

I always knew that fire was the most hypnotizing.

The way its flames are always twisting and turning in different ways.

The way the crackle can be so crisp,  
yet so silent.

The way the burning ashes  
float upwards like hundreds of fire fairies,  
dancing just out of reach.

The way you can stare at it for hours,  
never wanting to look away.

Sadie Baker Gr 7

Furry Feline

Aberdeen Elementary, Ms. Clarke's class

Purring warm body,  
Pressed against me.

Never wanting to make a movement or sound  
In fear of waking the sleeping feline.

Samaya L.  
Gr. 7 Arthur Stevenson  
A World Alone

### A World Alone

I wake up, the sun shining on my face. Burning my skin and setting it on fire. When I sigh, my breath comes out cold. I kick off my sheets, letting the sun ignite more of my skin. My eyes wander around my room, the sunlight leaking into the corner of my eye. I slowly start to roll my eyes towards the window, my eyes shutting automatically due to the sunlight. I let out a small groan, for I was never a morning person.

Now I sit up in my bed, eyes still closed and hands blindly wander around my window, desperate to shut the blinds. My hands maneuver around the blinds, messily shutting them. I finally open my eyes and everything looks like a grayscale version of itself. The sunlight has now been directed to the floor of my room, illuminating radiantly. I get on my knees to draw back my gaunt cotton curtains.

I crawl out of my bed and over to my wardrobe. I nonchalantly grab onto the brass handles of my wardrobe and open. I grabbed a pastel green sweater that I stole from my mom's closet and some shorts that I bought in Mexico, that one time we visited. I quickly throw on the clothes. I walk out of my room and see the sun pouring out windows again. I quickly cover my eyes, shielding my eyes from the lustre. It's strange because normally my mom draws the curtains in the morning. I shrug it off. It is a Saturday, and she must be sleeping in. At this point, my eyes have become accustomed to the sunlight. I don't even bother drawing the curtains.

I walk over to the kitchen and reach into the fridge. I grab hold of the milk, that feels hawkish to touch. I lift it out of the fridge and lay it on my hyaline marble kitchen counter. I grab a vitric glass bowl and some cheerios. I then pour the milk into the bowl, kicking my leg

Samaya L.  
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about as I watch the milk fill the bowl. I look outside. The roads seem busy, which isn't too common. Suddenly I feel something nippy and raw on my toes, I look down and milk is poured all over my toes and the reflective floor. I quickly put down my milk jug, vexed with myself.

"Great," I murmur under my breath. I'm a 14-year-old girl, who can't even pour myself a bowl of cereal. I can't imagine how bitter my mom will be when I wake her up for something like this. I start prancing over to my parent's room, their door left only a hint open. I feel like I'm 5 years old again when I open their door and peek inside. I see the bed flat, no bodies occupying it. The bed is ruffled as if somebody has slept in it.

"Mom? Dad?" I call out as I fling the door open and step inside. There is no one there, the bed is flat, and there is no way my eyes can be tricking me. I flick on the light without even realizing it. Still not there. I swing my head towards the open door.

"Mom! Dad!" I say, calling out. I run out of the room and before I even know it I'm flying through the whole house, basically throwing myself into every room like a rag. My parents are nowhere. I feel myself tearing up like a little kid, I'm 14 years old and I'm holding back vexed tears because I can't find my mom and dad. Maybe they left, I say to myself. I walk over to the front door. My dad still has his expensive shoes there. My mom's favourite flats that she always talks about are left there too. I walk into the living room, feet desperately sticking to the ground with every step due to my sweat.

I tell myself I am panicking for no reason. The sun peers over my perfect neighbourhood. The sun hurts to look at so directly. It gazes firm at me, daring me to look

Samaya L.  
Gr. 7 Arthur Stevenson  
A World Alone

away, but I don't. I only squint my eyes at the sun, challenging it. I look over my smooth pavement, cars laid perfectly on it. I spin away from the window and speed walk violently to the back door, all while screaming my parent's names. My mind is fogging up, and I feel like I can't breathe. My breath is becoming slower. I place my hand on the door and slide it open. I'm hit with a gust of brumal air.

