

Terminal View



Mr. Gieson's 2002-2003 English Classes

You always find things you didn't know
you were going to say, and that is the
adventure of writing.

John Updike

What Is Blue?

by Joe Simpson

Blue is a feather

Blue is a berry

Blue is a monster

Tall, dark and hairy

Blue is fluid

Blue is the water

Blue is the pit of the fire

Where it can't get any hotter

Blue is the juice

Inside a smoothie

Blue is the seat color

Inside a movie

As you lay on your back

And look up to the sky

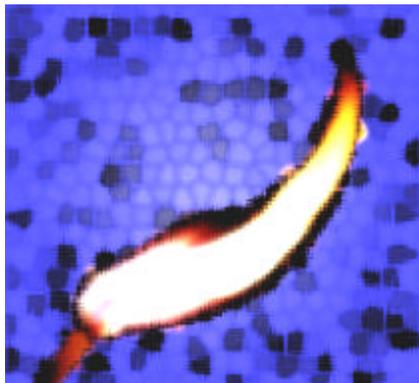
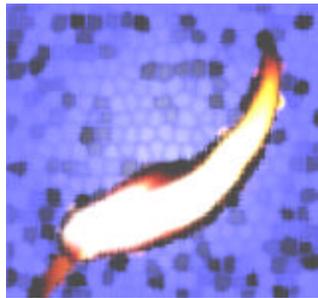
Blue is last color

You'll see before you die

Blue is cool, smooth and boring

Blue are the sheets

Over your head when you're snoring



I AM...

by Jennifer Alley

I am 14 years old

I wonder how the sun comes up each day

I listen to country music

I wish the summer could last longer

I want to do good things

I feel happy about myself

I worry about getting everything done

I cry when I think of sad times

I am excited about next year

I understand that life isn't always fair

I say funny things sometimes

I dream about reaching my goals

I hope I always have friends

Friend

by Ellie Lyon

Friend

Gentle, kind

Chatting, gossiping, laughing

School, youth, trust, years

Leaving, lying, cheating

Selfish, evil

Enemy



The Two-Hundred Butterfly

by Sarah Sykes

A frozen moment in time only seen in a picture: eight people in the air with arms tightly pressed together, horizontal over a calm, cool pool of water. The faces of each swimmer show the confidence or fear that fills them. Each says to herself, I have trained for this all year.

The thin, seamless suits of the swimmers quickly and smoothly enter the water that is now only gently rippling as if a stone has skipped across it. Strong, powerful kicks silently thrust the swimmer through the water. Beneath the surface, their kicks produce tiny bubbles that rush and swirl. After reaching the surface, the first two strokes are taken without a breath. Relaxed arms will soon become tight and tired; legs will become numb and tingly.

Those in the stands cringe as the swimmers quickly reach the first and most difficult obstacle, the wall. The wall produces many challenges and only the best will get off first. In coming off the wall, a stroke is taken without a breath. Holding one's breath is close to impossible, but extremely crucial.

More strokes are taken, more walls are passed, and only the final twenty-five is ahead. An incredible burning fills the entire body. In the pit of each stomach is the deep surge of whatever was eaten last. It is threatening to rush up through each girl's throat. When the last wall is reached, a sigh of relief comes from each person—not because of the results or their personal time, but because the race is over.

Pulling their limp bodies out of the pool is near impossible. Then, crawling across the pool deck, girls shake from fatigue while rumbling stomachs continue to roar deep within.

Each has just finished one of the most difficult races in swimming, yet some people tend to look past the strength of those who compete in this sport.

I Used to Be *by Rachel Blum*

I used to be a creek trickling in a narrow path,
But now I am river flowing with wrath.

I used to be a fist protected and tight,
But now I'm a palm open to new light.

I used to be a stick stuck in the ground,
But now I am a tree tough and sound.

I used to be red and full of fury,
But now I am blue--calm without a worry.

Candy

by Niki Spadaro

Can be chocolate

And also

Nutty

Doesn't matter what kind you eat

You'll always say, "Yummy!"

What Is Life?

by Megan Leonard

When a newborn baby cried

When someone you love dies

Losing the championship game

Succeeding in fortune and fame

Bad grades

Sneaking out to go on raids

Your first broken heart

That tears you apart

Great friends

That stay with you till the end



Umbrella

by Alison Hofheimer

Underneath, people rescued by the shelter from pounding drops

My hero

Barbaric spurts of water striking Earth's surface and those on it

Rain falls on top but is not strong enough to get through

Elaborate colors and prints

Laughing in the face of dangerous drops

Lengthy, long, expandable

Another day in Florida: rain, rain, and more rain

Girl

Animated, intelligent

Beautiful, polite, helpful

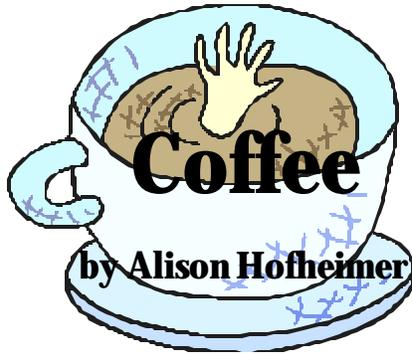
Kooky, mysterious, intense, athletic

Tasteless, messy, likable

Rowdy, charming

Boy

by Courtney Johnston



Strong, bold
Earth-shattering
Eye-opening, steaming
Steams my body, soothes my
tired soul
WAKE UP!

