



FREE  
(DOM)  
ARTS

The  
Winston  
School San Antonio

SPRING 2016 V6  
I.2

$$\left( \frac{F}{V} \right)$$

$$\left( \frac{F}{V} \right)$$

## Contents

Death to Color . Everett Haynes . Front Cover
Faculty Sponsor's Note . Paschal Booker . 2
Headitor's Note . Arthur Trickett-Wile . 2
Project A is Overridden . Will Stouffer . 3
Giraffic Park . Andrew Zwaan . 10
The Day I Prayed for Peace . Naila Mohammed . 18
Maybe It's All a Dream . Sergio Medellin . 19
Sadness . Sergio Medellin . 22
Trey Finds Love in a Scaly, Sassy Manfish . Jeremy Jones, Chris Vieger, & PJ Neidert . 23
My Amazing Sister . Rachel Wright . 30
Let's Play Operation . Veronique Sarosdy . 32
2D Art Gallery . 37
Lenses (A Gallery) . 39
Emmerich . Sam Fesko . 41
The Mark of Potential Creation and Understanding of the Worlds . Jonathon McIntyre . 43
The Inner Workings of MoreMan . Evan McGinnis . 47
Copenhagen . Zach Wolfe . 50
Three Stories . Ronnie Price . 53
Poems . Martha Day . 56
Pupa . Arthur Trickett-Wile . 60
Staff . 62
Portrait of Becca Brown . Everett Haynes . Back Cover

## *Freedom Arts Staff*

### School Faculty

Faculty Sponsor . "Spaculty Fonsor" . Paschal Murat Booker 12th
Spiritual Director . "Shronman in Residence" . Ronald Price 11th
Proofreader/Coordinator . "Lead Punctuator" . Martha Day Staff Writer . "The Amazicle" . Tij Jefferson Staff Photographer . "Eagle Eye" . Elizabeth Shaw Chief Editor . "Headitor" . Arthur Trickett-Wile 10th
Sr. Training Editor/Arts Editor . "Thorgan" . Morgan Carolin 9th
Jr. Training Editor . "Earnest Protege" . Matthew Alsip Spiritual Director in Training . "Shronman in Training" . Etiene Fitzgerald
Thank you, <i>Freedom Arts</i> staff

Before we learn to bend  
To the harshness that we feel  
When life comes crashing in

What has been said  
What has been done  
Is permanent  
Eternal  
No bridges built  
Can be unbuilt  
But they may all be burned

We come to understand  
We are alone on seas of trauma  
No truths and no directions  
Fear and imperfections  
And the knowledge that our feelings  
Are what we will become:

A happy boy who knows sadness  
Grows  
Into a sad man who knew happiness  
For he is all the wiser  
The pictures in his head  
In all their fleeting joy  
Saw a life of pure perfection  
Through eyes of a little boy

$\left(\frac{F}{\nabla}\right)$

### **Spaculty Fonsor's Note**

As I have noted in the past, each issue of *Freedom Arts* brings its own synchronous personality to our readers. New artists and writers arrive as veteran artists and writers depart. Three of our featured writings are memoirs from departing seniors Jonathon McIntyre, Veronique Sarosdy, and Zach Wolfe—all of them in distinctly reflective and revealing moods, in elaborate contrast with the collaborative madcap mayhem from new senior contributors Jeremy Jones, Chris Vieger, and PJ Neidert. Frequent contributor Will Stouffer is also graduating; he leaves us with yet another of his sublime tales from the netherworld of his fecund imagination. Graduating senior Everett Haynes, an artist whose talent exploded this year, is featured on our front and back covers, while fellow seniors Emily Kelly and Emma Price share the fruits of their keen photographers' eyes. Ronnie Price, our departing Shaman-in-Residence, has contributed a piece that will leave a lasting (spoken and unspoken) impression upon us all. While we will greatly miss our departing seniors, this issue offers ample evidence that art abounds as well with our remaining contributors.

### **Paschal Murat Booker**

#### **Headitor's Note**

Since our last edition, our staff in training has shouldered the load. All thanks in the world to my redeemer, Morgan Carolin, and Matthew Alsip, her able understudy, for painstakingly designing the work in your hands. As in years past, we thank Mr. Booker, Mr. Salinas, and Coach Rodriguez for their creative guidance and support. Our hearts go out to Dr. Val Reese and Dr. Tom Jefferson for generously funding this glorious creative enterprise. Finally, our biggest thanks go to the students—you, the writers and artists. Were it not for you, the magazine would not exist. This is truly yours to treasure. Enjoy.

### **Arthur Trickett-Wile**

## Project A is Overridden

*Will Stouffer*

I, like most animals, don't remember my birth. What I do know, however, is that I am part of an experiment. They called it Project Anthropos (meaning "human" in Greek.) For short, I'll just call it Project A. I am not actually human, though. In fact, Project A is based around the idea that evolution can be forced upon a species. Project A's goal is to "evolve" a species into another species. This is done by forcing a species to evolve the exact traits of another species. My ancestors (against their will) participated in this experiment. Every offspring would be used to force evolution into. If you were to see me, you would probably think I'm some kind of alien.

My knowledge of Project A only dates back to 2067. I was 4 years old, and I was always kept in the same cell. These cells, however, were much better than prison cells. For example, the scientists provided us with the knowledge to use a basic computer. We could access vast databases from history from long ago to statistics that update in realtime. The computers were able to teach us languages, but no one . . . experiment was able to really choose its language. I was stuck learning English. While it was difficult to understand at first, I eventually was able to get it. In fact, I was able to identify from which species I evolved. I evolved from a family of orange Tabby cats.

Later in my life, another experiment was "merged" with Project A. The project involved the injection of information into the brain (actually, it was more of a surgical procedure that added a strange interface for writing data to the brain.) The project's name was not disclosed, but if I had to guess, it probably had to do with the creation of super soldiers. I was one of the first choices for the information injections, though at this point I could only construct basic English sentences. The first thing that I was "taught" through this process was, in fact, English. This is where things be-

She speaks of THE dove.  
How she can believe in He—  
I do not know.  
She must feel free,  
Yet I'm still cold like snow  
I write her a song,  
For I care.  
She takes me in her arms,  
And strokes my hair.  
Believe Rose,  
Write if you must, but believe in Him!  
How can I believe, when He is taking you away from me?  
Writing is an escape—my escape . . .



*Vorhänge*

*Adam Eyre*

## Pupa

*Arthur Trickett-Wile*

In infancy and innocence  
We are born with marks upon us  
Cursed with imperfection  
Tainted with humanity  
In growing we must break

In the rushing of a brook,  
An ocher turtle floats down the stream,  
And the memories drift upward against the current.

In the rustling of a forest,  
A honeyed fragrance once mixed  
With the crisp scent of pines.

In the warmth of an ember,  
An embrace of arms unseen makes aware  
The cold kiss of winter.

In the gaiting of a pearly stallion,  
A distant heartbeat resounds  
In a familiar rhythm.

In the presents of a dry painting,  
Vibrant, wet brushstrokes wax over the old,  
But the original image may still be seen.

### My Escape

Writing is an escape—my escape.  
A recovery for self-discovery.  
I'm in my own little world;  
My mind's in a twirl.  
I must keep writing,  
for I am fighting  
Because SHE is fighting!  
An angel amongst the dark,  
Singing like a lark.  
Her eyes filled with love,

gin to take a turn. They successfully taught me English through a simple surgery procedure, which, at the time, was revolutionary. After learning more from the databases provided for us, I learned that the human race had always been striving for better things. They always wanted to know more about a certain thing.

One day, I was invited (forced, really) back to get information injected into my brain once more. I asked what the information or skill would be, but they wouldn't tell me. I recall hearing scientists who worked on Project A early on complaining about the fact that the merged project (which I'll call Project B) was taking over the experiment. After the information was added into my brain, I was surprised to find out that they escorted me into a room that I had never seen before. This room had a window. I had only read about windows in the databases that they had provided me. They told me that if I were to do the test and follow their orders, I would be allowed to mingle among the human population outside of the cells that we were in. They said I would be released to do whatever I wanted and they wouldn't intervene. Given that I had only now thought of this as a possibility to feel less dependent, I accepted after a few minutes of thought. If I knew what I knew now, I would never have accepted that opportunity.

They led me to a giant room that was brightly lit; it looked like an indoor military training site. I knew something wasn't right, but after hearing that I had a chance to be like a normal human being, I didn't let those thoughts get in the way. They led me into a room with a few doors and closed the door behind me. The PA system turned on and I immediately heard an incredibly low frequency coming out of the speakers. Judging by what I know about humans, that sound was out of their range of hearing.

I began to feel a bit strange. My blood pressure began to increase along with my breathing and heart rates. I had the common signs of adrenaline released into my body. That's about when I heard servos powering up (another thing humans can't hear). It's almost as though I felt . . . more powerful. I felt incredibly strong.

The PA announcer talked over the low-pitched sound and told me to continue through whichever doors I pleased. He said that they would inform me when the test was over. I entered the door on the left and was greeted by a cardboard cutout connected to a servo that popped out into the door frame. Before my brain could even register all of this, my arm swung full speed into the cutout . . . and I broke the servo's arm. I almost expected them to end the test right there, but they just told me that that was normal. Normal. Since I am never really able to be around any other living beings or be able to understand any of the concepts that were presented to me in the databases, my understanding of normal was very limited, so I accepted the response.

As more of these strange involuntary actions continued, the feeling of powerfulness grew, but based on my inability to control these actions, I felt less powerful than a quadriplegic sinking into the ocean. I began to hear things.

When the test was finally over, I had destroyed almost every piece of cardboard there was. They instructed me to continue through 2 doors to leave. As soon as I opened the second door, I was greeted by 5 soldiers who escorted me back to my normal cell. I was beginning to grasp what they were doing. Project B is based around the idea that they could change a being's thoughts. They could implant ideas that would influence the actions of the being. In this case, me.

