

# THE ALPINE PATH

Volume 10, December 2025

## From the Editor

We've made it to Volume 10! That means it has been five years since we started this journey up the alpine path. And what a wonderful journey it has been! It has been such a pleasure to see our young writers and artists grow in their crafts over the years. We are so grateful for the people who have supported this literary journal through their submissions and through reading along over the years, without whom, we would not have made it to the tenth volume.

A natural fall and winter theme developed through the writing and artwork in this volume, which is perfect for this December month. So, whether you love curling up with a mug of hot chocolate or you're counting the days till the spring blossoms, you'll find something to enjoy in Volume 10 of *The Alpine Path*.

From the editor, have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

## Winter is Coming

*By Car Gallant, 14*

Colder it's starting to get.  
Early the sun starts to set.  
Finally, slowly, winter is coming.  
Creatures are getting ready,  
The plants are getting ready.  
Finally, slowly, winter is coming.

Now the leaves are turning brown;  
Almost all are on the ground.  
The plants are dying to come back next spring.  
The wind now carries our words,  
A cloud waiting to be heard.  
A melody of voices mixed to sing.

The last geese are flying south.  
The bear, he fills up his mouth.  
Winter, the creatures are preparing for.  
The squirrel readys-up his bed;  
Gathers nuts for days ahead,  
Before the snow covers the forest floor.

Now I sit by the fire,  
Listening to its choir.  
Waiting, waiting, for the winter to come.  
Then silent everything goes.  
The first snowflake outside shows.  
Finally, slowly, the winter has come. ❄️

# A Walk in Autumn

*Brynlee Boline, 15*

I step outside of my house and am greeted by the beautiful sight of my favorite season—fall.

The sky is overcast, a slight dampness to the air as it sprinkles slightly. I raise my umbrella to cover my head. The crisp autumn air makes my cheeks pink, and a sudden gust of wind pickles my skin, managing to find its way through every opening in my knit sweater. I clutch my coffee tighter, savoring the warmth radiating from it. I take a sip and let the pumpkin flavor fill my mouth. The hot liquid warms me from head to toe as I swallow it.

The reminder of warmth makes me want to curl up next to a window, a hot mug of tea in my hand, honey at the bottom. Outside the window would be a lake, leaves floating on the surface and blurring the reflection of the trees. I'd be covered in blankets and wearing socks so fuzzy, they would rival the softness of a lamb's ear. For breakfast that morning, I would have eaten cinnamon rolls fresh out of the oven, the icing melting on my tongue. Next to me, a pine scented candle would be burning, filling my nostrils with the smells of the outside world. Rain would trickle in streams down the window, and I'd occasionally look up and pick two drops to see which one reached the bottom of the window first, each picking more water up and gaining speed as it slid down. I would always be disappointed that the one I'd picked didn't win. I'd hold a book in my hands. Maybe a high fantasy novel, or a contemporary romance. Either way, I'd be thrown into another reality. One where I could love the characters and escape my thoughts and the world around me for a little while.

I'm brought out of my daydream by the crunch of the brown leaves from under my feet, long ago fallen from the many sprawling branches above my head. The leaves up there are still shocking reds, oranges, and yellows, but they will soon fall and join their brethren on the hard ground. Until then, however, they will stay, and paint a beautiful canvas of colors for all passerbys who stopped to admire their brilliance. It reminds me that it can be beautiful to let things go, just as the trees do to their leaves.

It is the faint smell of those dead leaves, rotting on the forest floor, that many associate with fall. And for good reason. It has a wonderful aroma.

I look up when I hear a bird honking, to see a flock of geese in a V, flying south. Their wings are stretched wide, and they'll stop many times on their exhaust-

ing journey in search of warm weather. I love how you can always tell when it is fall, and when winter is approaching by the patterns of the birds. Their return then indicates that spring is going to make an appearance, casting the heavy blanket of winter and cold away.

I hum a little tune to myself as I walk past a group of giggling children waiting for the bus that will bring them to school. It's a song I've been learning on the guitar, and it had the folk vibes that fit with fall. The guitar, and the soft vocals are so perfect for the season.

For the most perfect season.

No other season is like fall. There is just something so special about it. Maybe it is the earthy tones, or the pumpkin decorations, or the fresh fall tasting desserts. Whatever it is, it is magical. Fall truly reminds me that change can be a beautiful thing, if only you let it. 🏔️



*Melting Rainbow by Liliana Choi, 11*

## Winter Trees

*Scarlett Dickens, 6*

The white cover  
of frost

The winter, snowy trees  
lie in front of me

Trees are still growing,  
the glacier's ice winds blow

I walk towards a tree  
I love it and  
hug it

I decorate it  
with snow globes  
and winter winds 🏔️

## The First Snowfall

*Roslyn Dickens, 11*

The flakes glaze the windows,  
The sky shimmers a dull greyish-white,  
The flakes fall thickly and tickle my nose,  
And cloak the trees in white.

Children young and old  
stumble into their cozy homes,  
As the bitter wind nips at their backs.

After a while of cuddling up inside  
They hurry back out again  
To build, and play, and fight.

At night  
The snow dazzles their dreams in white,  
The grass welcomes their winter quilt  
As it tucks them in for a long quiet season.

