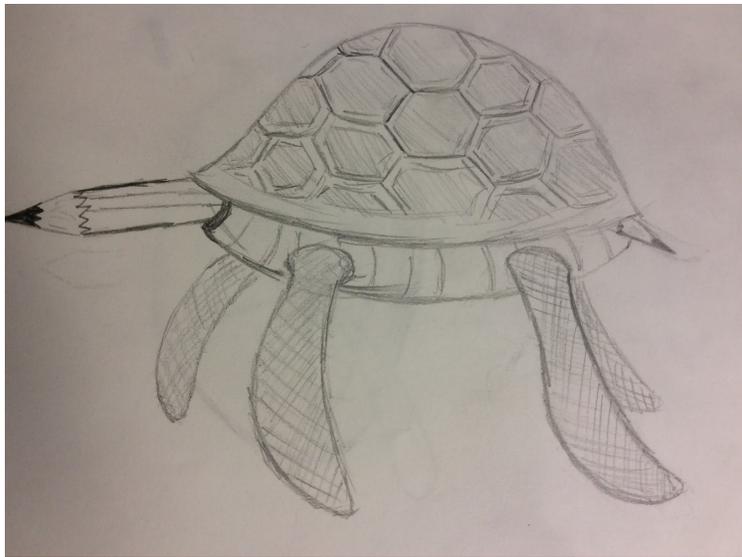


Drafts,
Doodles,
and Dreams



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Special Thanks to...

Gabe Lembidakis, Artist Extrodinarre

And Student Writers including:

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Bri Lavelle

Elizabeth Bodette

Ranjini Iyengar

TJ Brosnan

Callum Tinkler

Jordan DeCoste

Alexis Demarco

Mary Cate Flynn

Michael Kamelle

Arya Gupta

Maria Benham

Catherine Gallagher

Caroline Regan

Meredith McDonough

Tanush Mittal

Gabe Lembidakis

Latin Test

By Aidan Sasser

Sometimes I just don't use my head,
I have a high IQ and everything
I like red.
I have a shadow.
I knew it wasn't of any use though,
The studying.
I could get away if I remembered,
I was sweating something fierce,
I could feel my palms getting clammy.
I glanced around for a
Clue.
But there was nothing.
So I sat there,
Smiling.

The Perfect Summer Night

By Meredith McDonough

The Iris Moon shined very bright
and it reminded me of a Super Nova
It lit up the whole sky
and the Twilight Mist filled the air
with a breeze that was felt everywhere
It was the perfect summer night

A Day in April

By Tanush Mittal

This April day is where happiness lies,
The Monarch wing flashed past my eyes.
Then I saw the spring squash with a smile on it's face,
And saw the sun setting at a slow pace.
Then at night, I saw fireflies dancing in their light,
And went to bask in the glow,
the only light in the night.

Paint chip poetry

by Maria Benham

The sea breath of the bright sunny ocean
The crystal aqua of the beautiful crystal vase
The bay mist of the warm shiny summer sky
Oh what a fun it is to watch the nature in the summertime.

Poetry About Heroes Inspired

by Alice Walker's My Sister Molly Who in the Fifties

For my cousin Mira to whom I can always share my wild creative side

By Maria Benham

Who once tried to create a night spying game
Described in a book
Who always seemed to enjoy everything
Without a complaint
Whose secrets I always remember
But our memories half forgotten.
Who came home on vacation
When the moon was cold,
And laughed
And smiled
Burst into the house a like a fast wind
And cheers everyone up
Who did not mind
What anyone thought of her
Who has gone to school
and cared for everyone;
No matter who they were
Who always thinks of me before her,
And taught me to always have courage
And to never change myself to please another.

For my cousin Mira who always brings out my wild creative side
Knows all the books of Harry Potter by heart
And coached me in my British accent
A city I dreamed of going forever
With her
Who always made me laugh
When talking into her non -sense accents
Who never liked to read poetry
But loves when I write them
And who always has the interest to read books
older than my age

On Christmas night always wanted me
To have the greatest presents.

Who when we were young
Knew almost all the riddles
And made us feel dumb.
Who always filled the room
With her scent of roses and tulips
Who occasionally looked as good as them
And even sometimes smell like my favorite fruits
Who knitted bags in a small age, Dutch braided my hair,
Helped me pick out my clothes that best describes me.
Who always had ways and tricks to cheer me up;
I which I could remember what they were.

Bob Ross: the man the myth the legend
By Gabe Lembidakis

Twinkling eyes imagining a world no one else can see
Who wears a wreath of wheat encircling his mind
Whose smile can change a jaguar into a kitten
A beard with hues of brown and white like a chipmunk's mane

Who paints a masterpiece as easy as breathing air
Who Creates marshmallow skies floating gently above bodies of water
And mountains reaching their hands into the heavens
A magician who can make a magnificent scene of nature appear
Within a blink of an eye

Who encourages us to try because we never make mistakes,
only happy accidents
Who has the gift of relaxing troubled minds and souls with a velvety voice
A presence that conjures up visions of meandering, babbling brooks
And mighty waterfalls
Who creates shadows with a swipe and a gentle mist with a pull

And whose creations make the world
A little bit happier.

My cousin Julia who makes me smile

By Caroline Regan

Who once created a whole dance using
Only things in her house
And who when we failed
Just smiled like it was all part of the routine
And laughed at the end which made me laugh
Who always wanted a standing ovation
Even if she didn't dance in it
She smiled
And laughed
And made you want to moment to last.
But in school
She was the smartest girl
A million or more
Things you could tell her
And she came home and told us to that we
Would never be as good at math as her
No matter how hard we tried it wasn't possible.

For my cousin Julia who makes me smile
Would spend spend hours dancing away into the night
And coached me on my tricks
Some which she did better than me
But I still loved her
Because she said I would soon learn
Like her.
And loved to read to me each time I saw her
She read everything she could find and didn't care how long or big it was
Who read Cat in the hat and other storie
And loved most of all to read stories about Christmas
And the joy Santa would soon bring to her
And I always hoped she would never grow away from that magic.

Who makes me smile
And whose face lights up
like all the Christmas lights in the world
Every minute you see her you get more and more happy
Like the time I was sad because I got a bad grade
She cheered me up with each light

And turned everything into a positive
And never seemed sad.
Whose beautiful brown hair
and brown eyes give you hope
Whose clothes made her look like a princess
Dancing and singing
With her Prince Charming
And seemed to know that
Everything has a happy
Ending.

For my brother Caleb who always cares about me
By Cat Gallagher

Once made a batter for
Brownies
That we mixed and stirred together
And as we ate the batter with spoons
A ring of formed around our noses
And a coating around our hands
Who came home from school
When the rain was pouring
And worked
And studied
And didn't mind his soaked bag
The late nights all for his grades
But never did he want a hand of aid
Whom
Had been to school
And taught me how to read
Around the age of two
And taught me how to speak my mind
No matter if that was what the teacher wanted me to
Do.

For my brother Caleb who always cares about me
Knew Harry Potter well and read into the night
And reminded me never to stay up late in frightfright
for he would always be there for me
A storm came and messed my ocean of sleep
And with a onesie on I would run to his room
We

Would read a book about princess, Kings or Queens
and drift off like a blowing breeze.
Who was energetic and ran from East and West
And told me how to kick a soccer ball the best
On nights the sun was setting low
We'd go outside and kick a soccer ball with a hard blow
Christmas followed with presents and toys
And I for one saw my present from Caleb and made lots of noise.

Who was caring
Knows all the right things to say to me
A charming little boy wasn't he?
The Love. Of having fun with him
Like twin baby birds. He could walk among our house, make me happy, without saying any words.
Always reminded me of how to use the right vocabulary
Like knight or night and sun or son
Who loves soccer, track, winter and spring
Who made A+ and smelled of axe shampoo on your
Hair. When he moved I knew it was always him who was there
Hung ornaments from trees
Ordered pizza
Frowned upon soccer bruises
And seemed to always remember
All the good days
I had not forgot.

For Mrs.D who was an amazing English teacher
By Vikram Gonuguntala

For Mrs.D who was an amazing English teacher
Always made 100s charts from
Construction paper, stickers, tape, and a marker
That she made us gleeful with
And used the happy happy joy joy stickers
A pink paper the chart and
A black marker to write our names.
Who picked out the right books
When we would never read boring ones
And read
And kept us engaged
And loved us all, like a cupid, especially

The 6th graders
45 or more students
All hating that mammoth of a grammar book.
Who had the best reading voice
And kept us in the book
So we did not have any temptation
And taught me not to game on my iPad
No matter how boring grammar book was on my
desk.
For Mrs.D who was an amazing English teacher
Knew how to teach and taught into the end of the school day
And coached me in my grammar
A menace of a book
But learned to thank her for
Because "it" said he could be
A great use in tests
And getting this dreaded grammar right, could boost my test scores
in the SAT.
Who read from *The Wish Giver*
And loved to read from the *Odyssey*
On days the heat was high
And Room 102 was cooking
And I for one prayed for the AC.
Was an amazing English teacher
Knew all the ways to stop
Us gaming in C Block
English class. Engaging the class
Like she was an expert. Who always let us have candy
And brought them into class
And looked like we were going
To watch a long and good movie.
Who made us make poem books and fun creative writing
Projects. Moved desks in a circle
Read aloud to us
Ordered tons of extra books
Frowned upon us not paying attention in class
And seemed to know exactly what we were doing
On our iPads and if we were reading,
I had forgot all of the plot.

Poetry: Ballads of Hardships

A Day on Boylston Street

By: Maddie Laidlaw

We went to watch the marathon
Down on Boylston Street
Racers were running by with family there
At the finish line they would meet.
A day to remember.

The sky, the atmosphere,
Were all so pretty!
People were everywhere;
It was quite a day to be in the city!
A day to remember.

Then, at around 2:50 p.m,
About halfway through the marathon,
Terror had struck.
And everyone was gone.
A day to remember.

By now the prettiness had left the air.
And people were no longer everywhere.
Terror and horror of reality set in,
As the sounds of sirens filled Copley Square.
A day to remember.

Ballad of Jose Fernandez

By Jack Iannibelli

Do you want to go, my friend
Out in the bay,
Out in my boat
To go fishing today?

No, no, we shouldn't go right now Jose
But we should go soon,
But we have a game tonight

And it's almost noon

Come, come, come with me
It will be fun,
If you don't come
I'll just be a poor man in the sun

Fine, fine, I will come along Jose
But we have to start packing,
We should also bring a friend along, to help us with our tracking.

Do you want to go, my friend
Out in the bay,
Out in my boat
To go fishing today?

Really, going fishing now Jose
Out at this hour,
Alright, I'll come, just let my finish my milk
Or it will start getting sour.

Great, we have three men
Out in the bay,
Out in my boat
To go fishing today

The water started to get high tides
Crazy we're the waves,
Just like a hockey goalie
Making so many saves

“Wait watch out Jose,
Here comes a giant rock,”
But it was too late
And the ship went clock!!