I had a nightmare that night. It started off with me being released from this facility. I wound up in a large city, but I couldn't see anyone. The streets were lined with cars, but there wasn't a human in sight. I entered a small coffee shop, but it was completely empty. It was as though everyone just left. I exited the coffee shop to find myself looking straight into the eyes of a lion-human hybrid. Its teeth were dripping with blood and its mouth was wide open. I stood frozen in place for what felt like ages until the creature turned around and took off. This is around when I awoke.

I began to wonder if this was part of Project B affecting

Not by grace,  
But a ghost  
That has long left me.

#### Without A Home

The wind chills my bones  
As it whips through my paper coat,  
My tattered scarf falls limp  
Against its adversary.

Like a prodigal prince  
I wander back home,  
Underneath a bridge,  
My castle for the night.

I violently shiver as the  
Dark wind gusts again,  
Threatening to take away  
My lone covering.

A growl like a hungry animal  
Erupts from my stomach,  
And I am ashamed of the  
Desolation around me.

Fingers numb against the cold,  
Not knowing if I will awaken  
To the sight of a new day  
Or to eternity.

#### Painting with Memories

What if the title is really about a peapod vein that happens to  
stick out  
(Upwards of course, like nature intended)  
From the bushel?  
And some alcoholic is purging his latest Pink Squirrel out onto  
the garden?  
(What a sweet threesome that would be)  
Nice and creamy.  
What would the use of a title mean, then?  
Sure, one should never judge a book by its cover,  
But can the same be said about a title?  
I guess now it can be said.  
Never assume a peacock is blue,  
Nor cherry vodka tasty.

#### Letter to a Lost Love

Where will I find you  
When you're no longer free?  
Because when you roamed,  
I knew exactly where you would be.

I could depend on you, I thought.  
I could depend on me, I thought.

But even my shadow  
Hasn't been a good friend.  
It always disappears at night  
And changes in the light.

Although, I lack faith in my fate,  
I still hold onto a promise  
That I will be found.

my thoughts. I could only hope that what I had seen wouldn't affect me in other ways. I was afraid of what was happening. I still am. I don't know what they were planning to do next, but I could only hope that the tests didn't continue in this direction. I thought about the frequency that came from the PA system during testing. I figured that that was a trigger for whatever information they put into me.

They let me leave the following day. I was situated in a town called Austin. Austin, for those of you who don't know, is the capital of Texas. More specifically, the Amor Apartment Homes. They paid the rent, but I had to find a job. Neighbors were informed of my presence and I was able to introduce myself. In fact, one neighbor invited me over to dinner the following night (she figured that I should be getting settled during my first night's stay). That particular lady's name was Nancy. She was nice. She owned a cat (I thought that might have been one of the reasons that she invited me over). I went to bed and slept well that night.

The next day, I decided that I should purchase some clothes that would cover me a bit better (it seemed as though my other neighbor was intimidated by my appearance). I found a website called Amazon. It contained plenty of clothes and other things that I had only read about. I ordered a hoodie and a pair of jeans that were one size up from me (they should cover my ankles and feet a bit better than the clothes that the scientists working on Project A/B gave me). I began to think about my hands. My hands were a bit larger than a normal human's, but not to the point of being alarmingly large. I figured that I could buy a pair of large gloves as well, so I did. They arrived by drone within the hour and I tried them on in front of a mirror. I looked a bit like a gangster, but I didn't care.

As it neared dinner time, I walked over to Nancy's house. She had prepared smoked salmon. The aroma in the room made my mouth salivate. She said that if there was any feline left in me, I'd like the salmon. That, I assumed, was a joke, so I laughed. She

laughed as well and we sat down. As I did, however, she stopped to ask if I knew what table manners were and how to use utensils. I told her that I had read about utensils and knew table manners, but I never had to really use them before. She said that if I needed help with them, she could teach me. I grabbed my fork with my right hand and grabbed the knife with my left hand and I cut into the salmon. Easy enough, I thought. Next, I stabbed the small piece of salmon with my fork and raised it up to my mouth and took a bite. As I'm sure most people would if they had fangs as large as mine, I bit into the fork. I didn't feel any pain, though.

I finished the meal with Nancy and I thanked her. She said that I was always welcome there. Before I left, she handed me a pair of sunglasses that would shield my eyes from the bright Sun. I appreciated her gift. As I exited through the door, Nancy added that she liked my clothes and thought that I shouldn't hide my body from people. She said that the people who would make the best friends would be the ones who were most accepting of how I am. I thought about those words as I walked back to my apartment and sat back down at my laptop. I was tired from the good meal, so I decided to sleep instead of learning about being "normal."

When I awoke, I heard a loud knock on the door. I asked for their patience as I got dressed. I opened the door and was greeted by a man in a blue suit with a badge. I assumed he was some kind of local police officer. He said that Nancy had been murdered last night. This is where I started making connections. The officer stated that she had been stabbed with a steak knife, but there were no recoverable fingerprints on the knife. He asked if I heard any sounds come from the room late at night, but I stated that I went to bed early that night.

The officer cocked his head slightly when I stepped back a bit. He asked me to remove the hood. I told him that I was having a bit of light sensitivity issues that morning, so he allowed me to keep my hood and sunglasses on. He asked questions that I



*Faces*

*Lizzy Shaw*

## **Poems**

*Martha Day*

### A Peacock Drank Some Cherry Vodka

What's the purpose of titles?  
Sometimes they are misleading.  
Other times, non-existent.  
Emily Dickinson didn't use titles,  
Nor did Rumi, on some stuff at least.  
The title is supposed to have some previewing of upcoming attractions,  
Like wake, but only for the reading personnel.  
It can appeal to the senses—all of them.  
Except maybe touch.  
How does one touch a peacock-drinking cherry vodka?  
Even now, readers can smell and taste cherry-flavored.  
They can see a majestic blue peacock, tail and all,  
Bending over to drink.  
But that can be misleading.

meal and no one else said a damn word to me. What a great anniversary.

### Men's Club

At the height of Prohibition, all men belonged to a men's club. As a chimney sweep, I went to the men's club every night, so I could drink the night away. Most of the clubs would host a boxing match every so often, just to show their appreciation to the men who kept them in business. The alcohol flowed like water. Usually the fights were uneventful, but this night was different. There was a certain magic in the air. As I walked around, I saw some very high-ranking people at the club. Most of our members were low income, just getting off work, but something brought all these muckety-mucks into our club. I had to sit up top to watch what would be the fight of the century. The two fighters were like gods among men. They threw punches that could kill a water buffalo, but they took the hits and kept on fighting. Not paying attention to the time . . . it was getting late, but these men didn't stop. It was like neither of them felt any pain, until one of them threw the punch that would change the way I think for the rest of my life. BANG!!!! It happened—the first punch in the history of the sport that killed a man. Everyone was yelling, losing their minds over the dead man. To this day, I cannot go back into that club—every time I walk by, I feel its eeriness.

$\left(\frac{F}{\nabla}\right)$

wasn't able to answer. He left shortly after he realized that I knew nothing.

I consulted what I now knew to be the Internet. Apparently, there have been cases of sleepwalkers killing people without knowing it. I was scared for my life. I thought about the strangeness of the circumstances.

Two years since the incident, nothing similar to this has happened. The case was shelved, due to lack of evidence. There was something that had happened recently, however. I watched the news and found out that Project A had finally come into the public view. Funds stopped, so they were forced to release any living being that was part of the experiment. The scientists were interviewed and told them everything. Project B was never mentioned, though.

The creatures of Project A were released into society. Everyone thought that these new "species" would live in harmony with the humans. After a month, mysterious deaths started showing up. People began to blame the new creatures. Every known Project A creation was given a mark on their hands for identification. Even I was blamed for the deaths. I knew a few other Project A subjects had been locked up in jail or in insane asylums.

I was one of the lucky ones. I had made friends around my area. I even found a few "others" who had similar experiences. We often chatted about how the public saw us and the troubles we encountered. Sometimes we'd walk into a restaurant and they would have signs stating that pets/Anthros were not allowed in the building. We got looks. We felt unwelcome most places.

A documentary was released about how harmless we are. The documentary was thorough and well put together. They even got a famous person to do the voice acting, but it still wasn't enough to change people's perspective.

After 10 years, though, things began to get better. There had not been a mysterious death for 7 years and all of the signs had come down. The opposition was over. The deaths were blamed on

some kind of violent Project A protestor. I didn't buy it, though.

They found the murderer. "We" didn't do it. The scientists belonged to Project B (the Project B before the merge). Apparently, all of the victims were part of the early Project B. The original training implement had a flaw that would inform the victims to kill themselves. I had the same questions that everyone else did. How were there this many experiments? Why did they only occur in areas where members of Project A were released? How is it that nobody from Project B spoke up?

All of the questions were answered by an anonymous, but reliable, source. All that they knew of this person was that they had worked on Project B. Project B's scientists were forced to double as experiments. The early tests went well.

( $\frac{F}{\nabla}$ )



*Rocky Bridge*

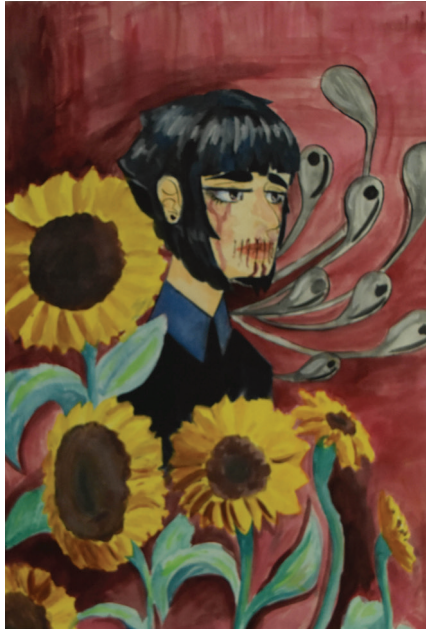
*Emily Kelly*

shadow, as the sun starts to set, a shadow cast over me, like medication numbing my sadness. I feel its powers, too strong to handle. I know I have to look back, but I'm afraid of what I will see. I can't help it anymore: I look back and he is there. As he comes towards me, I see the little tree next to him wither up and die. I know that he was indeed following me—Death. It was my time to go. He held me on my way to the light—there will be no more worries, my child, he said.