Lizards

by Lauren Bussey



It crawls and slithers across the up-rooted earth as its bulging eyes focus in on its prey, a spider. Without notice, the lizard stops, sensing the air with its long tongue. The prey remains oblivious, unaware of the lizard's presence. Little by little, the slimy creature closes in. The spider is clueless. As the lizard slides soundlessly across the sand, ready to make its final move, the spider stops. The prickly hairs on its legs, now aware of the lizard, begin to rise. Suddenly, the lizard makes a daring move; it catapults itself into the air, heading right at the spider. The spider skitters sideways, and the chase is on—one animal running for its life, the other for its dinner. Their speeds increase as they hurdle themselves over tree roots and through the thick brush. The lizard is gaining on the spider until the spider takes a sharp turn...right into another web. Helplessly entangled in the sticky thread, it eventually stops struggling against the web's tight hold. It lays motionless as the lizard once again sticks out its long tongue, sensing the air. The lizard inches forward greedily, opening its mouth as it moves.



Old Timers

By Ben Ferrell

Open to speaking their minds

Like talking

Docile

Tired, worn out

Ill-tempered toward teens

Make salads

Erratic drivers

Retired

Shuffleboard and canasta

At the Foul Line

by Rachel Harris

I glance up at the scoreboard...fifty-seven to fifty-six. We're down by one point with ten seconds on the clock in the game that will determine the conference champion. After in-bounding the ball, I race down the court waving my hands for a long pass. Our guard catches sight of me, and thrusts the basketball down the court. Leaping up in the air, higher than I ever have before, I grab the ball with every ounce of strength left inside of my body. I feel a slap on my wrist, and the pain of long, pointy fingernails digging into my skin makes me shriek inside—but I do not show my agony.

The referee blows his whistle and indicates the foul on number forty-two. This is our last chance to prove ourselves and win this game. I look out at the crowd and see worried faces. My foul shooting has not always been so sensational. My team members on the bench bury their heads in their arms, thinking all is lost. But coach still has faith in me; he always does. He smiles and gives me a thumbs-up.

As I walk up to the foul line, the basket has never seemed so far away. I breathe hard and try to concentrate, but how can I concentrate when the whole game is resting on my shoulders?

Lining my right foot up with the center floorboard, I give the ball a few dribbles. I stare at the scoreboard again...fifty-seven to fifty-six with two seconds left now. This is it. I bend my knees, arch my back, and stare at the basket. The other team is pounding on their bench and on the floor, and screaming and yelling. I dribble the ball some more, and rest it in my right hand with my left hand guiding the ball. Jumping a little, I release the ball. It floats up in slow motion, and bounces on the rim and finally falls in after what seems like forever. My knees feel like jelly. If only the next shot could go in for the winning point, we could all go home without the dreaded overtime. The crowd is cheering and coach is smiling.



The referee gives me the ball and says to the other players, "One shot; let it hit the rim." Lining up again, I tell myself, Same thing, same thing. Somehow, I block out all the noise and distractions. Silence. This is beautiful. I jump a little and shoot the ball, making sure every move is perfect. It bounces on the rim yet again. The other players are battling each other for the rebound. I can't move, for I know it's going in. It bounces one more time and finally falls gracefully into the net.

The timer buzzes, and my teammates run onto the floor to celebrate. We jump up and down, naturally, due to our extreme excitement. The game is over. It's almost sad. However, we are the champions.

After the Game

by Allison Dewan

The crowd is flowing
Out the tiny gym door;
I am so tired
I could fall to the floor.
The tension from the game
Finally floats away,
And I now end
My long, tiresome day.

A World of Their Own

by Katie Slater

In a brilliant glass tank two angelfish swim through the clear, sparkling water. One after another they glide through castles and treasure chests searching for a place to hide. With no luck they keep searching. Their tails drift behind them, waving in a wispy motion as they continue their journey. As one notices specs of food being dropped from the “sky” above, they begin darting toward the long-awaited meal. They swim across the top of the water trying to consume as much as they can.

With tummies full they rest. Asleep, the angelfish float throughout their palace unaware of where they are going. The water is calm. There are no ripples or waves, just two peaceful fish and a glassy water surface. Its own little world, the fish tank lies undisturbed all alone on an old oak table.

Roses

by Lauren Bussey

Redding buds
Only blooming at certain times
Smelling sweet
Enveloped by soft petals
Slowly wilting as winter arrives



What I'm Thinking

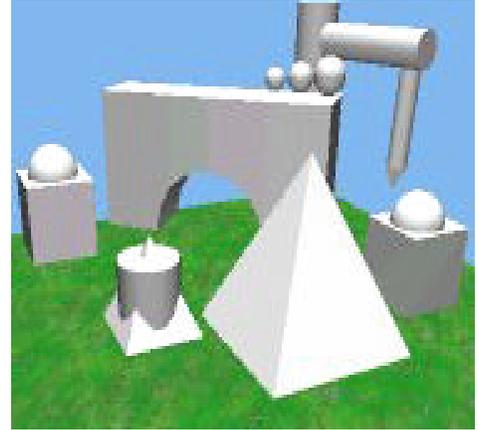
by Joe Simpson

God, I'm bored. I feel as if a swarm of boredom bees has chased me down and stung me to the point where boredom puss is flowing inside my body and oozing out of the pores of my skin. I hate that. More to the point, I can't think of anything to write about and it's giving me a headache. I started a couple of other writing pieces, but none of them worked out.

The first writing piece I started was about wake boarding. It was going well until I forgot what I was writing about. It went like this: "The full moon glistened brightly along the glassy river alley. I watched from the boat as Ryan carved across the flat-water top. Billy had tried to follow him with the spotlight..." It could've been nice.

Another piece of writing I started was on tuna fish. I began writing it on something random like tuna because I was really pressed for time. It wasn't a smart idea because it wasn't interesting enough to finish. It started out like this: "I love eating tuna fish salad. While tasting it, I savor every little morsel in my mouth as it takes my taste buds for a joyride. I could spend an hour or so just making one batch, perfecting it, correcting the ratio of relish to mayo and what not..." I bet you hate it. I hate it. During the time that Mr. Gieson reads it aloud to the class (if he does), I'll be sitting back in my chair contemplating why I should drop out of school and become a circus clown in Iowa or somewhere off the coast of Africa, or something like that.