“Mom! Dad!” I manage to scream out, even with the lump in my throat. Small cries come out. I scream their names again, but anybody who could hear wouldn't be able to make out my words past my voice breaking. Goosebumps rise on my legs due to the cold. I suck in a dense breath of air. It fills my lungs fast and tells me to calm down like my mother would. I suck another breath of air, intoxicating myself with oxygen. I slide my feet into my father's flip flops. The flip flops encrusted with dirt comfort my feet. I slide the door behind me and walk outside.

I only just realized that my parents are missing, but I feel like everybody else is too. There is a lack of something. As I look around the dead quiet of my neighbourhood, I just know that I am the only one left. I hop the fence and clench my toes in order to keep the flip flops on my feet. I'm in my best friend's backyard, I slide open their back door and close it, not even bothering to take off my shoes. I charge into my friend's parent's bedroom and walk onto the balcony. I have my mom's sweater, my dad's sandals, in my friend's house. I find company in these objects, in this world alone.

Andie M  
Grade 7  
Beattie Elementary  
Who Am I?

## Who Am I?

I was going on a walk when suddenly I saw this girl at the park sitting under a tree. She looks like she has been crying and her hair is reddish brown and is matted and her overalls are all ripped and ruined. I went up to her and said, "Hi my name is Madison . Hey what are you doing"?

"She said, "I don't know where I am!

I asked, "Do you have parents?"

"Well I don't know "she said, I can't remember anything."

" I can help , I said - Let's call you Joni and you can come stay with me while we figure everything out"

Well I mean I don't know, I would love to, but Joni was worried about everything like if I liked her or if she would fit in with my family and if she even had a family of her own or if she could live with me forever.

We started walking home and when we got to my house I said, What bedroom do you want?"

Joni said, I don't care,and I said, "well I want you to have a bedroom you like and feel comfortable in. She picked the one with the white walls and the poster of Paris.

After she gets settled in, I decide to look through my mom's essential oils to see if we can help Joni get her memories back.

Andie M  
Grade 7  
Beattie Elementary  
Who Am I?

I remember that there are two oils that might help - they are ylang - ylang and rosemary so I ask Joni if it's okay with her for me to put them in the diffuser and for her to stand close and breathe the fumes.

She says, " sure," and once she breathes in the rosemary and ylang-ylang she gets a memory almost right away.

" Oh no, she says and covers her eyes with her hands, " I had a memory " it was of my mom and what she looked like and my daddy "joni said " well maybe if we go downtown and walk around and shop for some clothes then maybe i will see them . Can you give me a description of your parents ?????.

"Ok well, in that memory I just had, my mom has brown eyes, blond, curly hair and she is wearing a hat that is black and some black tights and a blue hoodie and big bulky boots and now my dad was wearing work-boots and a big fire fighter suit because he used to work at the station. We went downtown and went shopping at the store and then we went into a store and we were shopping and all of the sudden we saw some people that Joni went right up to and said "hi how are you?".

"Good thanks," the people said. "Well what are you doing on this lovely old saturday evening?"

" I am just out here with my new friend."

" I know you from somewhere." "Where do you think?" said the people. Our daughter's name was Joni and you look a bit like her.

" I don't know maybe my old town where I used to live?"

Andie M  
Grade 7  
Beattie Elementary  
Who Am I?

“Where was that?” said the people.

“Well that was Jacket park.”

“Oh, do you remember what street it was?” said the people.

“Let me smell some more of that memory oil Madison. I think it was Rose street number 1238”.

“Wait a minute, said the couple. We used to live there and then our daughter moved out and we never heard from her again. We were so sad - we thought she died. So we moved here to Parkville!”

“OH WAIT you do look familiar. I think I am your daughter??.

“What? We thought you had died! We looked everywhere for you and had the police looking for you” .

“Well I am so confused, I remember you but everything is blurry. My friend found me at the park sitting by a tree all ripped and ruined and then we figured out that I lost my memory and I don’t even know how old I am and stuff like that.”

“How long has it been and where have I been?” Joni cried in frustration. Do you think you could be my parents? Madison, let me sniff some more of that ylang ylang oil?”