Scarlet Meliton Enzo (1879 – 1904)

### Married to Two Women

As a man, I have two loves in this world; one is killing me, and one is saving me. I have been married to Gladys for 62 years, and I have been married to my cigarettes for 70. I started smoking right before I went into the military. They damn near saved my life in WWII and through most of my marriage. I'm a simple man: I smoke half a pack a day, since my doctor told me to cut back. Today it's Gladys's and my 62nd wedding anniversary. She wanted to go to our favorite diner, and I wanted to smoke, but she has the power to make me do anything, so I put on my nice suit and slicked my hair back. As we walked to the diner, I saw all these No Smoking signs, which surely pissed this old man off. When I got to the diner, I saw that they, too, had a No Smoking sign. I thought to myself, I've been smoking in this diner for fifty years now, and this sign sure won't stop me. We sat down to eat, and even before we ordered our drinks, I pulled out my pack of Marlboro reds and lit a cigarette with my blue lighter. As the waiter came to tell me to put the cigarette out, I looked at him and said, "I fought a war for your ass, so you better not tell me to put out this cigarette." He said nothing and turned away. Now, I sit here, with Gladys picking her nails and trying not to be seen, while I stare blankly at the No Smoking sign. I smoked that whole



*Happiness in Silence* Megan Jordan

### Three Stories

Ronnie Price

#### The Follower

As I walk down these streets, I feel followed. I feel as if someone is in the shadows of the daylight. I keep walking, trying not to let in the vanishing eyes that are following me. I keep telling myself no one is there, that I need to make that appointment with the psychiatrist. As I keep walking, the feeling of those eyes lays heavier on me. I'm still trying not to look back. I do not want to feel those eyes anymore. They start to weigh down on me—I can feel their pressure, heavier and heavier. I want to look back, but I know that I can't. A cold breath runs down my neck. I know that whatever is following me has a certain evil in its nature, but there is also a bittersweet sense of bliss, too. I can see its dark

### Giraffic Park

Andrew Zwaan

#### Carl

A couple weeks ago, on an island far, far away, Carl, the head janitor, was patrolling the bathroom stalls at Giraffic Park, a luxury island resort off the coast of Girffany. Ever since he was a child, he had been fascinated by everything giraffes did—from eating and sleeping, to even the way they walked. Giraffic Park had rollercoaster rides, giant hamster ball wheels so that tourists could be side-by-side with the giraffes, and hotels, tourist shops, and much more. The park contained one hundred giraffes. The main attraction of the park was originally going to be dinosaurs that were brought back from extinction, but that didn't happen because that would be stupid. Carl was a blonde-haired, middle-aged man who wore glasses. He had worked there for about a year, and never once got a promotion. After all, he only got a measly \$10 an hour. Then, one Saturday afternoon, he received a phone call that would change his life more than he'd ever know. It was from Bertholga, the park's operations director. Bertholga told Carl to see her in an area of the park that hadn't been completed yet. She managed the business aspect of Giraffic Park and focused on profits and the well-being of the tourists.

Excitedly, Carl hopped in his brand-new pink PowerWheels Barbie jeep. It wasn't very big, for it was only a two-seater, but it was completely electric and required no gas at all. After driving all the way to the other side of the island on a beat-up dirt road, he saw Bertholga waiting outside a small two-story, glass building. Behind that was a huge square-shaped concrete enclosure. He had never seen this building before. Carl assumed that the walls must've been at least fifty feet high. The building was in a secluded section of the park; much of the area around it was comprised mostly of trees. Carl stepped out of his vehicle. Bertholga nodded

in approval and said, "I see you have a new ride. The pink complements your hair well."

Carl replied, "Thanks, it's also electric, so I get to help the environment while looking cool at the same time. Not to mention, it's a convertible, which makes it even sweeter. What was it that you called me for?" He walked up to Bertholga and shook her hand, noticing that she had her dark brown hair in a ponytail. She swiped her card and the door slid open.

"I need your opinion on something," she replied, as her large frame struggled to fit through the door. As they went upstairs in the elevator, Bertholga told Carl, "The scientists here and I agreed awhile back to create a hybrid giraffe. That's right, this one wasn't bred. It was designed. We needed something more than a regular giraffe. Kids these days just aren't wowed by ordinary ones anymore. This giraffe is named Linda. He has the ability to say his own name, although that is where his vocabulary starts and ends. His species name is the *Invicta centenis*. We made his neck twenty feet long, and both his teeth and claws are razor sharp. Not only that, but his legs are also ten feet tall."

Carl didn't look very thrilled, "They're giraffes. Wow enough. What's it made of?"

"That's classified. They didn't tell me," Bertholga answered.

The two of them stepped out of the elevator and into another room looking out at the gigantic concrete enclosure. In the corner of the room, there was a man of rather large size observing Linda's vital signs on a computer screen. On the side of the wall, there were four camera monitors overseeing the giraffe's paddock. The inside of it was full of lush wildlife, with trees all over the place. Carl had a worried look on his face as he looked out the large glass pane, noticing it had a large crack, "What is that?"

Bertholga hesitated for a second and replied, "It tried to break the glass."

"This seems kind of dangerous, don't you think? Why even create it in the first place? Where is this thing anyway?" Carl asked.

you're hooked. To be honest with you, it grosses me out all the time. When I get into my truck, I see the spit cups and the spilt stuff everywhere and it reminds me of how many people I have let down. I mean, I am deliberately putting harmful chemicals into my body.

I started dipping when I was fifteen years old. I tried everything from Skoal Peach to Copenhagen Snuff—the granddaddy of them all. I never smoked or drank like others; instead, I dipped, which is still not good at all. At the end of the day, I have accepted the fact that I dip snuff and really do not see an end in sight. I have tried everything from nicotine gum to patches and talking to a therapist. None of it was like Copenhagen. Man oh man, do they make a damned good product. It is super addictive, and people keep on buying it because of that. The main reason why I started to dip was because I was depressed and it made me feel better, but little did I know that it was really hurting me all along. I never thought of it as being cool, like the other kids my age did, but something benefitted me almost in a negative way, if you understand where I'm coming from. I know everyone had their ups and downs, but I wish I could go back in time and change this bad decision, but I know I can't, and I accept that. It is a learning curve for me.

Smoking and dipping transform your body and make you look like a freaking monster—you smell like one, too. It sucks to have to walk around all day with smelly breath and yellow teeth. As the saying goes, "A can a day keeps the dentist away." It stands to be true, as stupid as it sounds. I hope whoever reads this understands what tobacco can do to you, and how much it can screw with your life and the way you look.

I think this would be beneficial for other students to read this, so perhaps they won't make a mistake like I have. Maybe it will get them to think about the decisions they make in the future—hopefully, they will make good ones. There is nothing more I have to say other than that tobacco KILLS, so do not try it.

grew up in a small town about an hour north of San Antonio, Texas. It is not abnormal to see people smoke or drink in Spring Branch, where I live. It is everywhere you go. It almost follows me around, as strange as it is. Most people find happiness through other things like working, friends, or school. Not this guy. I enjoy a decent-sized pinch of Copenhagen, Long Cut Original. It might come across to you that I really like it, but part of me really hates it. Whatever anyone may tell you, it is bad for you, no matter what. It causes all kinds of oral-related issues and can even cause throat, mouth, and stomach cancer. There is nothing funny about this, other than the fact that it tells you in big letters that it can kill you or cause cancer, right on the can itself. I ignore it most of the time, but it is a horrible habit to have. I've gotten so used to it that it's just a part of my day, like getting dressed or taking a shower. I cannot describe it to anyone who hasn't done it himself. The people who tell me that it is easy to quit, that all I have to do is chew gum instead . . . they just do not know. They really do not understand. I mean, who ever thought something as small as tobacco could cause so many big problems. It is such a shame that someone like me, who came from a good background, would make a decision like this. I have not gone a single day in the past two years without it.

I want to explain to you how all of this works and how I got started on Copenhagen. When I was in grammar school, we attended a program called D.A.R.E., which is basically a drug and alcohol awareness program for young kids, so that they won't try anything that will harm their bodies when they get older. I even signed a note that said that I would be drug-free. Regardless of what you may think, tobacco is a drug, yes, there are kids my age and younger who are smoking that funny stuff and drinking until they can't remember where they were the night before, but I am guilty of dipping snuff. I always get asked, "Why do you dip, if it tastes and smells so awful?" My answer is that you try it once or twice, then you find yourself doing it three times a week and

"Uh, I'm not exactly sure. That's strange. It always comes out when we release the pigs for its daily meal," Bertholga said, as a puzzled look began to grow on her face.

Carl looked back at her, "And when was that?"

"Just about five to ten minutes ago. It's come every time we—"

"Hey, have those wet spots always been there?" Carl asked, as he pointed to the side of the wall.

Bertholga turned around and looked through the glass, "Oh no. He must've used his ten foot long tongue to swing himself out of the enclosure," she muttered under her breath.

A blaring sound came from the screens on the side of the room. In big red letters, a message read Warning: Subject is out of containment. The man's face scrunched up as he said, "That can't be, we haven't opened up the gate in weeks."

Bertholga bolted toward the elevator, "We put a tracker in its skin, I'll call Eisenhower. He can tell me what the hell is going on here."

"Then why are you going to the elevator?" Carl asked urgently.

"Because I forgot my Big Mac in my car! I'll be right back!" Bertholga shouted, as the door was closing.

Carl whispered to himself, "Are you McSerious?"

The man that monitored Linda swiveled around in his chair, crumbs of chips falling out of his mouth. "Women, am I right?"

"Uhhh . . . yeah, I guess. I'm going to go down in there," Carl replied awkwardly. He walked into Linda's enclosure. How were they not able to find it? Carl thought. The way Bertholga described it, it sounded like this thing was gigantic. Carl felt a vibration coming from his pocket. It was Bertholga calling him.

"Carl, you need to get out of there NOW! Linda tricked . . . ccccksshhk . . . I'll get the operator to open the door. Linda is . . . cckshsshhk . . ." The phone crackled.

"What, Bertholga?" Carl asked.

There was a bloodcurdling scream, LIINDAAAAA!