The trees pull on their ivory winter robes  
And the creatures grab the last berries and nuts.

The snow gives the houses a dusting of magic.  
The sun wakes the children to another cover of white.  
But the Earth sleeps under its new quilt. 🏔️



*Meg Richards, 16*

## I Hear, I Listen

*Anderson, 14*

Over the hill at Grandma's house  
I hear the birds call  
In that strange land between  
The summer and the fall.

Over the hill I listen,  
As the cars zoom by and by,  
And lull me to sleep,  
Though to stay awake I try.

Over the hill I awaken,  
With a jolt and hear,  
The call to dinner,  
Ringing loud for all to hear. 🏔️

## The Twenty Fifth Hour *for my grandmother; who writes and writes and writes*

Bethany Loewen, 17

UNDER THE GROTTTO, and behind the wall; that was where they lived. It was a long, laborious existence. Free only by a technicality which occurred quintannually, they waited. And the fear is in the waiting. Graceful of body, but terrible in length; they ranged from inches to meters in length, all with the same slinking lithe body, same dark tangled tresses. Their world was darkness, and their company; the sweeping songs of dripping dripping, dripping. It was one of these five times, the length of the day turning an hour more, that hour not quite existing except for here in the silent grotto filled with a quickening pulses as the time approached. Flashes of colour could be seen along the one ray of light that filtered through a long crack in the stone. If a clock were to exist in such a place, it would have been ticking ticking, maddeningly, and incessantly. Waiting for that blessed and cursed hour of freedom. See! One surfaces, hesitantly lifting a white hand above the water, glistening. The air changes, a new cross breeze flitting across their fingers. This time had begun when the universe came into being; starting small, so small, barely less than a millisecond five times every year. And the threshold increased, in seconds, or in minutes, or less. And now it stood as one hour. Sixty minutes, three thousand six hundred seconds, three million six hundred thousand milliseconds, exactly.

The fact that it is indeed, exact, is of great importance and note because the moments had never been so precise, down to the last infinitesimal part of Time. The cliffs surrounding the entrance were tall, towering, steep, and rather fragile. Formed from sand and mud compressed

since the creatures had been placed in their palace of shadows; then only being a hole; they stood and would stand for many years more. In the shadows they swam to the surface, longing for that glimmer of light to widen and shine once more.

The man who lived atop the cliffs polished his silverware with a careful deliberation, alone for the night. The sugar bowl was on a roughly hewn wooden table; fir, or maybe ash; and the milk was in a bucket by the door, one of his three cows having been milked half an hour previously. The air was humid but not overly, and the wind blew through the leaves, whipping and swirling in eddies that brought dust up from the ground in small swirls. The long fracture in his back garden stirred as the night grew longer, and a shadow fell in the wrong angle, going silently unnoticed. Earth's tides were different now than they had been, the moon slightly smaller in the sky, and the day marginally increased. The hour approached, and the man, whose name was Eddi, set out ranging sizes of china, teacups and plates and saucers, and silver spoons, and a

silver milk jug, and little forks and big forks; and he took biscuits from the oven and pats of butter from a churner set in the corner. He took an apple cake from its bundt pan and turned it onto a cutting board made of maple, drizzling a fine cream glaze over top, and sprinkling it with violets and apple blossoms. The clock that stood in the left hand corner of the kitchen ticked abnormally once, then twice. He glanced over at it watching it go round to the left, as all clocks do. Plenty of time left for him to find someone to take care of the gardens and trees, the small abode, to keep the rain off the chickens and goats and cows, and most importantly, to set the table for tea.



*Mackinac Island Archway by Lelah Brenchley, 15*

He remembered as if a dream, a fond dream, a lovely old fashioned dream, a much younger day when an aged women had knocked at his door, long silver hair curling over her shoulders, a sage apron over brown trousers and a cream linen tunic; scuffed and aged from the sunlight filtering through the atmosphere, and from the ever changing earth. Crossing into the other room,

somehow never seeming quite the same. But now quiet! Watch; and wait, he opens the door, steps into the garden. Choosing a candle from the shelf, and holding it along the edge of a metal wire until it catches. And all at once, there it came. A small shudder, imperceptible except to those damned few who Time has chosen for its own. A shift in the fabric holding Time away; a tear, a fold, call it what you will; Time, was free.