Now I've written this and I hate it too. I don't have any time to write anymore 'cause the bell is ringing and I have to turn it in.



Memories

by Ellie Lyon

Memories are calm,
They are soothing,
They even stay with you
While you are moving.
Saying goodbye
Is never easy,
You get all emotional
And sometimes you're queasy.
Never to leave you,
Always by your side
Memories give advice
And can be your guide.
You can't forget
The memories you've shared,
They even are with you
When you're scared.
Love and cherish them
Just like a gem.



Funny
Happy, hysterical
Chortling, chuckling, snickering
Billy Madison, South Park, Chris Rock
Crying, screaming, shrieking
Horrificing, terrible
Scary



-- *by Jamil Array*

Building Up

by Joe Simpson

Silently building up over time,
Anger balled into a liquid.
Reminders from a past
So painful, so vivid;
Held back stresses
That can't be let out...
Mind pounds and presses
Releasing screams and shouts.

Prayers in the night
Hoping for better news,
Still my mind is tight;
These are my blues.

The Blanket

by Ashley Ashourian

The needle swooshes in and out of the yarn as Grandma sits on the worn burgundy couch in her small, cozy house. She is so focused that the rim of her massive glasses almost touches the yarn. Her lips are pursed in determination. She thinks of the finished blanket she will give to us for Christmas, wrapped in maroon paper with a gold bow. She hopes that we will like her present and thinks about how it will pass on from generation to generation. Her Yorkshire terrier yawns beside her, and she knows it must be getting late. She concentrates on pulling the needle in and out of the yarn. She is almost finished. The yarn rubs against her; it is as soft as a rabbit's coat. The lights seem dimmer and Grandma is extremely tired. Her curly gray hair bounces as she nods off. Maybe she will finish tomorrow.

What is Yellow?

by Ashley
Ashourian

Yellow is a sunflower
A banana
And a biker's old bandana
The first color that comes to mind
An easy color to spot and find
Yellow is pancake batter
Carbs that make you a whole lot fatter
Yellow is a flash of caution
A color at an antique auction
Yellow is fun
Lemon soda and home runs
The color of the Cheerios box
Smelly, gross, disgusting socks
Yellow is butter
And a dirty room full of clutter
An egg yolk cracked in a pan
Also, the color of Ms. Pac-Man
Yellow is a smiley face
The mantle of a fireplace
French's mustard squeezed on a hot dog
The paintings in a synagogue
An old and dirty cleaning rag
An M&M peanut bag



Yellow is a school bus
A kid I know named Gloomy Gus
Pizza crusts and buttered toast
The football field's high goalposts
Eggnog at Christmas time
A sunset after a mountain climb
A bowl of popcorn on the table
A character in Aesop's fable
Yellow is a pineapple
The perpetual flow of a clear brook's babble
The outside rind of a grapefruit
A friendly little spotted newt
An Easter egg packed full of stuff
The fluffy filling in cream puffs
Saffron used to color rice
Rita's lemon Italian ice
Cheesy Kraft macaroni
The restaurant's special—rigatoni!
French fries and birthday cake
The feeling on a coffee break
Yellow is a springtime flower
Also the moldy mildew in a shower
And in the summer
When the sun shines brightly
Yellow is the color
Of friends held tightly

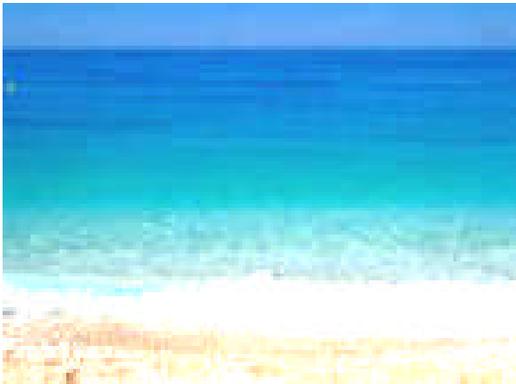
Campfire Serenity

By Tania Yegelwel



I leaned back on the bumpy log, placed my palms on its rough bark, and glanced above at the vibrant stars. The fire burned and crackled as other campers dipped their marshmallows into the flames. I decided to follow my friends' actions by grabbing a stick and roasting one of the sweetened puffs until it was light brown and crispy. The gooey treat melted on my finger tips as I quickly stuffed it into my mouth. Sweet songs being played by counselors on guitars filled the air, and a peaceful atmosphere descended upon us. A cool breeze stirred the fire and swayed the trees. I relaxed, listening to the music and counting my most vivid camp memories.

Looking back up at the sky, I searched for a shooting star so I could wish this night would last forever.



Water,
Mysterious, glassy,
Swimming, diving, floating,
Freedom, coolness, fish, bubbles,
Growing, budding, breathing,
Trees, grass
Earth

--Katie Slater

Ocean

by Ellie Lyon

The cold, salty water swarmed around me. My heart pumped wildly and beads of sweat appeared on my forehead. Bright red, slimy fish brushed the side of my leg as they swam by. I cringed and screamed as loud as I could, thinking it was all a dream. But it wasn't.

Now, I could feel the mucky seaweed wrapping around my feet. I kicked, but the seaweed wouldn't let go. Then I felt something else grab me and pull me down into the unknown darkness. My heart practically leaped out of my chest with fright as a giant sea creature swallowed me whole!

The Journey

by

Lauren O’Laughlin



As a ritual in our tribe of tree frogs, when the sun hits a particular part of our tree, we embark on a journey to taste the delicious water of “The Pond” once again. Our tree exudes so much peacefulness that if you merely jumped by it, you might fall asleep for hours.

Yesterday the sun came. It had been quite a while since the sun had last caressed the spot on our beautiful tree. We gleefully left this morning in search of the famous Pond using the information passed down from our elders and our memories. We treated the Pond as a gift from God, and all of its contents as a Blessing from the Universe.