Carl turned around to see Linda racing towards the room that the operator and Bertholga were in. "LIINDDDDDAAAAAAA", the giraffe kept screaming, as it got closer and closer. Shock registered on both of their faces, as Bertholga continued to shove the Big Mac into her mouth, ketchup dripping down her face. Linda shoved his head at the glass with full-force. The entire window shattered instantly. With a single bite, he ripped the operator out of his seat. All Carl heard was screaming. Linda swung the man's body around like a ragdoll. Bertholga was motioning for Carl to run while he still had a chance, but he couldn't. His whole body was frozen. Linda then tossed the operator's body up in the air, and used his razor sharp teeth to tear his body into shreds. Blood shot out of every inch of his skin. Before Carl knew it, Linda was coming right for him. The gate already started closing. His feet felt like they were going at eighty miles an hour. It seemed as though his lungs were on fire. Carl barely got through the door. He leaned against the wall and breathed a huge sigh of relief. As he looked up, Carl saw Linda's massive tongue propel him over the wall.

Carl quickly dove towards the nearest vehicle, a truck. With Linda's back turned toward him, he saw his opportunity and seized it, darting for his Barbie jeep. He thought his heart was going to literally jump out his chest. Sweat started to cover his forehead and palms. Jumping into his car, he pushed the pedal down immediately. As he started up the engine, Linda turned around and noticed Carl. C'mon, c'mon, c'mon, he thought as his Jeep started to take off. His car rocketed forward. The giraffe was no longer in sight. Wiping the sweat off his forehead, he looked in his rearview mirror only to see Linda chasing after him. His eyes grew wide as Linda was staring right at him. Everything Carl drove past was just one big blur. The ground around him was shaking from Linda's huge, thundering hooves. He knew he'd eventually have to shake Linda off. But where could I go, he thought. Then it hit him: the waterfall. Carl knew it'd be risky, but it was the only way to get rid

out of a fear of rejection. Every day I ask myself, what am I here for? And here I am, still pondering how to find this answer. Until that answer comes, I will still search for a better life in the meantime.



*World of Color*

*Emma Price*



## **Copenhagen**

*Zach Wolfe*

Let me start by saying that this is not about a furniture store, nor is it about the city in Denmark. It is about something that has haunted me for nearly three years now. Copenhagen was first made in the year 1822 by a man named George Weyman. He called it Weyman's Copenhagen. Little did he know that his product would be one of the best products on the market: not because it tastes good or smells good, but because it is the most addictive substance in the world—tobacco.

Whoever reads this might not know that I myself am guilty of consuming George Weyman's product, but it is true. I

So, I decided to take my life under a calm, cloudless sky, below a beech tree halfway between my village and the demonic beast's lair. I ask of you, dear reader, to tell my family this: "I tried my best, but I was too filled with sorrow, frustration, and guilt that I did not slay the creature; I could not return to you without my honor. I'm sorry . . . but, I will not be returning to you with that promise fulfilled. For this, the beast cannot be killed. It shall always return in a new form, asking for your pity. Never give it your mercy and sorrow, for then you will become like me—a man who is unable to fight it without losing his nerve, as well as his strength." I ask of you, dear reader, to tell others of my story . . . please.

### Reflection

Timid, unpredictable, fragile . . . this is what my personality decided to become. To be honest, I have no truer words to describe myself. Born under the sign of Cancer the Crab, I have always been easily damaged; emotionally, I require a long time to heal my wounds. However, the circumstances I'm put through every day make it even harder to heal. Every time I searched for people to give my trust, I found my kindness trampled on by those I put my faith into. Therefore, I have been left to retreat into a shell of solitude and depression. I try to open the door to my compassion. I am one man forced to hold off a typhoon of emotions that leave me in a state of depression. I have recently used these writings in an attempt to indirectly confront my emotional problems. However, no matter how I phrase my words, it is still not enough to cheer my spirits. Ever since I wrote the first of these writings, I have yet to find one of my inspirations to have come from anything other than the deep pain inside that I am unable to express directly. I have yet to find a person I can give my trust and not be betrayed by them. I have gone from a very happy-go-lucky child to a teenager who cannot find his way out of the valley of sadness, and it is too nervous to attempt to build new friendships

of Linda. He took a sharp left turn and went off-road into a clearing. Linda was right on his tail. Carl was surprised that his Jeep was even able to outrun Linda, considering that its top speed was only 20 miles per hour. He saw the rush of the waterfall ahead of him. "LIIIIINDAAAA!" the giraffe screeched. Linda was getting closer every inch. If Carl didn't time the jump correctly, he could die two ways: Linda could snatch him out the air, or he could plummet to his immediate death, forty feet below. Linda's tongue was flopping all over the place, ready to grab Carl out of his seat at any second. He counted in his head, 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . .

His Jeep plummeted off the cliff. The image of the operator getting torn apart was ingrained in his head. Carl felt as if he was in slow-motion. Linda bit the back of Carl's Jeep, and with as much power as he could muster, he jumped out. His arms were flailing against the force of the wind. The Jeep dropped behind him. Carl felt completely weightless. His body hit the river with a hard smack.

Carl gasped for air as his head surfaced above the water. He swam to the bank of the river and crawled onto the grass, coughing up water. He turned around on his back and saw Linda sprint away. Carl smiled for a second and started laughing. "I am such a badass," he said to himself. He got up on his feet and began to walk back to the park.

### Linda

Linda stormed through the forest, searching for anything he could eat. He left a trail of mayhem behind him, as his huge body knocked down trees left and right. Out of the corner of his eye, Linda saw something shiny. As he approached a clearing, he saw it in all its glory. It was a sight to behold. Linda need must have get food, he thought. It was a large glass dome containing tons of winged giraffes. He heard gunfire. There was a helicopter shooting at Linda. He started sprinting at full speed. Linda's saliva

was dripping off his tongue as he dashed towards the dome. Linda had big food, he thought. The bullets barely did anything. It was like a fly on a human. Linda crashed through the glass, attacking all the giraffes on sight. The bullets were now raining through the top of the dome. Many of the flying giraffes took off towards the park, their huge wings flapping against the sunshine. One of them tried to fly, but Linda stomped on its back and bit its head clean off. "LLLLIIINDDAAAA!!!" he screamed. Outside the dome, one of the flying giraffes was headed right toward the helicopter.

"Up, up, up!" the door gunner shouted to the pilot. The helicopter went up, but it was already too late. The giraffe plucked the door gunner out of his seat and pushed the man's head in between the helicopter blades. Blood covered the cockpit window. The giraffe swooped down to the pilot and passenger, and broke the glass and threw the pilot out. The helicopter crashed inside the dome and exploded in a fiery blaze against the ground. The giraffe then flew away with the others toward the park. Toward the humans.

Carl

Carl was running back to one of the gates. Using his key, he slipped through the large metal door. What he saw next was absolute chaos. Everyone in the park was running for their lives. The flying giraffes had gotten loose and were terrorizing the tourists. They were everywhere, picking up people and shaking them all over the place. Someone tapped him on the back. It was Bertholga, still eating her Big Mac.

"I've been looking all over for you, Carl!" she shouted.

"You're still eating that?" he asked her.

"No, this is a different one!"

Carl couldn't do anything except shake his head. "We need to get indoors," he said. Bertholga nodded in agreement. Hooves latched on to Bertholga.

I look through the door and see clashes. I seek friends, but I am too shy to ask for them. I want to help people, but my body refuses to move. I want to go outside, but I stay in my room. Closed off from these things, as well as from the rest of the world. I lie in my bed, confused about my purpose. I refuse help for a reason even I do not know; I do not want to face the world in this state, for I fear being accused of having an abnormal mentality on life. I long for the day when I open the door and see peace. The day I have my reason, my purpose for existing here . . . shown to me. That day is out there; I just have to hold on . . .

A Final Letter of a Dead Man

To whomever finds this note . . .

If you are reading this, then I was unsuccessful in my efforts to kill the beast. I set out to slay the creature. I left my home with optimism and the thoughts of a quick and easy victory over the enemy. However, when I arrived at the lair of the creature, I was deceived by its dastardly persuasion and cunning. I lowered my guard and it cursed me with voices and noises that plagued my mind. It lunged at me and cut a hole in my heart and broke the peace and ease inside me. I tried to get up to continue the fight, but every time I took a stand, the creature would lull me back into a false sense of security. Even when I landed blows against the creature, it grew back its limbs and became more ferocious. Attacking it was like trying to take the heads off a hydra. With every blow I dealt it, it grew a larger source of power and cruelty. I could not return to my family either. Not only did I fail to slay the beast as I had promised, but the voices and noises it cursed me with would never vanish from my thoughts. It was the equivalent of having the moments of one's life being looped for infinity. They would haunt my dreams as well as my nightmares.

## The Inner Workings of MoreMan

*Evan McGinnis*

### You Are Not Forgotten

Every day I spend here with these “people,” my sanity fights for a lost cause. To fix the unfixable is impossible. I do not want to surrender my sanity, but to change them to sane would be like trying to fix a bad apple with a barrel of good ones. This place gives you no choice but to fight the tsunami of pain, anger, and insanity. I come bearing an olive branch, but it is always broken. To the lost sanity, I say this: “You are not forgotten.”

### We Take Our Stand

Every day, we take our stand. We fight the barrage of the enemy and watch our brothers in arms get driven to madness. I look up from our fortifications and see a once peaceful, clear mind is now left battered, bruised, and scarred by the enemy fire knocking at our defenses. We are running out of allies to help us fight this war. They defect to our enemies, or they are unable to help. So, we wait until the next barrage. We stand and fight this fight. For our mothers, or brothers, our fathers, and any friends who are still left. We also fight so that our story . . . will survive.

### The Search

As I live my life day to day, I search for it. I search for the Promised Land, a place where all the noises and voices will finally . . . cease. Every day I search for it. I cannot give up my search. I have made my decision clear; I will have my men fight on until we find peace. In this life . . . or the next.