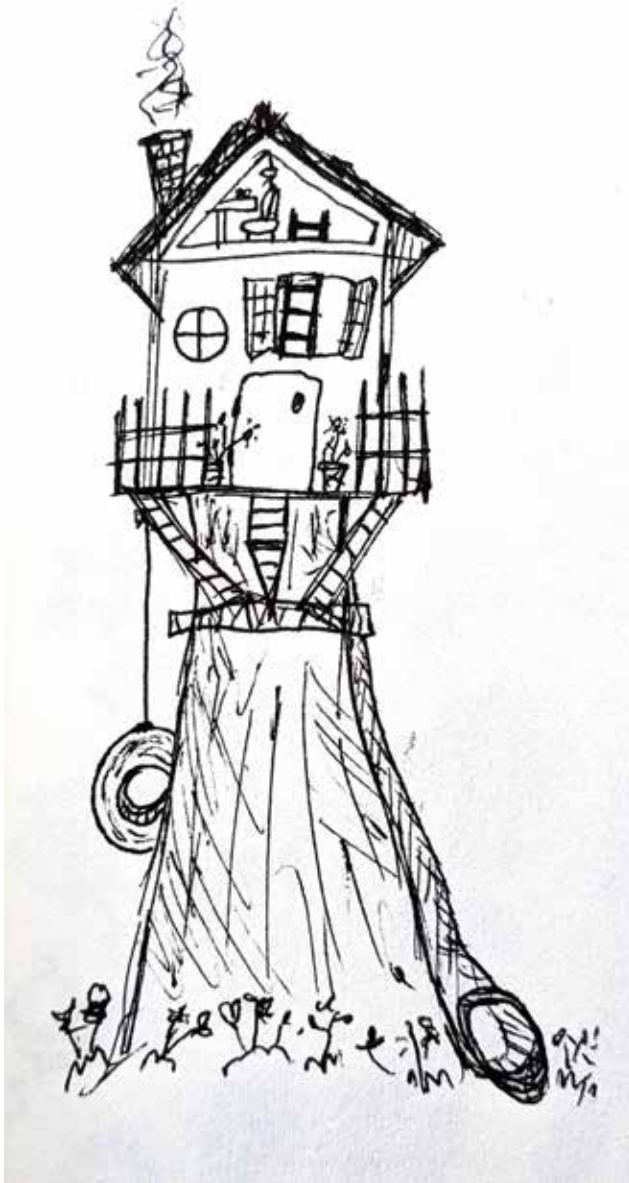
Eddi walked along a path to the rift, feeling as though the earth was shrinking and becoming smaller and smaller while he stayed the same, and the universe becoming ever so much larger, and deeper, and darker, and he was very very very small in the emptiness. A sparrow flew just to the left of his candle, grounding him as he stepped to the edge of a misty darkness. He whistled, softly, one long low note, and in response tens of voices sang back with a complex, saddened harmony. Shadows rushed together, falling towards the moon, joining the first, and where they converged a figure appeared. It stepped out of the dipping and swirling mass and appeared concretely, pockets of light darting around it, with a long flow-

of the dozens of hands reaching out of the splinter. Grasping the smooth white skin where it turned to a harder, darker substance, slowly the whiteness spread, and then quicker quicker quicker, and then the hand turned to two hands and was able to hoist itself up out of the rift, revealing a womanlike figure. Perching on the edge, lifting her head in the clean night air, a darkness was still visible in the shadows of her face, her arms, hanging about her sides stiffly, giving her the air of being on death-bed. Eddi watched as Time continued their task, pulling up the sleek hands, and transforming them, for a short while, to something closer to human.

Once they all stood; as if only just having been brought to life, which, Eddi supposed, they had, their voices rose again in a haunting minor, and he extended his hands, palms up, and sang back. Time strode towards the path through the garden. Shadows bent away from them, Earth rose to meet their feet, tiny flowers and patches of moss and soft sweet grass bloomed beneath every step, where they touched a tree branch, greenery draped itself over and traveled down the trunk to meet itself. The others followed along the carved path of life through the otherwise dim wilderness.

The twenty fifth hour has dawned on the dirt and stones of the earth.

Eddi led them to the door of the house, placing the still burning candle on a ledge near where he had taken it from. The table was visible through the smudged glass in the door, still set, everything perfect, just as he kept it. Time followed him over the threshold, settling on the chair placed above the clock. The others followed, traversing the familiar stones as if



*Cottonwood Cottage by Lelah Brenchley, 15*

his eyes went over a clock set deep in the stone flooring. Almost then. The universe wound tightly around its coiled spring of Time, constant,

ing robe flitting between dark and light, essence and non-essence, being and thought. Time bent down and extended a hand to one

it had been their own; each choosing a bench or chair, some preferring instead the floor, or the worn soft moss carpet in the corner of the room. He walks over to the numerous kettles placed over the stove, and goes around filling teacups, gently speaking with some who wish it, and then came around to Time; filling their cup for them while they smile sadly.

‘Almost your turn isn’t it, Keeper?’

Eddi turns towards the low voice, one of the first to be brought out of the darkness.

‘It always is love.’

And, taking his own mug; the colour of sage, with a small smile on one edge; he settles into the nearest empty chair.

As if something was holding them back, all the raised now begin murmuring, over each other and to each other, and some to Eddi, but no one speaks to Time.

‘Ey the darkness is more than last time!’

‘Isn’t tonight perfect?’

‘I can’t see, my eyes, they’re gone they’re gone they’re still gone.’

‘Time’s flowers were murky, don’t you think?’

‘Pass the cake, would you?—no the other cake.’

‘And where are all the others, Eddi, where have they gone?’

The last remark in a subdued alto stilled the room, quieting the voices and he turned, confused, to Time.

‘Well—I—what others?’

Leaning over the table they spoke again,

‘All the ones before you Eddi. Where did they go? Where do they lie? Where do they rest?’

‘I thought they were dead.’ His eyes were dark, and his mouth in a firm line set deep against the planes of his face. His thoughts flit to every question asked in this house, every odd moment he barely noticed. When there is no response he leans back in his chair, carelessly dangling his mug over his lap.

‘What are you trying to say Time?’

The only response Time gives is to steadily look on at him, their face betraying no emotion.