Do you want to go, my friend
Out in the bay,
Out in my boat
To go fishing today?

Ballad: Busting in the Dust

By Vikram Gonguntala

Joey Bill went to the farm
But did not realize what was going to bust.
A black blanket of cloud overcame him
Then all he could remember was dust, dust, dust.

When he recovered, he went to the church
But did not realize what was going to bust.
The bells only rung because of the wind
And because of the dust, dust, dust.

When he came home, he said to his Ma:
“Mother dear, I never knew, about what was going to bust
All I could remember was the church bells ringing.”
But his mother could not recognize him, for he was covered in dust, dust, dust.

Later that week, he asked his Ma:
“Mother dear, can I go out play? I will come back when it will bust.”
She then replied: “Ok, my son, go out to play, but be careful, for me, please?”
And so Joey went out to play, but it never came, the dust, dust, dust.

And so he came home, and said to his Ma:
“See, I was careful Ma. I always know when it will bust.
So can I go out again today?” And Ma replied, “It is ok.”
And so Joey went out to play, and so it struck, the dust, dust, dust.

He never came home, but his Ma knew he wore a blue shoes.
Joey’s mother searched for him, and knew it would bust
And met the same fate
As her son in the dust, dust, dust.

A Ballad of Hardship about the Hardship of Writing this Ballad

By Ryan Ackerley

This Ballad is my hardship,
Oh, how it was agonizing,
No ideas coming to my head,
No clue about strategizing,

But then it came to me,

A great notion,
Emerging from my brain,
Almost like someone gave me, a potion,

“A Ballad of Hardship about the Hardship of writing this Ballad”,
“Very poetic” I said out loud,
Many thought it couldn't be done,
But still watched, as I wowed all in the crowd,

And when I was done, I said to myself,
“Writing the Ballad,
Came along with its hardships,
But hadn't turned out, so bad.”

Fan Fiction Inspired by the following short stories:

“All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury

“A Retrieved Reformation” by O. Henry

“Flowers for Algernon” by Daniel Keyes

“Raymond’s Run” by Toni Cade Bambara

By Nico Bonavita

Jimmy Valentine was not always a safe breaker. He lived in a small town on the border of Canada and Maine. He grew up there with only his dad, because his mom died during childbirth. His dad never bought him anything, and he had an allowance for his money. He worked four hours a day, and for six days a week, only to get \$5.00 weekly for all of his hard work. As a small child, he helped his father do laundry and he took out light garbage. He didn't get payed at this age, and he did not work for very long. Once he turned 10, he started to clean the gutters, purchase groceries, and go to work with his dad. His dad chopped wood down and sold it for money.

Once Jimmy started to study for the SAT's, his dad hired an assistant to replace Jimmy on the job. One day, while his dad was distracted, his assistant tried to murder him, because he felt he was being treated to harshly. Jimmy's dad tried to swing his axe at his chest, but missed. He chopped his assistant's fingers off and gave him a grade three concussion with some broken bones. His assistant was seventeen, so he took the case to court and Jimmy's dad was charged with child abuse and attempted murder, sending him to jail for 35 years.

Jimmy was sixteen at the time, and not only did he tragically lose his mom, he lost his dad. He transferred to a boarding school so that he would not have to go to an orphanage, as he could not

live on his own yet being only sixteen. He tried using some tools for grinding wood to open his dad's safe, where he could get the money to pay for his schooling.

He was at it for about two months when one day he went out and bought real safe breaking tools. He got them illegally for cheaper, and in four days of using those tools he managed to unlock the safe. He found enough money to pay for his high school, and for some of college. He continued to break open safes around campus to try to find enough money to buy his basic necessities. He ended up buying an apartment in a different part of the country, and he had decided not to go to college.

He became friends with the person who sold him the tools. They started breaking safes open all around the country, and he and his friend became very wealthy. Jimmy could break open a safe in under 20 minutes now, so he was able to steal from places that had better than decent security with ease. One day, he stopped by a place that supposedly had over 500,000 dollars worth of jewelry in it. It was in a store guarded by a sleeping security guard named Ben Price. While Jimmy was breaking open the safe with his buddy, they set off an alarm. Price woke up immediately and tased Jimmy. His buddy, instead of helping him, ran for it.

Jimmy was knocked out, and he awoke in the hospital where he was checked for any drugs or alcohol in his urine. Once they found he was clean, they sent him to court, where he was sent to prison with no bail, as they thought he could've bought a nice car with all of his safe money, which he could use to escape the country. He would remain in prison for ten years.

Ben Price was promoted to chief of police due to his arrest, and he was given \$10,000.00. He would keep these rewards on one condition: he moves near the prison Jimmy is in, so that if he breaks out he can be close, and be able to catch him and call in backup if needed.



By Liam Prigmore

A cold wind blew dead leaves over the street in the near black of night. Many stores around the town of Springfield were closed at this hour; however, the Springfield bank sign was illuminated with a faint glow. Jimmy Valentine, a trained safe-cracker, nonchalantly stepped off of the inbound train at the City's main station. He almost had left his equipment on the train; but once he had realized this, he quickly retrieved it and began to walk into the distance, as the passengers still onboard the train wondered where this lone man was headed at this late of an hour. His destination, the bank, was only known to himself and an individual he wished he could avoid.

Steve Smith was a professional detective who had been tasked with a single difficult objective: to catch Jimmy Valentine, the most notorious bank robber in the country. To begin with, he had tirelessly hunted for any sort of evidence left at crime scenes that would lead him towards where this robber would strike again. Finally, he found a pattern in the cities that Jimmy had traveled. Using this key discovery, Steve was certain that he would accomplish his goal tonight, in the town of Springfield. He did have help from another secret operative: a younger, inexperienced officer named Ben Price. Ben was undercover on the inbound train on which Jimmy Valentine was a passenger. He should be reporting at any time now.

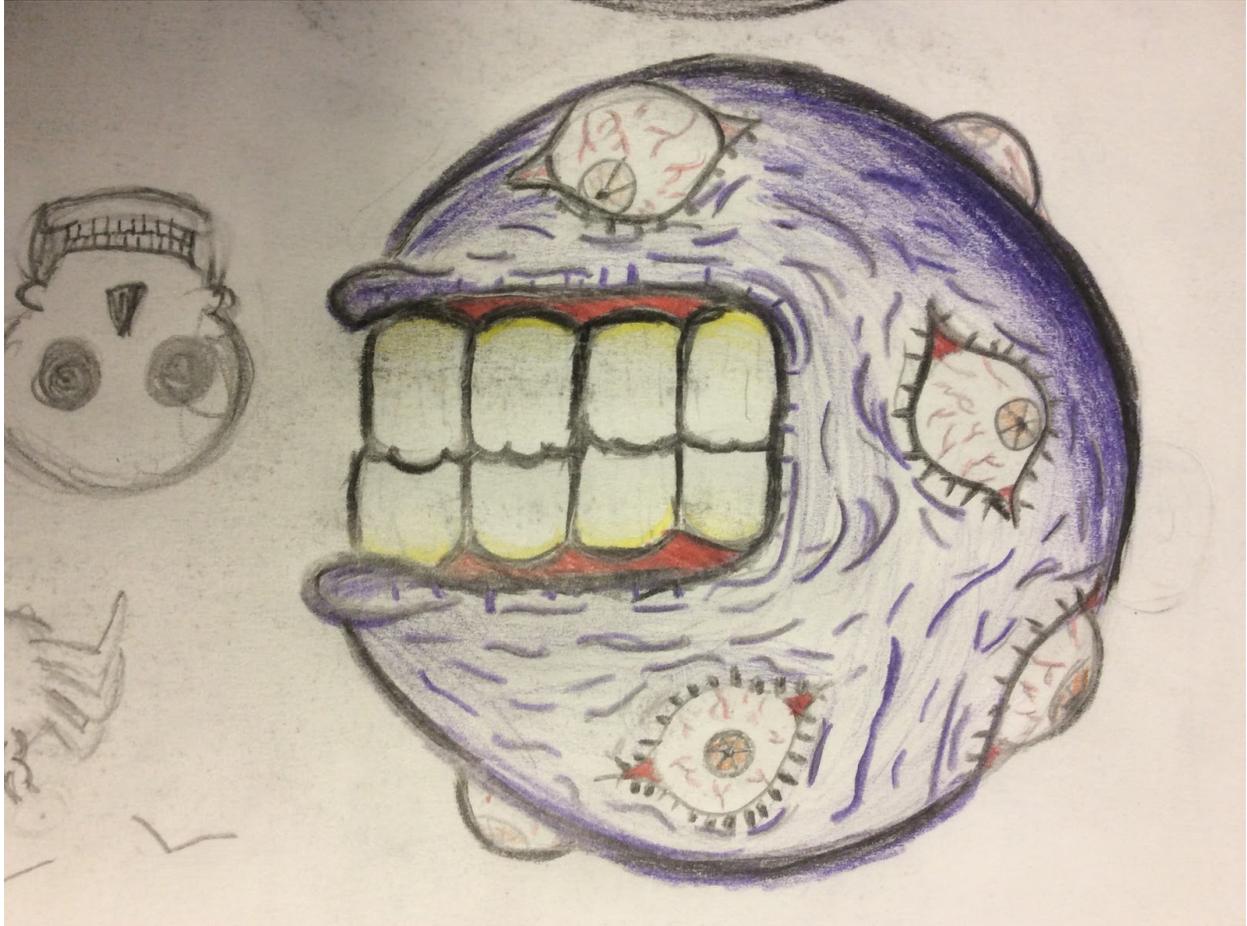
Steve's phone rang, and he hastily picked it up.
"The suspect is approaching his target." A voice whispered through the phone.
"Thank you Ben. Please be ready once I catch up with him to assist me in apprehending Jimmy Valentine." Steve hushly replied.
"I will be on site soon. Over." A click followed by silence in Steve's ear let him know that Ben had discreetly hung up the phone.