### Behind the Door

“Carl, help!” she shrieked. He cringed when he saw her mouth full of hamburger meat and cheese covered in ketchup. Carl quickly shoved her mouth open and grabbed a fistful of the chewed-up burger. He jammed it against the giraffe’s eye, causing it to howl in pain from the burn of the ketchup getting lodged in its pupil. The hooves slid off Bertholga’s shoulders. “Let’s go! Hurry!”, Carl shouted at the top of his lungs. The two of them ran to the security building, ducking and avoiding the flying giraffes. Bertholga quickly swiped her card and the door opened. They ran inside. Bertholga dashed to the back of the room, grabbing an assault rifle and a pistol. The assault rifle was equipped with a red-dot sight.

“You know how to use one of these things?” Bertholga handed the rifle to him.

“Yes,” he replied, as he inserted the magazine and turned off the safety. Bertholga aimed down the sight of her pistol, looking outside at all the mayhem going on. They sat on the floor against the counter, staring at the window. Bertholga pulled out another Big Mac and put it in her mouth.

About fifteen minutes passed. “We can’t stay in here forever, you know”, Carl stated.

“Where did everyone go?” Betholga asked. Carl realized something was wrong. There was no screaming anymore. Both of them stood up and slowly walked toward the window. There wasn’t a soul in sight. There weren’t any flying giraffes either. Carl pushed the door open and walked outside. The only signs of life weren’t even alive anymore—several dead bodies littered the ground. Bertholga gave Carl a walkie-talkie.

“I’m going to head to the control room,” she told him. Bertholga got on one of the ATV’s and drove away.

The only thing Carl could do was find out where everyone went. He just realized that this was the first time he had ever heard the park completely quiet. The only noticeable noise was his boots slapping the ground. Then, he heard something. It sound-

ed like it came from behind the restaurant in front of him. Carl looked through its large windows to the other side, but he didn't see anything. Raising his rifle, he slowly walked along the wall. He reached the corner of the restaurant. Exhaling a large breath of air, he quickly aimed his rifle at whatever made the sound. It was just a squirrel.

He breathed a big sigh of relief. Before he knew it, a flying giraffe leaped out of the bushes. Carl jumped back and fired at the creature. The gun was shaking all over the place as bullets spit out of the barrel. Carl kept firing. And firing. And firing some more. After about thirty seconds of shooting the flying giraffe, he stopped. An automated voice blared from the park speakers, "Attention, all tourists. Please proceed to the front of the park and you will receive shelter and help."

*Guess that's where everyone went, Carl thought.*

$\left(\frac{F}{\nabla}\right)$



*Roots*

*Lizzy Shaw*

using.

To this day, I look back on everything that has happened to me, and how I was so different. I wonder what situation I would be in and how I would look at the world differently than I do today. I would explain more, but I cannot do this, simply because it would only work out for me if I continued. I would start explaining it in a way that others would misinterpret. I know that seems contradictory to what I have been saying before, but this memoir is to be interpreted in one way, and one way only. No one else should read this and try to create an image of what has been typed. This is not a story with which everyone can be creative and discuss. This is a memoir that says how I am. Everyone who reads this should know that I wrote all of it, because this is my world right now. There is no creativity in this story and there never will be. Nobody can say I was lazy and that I left this up to interpretation, because I didn't want to create a final idea, set completely in stone. Of course, if readers want to create their own memoirs and relate similar experiences, then props to them. This is the mark that was branded onto my life of how I am who I am to this day, and who I used to be.



*Sun Pixels*

*Medora Levy*

my life as much as he did because everything that has changed me was done through my own creation or ideas. If it were not for him, I would not be the same, but I do wish that he was still alive, just so I could find a way to talk to him. There are many questions that ask the same thing in different ways, but in the end they all ask, "If you could revive someone and talk to them, who would it be?" My choice would not be my biological parents, to find out why and who I am, or a historical figure, or a celebrity—it would be MrDanish177. I would want to know his story and him in general. Nothing I can explain in an essay, or memoir, or speech. Nothing to the fullest extent, at least.

As I continued playing these games, I got more and more interested and decided I not only wanted to use tools given to me, but create my own tools and make sure there was nothing left that was not mine. I looked through properties of units and found out how they worked, so I could also make them not work. I remade the properties, so I would not be recreating the units, but creating new units completely on my own terms. While doing this I was still playing "normal" games, learning new strategies and tactics about the game. I kept up with the meta-game, and I did everything I could to gather this information and lock it up in my mind.

I also had a PSP. My PSP was one of the first devices through which I regularly connected with other people, so I could face them in matches. *Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron* was a good example, because I usually ended games with over 200 kills and little or no deaths. If you know anything about that game, you will know that hackers completely took it over very quickly. I was not one of those hackers. Everything I did was legitimate, and I was proud. I was proud because I used custom classes at which most people would turn up their noses in disgust and call me a noob, shortly before getting completely and utterly destroyed. I used these classes because everyone knew how to counter the meta-game classes, but were clueless when it came to what I was

## The Day I Prayed for Peace

*Naila Mohammed*

Young teenage girl walking down the streets with a headscarf  
She has feelings about what has been happening around the  
world to Muslim women

She covers herself because Allah (SubhanahuWaTa'ala\*) says in  
the Quran

She has feelings about the future of the upcoming events that  
will be happening in her life

"Will people accept her while she is wearing the headscarf?"  
Will she be the same girl that she was or will people call her a  
terrorist

It doesn't matter who you are or what color skin you have  
we all are allowed to wear what we want

Just because I wear a headscarf and I pray in public it doesn't  
mean that I am a terrorist

Just because people hate Muslims doesn't mean they can call us  
out

I want peace I want people to call me a human  
Modesty might be my passion, but not yours

Hijab (the headscarf) has a meaning—it's not just to cover my  
hair

I might cover my face and just show my eyes  
My brother might see my beauty but you can't see it  
you might be jealous but I don't care

It might be my crown and my support to my religion  
We may see random people with Hijabs but might as well say  
Salam (peace be upon you)

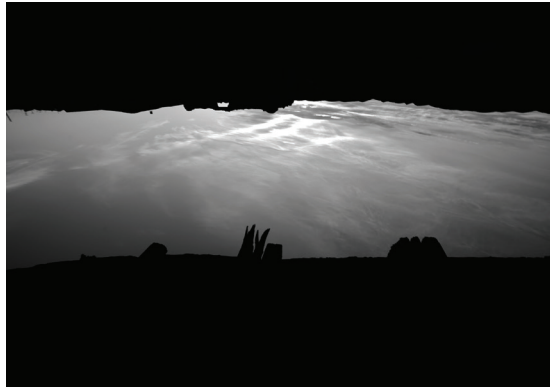
Hijab is my crown, my path, my right, my choice, and my life  
I might talk differently but I might be different with my family  
Being a hijabi represents who I am, but it doesn't matter if you  
accept me or not

I will always be the girl that you imagined

I might wear different colors but they don't represent anything they only represent me being calm and being a Muslim.

---

\*"Glory to Him, the Exalted."



*Water Sky*

*Morgan Carolin*

## **Maybe It's All a Dream**

*Sergio Medellin*

Prologue: Dreaming . . . a lovely escape from reality. The only downside: if it's a pleasant dream, it will never be real, never a place where all our thoughts manifest themselves into a world of any liking. What if we could live in the Dreamscape, not having to wake up to the realities of the world? An even bigger thought . . . what if we cannot tell what is real and what is a dream? They say dreams are where our desires or our problems may lie. But, two people happen to live this possibility and they are about to have a rude awakening—or should I say, a rude dream.

Jace wakes up in a cold sweat and looks frantically around

I got more games and entered many worlds. Each time I got somewhere undiscovered or did something new, I got more intrigued and thirsty for power. The Legend of Zelda, Spyro, Drill Dozer, The Amazing Spiderman, Pokemon . . . the list goes on. Plastic bags and cartridge organizers full of GBA games for me never to truly master, because there is an infinite number of possibilities that nobody can, or ever will, take away from me. I started playing on a computer as well—a Windows 1998 computer, with a busy monitor and keyboard that was just the right type for me. Her box tower was so stacked, you could bounce a floppy disk off the side. She was a bit loud when she started up, and you could tell when she was registering the world, with her blue eyes doing the thousand-mile stare.

I played more games and let my creativity loose, as I created scenarios on my RTS worlds. I was in full control, not only creating the worlds, but also controlling how they work and what would become of them as well. I found different ways to present an area, and I browsed the menus and text declaring how something was done and what it would do. I found out how to internet and fortunately I also found YouTube, because there I discovered an inspiration like no other: MrDanish177. He created beautiful worlds and I wanted to be just like him. I was willing to give up my own way in many instances, so I could be MrDanish177. The worlds he created in scenario editor truly took my breath away every time, and he did it fighting harder than I ever could. He had cancer and was dying. His channel slowly declined in uploading videos, and finally, on July 6, 2011, he uploaded his final video, entitled "Update & Questions Answered #1." I don't think I was ever more devastated in my entire life than when I found out he would most likely not be uploading more videos for obvious reasons.

From then on, I devoted myself to doing everything in a way that would be my own and finding new worlds and ways for anything and everything. MrDanish177 changed my life, which is one of the only things I can say that for. Nothing else has changed

## **The Mark of Potential Creation and Understanding of the Worlds**

*Jonathon McIntyre*

It is said that most people only enjoy something because of the experiences that they have gone through, and that their lack of experience with something else has caused them to think the way they do; rejection of something, then, is sometimes based on a lack of experience rather than an actual experience. I am not part of most people. I have experienced many ways and choose my own path, instead of stopping when I find something I enjoy, because I know that I can always change what I do if I so desire.

As a child, I was not into the idea of electronic technology and such. I was sporty and I enjoyed going out and playing a game of basketball or soccer, instead of staying inside to watch television or play videogames. I would practice and go outside and have fun, but there was a point where I was pushed beyond that. I would practice the way that worked for me, but my dad would see it as incorrect or sloppy and tell me to do it the right way or not at all. It seems like I should have listened, but the more I look back at my life, the more I realize my way ends up working the best overall; it benefits me far better than if I were to just give in to commands.