‘I don’t care. They lie where they lie, they rest where they rest. They dance where they will. I don’t want. To know.’

The room, once so welcoming, now is austere, shadowed, the earlier camaraderie broken by the expression on Time’s face. A slight mist hanging around them, barely perceptible except in the lantern-light.

‘Come along young one—she waits, as she always does.’

A mug is set down on the table. A biscuit placed back half eaten. A slight tremor in Eddi’s brow betrays his uncertainty, and he flicks open a pine coloured lighter.

Close

open

close

open

close

open.

Close.

His head turns to the window that looks out over the cliff, and the single lantern he keeps lit flickers, making sure no one steps off the edge in the darkness. When he turned back a hand was extended, but he stands without taking it. The wind watches from the flickering lantern, darting around and around and around and around just like he did every time before this one.

The teacups have been abandoned, biscuits and cakes and petals strewn around the room. And they all walk to the edge, watch them take step after step after step never faltering. And every so often one smiles to another and a hidden thought is shared between them. As Eddi follows behind, arriving at the rift there is a strange darkness to the air that he can’t ever remember seeing before.



*Bridges by Bethany Loewen, 17*

The air is heavy with velvet and the smell of violets, and perched on the edge of the crevice is a figure. The wind floats her hair over her shoulders and droplets of water hang around her fingertips, dropping into the lake below. Time smiles a sad, lonely smile, and they walk over to her, sitting down on the edge of the cliff and taking her hand. She turns to look at Eddi, who stands confused while all the others dive down into the depths slowly. A piece of earth breaks off the edge of the cliff and hovers beside them, Time stands and pulls Death up with them, stepping onto the island carried by wind. Eddi bends down and places his lantern on the ground, leaning against the trunk of a tree and watching. Death bows to Time, and Time bows in return. And they begin to dance. Mist hangs in the air, flowers fall where Time holds her, and time stops for eternity minus one. As the platform on which they stand begins to crumble they slow, and Eddi steps forward, taking up his lantern again.

The wind streams away and Death walks to Eddi, Time watching from

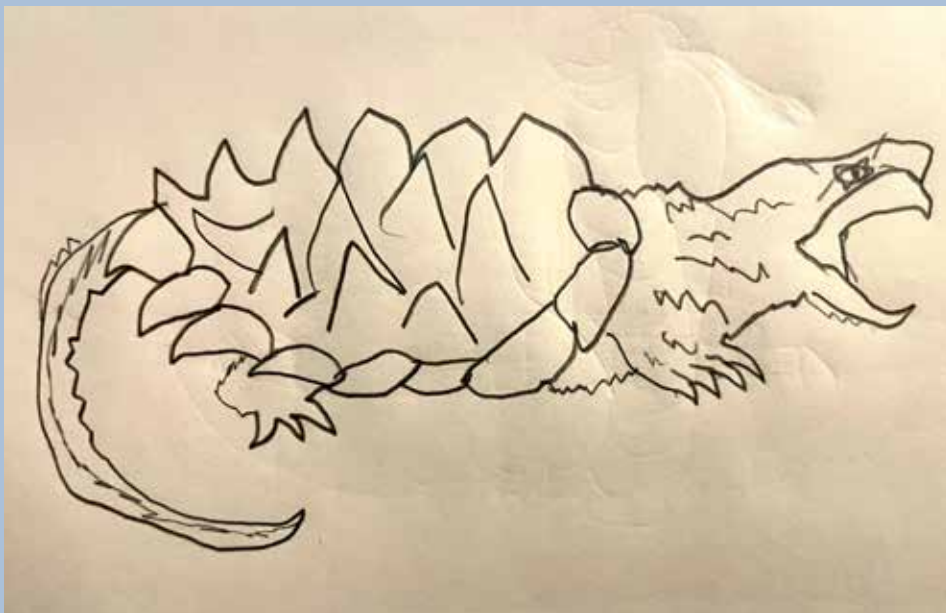
beside the rift. She asks quietly, 'You know what this means, don't you Eddi.'

He nods, and moves to set down his lantern, but she stops him. He walks to the edge and closes his eyes, so he doesn't see when a tear falls down Times cheek, dripping off their jaw, and Death takes it on her finger. And so the keeper steps off, and as he does his eyes fly open when he realizes he never chose someone to take his place, as the old woman chose him. But he need not worry, as the wind has already sought someone, is already flickering a light above his head.

A slight glimmer is the only indication of the water below, but it is closer than Eddi thinks it is; falling; does not take very long. Now! The water closes over his head, welcoming, cool and soothing, and as the water seeps into every crevice of that human skin, a calm sweeps over his ribs, an involuntary calm. He remembers, as if a dream, a house, and cliffs, and a flame in his hand. Looking down he sees that flame still creeping along his fingers,

all along his skin, his muscles, tendons, all aflame and flickering. Behind him is a suggestion of a breath, and turning he hears a whisper in his ear. A tick is in his feet, and looking down a clock spreads out beneath him in a spiral. And he watches the second hand move around, and as it ticks a second clock draws his attention, inset in the spiral, of only one hour. And while the ticking becomes increasingly insistent, the water churns and knocks him off balance. Dragged down to a flickering emerald tile, as his feet touch the ground his mind sings as a thousand songs drown all other senses. The harmonies wrap around his skull, burrowing their way into his bloodstream, thrumming along with the last beats of his heart. Rooted there for what feels like eternity, seconds later the harmony cuts off and he is left alone. Out of the shadows the others come, offering fingers, touches, veins, and his muscles falter and he falls, finally, into their embrace.