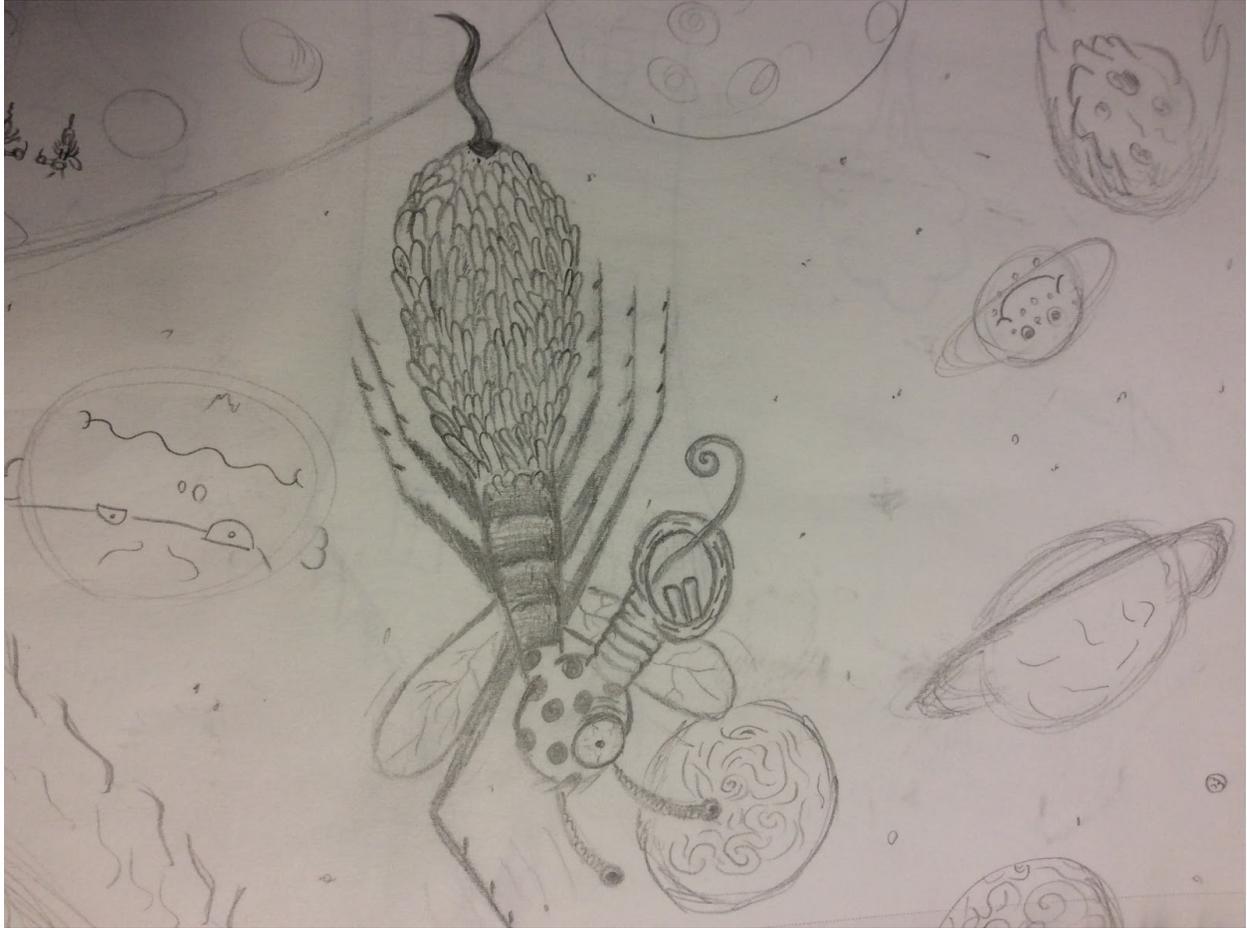
Steve Smith speedily tucked his officer's badge into his pocket and casually sauntered downstairs, not wanting to attract any attention from an alert Jimmy Valentine.

There was nothing but air passing over the streets, and Jimmy Valentine had come to like the quiet of night. He reached his destination quickly due to these empty roads. As he entered into the bank, he saw no staff members on duty, and questioned why the doors were unlocked at this hour. He first effortlessly lifted his tools over the counter, as he has dozens of times before, then similarly pulled himself over, as he had done so many times. He was beginning to unpack his equipment onto the floor when he heard the groan of an opening door coming from upstairs. That he had not heard before. Thinking, he knew that the upstairs was either reserved for security guards, or...law officers.

As Steve crept down the stairs, he acquired the attention of the criminal at work. Jimmy looked up at him and harshly threw his equipment into his bag before bolting towards the door. Steve followed right after him, out the door and trailing the silhouette of his culprit around the corner. Once he turned the corner, he let out a heavy sigh as Jimmy was nowhere to be found. However, that only lasted a couple seconds before a red Chevrolet came speeding out of an alleyway about 30 meters ahead. Almost in perfect timing with the potential getaway, Ben Price drove up alongside Steve and motioned for him to get into the police cruiser.

They followed the chevy through the streets of Springfield, trying to anticipate its every turn. At one point, the car had become so far ahead of the police cruiser that the officers had lost track of it completely.





By TJ Brosnan

It was Leaving Day. It was the day where students that were over the age of eighteen on the planet Venus were allowed to board rockets from Earth and fly back to their home planet. There, they could get good jobs and the sun shined every day. On the other hand, it rained constantly on Venus, only stopping for a few minutes every seven years. However, the rockets could only come when the never-ending, torrential rain stopped. If they landed any other day, the rain would cause complications with the engines, which would have disastrous results. Students were allowed to come back to Venus at any time, but they had to spend a lot of money for the trip back, unlike the flight to Earth, which was free. Every teenager shuddered to think of the consequences if they did not make it to the rocket in time. One of those teenagers was a young girl named Margot.

Margot was a small girl with blue eyes and yellow hair that fell past her shoulders. She was a nice girl who had a weird obsession with the sun, She would always tell her class weird fact and jokes about the sun. It seemed like all that she talked about was the sun. She did not care, though. She did not care about anyone's opinions about her, and she did not think that she was weird. She thought that she was amazing, until the incident.

As Margot stood in the classroom, she thought about a few years ago, when a young boy named William had locked her in their classroom's closet because he thought that she was a very strange girl. Little did he know that a few years later, she would become the most popular girl in the school.

William had also been very jealous of her because she was supposed to fly back to Earth with her parents. Unfortunately, her parents had lost all of their money gambling at a casino. She had promised her parents that when she got to Earth, she would save up enough money to pay for them to come to Earth and live with her. Margot had thought that she was a great person before the incident. Because of William's actions, she had changed her personality and had not talked about the sun since.

Margot looked around the classroom. It was very dark because there were no major sources of light, other than the dim solar lamps on every desk which gave the students the necessary sunlight that they required. There were papers and books strewn across the floor, because they would no longer be needed. This was the students' last day on Venus, and they could not carry excess luggage. If they did, the rocket would not be able to take off into space because of the added weight. While she was looking around, she saw William walking in the hallway to his next class. *I cannot wait to put my plan into action*, she thought. She then walked to her locker, chuckling menacingly while she got her books for science.

William was walking down one of the corridors in the underground classroom, thinking about all of the great things that he would do once he got back to Earth. He was going to construct many buildings, like orphanages, schools, and hospitals. He was even going to run for president of the United States of America, so he could change the country and the entire planet for the better. While he was thinking about all of his ideas, he bumped into Margot. They both fell to the ground, their books and papers flying out of their arms. "Sorry, Margot," William said, brushing back his tangled black hair, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," replied Margot. She then picked up her supplies and stormed away. William's smile was suddenly replaced by a frown. He had always felt bad about how he rallied the other students to lock Margot in the closet. He had just been annoyed by all of her comments about the sun. That was all she had ever talked about then. But now, Margot did not talk about the sun at all and had more friends than he ever had. Sadly, she still held a grudge to that day. He had apologized many times over the years, but it never seemed like she accepted them. He just wished that he had never locked her in the closet in the first place.

The next day, Margot walked into the classroom, ready to enact her plan. The sun was going to come out in exactly thirty minutes, and the students would have five minutes to board the rockets with their luggage. She knew that if she wanted to succeed, she would have to start soon. Fifteen minutes later, the teacher told everyone to grab their bags and go outside to wait for the rockets to arrive. A few students grumbled about the rain, but most of them did not mind heading into the downpour. A few minutes of rain was worth an eternity of sunshine.

William grabbed his bag and walked towards the elevator that would bring him above ground. When he arrived, Margot yelled his name. Her voice rang like a beacon, calling for him to help. When he heard her, he ran over to her. *She seems very nervous*, thought William.

"Oh, thank goodness," said Margot with an anxious smile, "William, will you please get my green bag that I left in the classroom?"

"No problem," William said.

"Thank you so much!" While William ran towards the classroom, Margot grinned in delight. *Everything is going exactly as I want it to*, she thought.

When William reached the classroom, he immediately looked inside and under Margot's desk. He did not find a green bag. He then looked inside and under all of the other students' desks. He did not find a green bag. A few moments later, he went through the teacher's desk, thinking that she might have confiscated it for some reason. Again, he did not find a green bag. He then looked everywhere again, and found nothing even remotely green in the classroom. While he was pondering over where the bag could be, he realized something. *Oh my god*, William thought, *she tricked me!*

After every student and teacher left the building to see the sun's beauty and the gleaming silver rockets, Margot walked towards the two doors of the elevator. She placed a wooden board, which she got from her woodshop teacher, through the crack between the sliding doors, jamming them shut. Through the small gap in between the doors, she saw William with a panicked expression on his face, realizing what would happen if he did not escape in the next few minutes. "Why are you doing this to me?" yelled William.

"Revenge!" screamed Margot. She then proceeded to the rocket. She pulled her luggage onto the vessel and sat in her assigned seat. When the teacher took roll call, Margot muffled and deepened her voice, making a perfect imitation of William. "Here," she said through her hand.

"Well, it looks like everyone is present," said the teacher, walking down the steps back to the surface of Venus. "I hope you all have a great time!" she yelled. All of a sudden, William ran out the doors of the elevator and stormed through the entrance of the rocket. "Margot tried to trap me here for another seven years!" William screamed. The teacher gave Margot a detention, dooming her to spend another seven years on the surface of Venus. However, before the rocket flew off, William convinced the teacher to let Margot onto the ship. "I forgive you, Margot," said William.

"Really?" said Margot, astonished. "Well, if you forgive me for my mistake, then I forgive you for your mistake." As the rocket launched into space, William and Margot both sat comfortably in the rocket heading to Earth, now new friends.



Prologue: A Retrieved Reformation

By Elizabeth Bodette

I trudged into my room, slamming the door behind me. I dropped down onto the rough mattress. I was so close to breaking that safe, but of course, the dang guard had to walk in. I've been doing this for five years, five years without getting caught, five years of complete accuracy. You would think that I would be getting better with time, but no, I seem to be getting sloppier and sloppier. I have the best tools in the world for this job and yet I am losing my touch. That dastardly cop isn't making my life any easier, either. He is getting hotter on my trail every safe I break. One more, just one more safe and I'll be able to disappear for good. I almost have enough money and all I have to do is break that safe in Springfield and I'll be as good as gone before that foolish cop even hears about it. I heave a heavy sigh before pushing myself up, and lumbering down the stairs with my tool bag in hand. I briefly waved goodbye to Mike before opening the door and stepping out into the crisp autumn air. The walk to the train station was short, after getting on the three o'clock train to Arlington Heights only a few miles from Springfield. I waved down a taxi to take me into Springfield center. I paid my fare and stepped out of the car. Looming above my was a large white building with a sign that said "Springfield Bank" on the front. I walked over to a small bench across the street and waited. I waited until everyone had left before quietly making my way over to the utility entrance and slipped quietly into the bank before making my way over to the safe, careful not to make a sound. I went to work breaking the safe, cautiously unlocking the locks with precise flicks of the tools. The safe clicked open, I opened to door and started taking stacks of cash from the safe, I was so wrapped up in grabbing the cash I never noticed the police sirens coming close. When I finished packing the cash I heard them coming through the front door. I ran swiftly out of the safe, not caring to close the door. They chased me out of the bank and down an ally. The next thing I knew I was on the ground, arms twisted uncomfortably behind my back and a metal cuff tightening on my wrist.