“Well, any memories coming up?” said Madison

“Oh my gosh, yes, these are my parents - I am their daughter and I am 18 years old. I was missing for four years!

Andie M  
Grade 7  
Beattie Elementary  
Who Am I?

I might never know what happened to me and why I lost my memory. Maybe I was kidnapped or maybe I was with bad people that gave me drugs. I am sorry I left home and scared you, Mom and Dad.

Well now we will call you and talk to you every day, said the parents.

Can you come to visit on the weekends? said the parents

, "Where do you live, Melissa and Joel?" said Madison

oh we live at 1248 rose street " said the parents.

" Oh, ok I will talk to you tomorrow Joni and we can arrange that on the phone ok bye, talk later, have a nice day and see you on the weekend." And they went different directions, feeling very happy ."Well that was so cool," said Joni.

"Yes it was!" said Joni. I have my family back and I have a new friend, you!"

"And you get to live with them on the weekends and me during the week, "said Madison.

Great, I would love that and we can get us both set up at college .

Oh wait, I just got all of my memory back, yay yay". And Joni really IS my name - you picked the right name for me", shouted Joni.

## Esrever

I have lived here all my life, and I have never noticed it before. It's not marked on any map. Maybe I'm just seeing things. Here I stand on the edge of a lake that doesn't exist. It has no name that I know of, so I call it Lake Esrever. I found it while I was walking through the forest; I was not far from my house.

Now I stand at the sandy edge looking into the water. I've stood at the edge of this lake 27 times now but only touched it once. Every time I come here I want to touch the lake again, but my only experience tells me otherwise. When I touched the lake, I returned to the day of my mom's death. The thought put a shudder through my body. I turn away not wanting to see the look of horror on her face before the crash. Strangely I feel a pull towards it to touch it again.

When I got back my dad was on the deck with a cup of coffee in hand. "Leelyn, you should at least bring Domino with you." Domino is a dog. He's a Gordon Setter, we got him when I was eleven.

"Dad, no one lives around here except us."

He frowns, "Still it would make me feel better if you brought him." Right on cue Domino bounded out of the forest and seeing me he came over and licked my hand. Petting him on the head I go inside.

The next day I take Domino and go to Esrever. It's so still it looks like glass. My urge to touch it is unbearable; I don't know why I want to touch it. It's like it's calling out to me, "*Leelyn.*" I drop, not wanting to hear it anymore. I'm on my knees covering my head trying to block it out, crying out. I can't stand it, my hand reaches out to the lake. I try pulling away, but I

can't control myself. I put my hand out again touching the lake. I gasp. I'm pulled into the day of the crash. The day I lost my mom.

I'm back in the car with my mom; she's on the passenger side. I just got my learner's license and it is my fourth time driving, and I just got my learners. We turned a corner and I smiled happily that I didn't hit the curb this time. Without warning a bright light comes into view. I swerve trying to dodge the light. I hear my mom scream, then I black out. The next scene drifts into my mom's funeral. My dad and I stare at the coffin wanting to believe she will come out telling me it's all a joke. She doesn't.

I wake up and sand is covering my side and part of my face. Domino is standing over me licking my hands and face that are streaming with tears. I try to get up while coughing sand out. Domino doesn't seem concerned anymore and runs back into the woods while I process what happened at the accident and funeral. It's all my fault; I could have turned another way or swerved more - anything that could save my mom. Instead I let it happen.

I stand. My tears are gone like it never happened. I puzzle over what happened when I touched the lake. It took me to my deepest regrets - to the thing I wish I could change. Why does the lake take me to my regrets? To torture me? To remind me that it's my fault? The last thought brings tears to my eyes. Turning away I walk home calling Domino back to my side. Dad was making dinner so I walked up the stairs and into my bedroom letting darkness come as I fell asleep.

For the next few days I stayed away, occupying myself with reading and helping Dad around the house with chores. Staying away was harder than it seemed. I kept wanting to go back

to the lake even though it hurt me. I had a feeling that I could change something if I went back. I am probably wrong.

On the fourth day, I took Domino and went to Lake Esrever staying far away but close enough to see the gentle ripples of the water. The feeling of being able to change things grows stronger. I came back to change what happened during the crash, to make it better. I want Esrever to tell me it's not my fault, and here I am. I'm on the sand now. One step forward I'll be back in that car and at that funeral. Taking a deep breath I put my foot in the water.