Along our path we entered a large, metallic gate that looked shiny and new. None of us can remember the image of the gate since the last journey. A treacherous sea of garbage swelled in front of us as we tried our useless force against the mountains of waste. My slimy, green toes squeeshed and squooshed through an unknown sticky brownish goo painting the surface of this strange place like glue.

As the unbearable stench of rotting food invaded my nose, I instinctively jumped faster to evade it. With every jump I took, some random piece of rubbish fell from above. Each could lead to my death. Tin cylinder rooms labeled Coca-cola lay everywhere. “Where did it all come from?” I asked.

A few of the younger members of our tribe were misled by the tiny Styrofoam pieces sitting in the heap of it all. They ate it, thinking it was food, and passed away before they could take another breath.

“Who is responsible for this rubbish, the mess that now holds my friends’ lives? Show yourself!” I yelled in anger, but realizing I was but a small tree frog, I kept quiet.

I hopped along with the others, determined to quench my thirst and calm my mind when we would reach the wonderful Pond. The interminable rubbish went on for days and weeks, but finally it came to an end. The remaining frogs and I, full of exhaustion, jumped through the final gate, panting as we went. We were starved, but yet somehow completely full of desire for the Holy clear, blue water we had drunk once before. We finally reached the Holy Pond, but something was not quite right. I jumped closer only to realize that the once gorgeous water was grey! Hoping that my thirst had somehow altered my vision, I hopped down and took a sip. Filth! The pond was filled with awful, deadly filth! The others soon realized that I had croaked the truth. We grieved with sorrow. Because of our demanding thirst, we had no choice but to seek fresh water nearby.

As the others weakly jumped away, I paused. I looked across the Pond which once had great meaning in my heart. I saw an enormous building in front of me, expelling a thick, hazy smoke with the stench of millions of carcasses, much like the smell of the rubbish heaps I passed earlier. I looked at two standing creatures at the base of the structure, eating from a tin box. One took his food out of a transparent bag and let the bag drop to the Earth. Then it hit me—*these* were the creatures who had ruined our path! *These* were the creatures who had ruined our beloved Pond!

I screamed at the top of my little frog lungs, “How can you do such a thing? Have you no appreciation for the Earth that was given to you?”

If only the Earth were as it was before; we could have our lives back.



Fire

Hot and bright

Burning, flickering and cooking

Camp, glow, smoke and smell

Fade out, water, wind

Flow and glisten

Ocean

by Kenzo Kawasaki



Fantastic way of expressing

Love to

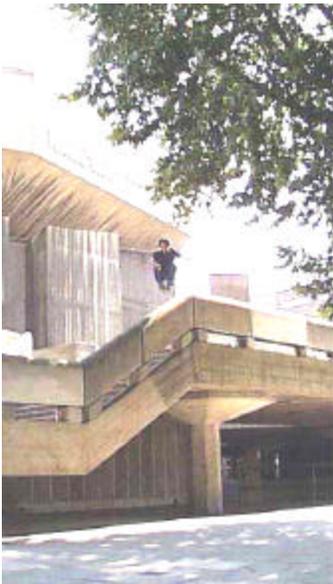
Others with

Wild and

Exotic

Rainbow colors

Anonymous



Free Falling

by Kenzo Kawasaki

Picture this: You're all alone, sitting with your feet dangling fifteen feet from the ground. All there is is concrete under you, and all you have is your skates to get you down. Your mind tells you, If you drop the vert, you will regret it for all the pain you'll feel when you hit the ground. You also know if you don't drop, everyone will make fun of you, or they will say, "Don't worry about it." Your skates feel heavy like they want you to go down. You can do it. What if I break something? I hate casts. Your mind races; it is time to go

You push off, put your skates on the wall and close your eyes. The wind whips against your face and suddenly you forget all your confidence and all you've learned. You can't hear anything; your knees give out. Your body goes limp and you hit the ground. The lights go out and you wonder, Am I dead? Then someone walks up and flawlessly drops the vert. You close your eyes and yell.



The Result

by Joe Simpson

David had had the third-to-last run in the competition so the water still dripped from his eye-level brown hair to his bare stomach to his red-and-black board shorts and down to his callused feet. He stood in a line alongside the other riders at the front of the stage. David knew that they had already called second and third, so if they did not call his name for first place, he would not have placed in the tournament. This being his first tournament in the cowboy division, he was inexperienced and cautious but trying to play it cool and confident. He stood as stiff as a board. He had all his weight on his heels, stuck his chest out, and gripped his hands tightly behind his back. You could tell by the wrinkles in his forehead that he was as nervous as a legless cat in water. Anyone could tell by his glazed, shaking eyes that all he could think about was his run.

Returning Home

by Rachel Harris



A tall, dark-haired man knocks on an ancient wooden door faded with water spots and covered with deep cracks. The splintered boards of the front porch creak and groan as he sets two black leather suitcases down. He glances at his gold and diamond Rolex watch, straightens his tie, and knocks once again on the door. Surveying the giant oak trees in the yard, the man spots an old tire swing hanging lackadaisically from a worn-out twine rope. It swings slowly in the cool autumn breeze.

The man picks up his luggage and slowly walks down the rickety porch stairs. Just as he opens the driver's door of his Jaguar convertible, having second thoughts about his visit, the man hears loud, playful barking coming from the woods near the small house. A graying golden retriever emerges from the colorful woods.

Recognizing the dog, the man runs toward the friendly, familiar animal; its long ears wave in the wind as it prances toward the man. The man embraces the dog, running his fingers through its thick yellow and grey coat. The dog playfully licks the man's face, wagging its tail excitedly.

The voice of another man dances through the cool, crisp autumn air, "Charlie, you crazy dog, wher'd you be off into?" He stops abruptly as he exits the woods. Staring at the other man in amazement, a tear rolls down his cheek and a smile spreads across his face. "Welcome home, son."