By Ranjini Iyengar

Everyday I come across a simple question, “Are you okay?”, and yet it's not that simple at all. I freeze up, get nervous, and can barely express my emotions or move my mouth to talk to someone. My usual day consists of good memories and bad ones. While I enjoy the wonderful and warm memories of the times that I took pride in my work, I am also a perfectionist and all of those bad memories or mistakes bother me and come to my mind every night. These bad moments consist of events that happened from school and from other places as well, but my main focus is on the day that I felt like an outsider.

It was 2016 in Middle School and it was my second year at a new school with my friends. The days went on and I thought everything was fine. New school year and new students coming into the grade. Everything suddenly changed. My friends were my closest at one time, and the other time, they went off to start a new era of adventure and create a place in my heart that was dark, cold, and lonely. She left me, and all of my hope went away. One decision lead to another and I soon found myself confused. I thought, “How could she stab me in the back and pretend like nothing happened?” But soon enough, I slightly started to notice that she moved on, and talked to her other friends about me and my closest friends from the bottom of my heart. My dance friends are not only my oldest friends, but they are my family and I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them. They have gotten me through the toughest times of my life with everything going on at home and at school. They have done nothing but support me and believe in me for who I am. It's these little things that bother me because this girl didn't do anything to comfort me or make me feel like I fit in. I still have respect for her but loudly yelling and boasting to me and her friends about how she gets a certain opportunity and I don't is not okay.

You may ask me why I haven't done anything about this, but I emotionally can't. If I tried to confront her I'd be filled with guilt, horror, and embarrassment. There are certain things that I apparently “can't do” because of this stupid social status thing. All I can think of is how negatively rude she can be. My mind wanders off into a different world now, searching and hoping to find peace with these little cracks that have shaped my broken heart. My heart and mind are now connected, and I have done everything I “can” do.

By Emily Trullo-Lavelle

“They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.”

Once they opened the door they saw Margot on the ground. She was huddled in the left corner crying. All the kids looked at each other, thinking the same thing. Why did we do this to her?

“What are you children looking at?” asked the teacher. They walked over and saw the situation. The teacher gasps and quickly walked over to Margot. “Oh darling, are you alright? What happened?” The teacher tries calming down Margot but it's in vain. Everyone's staring and whispers makes her cry even more. Finally the teacher decides to make the other children go to another teacher's room while they deal with Margot.

Eventually Margot calms down since there were no more children around her to judge. “Oh honey. Do you wanna tell me what made you so sad?” The teacher asks. Margot carefully explains everything that happened while the teacher listens attentively. Once she finishes the teacher asks, “Would you like to go home Margot?” Still in shock from everything, Margot barely manages to nod her head. While Margot waits for her parents, she thinks about everything that happened. *What did I do wrong? Could I have done anything different to stop this? No, I couldn't have. They are just all mean. They hate me....* These were only some of the thoughts that went through Margot's head. Someone interrupts her thoughts by tapping her shoulder and telling her that her parents are here. Margot silently walks to her parents and they head home.

By Callum Tinkler

Friday, January 13, 1888

Jimmy Valentine woke up with a headache. He had been up late the previous night, touching up on his tools. He wanted to make sure they were in good condition. He ended up finding one of his screwdrivers was badly stripped. He was lucky he found that error yesterday and not today.

Today he was going to break into the Springfield Bank safe.

It shouldn't be so hard. Jimmy thought. *There's nothing special about the safe. I'll be able to break in easy and get out of there before anyone sees me.* Jimmy got out of bed. He felt weak. *That's odd,* Jimmy thought. *I'm usually fine if I stay up late. Must be getting old.* It was a good thing Jimmy wasn't superstitious. But maybe today wasn't his lucky day. After all, it was Friday the 13th.

Jimmy took all his tools that were on his desk, and put them in his case, He then left the little apartment room he was staying in behind a restaurant. He went to say goodbye to his friend Mike Dolan, but he wasn't in the restaurant like he normally was. Jimmy asked a waiter there about his whereabouts. Apparently he was feeling quite ill, so he stayed home. Jimmy left the restaurant wondering why he was sick. Mike Dolan never got ill. He even was paranoid of dying of sickness, so he had taken every precaution to stay healthy. *Today's a strange day.* Jimmy thought.

Arriving at the bank, Jimmy went up to the main desk. One of the employees was one of his many partners-in-crime. He led Jimmy to a back room. "When I walk by here again, it means you're clear to go into the vault. It might take a while, we've got a lot of customers." He left. Jimmy waited an hour. He took a quick glance out the door. Nobody there. He waited another hour. He checked for a signal, but none came. An hour later, Jimmy heard the sound of sirens right outside the bank. "Do they know I'm here?" He wondered. He took another glance out the room, and saw his accomplice being handcuffed.

"Where'd he go?"

"I swear, I don't know!"

"We found your records, we know what types of people you work with. Where is he?"

"I'll never talk!"

Jimmy was on his own.

The policemen took Jimmy's friend away, giving Jimmy a chance to sneak into the vault. The door was locked, obviously. Unfortunately, Jimmy's accomplice had the key. Jimmy put his mask on and took out his safe-cracking tools. They would do the job. He set to work on the vault door. It took him about 13 minutes. Just as he was opening the door; however, someone outside the bank spotted him.

"Hey! He's trying to get into the vault!"

Policemen came rushing through the doors of the bank. Jimmy barely closed the door of the vault in time. He jammed it with a crowbar he kept in his bag. Trying to ignore the loud sounds of pounding

on the vault door, he set to work on the safe. He got it open after a further 13 minutes. He never stopped to wonder why both the locks were cracked in exactly 13 minutes. He had other things to worry about.

Like the fact that he was trapped in a vault with only one door.

Jimmy started thinking. It was only a matter of time before the police found him and the safe. Then Jimmy had a risky plan. He would lock himself in the safe, and break free when the police left. He quickly got into the safe. Luckily, it was a rather big one, so he could fit. However, it didn't stop it from being tight and uncomfortable. Minutes later, he heard more sirens, followed by the crash of the vault door.

"Where is he?"

"He can't have got out, there's only one exit!"

Fools. Jimmy thought. He felt himself being picked up and put onto something. Probably a car of some sort. He had to break out fast. Luckily, the safe was already unlocked, so Jimmy pushed the door open and ran as fast as he could. He heard policemen shouting and running after him.

"Freeze!"

"Stop!"

Jimmy ran faster. Two burly policemen pulled out guns, but Jimmy ducked behind a building before they could shoot him. He looked for a place to hide. He was excellent at hiding. He turned a corner, and then dove into a dumpster. He heard the policemen keep running. Jimmy peeked out. They were gone.

Jimmy returned to his house behind Mike Dolan's restaurant. He was exhausted. It was about 6:30. He slid his tools into a secret cabinet behind his bed, took the money out of his pockets, and went to sleep.

He was awakened by men shouting. *Probably drunks from the bar downstairs. Or teenagers.* It happened often. Then, two policemen burst through Jimmy's door. Jimmy started towards the door, but the police caught him. He tore off a bit of cloth from one of the officers, but the other one handcuffed him. He looked at the cops. He was startled to see one of them was the accomplice at the bank.

"Well, I guess it isn't your lucky day, Jimmy."

"No. I suppose it isn't."

By Jordan DeCoste

As I walked down the middle of the classroom to the front desk, I nervously looked around the class as 19 pairs of eyes stared me down. It felt like 38 pins pushing on my skin, seeing right through me and straight into my soul. I slowly crept to the front of the room and I stood in front of the board. My heart sounded like it was going to burst out of my chest, and I felt like the whole room could hear it. I nervously tapped my foot on the ground, looking at the faces staring back at me. I bent and folded the flash cards in my hands and I cleared my throat, awkwardly shuffling my feet. I looked at the teacher, then back at the class, frantically looking around the audience for a friendly face. My hands started to get clammy, the anxiety of the moment starting to kick in. I looked over at the computer, which my partner, Alex, was typing and clicking on. He looked up at me with a pale face, motioning for me to come over. I quickly walked over to him and the computer, listening to whispers in the crowd as they waited for our presentation. I watched as he looked through documents for our presentation but did not find it.

"It's gone," Alex whispered to me. I looked around nervously and gulped.

"G-gone?" I stuttered out, looking at the blank screen. He nodded in response. I looked down at my feet and thought to myself, *what are we going to do?*

By Alexis Demarco

Dear Diary,

I am becoming worried sick about Charlie. I've always neglected the level of compassion I had for him. From the outside looking in, I have noticed changes in all of my renters. I feel as if I've watched the peak of Charlie's life through the peephole. He was always self-motivated, had the desire to become intelligent and was dedicated to his job, was prepared to work every single day. Sometimes the worst thing happen to the best people I believe. Reading, writing, and comprehension came easier to him gradually after the operation. Prompting his return, Charlie was the same but as time went on he became a superhuman genius. I was stunned. Now recalling what used to be, I feel awful for him. He got fired from his occupation at Donnigans Plastic Box Company here in New York City, and stays at home for the most part. Although Charlie had rude colleagues such as Joe and Frank, he was immersed in an environment to practice real life interaction skills. He can't even pay the rent anymore! He is isolating himself, just laying down all day like a loafer. I told Charlie that all he does is "lay around all day and don't do anything." My son was a loafer, he wouldn't have known the values of hard work if they hit him on the head! I threw him out of the house, I don't like loafers. My concern for Charlie is if he's ill, but if he tells me that, I'll send a doctor. I told him, "I won't have it." Charlie was such a driven man and I don't know where that drive went anymore. Until Charlie sees a doctor, I honestly don't know what to do.

