ground, but soon it will become it. soon it will become it. soon it will become the ground.

synchronized with the rising moon

philosophy, ideology, theology, humanity, umbrellas. snowman. important men urge us to return to the books to find ourselves, they say it has everything we need to know! they don't help us reach the shelf, though. they assure us, you've done absolutely nothing wrong! when really, everything i do is wrong. and deep inside the tangles of myself i already feel that. oh, the beauties of war! the smell of victory! the taste of the tears and the papery crunch of the letters telling you he is gone—the scratch of your fingernails on the chalkboard—and, certainly, the fanfares. but that is beside the point.

they were true love written in stone

fold your hands in your flowered lap, and make sure they don't know you're sweating in the sun that's decided to sit on you even in the small gray room. now children, look up. remember your history. everything will be alright. they are wrong. we. are. hatred. sugar. everything. will. be. a small shuffle of movement, and an awkward sliding of shoes. childhood is where rational fear begins. of course, butts are unacceptable. we are merely discarded and expelled. but they'll never forget the ones brave enough to be scared. it gives them goosebumps, in fact.

they're a little too sweet, a little too tight

at least i haven't fallen into anything deeper than a little bit of dirty water. up the road i could run but i don't really want to, there's nothing there but Dollar General and a few abandoned bicycles and some

McDonald's trash and maybe some cigarettes. this hollow winter sky, or, suffocating summer one, either echoes or compresses the yells of kids from all of suburbia, and the flags waving with mocking pride compare a maniac to Jesus Christ. and this is the world we live in. might as well throw up a heil Hitler, it's not much worse.

they were glued together, body and soul

is this the end of the world? or the end of dignity, at least. coffee keeps us awake, but it stains our teeth. love keeps us alive, but it stains our hearts. so many things are wanting to let you know you are alive. so why do you shut them up? the blinds won't always split the light into smaller rays, you know. maybe the heavy air will come and you'll remember what it used to be when your grandparents were hidden in the closet, 1942. they probably couldn't see much when the light came, but it's only my guess.

we gotta cut up our losses into doable doses, and ration our tears and sighs

was it something our mother said? we can't remember. the thin sheet of night is draped over our roof, but it's still not dark enough. we can still hear the dog barking outside at whatever ghosts he thinks he sees. we can still feel our toes and fingertips and our eyes are still blinking, openshutupenshutupenshut. if we have the energy enough, we will normally turn on the amber light and show the clock on the wall its crystals as we subtract an hour from it because it's fast. walking is upstairs, the ceiling creaks, floodlights go on

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and off, we realize we didn't finish our dinner and water tastes weird when we're tired. we wish our sister was awake.

don't fall prey to the dust and the rust and ruin that names us and claims us and shames us all

nowadays on gravestones we're not allowed to post everything we're sorry for. and rock and roll bleeds my fingers, but it'll be okay, because warm hands to hold say enough to break the world, and that is before we have to go to sleep. most who tilt the boat are not to be trusted. into the ocean we go! a little bit of everything we believed comes back to smack us in the face. but that's okay. we knew that would happen from the start. we knew. no skeletons. in. the closet.

never grow old, never ever die young.

if only we could understand that not much is under our control, we could begin to feel and love the reason we are here. because Jesus Christ should not be a political party or a personality trait for the ballot, something as big as that should be etched into the beginning and endings of everything we ever were. so how much longer are we gonna let them go on? broken records keep on spinning. it's not very pretty anymore, and false ideologies are only here because there will always be young hearts to prey on. just make sure you don't have to grow old too early. just make sure they don't crush you while you're still here. just please make sure. 🏔️



Verity Evans, 16

The Journey Through the Algae Forest

Nicholas Koturbash, Age 8

Once upon a time, there was a very kind crappie called Happy White Crappie (HWC). He liked to swim through the large algae forest near his home by the Old Wood Log.

Just as he was going through the algae forest, one spring morning, he saw a line and hook with a worm on it. He knew that meant danger.

A redeye bass darted out from behind a branch in the algae forest. It swam straight to the hook and took a big bite. That was a huge mistake!