Football

by Ben Ferrell



Crunch, Bang!

A man runs by

A juke, a slam, a spin

People stand up, getting a better view

Touchdown!

Three Strikes

by Alison Hofheimer



I am ready for the first pitch. The pitcher winds up and next thing I know a white sphere is soaring right towards me. Nervously, I pull my bat around just like I practiced, but my timing and the pitch's velocity are not quite the same. I listen for the blissful sound of the ball connecting with my bat, but, to my disappointment, the only sound I hear is the ball's journey ending in the catcher's glove with a crisp slap. Despite the silent crowd, from the dugout come the usual chants. Nevertheless the sound I concentrate on is the umpire's sharp "STRIKE!" followed by the catcher's sigh of relief. Now I'm ready, I coax myself. As I soothe my nerves I try to remain positive by thinking that the next pitch will end much better. I re-adjust my fingers until they feel just right. Then I stamp my feet in the clay and twist them around, seeking the perfect stance. In one motion I lift my bat just above my shoulder at the ideal angle to send the ball hurtling through the air.

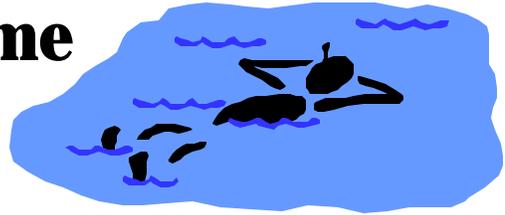
Once again the ball comes gliding through the air and again it is perfect. I know I am ready so I take a step and a nice level swing. I MISS! Stunned, I bow my head in shame and glare at my feet. What is wrong with me? Simultaneously, the smile disappears from my face.

I take another practice swing and that is when I know it is now or never. Last chance, so I must make the most of it. I glance at my coach and he just says, "Relax!" Suddenly I am a new person, one who is focused. No longer do I hear the encouraging cheers from the dugout or stare at the two strikes on the scoreboard. It is a new game just between the pitcher, the ball, and me. I know this pitch too will come straight down the middle, and for this I am prepared!

The pitcher releases the ball and it goes along with my prediction. Another zinger zooms right down the middle. I time it to perfection because I know it's the one and I do not want to take the walk of shame back to the dugout. I am so nervous; I squint, unable to see the ball. Out of nowhere I feel a thud on the bat and the sharp sound of the ball being jolted, the sweetest sound ever—music to my ears. I sprint to first base, round it and attempt to continue to second. I make it to second, however the centerfielder's glove and the ball had an unfortunate collision. She snagged my line drive. Although this ends my joyous at bat, there are more innings to come which means more at bats, and then I will be ready!

The Swim of a Lifetime

by Alison Hofheimer



Excitement overflowed my body when we arrived at the Keys; it is one of my favorite places in the world.

It was sort of late in the day, but I longed to submerge my tired body in the sparkling azure water of the Gulf of Mexico. I figured that I could sneak in a quick dip before dinner. I left the hotel with simply a big, soft hotel towel and my room key. Opening the gate, my first gasp of gulf air was filled with sea salt and I felt the gentle breeze rubbing against my exhausted face. Enjoying the crisp yet gentle sand underneath my worn feet, I approached the ocean.

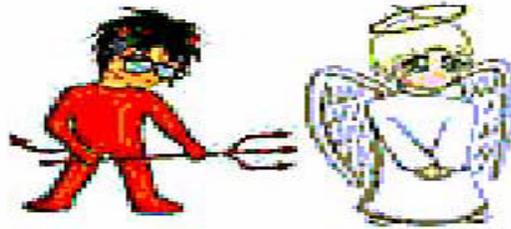
I put my towel and room key down on a lounge chair at the deserted beach. About to peel off my clothes, the sound of angry roars and fuming howls drew my attention to a dangerous brawl. Two men, apparently drunk, were next to me struggling. The bigger one, who appeared to be gigantic compared to the petite other one, pinned the small man down on the beach and was continuously punching him. Pounding beats raced in my heart! What should I do? My first instinct was to run get help, but considering how much anger the enormous man was displaying, I decided it might not be wise to tick him off by revealing myself. Quickly, I dove under the picnic table to try and hide myself and to pray that he would not see me. Explicit language poured out of the furious man's mouth; he showed no mercy and continued punching the lights out of the poor smaller man. Out of nowhere, breaking the constant chain of curse words came the pounding interrogation, "Where is the money? You backstabber, where did you stash it?" Terrified, I watched as the undersized man's unconscious body was shoved into the sea and I was disgusted to see the lifeless corpse float facedown. The darkening sky hid me from the man... or so I hoped!

Then it hit me. My towel and key lay on a chair in plain sight. There was no way I could save them; I just prayed that he would assume I'd become scared and left. Walking right past me, he murmured casually, "Well that takes care of him." Out of nowhere he seemed to vanish from the crime scene. Little did I know, he was sitting on the picnic table pondering his cruel actions. Assuming he was gone, I poked out my head like a turtle from of a shell, but I saw his leg and scurried ferociously back under the table. I wondered whether he had seen me or not. Out of nowhere, the psycho above me stuck his head under the table and screamed "SURPRISE!" then roared an evil laugh. It was all over...

Beep... beep... beep... the agitating sound of the hear monitor wouldn't stop! Why was I in so much pain? I painfully, slowly opened my eyes that seemed glued together. What were these millions of wires, tubes, and bandages doing here?

Sayonara

by Rachel Blum



It is a sizzling hot July day in south Florida. Eggs could easily fry on the sidewalk, and my friends and I are on an adventure. All we can think about is falling endlessly off a high tower while connected to a stretchy, springy rope. We are going bungee jumping.

Everyone picks me to go first, but before I start my journey up the never ending flight of stairs, I glance up. The tower seems to be 1,000 feet tall! I head up. Just take one slow, steady step at a time, I say to myself. My feet move extremely slowly, like they are sacks of potatoes. For every step I go up, the people below get smaller and smaller until they look like ants.