Best,

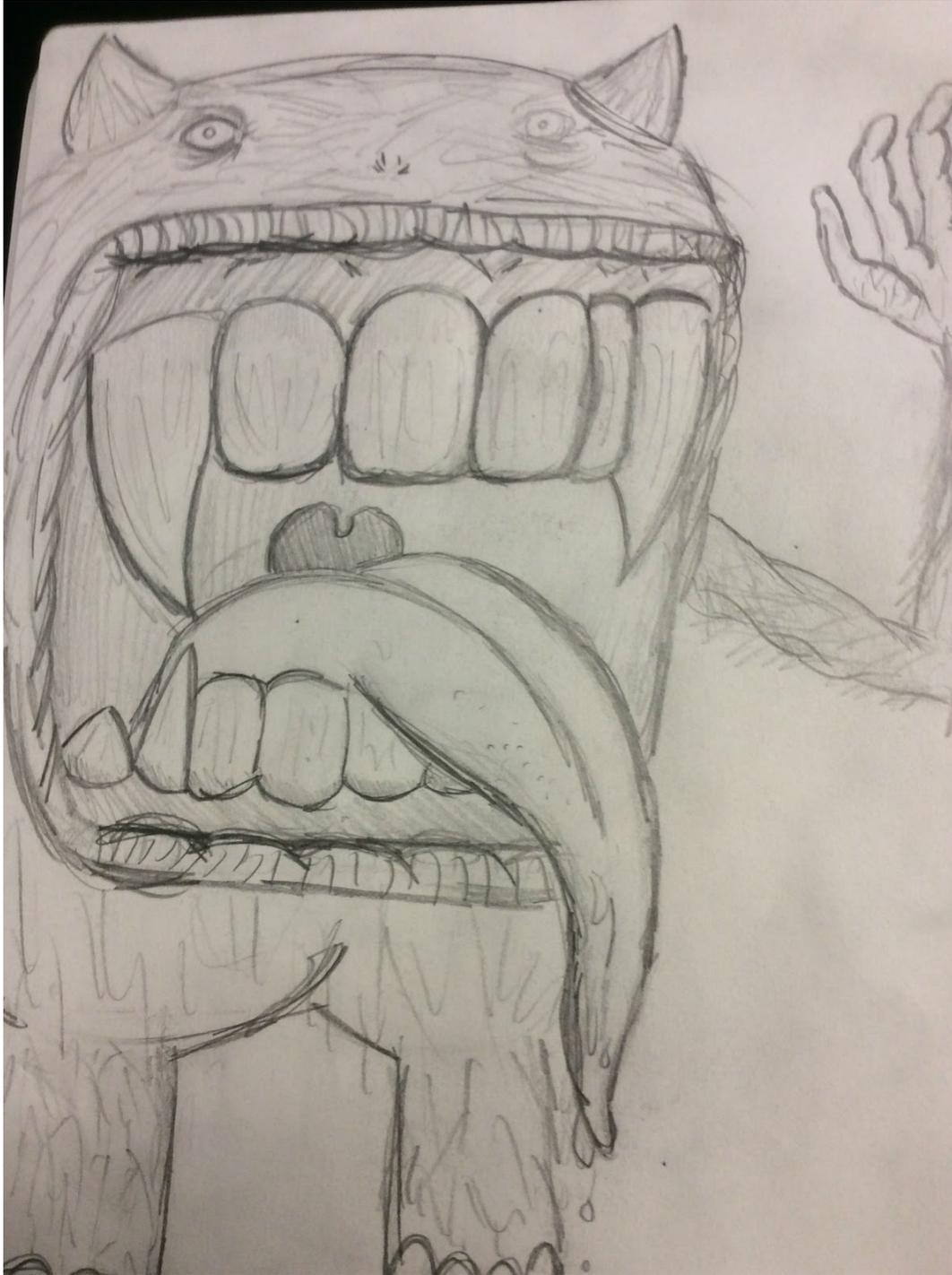
Mrs. Flynn

March 7th,

I am extremely proud that we are taking the final steps of our artificial intelligence experiment in the lab practice! We are running tests among many intellectually disabled individuals in the lab. There is one man by the name of Charles Gordon that really stuck out to me. He had an IQ of 68, and no critical thinking or imaginative visualization. Ms. Kinnian his educator told me his huge commitment to practice and has accomplished so much with the little God gave him. That will be vital to this experiment. Algernon has the motives to get his cheese out of the box, and Charlie will have the drive to get smarter. There is so much information he has to soak up like a sponge, so he has to consistently work hard to retain it. I was told he was driven to obtain knowledge and practice, so I told him that, "He had a good motivation." A strong desire to become a genius is important, there are many obstacles that Charlie must climb over especially when racing with Algernon. What I told Charlie made him happily beam with smiles. I believe this operation will change his life! I just have to get Dr. Nemur on my side that this is the one for the experiment. I am so very proud to publish my conclusion; however, I feel terrible for this man if him and his family don't agree or are not aware with the medical ethics of this experiment. He will play mind games with a mouse we named Algernon undergoing the same experiment, and Algernon has gotten smart rapidly! Algernon has to complete a series of puzzles before eating to drill his intellect. If a mouse's intelligence has skyrocketed; therefore, Charlie should become a pure genius with a little

determination and science. I am thrilled to start drafting my conclusion, and hope to make groundbreaking observations.

Yours Truly,
Dr. Strauss



By Mary Hueston

Margot walked out of the closet, tears staining her face. The children looked at each other, then the girl said, "Margot, we're really sorry. We never meant for you to miss the sun."

"Children, you should all be extremely ashamed of yourselves," said the teacher behind them. "You should never do anything like that again. Do you understand?"

"Yes, we understand."

"Now, let's work on our essays. All of you will revise them to include what you saw today. Margot, why don't you go home? I'll send a note to the principal saying that I dismiss you."

∞

After returning home, Margot told her parents what had happened that day.

"That's it! We're leaving!" cried Margot's father.

"Honey, we shouldn't just leave because Margot was treated so poorly by her classmates," said Margot's mother.

"We've been planning on leaving Venus for several months now. This is the last straw. I'm sure I can find work on Earth."

"Margot, go to your room. We'll call you when dinner's ready."

Margot trudged to her room and listened as her parents noisily discussed leaving Venus. Although Margot's father respected everything her mother said, her father had wanted to leave Venus for a while. As she listened, Margot's parents grew louder and louder until there was a sudden silence. Then she heard a whisper, and her mother came into her room a moment later.

"Margot, you father and I have decided that the best option is to return to Earth. Will you please start packing up your things? We leave tomorrow."

Margot started packing slowly. She was thinking about all that had happened at school. She was happy to leave and finally see the sun. Above all, though, she was glad that she would never be pushed around by William again because of jealousy, for even though she let it happen, she didn't appreciate it.

∞

After about a month on Earth, Margot's father found work and a permanent home in Ohio. It was their old home, in fact, because nobody seemed to like the location or the price; nobody stayed in it for very long. Margot went to a local school with much nicer people, and she never heard about or saw William or the other children from her school on Venus again.

...

By Michael Kamelle

The children slowly unlocked the closet door and prepared for a furious Margot to appear. The door was now fully opened and the children cautiously peered into the closet. To their surprise, Margot wasn't there. No one talked, they just stood there listening to the rain beat down on Venus, which is the planet they are living on now. The children are part of a colony that lives on Venus.

The other children had lived on Venus all their lives. Margot was different. She was taken from Earth when she was four. The kids always bullied her for this. Margot missed the sun the most, because it always rained on Venus. The sun almost never came out. Scientists predict when the sun comes up. They said it will come out every 7 years for a day and today was that day. Margot didn't get to see the sun, though. The children had locked her up in that closet in a blind rage.

"Teacher, teacher! Margot is gone!" cried the children. When the teacher heard this, she panicked. She quickly informed Margot's parents. After the parents heard this, they had a panic attack. Margot's parents were crying and screaming under the endless rain. It took them hours to calm down and when they finally did, questions came into their heads like the biggest ocean wave in the world. Their questions were, how did Margot get lost, was she okay, did someone take her. The biggest question that was going through everyone's mind; however, was where was Margot.

Margot had broken the closet door just before the children came to get her. She knew she missed the sun and she just couldn't cope with that fact. This made her so upset that she just ran. She ran and ran. She ran into the forests of Venus without thinking. Suddenly, she tripped over something and rolled down a hill. She had stumbled upon a rocket that was about to take off.

After Margot recovered from her fall, she slowly inspected the rocket. The door was open and she couldn't see anyone. She was still angry and upset, so she ran into the door and closed it. The rocket was packed with a lot of food and water. No one else came onto the rocket. She was alone. Then the ground started to shake and the rocket fired off of Venus. There was an auto pilot flying it to Earth. Margot was ecstatic! She was going home. Margot screamed, "I'm free!". Then she sleepily sat down and fell asleep.

Near the control center, Margot had awoken to the loud noise of the rocket. After Margot fully woke up, she tiredly looked outside. She was scared and didn't like being in space. She decided to eat lunch under a table. She did this because then she wouldn't see space and she would be thinking about her happy place. She wasn't scared under the table, because the table was her sun. The sun wasn't just a big warm star to Margot. It was everything that she thought was good. It was whatever she found to be comforting. After lunch, Margot fell asleep. She dreamed about that flaming star.

Margot awoke on Earth in the rocket. It was a miracle that the rocket ship safely landed on Earth without Margot having to do anything. It was as if someone or something had protected her. After Margot finished thinking, she excitedly opened the door of the rocket, because she realized that she really was on Earth. She jumped out of the ship and onto the soft, green, grass. She lied there and let the warm and comforting rays of the sun gently touch her. It was so beautiful outside of

the rocket ship. She was happy and didn't care about anything. She wasn't worried about where she was, if anybody knew where she was, and even if she would ever see another person again. This is because at that very moment the sun made Margot, Margot again.

Margot heard a rustling noise. Suddenly, a figure appeared. It was another person. The person was a kind older woman. She said, "What are you doing here sweet little girl?" Margot replied by telling the woman her whole story. As soon as she finished the old woman said, "Would you like to live with my husband and I until we find your parents?". "Yes!", Margot excitedly replied.

The next day Margot stepped outside of the old couple's house. It was a beautiful home and she loved it there. The couple was beyond kind to her and she made many new friends. Margot was outside because she wanted to feel the warmth of the sun's rays again. She couldn't stop enjoying the sun. Margot was more than happy with where she was right now. She sat on the stairs. Margot had finally found her home.

By Mary Cate Flynn

It was a cold Saturday morning when I was walking down the street talking to my friends. A little while later I had to leave to practice for the biggest race of my life. All of my friends yelled, "Bye Gretchen!". They new that I had to practice because I was racing against my rival, Squeaky. We raced against each other each time and not once have a beaten her. This was different, I've gotten better and dropped everything else she won't be ready but I will. When I was walking I saw my running rival. She was slowly walking with her brother Raymond, I always felt sorry for him because he wasn't normal and I knew it was tough for Squeaky. Unfortunately, I never talk to him because I'm too busy trash talking Squeaky.

As I walked onto the sidewalk where Squeaky and Raymond were standing, I gave them the most fake smile ever. After that I felt really bad because I don't like to be mean but it is just about the race and my focus needs to be about winning. The next day was the race and I was ready. I walked under the bleachers to warm up and get a pep talk from my friends but they weren't there like we planned. The feeling I knew was coming finally came and I realized that they weren't really my friends. I couldn't think about this now, so I ran onto the track and tried to focus. The race began and my feet never moved so fast. When I looked to my right I saw Raymond, running along side Squeaky and I, and thought they could be my friends. I can't be mean to him anymore and the only way of doing this was loosing. Losing the biggest race of my life for friends. That is what I did, and Squeaky didn't stop, she kept going. After the race I gave her a real smile and I felt good about it. I wanted her to know that I am happy for her that she won.