The clock peals twenty-five times. 🏔️



*Alligator Snapping Turtle by Luke Choi, 9*

## The Storm

*Marlena S., 13*

Sun

Warm, Bright

Glowing, Heating, Smiling

Sun Sinks, Lightning Cracks

Booming, Crashing, Zapping

Lashing, Pelting

Storm 🏔️

## Love is free

*Lindbergh Pereira, 17*

*"Fate is a wind,  
And red leaves fly before it."*

—Sara Teasdale

Love is free,  
There are no "prisons" in love  
Beyond those ones the soul and heart  
want to stay in.

Love would rather being hurted  
than hurting,

Hurting the one you love is  
Hurting yourself twice.

Love is weird...

How could someone possibly understand  
the laws of the heart?

Missing someone far away,  
Counting every hour and day,

Living the dreams you have created.  
With or without "us,"

Love seeks not but the true happiness:  
Once you are happy,

then I am happy, too. 🏔️

## Another Poet

*Isaiah Park, 17*

Has the World room for another Poet?  
If it does, as it may, it does not show it.

But whether space vast, or just one soul,  
Let me fill it, with lyric, that hole.

Will it be read? Remembered? Or wanted?  
As long as it comforts, I write on undaunted.

To warm one heart, to cheer one day  
My page will fill with poetic array. 🏔️



*A boat by Fredrik, 9*

## you.

*Gretchen Anderson, 15*

you were always the quiet presence  
emanating from the worn velvet chair to the right of  
the window,  
your nose buried in some fantastical world.  
I could never understand how  
a couple hundred sheets of paper and some ink  
were so much to you.

But I saw the way your eyes held stars  
and I wanted some of it. I wanted to understand  
what made you so bright.  
You closed those star-filled eyes when I told you the  
truth.

Three words that'll never pass my lips again.  
Your lashes brushed your cheeks, so pale.  
I think I scared you when I kissed those pale, pale  
cheeks.

I was a fool to think I could catch the breeze.  
for that's what you were  
nymph, fairy, goddess, angel  
I could never be worthy of you  
I called you my dream but you were never my anything.  
For I was a shadow, and you were a star. 🏔️

## Making Plans

*Sophie Kroeschel, 15*

There was a young man named Jimmy McGiffon who grew up in Southampton, England. He boarded a ship headed for New York City on April 10, 1912. His fiancée, Mallory Reed, went there several weeks previously, because her great grandmother had died and left her a house. Jimmy was going there so they could get married. It was four days into the journey. Jimmy lay on his bed, staring at the ceiling, unable to sleep. He never slept well on boats.

He wasn't exactly rich, so he and Mallory had been thrilled when she had inherited a house, and then his Aunt Priscilla had surprised him when she announced that she had got him first-class accommodations on the maiden voyage of a luxury passenger ship called the Titanic. He had never been first-class anything before, and he felt uncomfortable and out of place among all the people who actually belonged there.

He stood up and looked at the last letter he had received from Mallory. She said the house was in good condition, and that he would love it. It had four bedrooms, an indoor bathroom, and a huge kitchen. There was a large garden, a pond, and lots of trees. He couldn't wait to get to New York. He couldn't wait to marry Mallory. She said she would be waiting at the dock when his ship got there. He couldn't wait to see her. It had been nearly a month since they had seen each other.

Jimmy left his room and wandered around the ship, thinking. He didn't have a very good sense of direction, and the hallways on the ship were like a maze. He had gotten lost several times in the past four

days. Eventually he made it to the top deck. He was alone, except for a few crew members. He figured he was the only one crazy enough to be wandering around at 11:30 at night. He leaned on the railing, gazing at the black water glittering with moonlight. He wondered



*Skydiver by Luke Choi, 9*

what his future would be. They didn't have much planned beyond getting married. He would have to find a job, and they would eventually have kids, but that was it. He figured God had a plan for them, and that they would just take it one step at a time. Jimmy had a strange feeling there was something huge about to happen in his life; the feeling was almost a dread. He tried to brush it off as anxiety over moving to America and marrying Mallory, but the feeling remained, hiding in the pit off his stomach. He pushed off the railing and walked slowly along the deck.

He heard some crew members shouting and saw a few running

around. He vaguely wondered what they were yelling about. He yawned. He was finally getting tired. He turned and trudged toward the stairs. Then he was stumbling, grabbing the railing for balance. The ship was turning, throwing him off balance. Why in

the world were they turning? His stomach heaved. He despised sailing.

All of a sudden, an awful noise ripped through the night. It was a painful, loud, crunching, scraping screech. Jimmy practically jumped out of his skin. Shivers danced down his spine and his teeth hurt. The crew's yelling intensified.

Jimmy snagged a crew member running by and asked what was going on.

"Iceberg," he said, then ran towards the bow. Jimmy felt sick. Wasn't the Titanic supposed to be unsinkable? Apparently it wasn't. Although, maybe it wasn't sinking.

The crew man hadn't said it was. But he hadn't said it wasn't either. He gripped the railing for dear life.