I got tired of it all and to sum it up, I left sports. I did not, however, quit. I get told I quit all the time and I do stuff wrong or I am mocked for doing something later, but it's not true that I quit. I never gave up; I just found something that I wanted to do more, that would not involve the heavy weight that is a ton of stress. I had a Gameboy Advanced SP that I got as a Christmas gift, and I realized how much fun it was. I realized how much I could do in a different world, because I could choose how I do things. There were many obstacles and sometimes I had to do something in a way I had trouble with, but I would always complete something the way that worked for me.

his room. Clothes swamp the floors with a sweaty pungent odor. He rubs his eyes, wondering what woke him up in such a fright. He looks at his clock and it reads 3:30. "I don't know if I'm going to be able to go back to sleep," he thinks, but as soon as his head lies back on his pillow, he blacks out. The second time he opens his eyes, he is in school. "How did I get to school?" he asks, confused. He is standing in front of the school's entrance. A girl from behind calls to him and says, "Hey, where is everybody else at school?" Turning around, he sees a girl his age, also 16. She is beautiful in every way imaginable. He sees her gleaming big green eyes, and her slender body, accented by her blue jeans and tight waist. Her blue polka-dotted blouse hugs her small spry torso, as her flowing red mane of hair runs along her back. As he opens his mouth to respond, he gasps for air and then wakes in bed, staring at the ceiling. He looks at the clock; it reads 3:31.

Waking up tired and miserable, Jace gets up and prepares for school. His mom shouts, "Breakfast is ready!" as he put on his shoes. He rushes downstairs, plops himself in his seat, and devours the omelet his mom has just freshly prepared. She looks at him in disbelief and says, "Well, if you give me a chance, I was going to sit down and eat with you." She chuckles. "Sorry, Ma, no time!" he says, as he bolts out the door and gets in his car. As he speeds off to school, all he can think about is the girl. "Who is she?" he wonders.

During his physics class, Jace daydreams, since the teacher isn't too engaging with the class. As he daydreams, he can only think about who the girl in his dream is. The thought frustrates him, because he wants to meet her. He scoffs, "It was just a stupid dream, I bet she didn't even exist." As soon as he finishes the thought, a girl with a very familiar appearance enters the room and apologizes for being late. His eyes widen in awe, as he focuses intently on her, to see if she is the same girl from his dream. After class, he catches up to her in the hallway and says, "Hey, I know

this is weird, but have we met before?" "I don't think we have, but you do seem very familiar to me," she replies. Jace quickly adds, "Could we meet after school at the local park bench?" Shocked, all she can say is, "Uh . . . sure." "Cool, see you there," he says.

Later, Jace is sitting at the park bench, waiting impatiently and asking himself why he invited the girl to the bench. "Am I really going to start a conversation off by saying that I saw her in my dreams? I'll sound like a creep, for sure." The girl walks up to him and says, "So, what did you want to ask me?" Jace decides to just straight up tell her, and if she thinks he's crazy, then so be it. "I saw you in my dreams," he says abruptly. An awkward silence follows, lasting way longer than he would have imagined. He starts to worry and says, "Sorry for being st—" but, she interrupts him immediately and says, "I saw you, too." She sits next to him, and Jace is caught off guard. He quietly asks, "What's your name?" She softly replies, "Wendy . . . my name is Wendy."

"That dream felt so real, didn't it?" he says. Panicking, Wendy says, "What is going on? Is this just a coincidence?" "I don't know," he responds, "but how can we tell the difference between what's real and what's a dream?" Wendy looks around and says, "If this were real and we were in the park, then wouldn't there be more people here?" Jace looks around as well and says, "There would also be more birds chirping. It's a little too quiet." "Could this be a dream itself?" asked Wendy. All Jace's thoughts rush to his head, giving him the impression that they are, indeed, dreaming. But how? Everything has felt so real, from the very moment he woke up in the morning.

It then suddenly dawns on him. "What if I never actually woke up, and I am still asleep?" he thinks to himself. He then says aloud, "Maybe it's all a dream." He wakes up drenched in sweat, flailing around in his bed and shaking his head, completely disoriented. He looks at the clock with blurry eyes; it's hard to read the numbers. Finally, he is able to make them out: 3:32 . . .

to change that, to make them realize that demons weren't so bad after all. He started fighting other demons, the ones he considered his enemies. He was winning, while also destroying an entire belief system in the process. In doing all this, he gained a cult following. He was the first demon to fight alongside humans, and as he started ascending the demon ranks, he was starting to be seen as a demigod by the humans. When he began eradicating terrorist groups, he became a public hero. He completely destroyed Isis, Al-Qaeda and other jihad groups. Emmerich was a celebrity who made people understand that hell wasn't such a bad place. Emmerich told people hell was a place where people are fearless and try to make it known to a present god that they want to live again. After lots of time wasted arguing, Satan came to a verdict: if Emmerich could give him a good reason to live again, Satan would allow it. In Emmerich's case, he was allowed to live again.

Emmerich was a worldwide celebrity. He helped people build spaceships that could reach to the far end of the next solar system and back. He built phones that had 20TB worth of storage space for \$200 factory unlocked. He built PC's with an exabyte's worth of space, at an affordable price of \$900. He produced technological wonders and made tons of money from them. He then proceeded to donate the money to charity. No surprise to anyone, Emmerich then ran for President of the United States in the next election, and handily won.

$$\left(\frac{F}{V}\right)$$

## Emmerich

*Sam Fesko*

Emmerich was a child prodigy; he loved to tinker with electronics to see how they worked, and he could figure out how they worked in a matter of two or three hours. When it was time for school, his mother would say, “Hal, time to get up for school! Hal, you’re gonna be late!” (His nickname was Hal.) He would refuse to go. He liked being at home more, so he’d say, “That’s fine, I don’t wanna go anyway!” He’d go all out, playing video games and binge-watching anime when his mom left. He continued to do this until he was sixteen. You’re probably wondering what happened to him after he turned sixteen: well, he started going to school, got involved with gangs, and started worshiping Satan. In fact, Emmerich wanted to go to hell when he died. One day, he was shot in a drive-by and died, so he got his wish—to go to hell, that is.

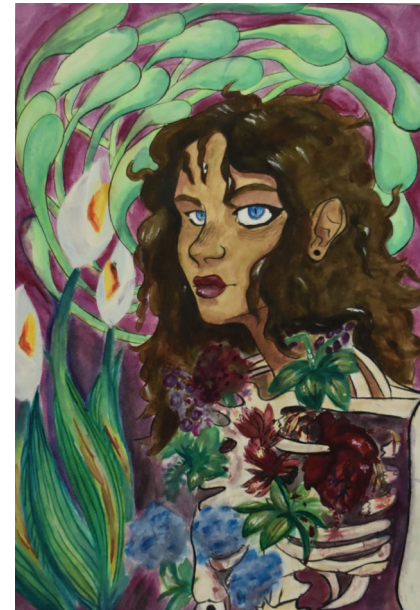
Emmerich woke in the afterlife, but what he saw was very different from a fiery inferno that people thought of as hell. It was a place of courage and triumph; Emmerich went and spoke directly to Satan. He wanted to be resurrected as a human-shaped demon, one who was literally evil, but who would use his power for good. He would change the world forever.

Emmerich’s wish was granted; he returned to earth as himself, but he was a changed man. He was powerful, very powerful, with many of the characteristics of his favorite anime and videogame characters, including Raiden, Chell, Haruhi Suzumiya, and Issei Hyoudou. Though Emmerich was mentally unstable and somewhat weird and perverse, he never gave up, ever. He started tracking down other demon lords to make demon friends, but he was rejected by everyone. Emmerich decided to start fighting the demon lords, to train himself. Eventually, he began to defeat the prestigious demons; he went from social reject to idol in a week. Although Christians still hated demons, he felt compelled

## Sadness

*Sergio Medellin*

Don’t leave me with my thoughts . . .  
These thoughts that consume me  
They take over  
They sink into my skin  
Leaving it tainted  
It leaves a stain for everyone to see  
Within that stain is overwhelming pain that makes me want to  
scream  
How do I free myself from the blackness of this mark?  
Where is this feeling of pure happiness and a permanent happiness at that?



*The Flowers Speak My Name*

*Megan Jordan*



*Grate Expectations*

*Sarah Yeadon*



*Spoonful of Sugar?*

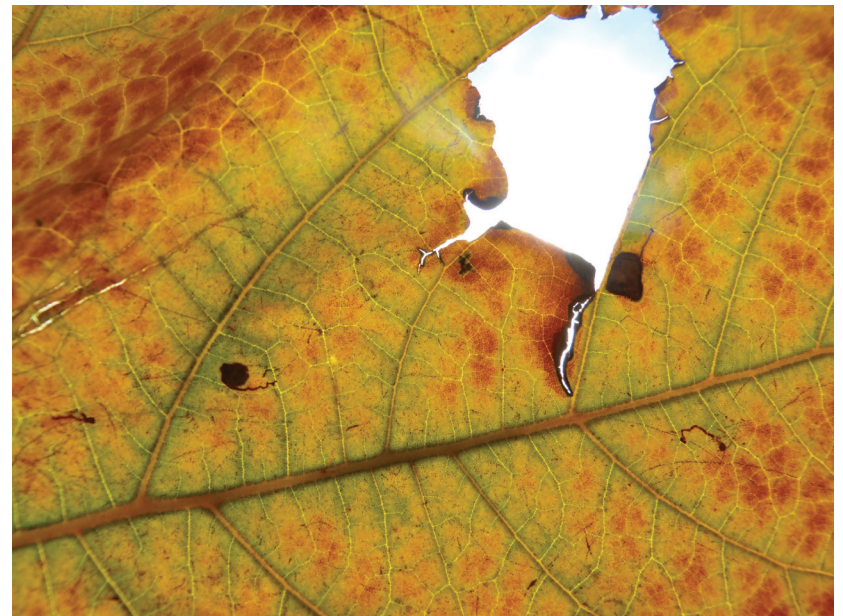
*Lizzy Shaw*

## **Trey Finds Love in a Scaly, Sassy Manfish**

*Jeremy Jones, Chris Vieger, & PJ Neidert*

Trey Gross was an 18-year-old young man moving out of his house and heading to college. He was attending Swamp Land University, which just happened to be located in the city of St. Louis. Trey was ecstatic about attending this university for his major in architecture. He was also excited, knowing that some of his lifelong friends were accepted and attending SLU, too.