I finally reach the top. The attendant straps me to the cord. As it wraps around my body, I feel like my guts are going to squeeze out. I look down one final time. The distance to the ground has become 10,000 feet.

The chanting of the little ants, “Jump! Jump! Jump” rings in my ears. My heart beats rapidly, like never-ending drums. I think I’m going to have a stroke as I step to the platform.

My subconscious emerges from its deep burial in my soul. The little angel on my right shoulder urges me to step back and be safe. “This is dangerous—you could get seriously hurt. Don’t jump!” he warns.

On my left shoulder sits the devil. “Don’t be a chicken,” taunts the devil. “What will your friends think of you?”

“They will not care if you step back,” says the angel warmly.

“Whatever! They will never let it go. I can hear them laughing right now,” says the devil with an evil sneer. Suddenly the devil and the angel get into a skirmish. Boom! Pow! Bang! “Ouch!”

“Sayonara, sucker! Hah, hah, hah, I win!” yells the devil as he spits on the angel’s deformed body.

I guess that means one thing—I’m going to jump! The ants down below count down: “5, 4, 3, 2, 1...GO!” I jump.

Believe it or not, that was the last thing I did in my lifetime. All my friends remember me as a brave person. Little did I know when the devil said, “Sayonara, sucker,” he was talking to me!

Just Another Meow

by Lauren O'Laughlin

I lay curled up against the icy back door, my fur standing on end. I can only dream of enjoying the warmth and security the house beholds, for my masters are ignoring me. I can't leave these grounds or Jack, the neighbor's cat, and his buddies will gang up on me and more or less shred me to bits. So I'm stuck here with my paws freezing on the porch tile.

I have five masters, yet none of them will listen to me! What did I do to lose their respect? I remember when it all started—four weeks had passed inside the house and I hadn't seen anything but the den. I wanted to see the world, I wanted to explore! After repeated attempts to venture outside, the mother of the household let me out and my other masters joined me. A gentle breeze caressed my neck and the sweet smell of flowers was in the air. I scampered around playfully as my youngest master, with curls of blonde, ran around on his short little legs trying to chase me. The soft rustling of the trees was like music to my ears, and I was glad my masters had allowed me this great experience. The other masters held me and stroked me, little did I know, for the last time. When it was getting a little nippy, my masters led the way to the door, but just as I was going to enter, SLAM! right on my little kitty nose. To this day I don't understand it, but I blame myself. Ever since, I have learned the hardships of being a cat, especially after weeks of pawing at the door with tears in my eyes, wishing someone would come to play with me or just be with me, like how it used to be before the days of the wooden door.

Esther's Departure

by Tania Yegelwel

Peering out the car window, she waved goodbye. I stood on the driveway and flapped my hand right and left until her face was not visible and the car she was riding in disappeared down the street. My sister Esther was going to college. She was about to experience a four-year adventure—a period of time where she would find herself, form many new friendships, and be challenged educationally.

Still standing on the driveway, I remembered when she was accepted into George Washington University several months ago. I never thought the day of her departure would arrive so soon, and I didn't realize she would be gone so suddenly. But she was.



Immediately afterward, memories of the laughs and fun times we shared rushed to my mind. A smile could not help but form on my face as I recalled and reflected. Feeling the warm driveway pavement beneath my bare feet, I realized something: our relationship would continue to be close. We would not be separated, even if miles tried to get between us.

Who Could Sleep?

by Ashley Ashourian



Through my frosted bedroom window swirling wind blew fiercely outside as white snowflakes drifted toward the glittering ground. The sun had just begun to rise, faintly lighting the distant horizon. I got up at once, and put on my warm, fuzzy robe and soft blue slippers to comfortably admire my presents. The tree was huge, seven feet at least, with glowing lights and ornaments strung to it. The large Christmas plate of cookies had been half eaten, the glass of milk half drunk. Santa Clause had come. I looked over to the fireplace mantle to find my huge red stocking stuffed with gifts and treats. My stomach panged with excitement, for I could not wait much longer to open them. I snuggled with blankets, hot chocolate, and a good book to pass the time away as my family slept. Birds stirred outside waking up the world, for who could sleep on a holiday like this?

Free

by Alex McCall

**I used to be
The color blue,
Quiet and calm
Like the sea.
But now I am
The color orange,
Wild and speaking free.**



The Beach

(Haiku)

by Jamil Array

Sand and rolling waves
Under the hot golden sun
This is true beauty.

Peace and Quiet, Please

by Rachel Blum



All I wanted was a little peace and quiet, dreams running through my mind and five sweet hours to myself. But, as I would find out, all of this was far out of my reach.

Just when I was about to doze off, my little brother yelled, “Ahh... I’m going to burst!” He had to use the restroom. Unfortunately, the nearest exit was twenty miles away. Our family was on a car trip traveling to Atlanta. “Dad, pull over!” he screamed. We pulled over and he used the “restroom” on the side of the road.

He got back into the dirty, smelly, and disgusting van. Crumbs of chips, goldfish, pretzels, graham crackers, and of course the scumdiliumptious Oreos lined the creases of the seats. There were mint Oreos, chocolate Oreos, peanut-butter-chocolate Oreos, and original-flavor Oreos. The snacks sunk in our stomachs as the calories built up. Liquids were gulped down at record-breaking speeds, swishing around in our bellies whenever the van turned. The cooler was filled with mashed, over-ripened fruit. The van resembled a pig sty.

Sitting in the back seat caused my legs to cramp up, so I could not feel my feet. My lower body felt like it had been trampled by a wild herd of fifty-foot, five-thousand-pound giants. “Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?” my brother and I chanted as our parents got mad and yelled, “Shut up already!” Then I leaned toward the window to finally get some sleep. Suddenly I saw an Oreo smudged up against the glass. “Gross!” I yelled. I decided that I would not be able to sleep until the window was clean.