A few people had come up onto the deck, asking what was happening. Jimmy told them all he knew, which wasn't much. More people came up. The deck started to get crowded.

The captain showed up and announced that the ship was indeed sinking.

"I knew it," Jimmy thought, fighting not to cry, trying to suppress the dreadful ideas popping into his head.

The captain said that women and children would start boarding lifeboats. Jimmy drifted toward the edge of the crowd. He wasn't a woman, and twenty-two was too

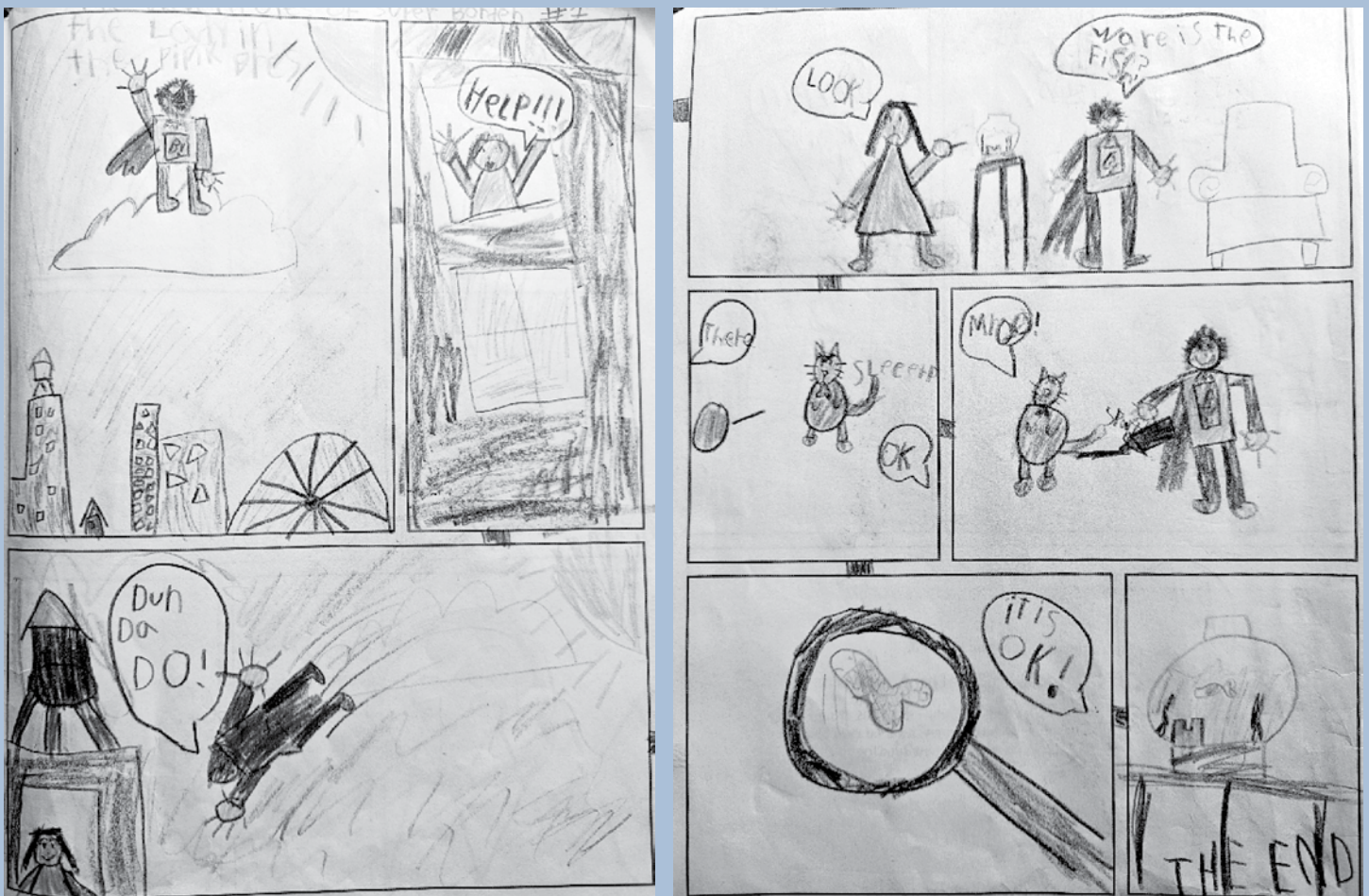
old to be considered a child. He doubted he would make it on a lifeboat.

For a moment, he felt sort of disconnected, like he was standing a few feet away, watching himself. This only lasted a little while. Then he was sort of in a daze, watching people board the lifeboats, observing the different states everyone was in. Most people were still in nightclothes and dressing gowns. The people who came up later were mostly dressed. Some men just running up the stairs were still buttoning their shirts. Terror was on every face, and children were crying.

Jimmy reached into his front shirt pocket and pulled out a photograph of Mallory. He gazed at his love's face. Where the photograph

showed only black and white, his mind filled in the blanks: curly red hair, shining green eyes, smiling pink lips. He stared at the photo for quite a while. He realized he wouldn't get to New York. He was going to die here. All of the lifeboats were filled. The bow was low in the water and the stern was lifted up. It wouldn't be much longer.