On August 18, 2016, Trey woke up and looked out at his backyard lined with fallen leaves. The air smelled of chestnuts, for some odd reason; it might have been because Trey's family had been roasting chestnuts on an open fire the night before. He smelled the air and saw the sun rise and truly knew what beauty was. He knew that it was one of the last times he would witness the beauty of a sunrise in the city of San Antonio, Texas. Trey checked



*Seeping Light*

*Emily Kelly*

## Lenses A Gallery



*The Pathway to Anne*

*Morgan Carolin*



*Resting Spot*

*Emma Price*

his phone to see if any of his friends had texted him about where to meet up at the airport. Trey was excited about his flight, since he knew that he would be sitting next to one of his best friends through high school.

When he opened his phone, Trey saw two texts: one was from his friend Lucas, asking him where he wanted to go for breakfast. The other text was from his ex-girlfriend, whom he called “Chewbacca.” Her real name was Madeline, but whenever she spoke, her voice sounded like Chewbacca’s “dialogue” from Star Wars. He decided to reply to Lucas with a simple but subtle “idk Raising Canes or something like that.” Lucas replied with a very excited “DUDE IM SO DOWN FOR CANES! THEIR BISCUITS WITH THE LITTLE CHICKENS IN THEM ARE LEGIT ONE OF THE GREATEST THINGS ON THE PLANET!!!!” Trey saw all the enthusiasm and excitement in that text message and knew that Lucas was going to be close to him for a very long time.

Trey saw that it was time for him to get dressed and pack his carry-on bag. He had packed his overnight bag the night before; it was a nightmare for him to check over everything he had put in his bag—the 10 shirts, 10 pairs of shorts, 10 pairs of underwear, 5 pairs of jeans, his PS4, a gaming monitor, 3 pairs of shoes, 3 jackets, his Kate Upton Poster, and a football signed by the greatest of all time: Bo Jackson. He looked over the items he would need to take as his carry-on luggage and decided to bring his laptop, his phone charger, earbuds, his laptop case, and his laptop charger. Trey then walked into his closet and started picking out what he would wear on the flight; he knew that it was going to be a long flight to St. Louis. Obsessive to the core, Trey then thought about the rest of the stuff that he had to do before leaving for the airport. He broke it down into three simple things: shower, get dressed, and brush his teeth. Trey sprinted over to his bathroom to get into the shower and make himself clean as a whistle for the city of St. Louis.

No surprise that showering for Trey was another obsessive

routine, as he grabbed the soap, scrubbed himself all over, and quickly washed it off. The conditioner phase was easy for him, as he quickly ran his hands through his hair, scrubbed the conditioner in, and washed it all out as well. He exited the shower and walked into his closet to choose between the two possible outfits that would fit the day perfectly. One of the two outfits included a leather jacket, a white undershirt, black jeans, and black dress shoes. Trey didn't want to look like James Dean for his flight, so he decided to go with the casual attire of a purple dri-fit hoodie and khaki pants with a black belt and Sperrys. When he finally got dressed, he ran into his bathroom, grabbed his Colgate peppermint toothpaste, and quickly brushed until his mouth felt fresher than a flower blooming. He finally was ready to go to the airport for the long flight that would change his life. He headed out the front door of his house and saw his taxi waiting for him. He quickly got into the cab and, as the driver started heading towards the airport, Trey thought of all the things he would get into with his friends—some good and some bad. Trey was thinking to himself the entire ride over, so he didn't talk to the cab driver at all, except for when they got to the airport. As the cab jolted to a stop, Trey got out and paid the man what he owed him and started walking to the terminal.

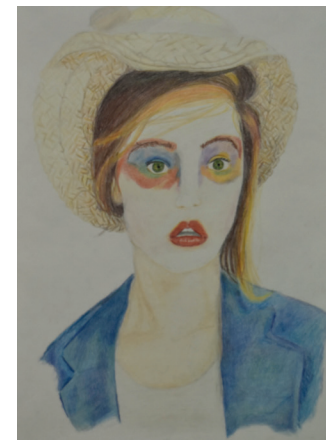
Obviously, the first thing Trey saw when he walked into the airport was the line for airport security. Trey felt insanely unlucky since the line he got into had a very old woman in front of it. Later, as a security worker started opening his bags and looking through his stuff, he realized that airport security gets way too much privilege to do what they want to someone who seems suspicious. After the 5 minute search, Trey was cleared and took his bag to terminal A27, where his friends Lucas, Gerald, Keith, Bob, and Joel were waiting.

Gerald was known for his talent in the rap music genre. He'd made quite a name for himself, but that's a story for another time. Trey noticed Gerald mainly for the fact that he was eating



*Heat Wave*

*Everett Haynes*



*Luka Pila*

*Becca Brown*

## 2D Art Gallery



*Tres*

*Becca Brown*



*The Trees Can Speak*

*Megan Jordan*

something. Trey approached his friends and immediately there was an argument about who should have to sit in the middle seat. Joel had the idea of drawing straws, a patently unoriginal idea. Luckily, Joel and Keith drew the two longest straws; Trey let out a huge sigh of relief.

Lucas had picked up a little biscuit from Canes for Trey, since he knew that they were one of Trey's favorite breakfast foods. Trey ate the entire biscuit in one bite, and then boarded the flight. He was happy to see that he had the window seat next to Joel and Lucas for the entire 3-and-a-half-hour flight. Trey knew that he was going to sleep for most of it, since he'd had approximately no hours of sleep the night before.

As the attendants walked down the aisles to check on everyone and their baggage, Trey clocked out and fell asleep. His dream was weird, but also crazily realistic. At SLU, he met a mysterious figure while walking to an orientation class. At a complex turn in the dream, Trey realized that he would take this figure's hand in sweet marriage. Trey saw the two of them growing old together in a house, with a family of weird-looking fish people (which didn't make any sense to him at the time). He then he saw two tombstones side by side, with the names "Trey Gross & Old Greg Gross."

Trey woke up from his dream in a cold sweat, startled by the shaking of the plane as it landed. Walking off the plane, he couldn't shake the fact that his dream seemed very realistic in his mind. He couldn't worry about that, however; he was going to college to major in architecture. He was going to become the next Ted Mosby and get grounds on a skyscraper at a very young age, fresh out of college. Trey was not going to stop trying until he became a world-renowned architect.

Getting out of an airport seemed to be much easier than it had been going into one for Trey and his friends. They retrieved their bags and hopped a big cab to SLU in about 10 minutes flat. As the group of 6 piled into the car, the driver assumed they were

all going to college, based on how old they looked. Trey told the driver that they were all attending SLU. The driver mentioned that he had graduated from the school, too, and that he was good friends with some of the professors. Trey ignored the driver, since he was an old, creepy man with one eye and a cybernetic leg.

The group of friends arrived at their college dorm at around 6:30 in the evening. Trey picked Gerald & Lucas to be his roommates, since the three of them got along the best out of everyone in the group. The entire group was exhausted from their long travel day, so everyone decided to go to sleep. Trey went to sleep as well, but he woke up later at night and decided to walk around the campus to see what it was like at night. Trey walked out of his college dorm and saw a lake, with a boat stocked with a fishing rod, bait, and paddles; Trey saw the opportunity to go fishing and took it. As he paddled out to the center of the lake and cast his rod, he felt a tug and started pulling and cranking his line. A cloud of mist surrounded Trey. He stayed silent as he heard something climb onto the boat, and as the mist cleared away, he saw a figure that looked just like the one in his dream—its beauty took his breath away. The seaweed in the hair, the tutu, the green moustache, the scaly figure, and last of all, the jacket it was wearing—in that moment alone, Trey knew that he was in love. He was speechless: he didn't know if he should talk, move, or do anything of the sort.

Just as he had built up the courage to move, the figure finally spoke: "Hey, there! I'm Old Greg! Pleased to meet you!"

"Hey," replied Trey, looking awkward as he rubbed his arm.

"What are you doing out here in my waters, boy?"

"Just enjoying the night fishing," replied Trey.

"Why are you trying to hurt my friends in these waters?"

"I didn't mean to hurt your friends, Greg."

"Don't lie to me, boy!" Greg angrily replied. He stood up and walked towards Trey. Trey was frightened as he saw Old Greg's hand reach down towards his tutu and pull it up as he yelled, "I'M

for something for dessert, because I didn't want to sound needy. I ended up finally pressing the button, and asking for dessert. I still remember what I had; orange sherbet. This whole time I had been in my room, I had been watching TV. I was watching a show called Xiaolin Showdown, which was really good.

I went home the next morning. A nurse wheeled me out in a wheelchair to where my mom was waiting with the car. I was still tired and sore, but I was recovering properly. It was Saturday then, and I went home and rested. I don't really remember what happened the rest of that weekend. I also don't remember if I went back to school that Monday, or if I went back in the middle of the week. I have to say this, though; I'm glad that I had my appendix out when I did, for two reasons. One, I don't have to worry about it for the rest of my life. Two, while doing tests, the doctor found that there was something wrong with my heart, and that it would have to be fixed later. But, that's for another memoir.



*The Sunset Station*

*Emma Price*

very bright. There were large machines and several people in scrubs. The doctor told me that I would neither feel nor remember anything, and reassured me that everything was going to be fine. There was a lot of reassurance from everyone throughout the entire ordeal. The anesthesiologist put the mask over my mouth and nose, and told me that I was going to get very sleepy and feel like I was floating on a cloud. The last thing I remember before going under was feeling just that; floating on a cloud.

It felt like only a second had passed before I woke up. I was later told that the anesthesia doesn't induce dreams. I was sore, tired, and thirsty, but I didn't have that cramp-like pain in my abdomen anymore. My mom was sitting next to me and gave me some juice. She said that the surgery had been a success, and at my request, showed me pictures of what my appendix looked like. It was no bigger than my pointer finger. I wonder if we still have those pictures.