I'm back in that car. I just got my learners. "Focus, Leelyn, focus," I tell myself. My mom is sitting next to me, giving me instructions and talking to me. I ignore her. I see the turn, but I do not turn. I go straight forward hoping I can change things. A light behind us passes down the street. I changed the path; Esrever changed the past.

Waking up on the beach was less surprising than before. Domino is sitting next to me, and sand is coating my left side again. Esrever is peaceful like always. I rolled over taking a deep breath. I close my eyes smiling. Petting Domino on the head, I get up. The walk home is fast because I don't walk. I run. Opening the back door I step inside and head to the kitchen. There at the table is mom. She's back.

The flowers in the meadow flow in the wind. I've had a rough few hours, and now I get to have a little break... Thankfully. My name's Ren. Well actually, I don't know what my name is. I lost my memory four years ago when THEY gave me my so called, "power". I hate it! I don't like this at all. Being able to create metal out of your own skin? Most people would think that's cool... But not me. I was thirteen years old at the time, and didn't know much about people. My parents didn't like me much from the beginning. They said I was a little brat who should never have been born. Well, as I said, I don't remember it. The commander told all of us about our pasts. I was from Germany originally, but now I live here in Japan. I don't even remember how to speak German. My friends are the same way. Kyuu was from England. La-dee-da! Arashi was born here in Japan though. All of us have lost our families. Anyway, as I already said, I've had a rough few hours. It started at 1:59 (five hours ago.)

"Ren! Whatcha doin'?"

"Nothing Kyuu. Isn't that obvious? I'm laying here, at the bottom of a tree."

"In that case, you ARE doin' somethin' aren't ya?"

"Why can't you talk like a normal person?" Kyuu looks offended.

"Normally? This is how people talk where I grew up!"

"You didn't grow up there Kyuu! You grew up in the army just like the rest of us."

"Yeah well so what? I talk the way I want to." She is such a pain...

"Hey guys, what's up?" I hear Arashi yell over to us.

"So ya finally showed up huh?" Kyuu yells back.

"Yeah what's up with that?" I joined in. I hear Kyuu gasp.

"What is it now?" I look up.

"What the-"

"Ren... Kyuu... and Arashi... Yup. We've found them." Who are these guys? And what do they want? "You're coming with us." The big guy says.

"Yeeeeeaaahhh, no we aren't." Kyuu responds.

I see people in the tree's start to walk towards us.

“Ren? Are you really her? The one who managed to cut down over a thousand men when you were only thirteen?”

“Yah, I’m her.”

“Yep. It’s her. She still speaks a bit of German.” What? I spoke German? I didn’t know “yah” was German! Why didn’t anyone tell me?

“Y’know... most people would be very frightened of us, so why are you laying there, perfectly calm?”

“Well if you really want an answer, it’s because I’m not like most people. I couldn’t care less about what you’re tryin’ to do, because me and my friends here are gonna get away simply. So reach for the stars! It’ll make it more fun when I kick you back into the dirt.” I open an eye once again to see my friends smiling down at me, and the men all around us with horrifying looks.

“Kyu... Cool them down a bit will ya?”

“Sure thing bro!” She blasts ice out of her hands.

“Bullseye! I got the big one!”

“Nice. Arashi... go get ‘em.”

“I haven’t done this in so long! Better look out guys... I sense a storm coming.” He jumps up into the air and shoots lightning out of his entire body.

“Yeah, I totally did it better.” Kyuu says with a playful look on her face.

“You sure?” He says, looking over his shoulder. “I really think I got more”

“Hey guys... We should probably get going. There’s a lot more than I thought.”

“Oh.” Kyuu and Arashi say in unison. We ran off into the distance.

“So, did you realize that those guys were part of a big organization that works for the king?”

“Yeah I did actually.” Kyuu says slowly. “So what? What does that mean?”

“It means the king is after us.” I reply.

“Oh shiznick...” She says.

“Watch your language!”

“Ah yes, it’s Japanese... How do I watch a language?”