In a flash, HWC bit the fishing line and freed the redeye bass. He helped the fish recover as he introduced himself, "I'm Happy White Crappie from the Old Wood Log. Be careful of wriggly worms on shiny hooks. You don't want to get caught again!"

"Thanks," said the redeye bass. "My name is Jake. I thought crappies were afraid of bass."

"I'm always happy to help another fish," said HWC.

They said goodbye and HWC continued on his journey.

It wasn't long before bowfin bullies started circling HWC. They started teasing him, "Hey – It's a little itty bitty crappie. You are small fry!"

Some of the bigger bullies tried to nip his fins!

"Oh no!" HWC cried out loudly, "Stop that!"

The bowfin bullies only teased him more.

Just when HWC thought he would never make it, there was a flash of green and white scales in front of him. It was a whole of school of redeye bass and they were scaring away the bowfin bullies!

One redeye came right up to him. HWC closed his eyes and hoped it would not bite him.

"Hi. It's me, Jake," It was the redeye he had saved earlier.

"Thanks. Why did you help me against all those mean bullies?" HWC asked.

"Because you were nice to me," said Jake. "One nice fish deserves another."

They swam off together and always were friends. 🏔️

Word Games and Video Games

Nicole ODaniel, 14

Callie finally returned from school and plopped on a beanbag in front of the TV. She usually gets home faster than her big brother, Jay, who is in high school and also comes back home to play video games as well. When she finally relaxed, Callie was suddenly startled when she heard a “slam!” at the front door, and then loud approaching footsteps, indicating Jay had arrived. She was used to discovering Jay’s mood by his language, posture, and if he could remember today’s time of day. And not knowing what day to expect, Callie had gotten used to figuring out this randomized pattern.

“Good morning,” Jay muttered as he entered the room.

“It’s late afternoon, silly,” Callie said, thinking she would have said “dingus,” but Jay obviously wasn’t in the mood.

“What are you playing?” Jay asked as he sat criss-cross staring at the tv screen.

“A game called ‘Animal Crushers.’ We defeat a bunch of evil wispy ghosts to save the Queen of the Animals,” Callie informed in a matter-of-factly tone.

“Oh really?” Jay said in a mocking amusement “And who is this Queen of the animals? A tiger?”

“No, it’s actually a goldfish,” Callie answered.

That got Jay to smile and lean over to grab a controller to play. In the video game, a cat dressed in a frilly white dress talks about her next racing match.

“I’m so excited!” the cat exclaimed. “My first racing match! And I already have a name for my racecar, ‘Tacocat Racecar!’ Because the name is the same backwards and forwards!”

“Wait, it is?” Callie said as she rearranged the letters of “Tacocat Racecar” in her head.

“Yeah it is,” Jay confirmed. “It’s a weird word that’s kinda like Anagrams. Where if you flip the words around you get a different word, or sentence. Like this cool one I saw online: “Astronomer or moon starrer.”

Whoah, how come Callie never learned any of this at school? Why couldn’t the teachers teach this kind of cool stuff instead? The controller dropped to the floor with a thud as Callie’s grip loosened on it and her mind whirled. What kind of other cool words are like tacocat and racecar?

Then Callie could hear the familiar sound of the front door swinging open, and it shutting very quietly, indi-



Joyous Teoh Zhi Yue, 9

cating the person cares about the door enough not to slam it shut. It must be mom! She had finally arrived home from her work shift and popped her head into the game room to see Jay and Callie.

“Hey, kiddos. How was school?” Mom asked with some enthusiasm, but it was clear how long and exhausting her day must have been.

“Hi mom, we’re playing ‘Animal Crushers,’” Callie answered as she tilted her head up to look at her mom.

“We?” scoffed Jay. “You dropped your controller and left me to defeat the evil, wispy ghosts all by myself!”

“I was trying to think of other words like ‘tacocat’ and ‘race car!’” Callie shot back.

“Oh you mean Palindromes?” Mom said. “Those were always fun when I tried to come up with words too. But anyways, I need to go dike manner. I mean make dinner! Oh, I guess I’m more tired than I thought.”

“Hey mom, you just said a spoonerism,” Jay joked with a grin.