The doctor wanted me to stay the night, just to make sure everything was going well and that I was recovering the way I should be. The surgery hadn't taken very long, so it was mid-afternoon by then. I remember, because my second grade teacher came to visit me after school got out. Everyone in my class had made me get-well cards, and she brought them for me to look at. My favorite one and the one I remember the most was from my old friend Connor. I was a HUGE Star Wars fan, and he had drawn General Grievous on the inside of my card from him. If you know what that character looks like, you'll know how difficult it must have been to draw. He drew like a pro. I believe we still have those cards somewhere. I remember my teacher telling me that she had gotten her appendix removed when she was younger, and she showed me her scar. I freaked out a bit and looked away, because no kids want to see their heavyset teacher's stomach.

I was eating when my teacher was visiting, so by the time she left, I wanted dessert. My mom was in the shower, so I had to ask for it myself. I was hesitant to press the call button to ask

OLD GREG, AND I GOT A TUTU!"

Once Trey caught sight of Greg's other tutu under his big tutu, he lost consciousness. Trey woke up in a cavern surrounded by coral, seaweed and many, many dead water-breathing animals. He was confused as to how he would get out, what he would do when he got out, and if he could actually begin a relationship with Old Greg. Trey began to walk towards what looked like a bar; as he reached for a bottle marked Bailey's, he felt a scaly hand touch his. He felt alive, knowing that his love was touching his hand. Trey turned around and looked into the eyes of the Manfish; he looked at Greg's Seaweed, his tutu, his shoes, his watercolors, and he almost leaned in for a kiss. Greg spoke softly to Trey, as he said, "Do you love me?" Awestruck by the question, Trey couldn't speak at first, but then he responded calmly with, "I believe that I do."

Greg smiled at Trey and asked him the most important question: "Do you want to drink funk shakes with me?" Trey was so overjoyed that he went and gave Old Greg a big old hug. Greg ran over and grabbed two glasses and "The Funk." The Funk was a small pitcher filled with some kind of goo. The goo was black, icky, and sticky. Old Greg poured the goo into two wine glasses and Trey took a big slurp. Greg saw the way Trey drank that funk shake, and he knew that they could be in love until the day they died. Trey knew that this was the moment—he leaned in and planted a kiss onto Old Greg's fishy face. At that moment, Trey fled the scene to leave Old Greg with his thoughts.

When Trey got back to his dorm room, his roommates were worried that he wasn't there in the morning. He came into the dorm room, covered in Bailey's, Seaweed, and Funk. His roommates asked what happened to him, since he had been gone for two days. Trey knew that if he told his friends where he had been they would have bullied and ridiculed him, so he just said, "I was off at a friend's house for a few days, since he's moving soon." His friends believed him, since they knew that Trey was a friend to all people.

Trey knew that he would have to get Old Greg committed before he could happily go to class. A couple of days went by before Trey and Old Greg talked again; it was heartbreaking for Trey, as he couldn't stand to be apart from his lover, but he had a plan for taking Old Greg's sweet hand in marriage—it took him a couple of days to come up with the plan. It consisted of catching 50 trout and shaping them all into a heart. He would then hand Old Greg a ring with a diamond the size of a walnut on it. If Old Greg said no, Trey would throw himself off a building to show his love for the scaly Manfish.

Trey's plan was set in motion and was ready for testing. Trey met the scaly Manfish at a local club. They started off their date like any other, dancing the night away while drinking Bailey's; they started getting very tired after an hour or two of dancing, so they decided to go to the lake where they first met. Trey knew that he could pop the most important question in his life at the lake, since it was where Old Greg and he first fell in love. Trey went down a knee and gave Old Greg the ring. Old Greg exclaimed, "YES! I'M OLD GREG! I GOT A TUTU!" Trey leaned in for a kiss and it felt magical for the two. After this, they went back down into the cavern where they first kissed and talked about their plans for the rest of the week. Little did they know they would spend the rest of their lives together. That was pretty much it from there on, as Trey graduated from SLU with a master's degree in architecture and became the youngest architect to get grounds on a skyscraper at the young age of 22. Trey and his lovely wife Old Greg ended up living in a house in a quiet little mountain town, where they lived the rest of their days in peace.

$\left(\frac{F}{\nabla}\right)$

After the CAT scan, the doctor confirmed that it was my appendix, and that I would need surgery, and to stay the night after. Well, I flipped out. I cried and cried that I didn't want surgery, that I was scared that I would wake up in the middle of it to feel them cutting into me. That was my biggest concern. The doctor and the nurses overlooking me reassured me that that wouldn't happen, but I was still terrified at the prospect of it happening.

I don't really remember exactly what happened next, but I do know that it was one of two things: either I was wheeled to my room to await my operation, or I was wheeled to the operation room immediately for surgery. Let's just assume that I was wheeled to my room for a short time before going into surgery. My room was laid out so that when you walked through the door, my bed was on the right, facing the left wall. The bathroom was adjacent from my bed. At the same time, though, I thought there was a bathroom to my left from the bed. Maybe I'm thinking of my second surgery, or maybe there were two bathrooms—I'm not sure. I do remember that the windows were on my right from my bed.

By the time it was time for my operation, my dad arrived at the hospital. My mom had stayed with me throughout the day, so my dad brought my favorite stuffed animal and blanket for me. I remember being wheeled to just outside of the operating room, hugging my blanket and my stuffed animal. I know I'll be asked later, so just to clear the air now, it was Tinky-Winky from Teletubbies. For those of you who had no childhood, Tinky-Winky is the purple one. My blanket also had the Teletubbies on it. My parents had to take the blanket, but I think Tinky-Winky was allowed in with me. I'm not checking with my mom for any clarification on details; I want to do this as best I can with my own memories.

I was crying when I had to leave my parents and go into the operating room alone. I remember it being very large and

dad was convinced that I had just eaten too many Girl Scout cookies from selling them the day before, and said that I should go to school. Normally he would have been at work, but he had just had a procedure on his neck the day before, which was lucky for me. I explained in as much detail as I could where the pain was and how much it hurt, and my dad pushed around on my abdomen, asking where exactly it hurt when he applied pressure. He poked me where it really hurt, and when I reacted and said that was the spot, he told my mom to take me to the hospital, that it was my appendix.

No kid wants to go to the hospital with abdominal pain, especially after researching Houdini. I cried that I didn't want to go, but my parents said that it would be okay, and it would be a lot worse if my appendix ruptured. So, I let my mom take me.

My first recollection of going to the hospital was finding a small dress-up doll of Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*. It was like a Polly Pocket, with a small plastic doll and rubber clothes. I asked my mom what it was, and she said that it was a gift for someone. When we got to the hospital, she said that I could have it and take it in with me. I'm not sure if I still have it.

I was put in a small room with a white bed and the standard hospital bed sheets. The counters, sink, and cabinets were level with where the head of the bed was, and ran across the whole back wall. I remember freaking out when I saw the IV that they were going to put into my arm; to this day I hate IVs. A nurse put the IV in my arm, and the next few hours are a blur to me. I think I had drifted in and out of sleep, unable to sleep comfortably. At some point, a doctor went in and looked at me, and said that I was going to get a CAT scan. They wheeled me out of the room and to another part of the hospital. When I saw the machine, I remember asking why it was called a CAT scan and not a DOUGHNUT scan. The medical staff laughed. In retrospect, they probably heard that a lot, and were just humoring me to cheer me up. But, that's my cynical teenage mind looking back.

## **My Amazing Sister**

*Rachel Wright*

I'm 8,  
She's 10,  
The perfect blend:  
Youth and adolescence.  
I know now how to tell her what I couldn't.

11,  
Now she's 13,  
I don't know what to do.  
Feels like I'm losing her;  
I can't keep up.

Age 14,  
She's now 16.  
No matter what I did,  
Nor what I thought,  
When I was 5 through 9.

Age 16,  
She gave up.  
We were moving houses.  
Mom said, "She's just lazy."  
Wasn't true.

Saw her tired,  
Crying.  
On the floor,  
Reached out my hand—  
"Let me help you up."

After that,  
She smiled my way.  
When I fall, she lifts me up.  
Standing with a smile, I say,  
"Thank you."

Sent from Heaven,  
Demeanor from Hell,  
From where I thought she was,  
I loved her very much,  
Just couldn't say.

Had a dream I was without her,  
Relieved she wasn't there.  
For that thought,  
I'll always hate myself.

I try to make her happy,  
Think that she's earned more.  
I cry myself to sleep,  
Searching for a way.

Becky,  
What you do for me,  
It's enough to make me happy.  
Don't ever think you fail me:  
You can't.



*The Foreigner*

## Let's Play Operation

*Veronique Sarosdy*

Not very many second graders know what an appendectomy is. Why should they? They probably don't even know what an appendix is. If you asked a second grader right now what an appendix is, you'll get three possible answers: "It's where you find words in the back of a textbook," "I don't know," or in a very unlikely case, "It's a part of your body that has no function." I know this because it wasn't until the second grade that I learned what an appendix is. I learned the hard, painful, near-fatal way.

The whole thing was incredibly ironic. It was then and still is now, but now I can actually laugh about it, since I'm not scared crap-less. The day before my appendix went wonky, I had given an oral book report on the famed magician Harry Houdini. If you know about Houdini, you'll already understand the irony. If not, go ahead and look him up. I'm not in second grade; I don't have to give the book report again. All I'll say is to pay special attention to his death. Go on, I'll wait . . . did you find the source of the irony? Good, now it makes sense to you. It's okay to laugh if you want; I laugh about it now, too. But I sure as heck wasn't laughing when I was eight.

It was very early on a Friday morning. I thought it was just a really bad cramp. So bad that it woke me up in the middle of the night, and rendered me unable to fall back asleep. I don't remember how much time had passed before I couldn't take it anymore and got up to wake up my parents. I do, however, remember that it was incredibly painful just to walk through the house. It hurt to even stand. To be honest, I don't remember exactly what happened next. I don't remember if I woke up my mom who woke up my dad, or if my dad was already up and I just went to my mom. However it happened, I ended up sitting on the couch watching *SpongeBob SquarePants*. My mom was going to let me stay home, and made me some tea to sip. My

*Emma Price*