My brother wanted to play the game “I Spy.” He went first and said that he saw something tall with green stuff on top of it. I then guessed “trees.” Trees were encompassing the road. I then focused on the gross sight in front of me: little particles of dandruff floating freely from the driver’s head. I turned away.

I sat and stared for many minutes. I tried to fall asleep but the radio was blasting and the voices of talk show hosts roared in my ears.

Suddenly I felt a tremendous bump. “What was that?!” my brother exclaimed. My father said he thought we had run over something and popped a tire. We pulled over to fix the tire. By the time we finished, it was around five o’clock in the evening. You know what that means...rush hour. We could only travel at about twenty miles per hour on the interstate. It had been a long day. Everyone quieted down and I scraped the Oreo off the window. Finally, I fell asleep. I only slept for about forty-five minutes, but it felt like an eternity.

The Incredible Hulk

by Matt Eshelman

Have you ever been on *The Incredible Hulk* at Islands of Adventure? The Hulk is one of the most intense roller coasters that I know of. From the second one takes a seat in the car, to the second one unbuckles the seat belt, one's heart is beating like a drum!



The roller coaster shoots outward from 0-40 in three seconds; you are a spitball being spit out of a straw. Your eyes crash to the back of your head. It's as if you're dead and seeing the bright light at the end of a tunnel and BAM! The car does a corkscrew into what feels like a million-mile drop to the floor of the park. You get that weird feeling in your stomach when you go over a sudden bump. Next, the car takes you toward the clouds only to do a loop followed by another loop overtop a small body of water. You sink under a foggy bridge and head into a corkscrew and another loop. When all of this is over, you make your way to a platform that is almost parallel to the ground only to plummet another fifty feet to the dirt. Once again you move up and down and flip around and turn upside down, and then you have your picture taken.

Now it's over and you make your way to the end of the ride. The nice lady asks you to proceed to the exit on your right. You make your way down a row of switch-backs to a bunch of TV screens, in which you may find your picture. When you look back up at the enormous metal structure, you ask yourself, Should I go home or do I dare do it again?

It Can Happen

by Hope Selevan

I used to be a lover of land sports.
Now I am a water sports girl,
And there isn't any sport in the water
That I don't love to do.



I used to be distracted, hyper, and easily confused.
Now I am focused and a hard-working student,
And for this I thank Concerta!



I used to never have any fear of anything,
But now I know of several frightening things
Because I was never aware
Of all the scary things in life.

I used to be a hardback book.
Now I am a flimsy magazine
Because I am easy-going.



I used to be a desktop computer.
Now I am a laptop
Because I travel a lot.



I used to be tone deaf,
But now I play guitar and practice constantly.

When you set your mind to something
It can happen!



Crossing the Border

by Allison Dewan

Beep beep! The arrow drops farther on the fuel gauge in my Mercedes. My fuel is too low. As I pull into the Hess station, I notice that a rundown, brightly-colored ice cream truck is very close to my rear bumper. There are two men in the front seat. As I peer into my rearview mirror, I notice that the driver has a jet-black handlebar mustache and a grayish-black beard. Underneath his left eye, he has a zigzag scar, which makes me wonder in fear how he got it. His companion has olive-colored skin, light brown hair and is staring directly at me. I am scared to get out of the car, so I drive off.

The ice cream truck begins to follow me. After a left turn, a right turn, and another left, I say to myself, Have I lost them? For a moment, I think I have indeed maneuvered my way away from the men in the ice cream truck. But my car is running on fumes, then flash! The engine switches off like a light. I pull over to the side of a dirt road. I am in the middle of the steaming hot weather of summer. I don't think I am in Texas anymore.

The one road sign I see is written in Spanish: "Ciudad de Mexico, 10 Miles." The ice cream truck has pulled over behind me and I get the feeling I should lock the doors. I lock them and sit nervously, desperately waiting.



The older Hispanic man, the driver, steps down from his truck and begins to walk toward my Mercedes. I yell "Ayudeme!" and "Parate!" He doesn't stop, but walks right up to my window and punches it with his bare knuckles. Glass shatters everywhere, but I quickly jump in to the back seat. Reaching through the broken window, he unlocks the door and climbs into the back seat. He extends his arms to grab me, just missing as I slide out the passenger-side door. I start running for my life, then I hear a gunshot and feel a thud; the bullet has hit me in the shoulder, but I continue to run.

I become exhausted and cannot run any longer. I leap into the dirt, surrounded by cactus. As my pursuers approach, I fall backwards unaware that I am on a hill.

After rolling down the hill and growing weaker from my bullet wound, I search for the strength to find help. Crawling my way through the desert sand, getting pricked by the cactus and encountering wild animals, I realize that I have escaped, but this was too close.

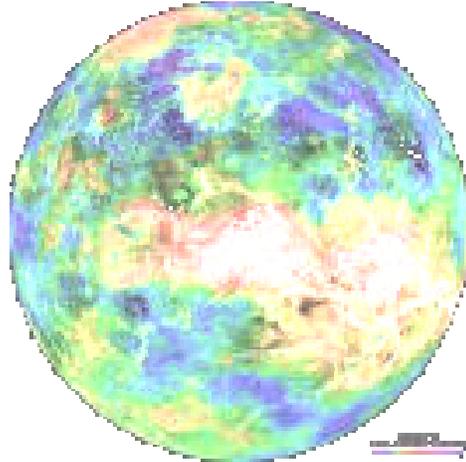
I finally manage to reach a pueblo where a young hombre helps me to my feet and takes me to the local hospital. As I recover, I say to myself, I don't think I'll be crossing the border again anytime soon!