Suddenly, Jimmy had a crazy urge to do something completely irrational. He kissed the photograph and jammed it back in his pocket. He took a deep breath, said a prayer, asked God to take care of his beloved Mallory, and he took a running leap over the railing and into the ice-cold sea. Just as he landed in the freezing water, the Titanic split in half. 🏔️



Borden Gallant, 11

## Belong to You

*Lelah Brenchley, 15*

The mountains are a masterpiece,  
The sky a wonderful blue,  
The ocean is a sign,  
That all nature belongs to You.

You alone have created it,  
The sky, the land, the stars,  
The amazing things we see everyday,  
And all the things that are far away.

You alone are the Creator,  
Behold, the earth is Yours,  
You admire all You have made,  
But You love us even more.

The mountains are a masterpiece,  
The sky a wonderful blue,  
The ocean is a sign,  
That all nature belongs to You.

And in all of creation,  
Whether the depths or the sky,  
Whether in the lowest valley,  
Or the galaxies on high,

The heavens declare Your goodness,  
The oceans Your power and might,  
Even if it's the bright of day,  
Or the darkness that veils the night.

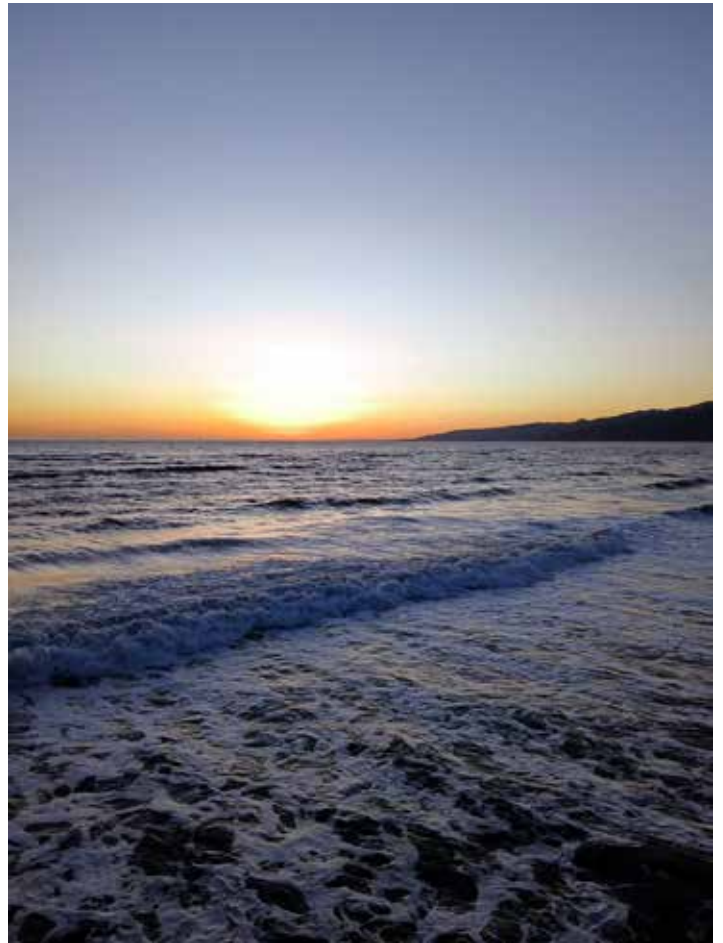
The mountains are a masterpiece,  
The sky a brilliant blue,  
The ocean is a sign,  
That all nature belongs to You.

You alone are our Maker,  
You have shaped and formed us well,  
In the depths of all creation,  
Or on high where in might You dwell.

You love us all forever,  
Your goodness will never end,  
You will always be our Maker,  
Our Comforter, Guide, and Friend.

The majesty and power,  
Of creation just show us how,  
How the Lord, our God and Savior,  
Will be with us forever and now.

The mountains are a masterpiece,  
The sky a brilliant blue,  
The ocean is a sign,  
That all nature, and we too,  
Belong to You. 🏔️