By Kaylee Allard

The Door opened slowly. The teacher says "Margot, I'm sorry that you didn't get to see the sun." Still Margot was the same frail girl, that looked like an old photograph dusted from an album. Margot was silently searching for William throughout the classroom. She finally found him sitting in the back of the class at an old desk. He was slowly reading some weird book that was in a different language than theirs. The teacher told everyone to come back in and seat at a desk. He pointed to the last desk he could find that didn't have a child in it. The teacher kindly pointed to that desk. That desk just happen to be next to William's. Margot held onto what was left of her courage and sat next to William. After about 5 mins of hearing all about math, William opens his mouth and quickly said 'The sun was beautiful'. Margot couldn't let William keep bullying her, so she said 'I would have seen it if it wasn't for you' very loudly. The teacher stopped teaching about math, and said ' Why don't you two come with me to the principal's office.' They walk down to the principal's office. The teacher goes in and the kids wait outside, finally after a good 15 minutes the teacher came out. The teacher said ' She is read for you two.' The two kids go into the office and to find that the principal has her back to them. The Principle starts talking and then turns her chair. Margot was shocked to find who was sitting in that chair. All of a sudden she looked at William, who just began laughing.

By Tyler DiBurro

After many hours of being stuck in the closet the children came back from playing outside in the sun. When William came back he opened the door ,and out came Margot. All the kids gathered flowers from outside and gave them to her,because they all felt really bad for her that they did that to her. When she came out she hated everyone especially William,but she didn't want to hurt them because she was leaving soon to go back to Ohio, and she would be seeing the sun everyday. Within a couple of months she was packed and moving back to earth. She said her goodbyes to everyone and the last person that she said goodbye to was William; she said to him “ goodbye William I hope I never see you again” and she left. Inside the spaceship she couldn't sit still, because she was so excited to get home and see all her old friends. It took two months to get home but it was all worth it; When she got off the ship she looked around and everything was different than she thought it would; She thought there would be flying cars, hoverboards, and a lot of technology everywhere,but instead it is just dull and boring. She moved back into her old house which made her really happy. She got to see the sun for the first time in along time. Finally after a full two days she found some of her friends,and she finally felt wanted again. They all were very happy to see her but apparently they didn't know she left. When she left to go live on Venus all she only thought about were her friends and the sun, but again she felt unwanted and lonely. She had a long walk around a pond and when she wasn't looking her friends surprisingly came out and threw her a surprise party for coming back; She felt like she was the king of the world. All the time after that party She felt like rain was going to come and make her feel bad but it was always sunny. She felt like she was raising all the bad stuff that was in her life and threw it away,after the party her life was just full of happiness and nothing tremendously bad.

By Sal LoCoco

It was a cold December night. As I walked towards the bank, I felt the snow crunch underneath my feet and walked slowly to not slip on the ice. My hands were cold as I carried my bag full of my special tools. I could see my breath in the air as I approached the gate of the enormous *LoCoco Savings Bank*. Safe braking had been my job for an extremely long time, but I knew deep down that I wanted something better and I was too scared to admit it. That being said, this was my biggest job in years as I have never heard of a safe this big. Months of preparation were put into this robbery because it would surely be the most difficult and risky bank to try to steal from.

I had just hired someone to break into the bank and create a problem in the lock of the safe. I was disguised as Tom Smith, a safe repair man for a small safe company based near the bank. I walked in and politely greeted the guard who was protecting the entrance of the bank. I proceeded into the manager's office where he instructed me to the location of the safe. This safe was the size of a small room and filled with money on shelves and on carts in the middle of it. From my estimation there had to be at least one million dollars in it. The walls were a shiny silver and I could see a blurry reflection of myself. The manager left me to work alone and I got to work. Instantly, I started piling money into my bags I had taken with me. I nervously, took thousands of dollars off the shelves. Just as I was about to finish taking the money, there was a loud bang.

Ben Price stormed into the room carrying his big shotgun. "You're going to jail for good this time." he proclaimed. I knew he wasn't going to arrest me without putting up a fight. I sprinted at him with my bag of money, using it as a shield to get me out of the small safe into the main part of the bank. His shotgun moved up and I could feel the sharp edge of the barrel violently pierce the side of my eye. Blood started violently gushing from my eye as I stormed out of the bank. I started to feel dizzy and it became harder to walk. As I continued to flee, I realized I couldn't proceed any longer. I spent hours trudging along looking for something that would help me lose the police. With much luck, I found an open car and fired up the engine. That speedy car eventually got me to a point where the cops couldn't see me. Even though I was temporarily free, my eye had been steadily bleeding, and it showed no signs of stopping. I suddenly found an old abandoned house where I promptly decided to spend the night.

I woke up to something cold on my wrists. Looking up, I saw Ben Price strapping handcuffs onto my hands. I couldn't believe how unprofessional I had been during this process. It disappointed me how the great Jimmy Valentine had gotten captured. "Remember me?" said Price triumphantly. I knew I was headed back to jail, but I surely wouldn't stay for long.

By Brady McGrath

After the children came inside, when it started to rain again, they went straight to the closet. They opened the door to the closet and Margot came sprinting out. She asked, "What did I miss?" And, "Where did u guys go?" After her classmates told her, they felt really bad about what they did, but Margot was infuriated. She tried to get in a fight with the people who put her in the closet. She tried to viciously kill them. Then the teacher quickly walked when she heard what was going on, and yelled at Margot, but she did not understand how mad Margot was.

When the teacher came in angrily and yelled at Margot she sent her to the Headmaster's office. The Headmaster asked why she tried to fight the kids, and she told him. So he went down to their classroom and he threw the kids outside because he felt so bad for Margot and he knew how badly she wanted to see the sun. When got into the classroom he brought the people who put her in the closet outside of the school and he said, "Because you made Margot not see the sun come out you will stay in the rain for the next 7 years until it comes out again."

The parents of these kids were very angry because of this punishment. They wanted to know if they could do anything else to get rid of this punishment. So the Headmaster asked Margot what else could the parents do to make up for the horrible thing that their own children did. So Margot said, "Well, they could send me back to earth so I can see the sun." The Headmaster went back to the parents and the parents said that they would fund the trip to bring Margot back to earth.

The next day Margot met the captain in front of the spaceship. took off in the spaceship that would bring her back to her home planet. It took her 16 days to get there. When she got there she could barely see anything. All the cities were burnt down and then she saw a light within a house. Then she saw her best friend from when she lived there inside the house. They started to talk about life on earth and how miserable she was there. Margot said that she would bring her back to the planet that she lived on and she could start school with her. Margot's friend was very happy to hear this and now Margot would be happy because she had one of her old friends, and also something that would remind her of earth.

By Eryn Trant

I can still remember my old house, the unique smell it had, how it was tucked away on a cul de sac, away from the noisy street, and the way it made me feel so comfortable and at home. It was like there was no other place for me, I was living in the perfect home. That was until my parents announced that we were moving. That meant a new town, new friends, and a new school. My family had only been living here for two months. My dad is a veterinarian and he is always getting transferred from town to town, helping out in clinics that do not have a lot of vets and need more help. I had just settled into my school, but now I will have to make all new friends and start the process all over again. I never fit in and always felt so different, because I was always changing schools. No other kid I knew moved around schools as much as I did. I was very nervous on the day that we were supposed to move. I did not want to leave, but I knew that I did not have any other choice. When we arrived at my new house, I was surprised by how nice everyone in my neighborhood was, some people even helped me and my family unload some of our belongings from the moving van. I had hoped that everyone else in my new town was just as friendly.

A couple days later, I had to go to school. I was extremely nervous. I begged and pleaded my parents to let me stay home, but they refused and said that it was good for me to go to school and meet all of my new classmates. "Think of it this way," my mom told me, "A new school is like a fresh start, there is nothing to be afraid of, take this as a good thing. If you go to school you will be able to meet all of your new classmates and start adjusting to your new school." I knew that she would make up another one hundred reasons to convince me that going to a new school was a good thing, so I decided that it was easier to just agree as I nervously walked out the door with a fake smile plastered on my face. The school was enormous and very noisy, I did not think that I was going to survive. After I entered the building and was able to finally find my locker, one kid approached me. He seemed genuinely nice and friendly. "Hi! My name is Raymond," he exclaimed. He sounded nice, but there was something about him that seemed a little off. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the other kids around me starting to stare. The only thing I really wanted at a new school was to fit in with the crowd. I did not want to stand out, my goal was to blend in. I knew what I had to do.

"Go away you freak!" I yelled at Raymond. I felt absolutely terrible after those words came out of my mouth. Raymond just stood there staring at the wall, while every other kid in that hallway laughed, snickered, and pointed at him. I immediately saw him running towards the bathroom with tears in his eyes. He ran past a girl walking down the hallway and almost knocked her down. She seemed very calm, until she looked at the sadness on his face. Her expression immediately turned from cool to cruel. She quickly scanned the crowd and noticed kids patting me on the back and congratulating me for what I had done. She then marched up to me and opened up her mouth.

"What did you do that for?" she asked, anger rising. "That's my brother and you hurt his feelings, nobody messes with him and gets away with it," she snarled at me. The girl happened to have an abnormally squeaky voice and I couldn't help but snicker. That's when she told me that she wasn't afraid of me and she started to charge at me with two ready fists. I realized that this girl was crazy, so I ducked and ran to my first class. All of first period I couldn't help but think of Raymond, what I said to him, and the sadness in his eyes as he ran down the hall to the boy's room. I suddenly got this knot in my stomach and felt very guilty. As the day went on, the knot in my stomach tightened and the guilt worsened. By the time lunch came, I decided to go up to Raymond and apologize to him for what I had done, but as I walked into the cafeteria two of the most popular girls

in the grade came up to me and asked me if I wanted to sit with them. I knew that I could not pass up an opportunity as big as this and figured that I could apologize to Raymond some other time. All through lunch the girls at the table congratulated me and praised me like I was some kind of hero. I acted cool and pretended that I was happy with my behavior. I gave the appearance that I wasn't sorry for my actions.

When I got home from school that evening and sat down at my desk in my room to start my homework, I suddenly thought of Raymond. This thought made the knot in my stomach tighten. The knot tightened so much that I could hardly eat dinner. When my mother and father asked me if I was alright and if anything was bothering me, I lied and told them, "no," and went to my room to complete the remaining portion of my homework. A couple weeks later, as I was walking into school with my two best friends, Mary-Louise and Rosie, a flyer for the May Day races caught my eye. As we were walking into school, they noticed my interest in the flyer.