Venus

Chapter One: The Warm Welcome

by **Brian Levenson**

“Everybody off! Watch your step on the way out and don’t look up. The sun will kill you out here and we won’t care.” The order came blaring over the loud speakers. A little distance away I heard, “Breakfast runs from six thirty to seven hundred hours. Miss it, and you’ll be dead in the field by ten o’clock.” He said it as though it was nothing unusual, even like it happened every day.



As we were herded into one long line, I thought I might ask what would happen on the field, but by the look on the face of that devil-hound slave driver, I thought it would be safer and smarter to stay quiet. Not everybody did stay quiet, though, and my sharp ears followed the screaming trail of men and women, even children, dragged aside to be shot...or zapped by some sort of retractable beam of energy. I could smell the burnt and rotting flesh, but I did not dare look over at the corpses. *I can't hope to save the dead.* The thought saddened me.

The others that remained in my group of captured “runaways” and myself were then randomly search by the “Head of Recruits.” He was tall and well-muscled, with a stare that could melt rocks. He punished any who disobeyed him, and it seemed he was looking forward to my turn to be searched. None could understand what we would be searched for, or what we could possibly have tucked away in the torn and tattered rags we were wearing. None but I understood. Everyone strong or strong-willed enough to cause problems was given an especially thorough and painful search. The screams let out during the search were enough to set my blood to boil, almost as much as the painful sun overhead.

I had long since resolved to take the pain, having accepted that my size and appearance would make me a victim of the search. I can’t imagine that someone who stood just above six feet wearing a torn military uniform revealing muscular arms would be passed over in a search like this. Just as well to take the pain and make a good example for others. It was a good thought, and it would help during the search. Then he came.

(continued)

I didn't turn to see him come, for it would have seemed disobedient, but I could feel him approaching by the tangible waves of evil he seemed to be shedding like sweat. He stepped in front of me and stared directly into my face. His inhuman eyes burned with an intensity that could cripple the merciless sun which had already forced furrows of sweat to form on my chest and back.

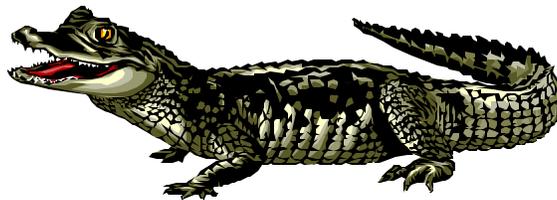
"The rest may leave!" *Oh no. He wouldn't kill me yet, would he?* "I know your plan," he said. He leaned in closer, his eyes still on mine, and whispered, "And it will not work. Starting tomorrow, however, you will." The monster's voice sounded all-too-human. It seemed like the voice itself was mocking me. All he said after that was "Dismissed!" *Good, if I'm still alive I can help to free these people.* My sole purpose...to free these people.

That was the only "kindness" I got out of this race of oppressive demons, as I was then forced through a sightless narrow tube to what must become my home. The dorm I was assigned to was a little room, about 6' by 6', slightly shorter than my head, but not too bad. There was a bed in one corner, folded and rotting away. By the look of it, I would be better off sleeping on the soft, compacted dirt floor.

I heard a bell, and an animated male voice reverberated with varying intensity, "LIGHTS OUT. Sleep well, MAGGOTS!" *Well, I guess I don't have much time to decide. Bed or floor, bed or floor... it's not much of a difference, so just pick now and quit stalling.* Somehow that last thought seemed offensive. Probably because choosing either the bed or the floor was the only decision I would be allowed to make for myself. I pulled the stained sheet off the sagging mattress and sat down. I fell back, using my hands as a pillow. The dirt felt warm on my back. I fell asleep with thoughts of that, that... *thing's* eyes, staring into my face. I almost felt sick.

Dream Write

by **Richie King**



I wish I was a gator
Swimming in the swamp
I wish I had its teeth and jaw
So my favorite foods I could chomp
I wish I was a gator
Swimming in the swamp
So all the "Rowdy Reptile" fans could
imitate my chomp

I wish I was a gator
Swimming in the swamp
I could be mean
I could be green
I could be a meat-eating machine
No one—and I mean no one—would
ever want to feel my chomp.

Jimmy

by Tyler Fawbush

“JIMMY!”

Jimmy didn't know what to do. “Jimmy,” the coach repeated loudly. Jimmy rushed over to him.

“Yessir,” he stuttered.

“Go in at quarterback,” coach said encouragingly. Jimmy's face went pale as a ghost at that moment. All he had been doing the whole game was playing guard, tackle, and center—center of the bench, guarding the Gatorade® and tackling anyone who came near it. But Jimmy still was the most excited player on his team about the district championship game. He might not have had the physical attributes of a football player, but he had a heart of gold. He was in trouble though. He had never played with the starting team, not even at practice.



Making matters worse, his team was down five points with 35 seconds remaining in the game. They were on the 50-yard line. The other team had already poured the cooler on their coach and were celebrating because they knew that Jimmy was the scrawniest, least athletic, and weakest player on his team. Jimmy looked on in dismay as they carted off the injured star quarterback, Randy Smith.

“Uh, ok, guys. Huddle up,” he said hesitantly after coach had signaled in the play. “The play is Green Flag 90 on two, Green Flag 90 on two. Ready break.” He stepped up to the line and got down in position to receive the ball from center. He glanced at the defensive linemen. Every one of them looked like they wanted to rip his head off with their teeth.

“Down... go...go.” The ball was snapped. Jimmy looked at the receiver that was designated to get the pass. He was not open. Time ticked off the clock as Jimmy ran back and forth across the field. The clock showed two goose eggs and he was still roaming at the 50. He glanced over at his coach and saw that he was saying, “Run!”

Jimmy took off. The players were so surprised at how fast he was; they just stood in amazement. He went to the 20, 15, 10, 5, and dove in for a touchdown. Jimmy won the game for his team and you can't imagine how happy he was. From that moment on, no one questioned Jimmy's ability and he went on to become a world class sprinter.