*Meg Richards, 16*



*Phoebe by Aster Yearwood, 10*

# The Wonders of the Wetlands

By Sydney R., 14

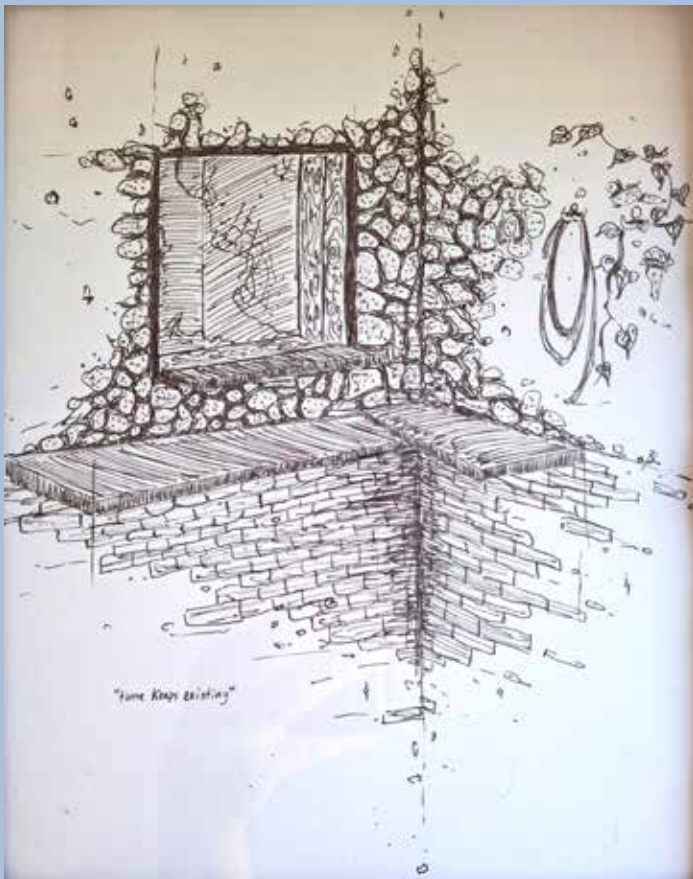
Ashley Grant stumbled through the underbrush cautiously making her way towards her favorite spot, a fallen log, which was in just the right place to watch the great egrets of the North American wetlands build their nests. From the rotting log there was a beautiful view of the sunrise in the morning, and if you were there just as the sun peeked its way above the horizon, the water would sparkle as though a thousand diamonds had been placed there. It gave the marsh a sort-of magical look. Ashley would make the half-mile trek from home almost every Saturday morning just to sit on the log, taking in the beauty of her special place, of which no one knew but her.

If she was worried or angry, Ashley would sit on the log and think

through her problems. It was a place of comfort, of rest. She was in awe of the incredible work of art, but even more so she was in awe of the One who had created it. She loved to think about Him making the wetlands, and the thought that He knew one day she was going to find it and enjoy the beauty of it, thrilled her. Sometimes Ashley would bring her watercolors and paint her surroundings as the day wore on. Every once and awhile one of the great egrets would pose long enough for her to make a quick sketch of it. Ashley kept all these drawings and paintings in a box under her bed at home. She had never shown anyone her work, for she thought they were too precious to share.

Once, she witnessed the hatching of a nest of egrets, and the sight was

breathtaking. Many times she saw the long legged birds out catching their lunch. They would snatch a fish out of the water with their beak and swallow it whole so fast that if you blinked an eye you would miss the whole thing. Occasionally, an egret would stretch out its long neck and let out a loud squawk, disturbing the peace in the marsh and sending a shiver down Ashley's spine. She was not scared of the great bird, but it was such a terrible and wonderful sound that she could not help but shiver. Ashley was glad that she could watch the wonders of the wetlands and knew someday that she would share her special place with her friends and family, as long as they did not get so caught up in the beauty that they forgot Who made it. 🏔️



*time keeps existing by Bethany Loewen, 17*



*Old Concrete by Bethany Loewen, 17*

## darling.

*Gretchen Anderson, 15*

let me call you darling,  
as a joke  
let me roll my r's and say it with an accent  
like  
"Can you get me a water, darling?"  
or "Oh darling, you have something on your shirt"  
or "Darling, you look marvelous." (you do)  
and then,  
when you're so used to it you don't even blink  
let me call you darling  
and be serious  
let me say it with enough weight to make it light  
like  
darling I miss you  
darling I love you  
darling 🏠



*My Family by Lucy Yearwood, 5*



*Creation of Adam by Bethany Loewen and Amelia, 17*

## The Death Of Dreams

*Abigail Pina, 16*

The girl who sits by the windowsill  
once had wonderful dreams  
she'd conjure up images of fanciful wishes  
in golden-hued dusk they'd gleam.  
But dreams only last for so long  
before they're ripped from your hands  
and she only watched as the ravenous hawks  
did away with her scrupulous plans.  
They came, they saw, and they conquered  
ripped apart the seams of her life  
did all that they could to make sure she would  
be left with nothing but strife.  
Amid a war so gruesome and cruel  
the girl kept going regardless  
of filthy schemes and evil deeds  
and murders hidden by darkness.  
Until she emerged victorious  
no more to be battered and beaten  
but no victory bell rang, no choir sang  
for the loss was greater than the win.  
The girl, now a woman, still looks out the window  
hand resting on the sill  
her fancies have fled, hope replaced with dread  
of the future, be it auspicious or ill. 🏠



*Candy Cane Lane by Evan Yearwood, 7*

## End of Long Winter

*Lincoln Dikens, 10*

I ache for the cool summer air,  
Or to watch my garden grow,  
To run and let the wind  
Whip through my hair,  
Or to feel the sun on my face,  
But I am only stuck here  
With this evil, dark, cold winter —  
This seemingly unending winter. 🏔️



*Bardok by Luke Choi, 9*

## So Here Comes Spring

*Isaiah Park, 17*

So here comes Spring: as charming as can be  
Her gentle hand strokes the branches dead,  
And makes them bud with flowers red  
She teaches birds to sing from tree to tree.  
So here comes Spring: she's making Flora stir  
Awaking them from Winter's curse of sleep  
And from the mountaintop and valley deep  
Every soul does take delight in her.  
Yes, every soul loves to see sweet Spring  
Except for me. Poor Soul! Embitter'd, I weep—  
All realms of nature take delight in her  
Yet as for me I cannot bear the sting  
Of gentle Spring's only bitter sweep  
From her trailing garments— Hayfever. 🏔️