"Are you gonna sign up?" asked Rosie. "I don't know," I replied. "I was the fastest kid in my old town and school, but I don't know who I am going up against," I told them. "You know that girl with the high-pitched voice, Squeaky, well she always competes in the May Day races and wins every single year. Gretchen, this can finally be the year that someone else beats her. I think that you should totally compete," Mary-Louise told me. "Yeah," Said Rosie. "Hey, why don't you go tell her right now that you're entering and that she'll have to train real hard, if she even has a shot of winning the race." I did not want to disappoint them, so I walked over to Squeaky. "What do you want?" she barked at me.

"Look, Squeaky," I told her, "I just wanted to tell you the kind of competition you will be facing in the May Day races. You're gonna want to train real hard if you even have a shot of beating me," I said as I shot her an evil grin and sashayed away. I don't even know where the sashaying came from, but it seemed like it worked. Both Mary-Louise and Rosie were telling me, "Way to go Gretchen!" and were making whistling sounds with their fingers. Squeaky shot me the look of death and walked to her first class. That's when I remembered that I had been meaning to apologize to Raymond for what had happened weeks ago. I had finally found friends, and with friends like Mary-Louise and Rosie, what was the need for any type of apology.

My main focus was the May Day race and I had been training with my two best friends. For the next few weeks I jogged with Mary-Louise, while Rosie walked. During one particular jog, we saw Squeaky as we were on the corner street of our downtown area. That's when Rosie suggested that we go over to Squeaky to make sure that she was competing in the May Day races, so that I had some competition. I saw that Raymond was with her. We walked up to her and Mary Louise asked if she was still competing. She said, "Yes." When Rosie opened up her mouth to make a comment about Raymond, Squeaky yelled, "Shut up Fatso!" and they both backed away from her obviously offended. I knew that this girl was crazy and would do anything to protect her brother, so I told Mary Louise and Rosie that we should just walk away. Seeing Squeaky's reaction to Rosie, they agreed and we walked away.

"What was that about?" I asked them as we quickly walked away. "I don't know. Squeaky's always been super protective about her brother Raymond. If you are saying something about him that she doesn't like, she won't say anything back, she will just start beating you up," said Mary-Louise. "Whatever," Rosie chimed in. The day of the race I was so excited that I hardly got much sleep the night before. My adrenalin was the only thing that was powering me that morning. I

met Mary-Louise and Rosie in the park before the race began. That gave me enough time to get my number pinned on my shirt and work out winning strategies with them. When the intercom crackled to life and the announcer came on and announced that the race was about to begin, I waved goodbye to my friends and jogged to the starting line. When the official starter fired the gun to begin the race, I sprung to life and ran the hardest that I had ever run in my life, but in the end Squeaky came in first. I came in Second. During the race I had noticed that Raymond was running alongside Squeaky, on the other side of the fence, in his own little way. At the end of the race, I saw Squeaky look in my direction. I smiled at her and walked over to her and congratulated her. She congratulated me in return and I congratulated Raymond.

I also apologized to Raymond about the way I had treated him when I first met him. He told me that it was okay and that he forgave me. I then asked Squeaky if she wanted to go for a jog around the block. She agreed and Raymond came with us. I suddenly realized that Mary-Louise and Rosie weren't my true friends, because if they realized that I was friendly towards Raymond they wouldn't like me anymore. The important thing that I learned that day was that blending in is not always a good thing. Being Different is what makes you extraordinary. I made a friend in Squeaky that day, someone who I thought would be the last person I would befriend.

By Ben Donnelly

Jimmy woke up in the middle of the night on a Monday. He moaned. It was way too early to be awake, barely after midnight. He got out of bed and picked up his bag. It was heavy, and he sagged slightly under the weight. Jimmy yawned, but he had work to do. Jim left the house with his bag, dressed in a nice tuxedo, and went towards the local bar. The man running the bar laughed and gave him a drink.

“The usual?” He asked.

Jimmy paid for his drink and walked out of the bar calmly. He got in a cab and went to the train station. He saw a wanted sign with his face on it. He laughed. What a joke. Like any small town cop could catch him. Then he saw a policeman rushing him from the behind. “How cowardly”, he thought. He had gotten cocky. He sneered at the cop. Jimmy ran as swiftly as possible with the cop steps behind him. The cop gave chase, but jimmy was to fast. The cop stopped chasing him when he ran out of breathe. Jimmy went home and hid his bag. He knew it was only a matter of time before he was caught. He went outside and got in his car. He started to drive. That's when two police cars gave chase. Jimmy hit the gas and sped up. There was a roadblock. Jimmy sped up more. He rammed the road block with a loud *wham*, and fell unconscious. His last thoughts before passing out were: “I guess I can't run forever.”

He would awaken in a cell.

When he awoke a few days later, a man was trying to read him his rights. His name was Ben Price. Jimmy would remember that name. He would be glad he did. It would be useful when he got out of jail. He accused Jimmy of being a safe cracker. Jimmy denied it, but they had had a load of evidence on him. In fact, they had been spying on Jimmy the whole time. Ever since his last heist two days ago. They caught him in the act for his last heist, and he had to run for it. He had no idea they knew who he was.

By David Olson

As the children opened the door of the closet that they locked Margot in very slowly, they were expecting Margot to be very angry and frustrated. But that's not what they saw when she came out of the closet. She was confused and didn't know that the sun already came out. Then the boy, William, the boy who locked her in the closet, stepped forward and told her what happened and how she was right and how he was so sorry. Margot looked away and practically ignored what William had said and walked out of the classroom. A few kids went out to go find her but she was nowhere to be found in the school. Everybody felt terrible about what they did to her. Margot was right all along when nobody believed her.

The teacher had walked in and asked all the children how it was. None of them responded. She asked "Why do you all look so sad and miserable?" Nobody responded when she said that. Then one boy shot his hand up and said what happened and how they locked Margot in the closet. He said "We didn't think she was right and she was lying about everything and was trying to fool us about what happened. We thought everything was just a huge lie. When we saw the sun we were so distracted enjoying the heat that we forgot all about Margot. We feel so bad that we did that. Margot walked out of the classroom when we let her out and we don't know where she is now. The teacher was very angry. She said "Why would you do that?! That girl was telling you the truth and even if she wasn't you still don't do that! Now look what you did! We don't know where she is now! Her parents are going to be absolutely furious when they find out that you kids decided to lock her up in a closet because you thought she was telling a big lie. Now let's search the school and try to find her!"

As the teacher and the children searched through the school, she was nowhere to be found. They checked every classroom and they still couldn't find her. The teacher told other teachers about what happened and they told the head of the school. Her parents were informed later about the incident. They were furious just as the teacher was. Both of her parents drove to the school immediately to help find their daughter. The father of the girl said to the teacher in the classroom, "Where were you when our daughter was being locked up in a closet?" Who knows where she is now. How could you not be present in a class when children are locking up our daughter in a closet?" The teacher knew that it was partially her fault for not being present in the classroom when they did that. She apologized to the parents, but they didn't care. They just wanted to find their daughter.

After hours of searching for their daughter, they found her walking home. Her parents asked her about what happened and that they didn't care if she was angry. Margot didn't respond. Then she said that she was angry and didn't want to be on Venus anymore and wanted to go back to earth. She said how she couldn't stand any of the kids that were bullying her. Margot is usually a calm girl but this time she was angry. Her parents could understand why and they calmed Margot down. It rained that whole day as it usually did. Margot didn't go to school for the next few weeks. Her parents finally made the decision that she was going back to Earth and they were going to get a rocket to go back. Margot didn't go back for anymore days at her school. Her parents decided that it would be best if she didn't go. They already had arranged a date for them to go back and paid off everything.

On the day that Margot left from rainy Venus to go back to sunny Earth, her classmates came to say something to her and her parents. They came to the shuttle and each and everyone of her classmates that locked her in the closet said sorry for making fun of her for being different and looking different and locking her in the closet. Margot said back to each and everyone of them, "I forgive you" Margot was a nice girl and was very forgiving. Then her and her parents got all of their belongings onto the rocket and left for Earth. Margot was very frightened by the rocket engine of the plane as it flew into space. It took a few days to get to Earth so Margot decided to sit down to eat. She ate with her mom and dad. Margot thought for a while while she slept about how she missed the sun and how angry she was at those kids, but she did miss her home and the rain. She knew her parents made the right decision going back to earth. After all the sun was a lot better than the rain. She slept very well that night.

The next morning, Margot got up hearing her parents yelling her name. Margot walked into the part of the rocket where her parents were. Margot looked out the window and could see how they were very close to earth. She was very happy but since she was such a calm girl she didn't really show her feelings. She went to get food. After about 2 hours her pilot on the rocket told her that they were landing. As the rocket landed, Margot and her parents were very excited. They got off the rocket and felt the nice sun on their faces and backs. Margot was excited and remembered how beautiful the sun was. But that also brought up the memory of being locked in the closet. Margot moved into her new house and signed up for school. After a while Margot and her family got over it and were happy living on their new home. Margot knew that someday she would go back and revisit the boys and girls that locked her in the closet but not in a negative way, but in a positive way.

By Annika Reddivari

I really want to win the race because I want an accomplishment. I am so nervous for the race because I have to go against Squeaky. I want to win this race so badly. She is so much faster than me. I should probably get her mad and make fun of her brother Raymond. It is so hard to go up against because she is so tough. Squeaky is so cocky and hurts everyone physically. I need to start training so I can win this race. I have come so far and I need to do this. She came up to me when I was with my friends. I was so scared what she was going to do to me so my friends stood up to her. I did not say anything because I was so scared. It was race day, I was so nervous about today. I want to win but I need to work really hard under all this pressure. Before the race began, I was stretching out my legs and was getting ready. I saw Squeaky and I saw her talking with Mr. Pearson before it started.

The race was about to start and I was getting into my starting position. Squeaky looked ready to win this race. The alarm went off and we ran through the street. Squeaky was so fast but I was right there next to her. I was loosing my breath but I knew that I have to keep going. We were running quickly at the same speed then we were very close to the finish line. I was so tired and my legs were hurting and ended up behind her in the race.

We were near the finish line and we were so close. We did not know who won the race. It took the people a long time to tell us who won. I was thinking in my head what will happen if I won. They finally announced who the winner was and it was Squeaky. She came up to me and was smiling. I congratulated her and gave her a smile. She thought that I did really good. That made me feel something and I knew that I could do it. Maybe people can change who they really are. Squeaky and I became great friends after that race and we helped coach Raymond. He became a really good runner and won so many races because of us.

All Summer In A Day continued ...

By Kayla Russell

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, to let Margot out. She was huddled in the corner, her back to them and head bent towards her knees.

“Margot...”

The quiet shuffling of feet echoed faintly in the dim hallway.

“We’re really sorry.”

A quiet sob escaped Margot’s lips and she shuddered. William noticed a soft glow coming from the corner, casting shadows barely visible on the cracked walls.