“I guess I did. Anyway, dinner will be ready soon,” Mom told us with a smile. 🏔️

God Save the Trees

K. E. Keseman, 16

God save our precious trees;
Protect them from the blaze
Whose smoke floats to the sky
Engulfing land for days.

God shield those gentle leaves
That shade all passersby,
Those branches pointing up
Like arrows to the sky.

God hide the woven nests
Where birds raise up their young
From flames that leap and spread
Licking with fiery tongue.

God keep the windswept boughs;
Let not the fire devour
The patient growth of years
In this one fateful hour.

God save our precious trees!
With mighty hands reach down
That sun may shine through smoke
And green rise up from brown. 🏔️

In the woods

Emily Roberts, 15

When the sun comes up over the hill,
It shines through the trees and erases the chill.
In the woods there are many things,
Little chicks and birds that sing.
The animals all come out to be in the sun,
And the baby bunnies jump, prance and run.
Mushrooms peek from under the leaves.
Squirrels run through them and up to the trees.
A creek chatters and gurgles as it goes down its path.
Down to the ocean, leaving a churned riverbed in its
aftermath.
Around the flower's bees hum,
Collecting nectar, going as quickly as they come.
In the woods the world is quiet yet alive,
And even in its solitude, it continues to thrive. 🏔️



Verity Evans, 16

Goldilocks and Rapunzel

Nicole ODaniel, 14

Envy is like a double edged sword, while you are attempting to pierce your opponent, you're wounding yourself in the process. Goldilocks was lounging on a velvet colored couch with flowers circling around her. Sunlight peered through the cracks of the trees overhead, and a greenhouse was out back, with vines and flowers crawling up the glass panes. A small blanket was laid at the feet of Goldilocks, with toast on a napkin and juice in a glass. It was an uneventful day and Goldilocks was reading a collection of old fairy tales. Then a dark figure walked by Goldilocks, but the features of the figure were hidden by the shade of the trees.

Trailing behind the figure was a train of golden hair. Intrigued by the beautiful hair, and a bit of a jealous egotistic, Goldilocks approached the shrouded figure.

"Hello? Who are you?" Goldilocks asked with a hint of accusation in her voice.

"I'm sorry, I think I'm lost. Could you tell me where the library is?" said the figure in a soft voice.

Goldilocks then noticed a basket that the stranger had slung around her arm. She looked like a studious daydreamer by the timidness of her voice and how packed tight her bag was with books she had finished reading.

"Who are you?" Goldilocks asked again, adding more emphasis on the question for the stranger to catch on that she wanted an answer.

"Oh right, my name is Rapunzel. Princess Rapunzel." Then the figure stepped forward and her emerald eyes gleamed in the light.

How odd. Goldilocks just read about a maiden who was trapped in a tower named Rapunzel. Goldilocks also started to remember that the girl in the story was a princess too.

"Did your parents ever name you after the princess Rapunzel in the fairytale?" Goldilocks asked, and held up the book of fairytales with one hand, showing the title.

"Oh, that is me. I am the foretold princess in your story." Rapunzel said with a proud grin.

"Really? Why, I should've guessed you were a princess. How else could you afford the supplies to take care of that hair?" Goldilocks said.

"Actually, I took care of my hair with limited supplies before I was a princess. It just takes more effort and time. But enough about me, who are you?" Rapunzel asked as she tilted her head in curiosity.

"I'm Goldilocks. I am from the story with the three bears." Goldilocks responded proudly, but suddenly stared at her feet in shame. "I wish I could have had a more heroic story."

"Our stories are more than what people remember about us. If you live your whole life worrying about how people will see your story, it will lead you into pride and envy." Rapunzel said wisely. "Now, how about you come with me to the library? I know just the perfect bakery with powdered pastries you could try."

Goldilocks thought back on how she first was jealous of how elegant Rapunzel's hair was, and how it made Goldilocks want to look better than her. But seeing Rapunzel's unnecessary act of kindness, and her wise words, Goldilocks thought on how she had already given up on her life because of the story she was given. Rapunzel had an outstretched hand towards Goldilocks, inviting her to a new story that she could be a part of.

"Yes, I would like that a lot." Goldilocks replied with a small, bashful smile. 🏔️