“Hey, where’s that light-” he paused as Margot began to rise. She turned slowly to face them. The shadows shifted also, but Margot’s face remained dark and her expression unreadable. She slowly brought up her hands, which were cupped around something. Beams of light seemed to be escaping from between her fingers, as if she had imprisoned a firefly within them. Margot opened her hands.

“Look,” whispered the girl whose lips never moved.

Beams of light shone from her palms, as if she held in them a miniature sun.

“I think the sun is a flower,

That blooms for just one hour.”

As she spoke, the light grew, stretching through her fingertips and lighting up her veins. It filled the cramped passageway with warmth. It was the feeling of walking into a coffee shop and out of a snowstorm and sensing the air change from frantic and frigid to warm and welcoming.

“It’s like a penny,” one of the children remembered.

“Like a fire.”

They all stood, awestruck, as Margot transformed in front of them. Her face, always so blank and emotionless, was full of wonder and delight as she stared at the beams that were now swirling in the air around them. The rain had washed all her brightness away, but the light was like watercolors; she was bursting with life. Her eyes shone with excitement and hope, her face was flushed, and she was smiling for the first time in longer than any of her classmates could remember.

Then Margot looked over at William. All of a sudden she could feel repressed anger bubbling to the surface, more than she'd experienced in a while. She had never fought back to William when provoked by his taunts, but now, feeling a new boldness, she reached out and (not very gently) tapped him on the shoulder. The rest of the children continued to marvel at the swirling lights, oblivious. William jumped slightly as he was yanked out of concentration, for he had not been an exception to the spell that the glow had cast. He turned and frowned apologetically, furrowing his brows as if he was thinking something over. (At this point Margot was thinking several things over, somehow forgetting that she was very skinny and very uncoordinated.) They stood there staring at each other for what could have been another seven years, until William spoke, taking Margot by surprise with the remorsefulness of his voice.

"I never used to miss the sun before."

"What?" Margot was totally bewildered.

"I never used to miss the sun, only the idea of it. You came here and you did miss it, but not because you read, or sang, or learned about it like it was a magical light that made everyone happy. You missed it because you had felt the warm on your skin and seen the glow of a sky without rain. Everyone wanted some of that, to be you, even though we could tell it was killing you to miss it. I wanted it more than anything."

Margot nodded, understanding in a different way the need to feel the warmth and hear the sound of rainless silence. She could feel her anger melting to sympathy, realizing that while the rain had washed away her glow, it had flooded William until all that he could feel was the anger of the storm. By now most of her class had been listening in for a while. One of them finally piped up.

"I'm sorry Margot."

"Ya, Margot, we're all real sorry."

"Sorry, Margot."

Margot looked around at the other children, remembering how they had tried to include her when she first came. She knew what it was like to miss the sun. She forgave them.

All of a sudden the children heard the teacher calling from inside the classroom. The children all rushed up, and Margot held out her hands and the light flew quickly back into her fingertips. She turned to follow up the stairwell, but William stopped her.

"You have the sun inside of you," he said, gesturing to the remaining swirls in her hands, "Don't let the rain wash it out."

The Big Night

By Cheyenne Smith

I raced down the highway at full speed, the sirens blazing, and a fleet of other officers behind me. This was it, the big night. I've been waiting years for this moment where I am able to catch Jim Valentine. I finally will catch him and arrest him. Years I've spent eating his dust as he zoomed out of sight and years I've spent chasing his tail just for it to lead me to all dead ends. This was it, the big night.

"You sure it's him sir?" asked the Jr. Deputy.

"Yes. I know it's him; I can feel it in my gut." I responded sounding calm but deep down I was extremely eager to get to the crime scene. I was hoping with all my heart he would still be there and didn't escape. The woman who called in the crime said her husband hit and tripped him but that's all I heard before I left.

We pulled up to a big and lovely home that was apparently owned by the mayor of the town. I looked to my left and saw him, the mayor, on a gurney being lifted into an ambulance. He had a black eye and many bruises; his wife and children were fine and stood right by his side. That was it, he was long gone.

"Sorry about last night." the Jr. Deputy remarked.

"Yeah, yeah." I groaned. "It's just years I've spent chasing him. Countless hours I've spent chipping away at what seems an self regenerating stone; I chip one part off and as soon as I go to the next part it's healed itself."

"I'm sorry. I know I was just put to this case but if it helps you're a real trooper. If I spent this long on a case I think I would go nuts!" he said trying to make me feel better.

"A few months ago I didn't have enough evidence to arrest him but I knew where he was. Now, I have the evidence and multiple eyewitnesses but I don't know where he is. You're right about going nuts; I haven't had a social life for at least a year now. On the bright side he's getting sloppy."

"Now, why would you say that sir? He got away. By all means no disrespect sir, but I wouldn't call that sloppy."

"About a month ago, he would've made sure there were no witnesses and nobody home. This means he must be desperate, he needs money. What good does that do me though? It's useless."

“Well sir, my mama always said ‘Even the greenest of green grass will always turn yellow.’” he said very heartfully. “Oh well look at the time, sorry sir but I have to go! I have a date with a very pretty girl and I would hate to keep her waiting. Night sir.”

“Night Junior.”

A few days past and I am mainly living off of coffee and 3 hours of sleep. It’s like I’m on a bike that powers a whole city, if I stop the whole city goes out. They depend on me, they need me. How many safes has he really broken into that I just don’t know about? Does it go deeper? Will I ever find him? How could I find him though? I’ve wasted so much time on this case I don’t even consider my apartment my home any more, for me it’s my office. I have a couch on the right, my *World’s Best Uncle* mug on my messy desk, and some clothes to change into in the closet.

“Good afternoon sir. I haven’t seen you all morning.” Junior said smiling as he placed a coffee on my desk.

“Thanks and a good morning to you too. How was your date?” I asked trying to take my mind off of Jim for one second.

“It was swell. We have another planned for next week. Sweet girl that Katie is. We went to a small restaurant and got to meet the owner. Oh what was his name? Oh Mike Dolan! Nice guy the fellow is.”

“Good to hear. I’m glad you enjoyed yourself, Junior.” I said. As Junior walked out the door I mumbled to myself “Mike Dolan.”

“What was that sir?” Junior asked as he turned around.

“Oh no, not you. It’s just Mike Dolan sounds familiar.” I said. Then it struck me. I burst out my chair like a Mexican Jumping Bean and ran to the file cabinet faster than a roadrunner. “That’s it! That’s where I know that name.”

“Mike Dolan, sir?” Junior asked genuinely confused.

The door burst wide open and a cop ran right through it. “SIR! SIR! THEY’VE SPOTTED HIM. HE’S HEADING TO SPRINGFIELD AS WE SPEAK!” she yelled.

“Send a duo to go down there but Junior and I are going to get a head start.” I started filled with confidence. “Oh, I’m going to need a team with me too. We are going to Mike Dolan’s restaurant.”

As I had suspected Mr.Valentine had left before the police got there but little did he know that a whole team of other police officers and were waiting outside of his friend's restaurant. I don't understand why it took me so long to realize that Mike Dolan's place was his safe haven. The lights were off and there were no cars parked, when all of a sudden I see a car pull up. A man came out and went to the door to unlock it. The man turned around and I could clearly see it was Jim Valentine. He locked the door again and vanished into the dark.

"It's a go." I exclaimed over the dispatcher. I wasn't excited nor was I happy but I felt as if I was arresting a normal thief. I knew this wasn't a normal thief though; I had spent years trying to catch him but I felt calm.

We stood at the door and a police officer had picked the lock quietly so Jim would not know the were coming. We entered the pitch black restaurant and carefully made our way up the stairs. The last door on the left had a glow coming out from under it but no sound was coming out it. I gave the signal to go down hall. Junior took the lead as he stood at the front of the door. Junior looked at all of us and with his hand signaled: three...two...one. *SMASH!* Junior kicked down the door and went straight in.

I looked straight at Mr.Valentine and he looked like a deer caught in the head lights. There he was, my long time enemy and the main reason my social life ended. I finally felt happy, but that feeling didn't last long. As Junior went into handcuff him, Jimmy put up a fight and scratched Junior so hard he tore off a piece of Junior's uniform. I went in fast and restrained long enough so an officer could handcuff him.

"Mr .Jim Valentine you are under arrest for the multiple accounts of robbery. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to speak to an attorney, and to have an attorney present during any questioning." I explained to him. I watched Junior escort him out the door and Jim did not even make a noise. I stood there for another minute just trying to wrap my head around this then I realized that was it, the big night.

Where I'm From Poems **Inspired by George Ella Lyon**

I Am From Poem

By Arya Gupta

I am from music notes
From Indian dresses and popcorn
I am from the many couches with lots of pillows
Cozy, loving, warm
I am from a cherry blossom tree
Which blooms with bright pink flowers every spring
I am from holiday decorating and short people
From Rajika Gupta and Anshu Gupta
I am from the crazy silly jokes and long hugs
From "Reading will help you in life" and "Make your bed!"
I'm from Diwali and candle lighting
I'm from Northern India
Pilau, Corn chowder
From the orange stain on the rug when Jaya left her putty there
The funny jokes my dad says
From the pictures of events hanging on the walls
From the memories cherished in items my family has kept for years

By Jordan DeCoste

I am from ripped jeans,
From Mountain Dew and Skullcandy.
I am from the hole in the driveway,
(Shallow, dark,
I always trip on it.)
I am from daffodils
The bright yellow color glowing in the light.
I'm from swimming and storytelling,
From Judy and Diane.
I'm from the talkatives and the strange humor,
From "Finish your vegetables!" and "What's for dessert?"
I'm from choosing a Christmas tree and church on Easter Sunday
I'm from Malden and Melrose,
Spaghetti and meatballs and grilled cheese.
From the time my brother Liam was bit by a cow,
The hand my aunt Judy broke while cooking.

In a hat box filled with pictures under the coffee table,
The collection growing with each event.
I am from these pictures,
An amazing abundance,
Taking me through my life

By Eryn Trant

I am from textbooks,
from Biotin and Collagen shampoo and Windex.
I am from the red brick house on the cul-de-sac up the hill.
(Tall, sturdy, and the sound of ice crunching under my feet.)
I am from basil,
growing in the side yard at Grandma's house,
releasing a sweet scent
every time the summer breeze blows.
I'm from celebrating Easter in New York and loud laughter,
from Bob and Patty.
I'm from long car trips and peaceful walks on the beach.
From "Work hard to achieve your dreams" and "Always put your best foot forward."
I'm from Greek Orthodox churches, and midnight Easter services
that end at three.
I'm from Boston and Greece,
strawberry cheesecake and spinach pie.
From the moment my grandparents left their country
and came to to this land
with a life savings of two hundred dollars,
to my father nearly drowning while white water rafting.
In the corner of my brother's closet is a box
holding all of my family's most precious moments
frozen in time,
but very alive.
These are my memories,
defining who I am and what I stand for.