“URGH! YOU IDIOT!”

“Hey lovebirds! Calm down.”

“HEY IT’S NOT LIKE THAT!”

“If it wasn’t like that you wouldn’t get so loud, and red would you?” I see Arashi’s face. He looks horrified. “I’m joking! I wouldn’t actually tell her you like her!”

“REN!”

“Jeez! Okay, okay. I’m done. But I know you still love each other!” I ran as I said this. I knew what was going to happen. I hear them running behind me, getting closer. I turned both forearms into steel. I spun around, ready for what was going to happen. But I wasn’t. I wasn’t ready to see my friends tied up with rope, being carried by a really big man.

“We warned you.”

“Uh, no you didn’t” I ran over to him, grabbed my friends and ran. I ran so far and hard, it felt like my insides were about to burst. I put them down, turned around to catch my breath - but I can’t. They already caught up. I was so tired, limp, and worn out that I didn’t even want to fight back when they lifted me off the ground. But I knew I couldn’t. I couldn’t give up. *“You have to fight. No matter how hard it is. You... Have... To... Fight!”* That’s what a little voice said inside of my head. I listened. I spun around in his grip, ducked, and flung him to the ground. I was so angry I jumped into the air, and shot bits of metal out of my arms and legs. I didn’t give any of them fatal injuries, but I did kick them back into the dirt.

Now we’re back at home.

We always reach for the stars... Until someone kicks us back down in the dirt.

Ava-Eve Williams' forehead was beaded with sweat. She had just spent the majority of the day unpacking her belongings. Miss Williams, originally from Deslyum City, was moving to an old house in Sasigeyo, which many believed to be haunted. Naturally, she did not believe this, since this story seems to be following the norm of many horror stories, but that's me getting ahead of myself.

After she had finished unpacking, Ava -Eve went to her new bedroom and lay down on her bed. It was a nice four-poster bed, very comfortable, and it was as if it was never slept in. It is rather very unfortunate that she did not get to sleep in it for long.

Because that night is when the voices started.

The first few moments were quiet, but very quickly Miss Williams began to hear them. It was a chorus of children's voices, all repeating in the same eerie sing-song tone, "Mommy, come to the kitchen, mommy." At first she thought it would leave, and that her mind was playing tricks on her.

She was wrong.

This went on for several nights, and Ava was convinced she had gone mad. Eventually she'd had enough of this nonsense. *Fine, then.* She thought to herself, *I'll go to the kitchen!!*

She went to the kitchen. Once there she thought, *Ha! What are you going to say to scare me now, voices!*

Then, just as those thoughts raced through her mind, the voices changed their message. "Mommy, look behind the carpet, mommy." They told her in their sing-song voice.

Ava-Eve's eyes widened, she bolted, she ran to her room and hid under her covers for the rest of the night, hoping, *praying*, that this was all just a simple nightmare (which she frequently experienced anyway), and that she would wake up and never have worry about the voices ever again.

The next day, Ava called her neighbour, Miss Jillian. After 3 rings, she picked up. "Hi, Jillian Puth speaking, how may I help, ma'am or sir?" Miss Jillian asked

"Miss Jillian, it's Ava-Eve, I was wondering if I could ask you something...?" Ava said questioningly.

"Oh! Ask me anything!" exclaimed Miss Jillian politely.

Miss Jillian was a very nice woman and was in fact the first person to welcome her to the neighborhood. "Do you know who lived in my house previously?" Ava-Eve asked quietly.

There was silence on the other end as Miss Jillian pondered the question. "To be perfectly honest with you, Miss Williams, I don't think anybody has lived in the house for as long as I've lived here in Sasigeyo."

Ava's eyebrows furrowed, "Are you sure?" Miss Jillian had lived in Sasigeyo for 60 years, how could no one have lived there for so long?

"Yes. I'm sure, because when I was small, my mother used to tell me to stay away from it. She said it was haunted," replied Miss Jillian thoughtfully.

"Oh, I have to go now, Miss Jillian," Ava-Eve said, shocked by the news.

They both hung up at the same time. Ava sat in silence, her trembling hands covering her teared up eyes. She did not move for 2 hours.

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That night, the voices chorused again, "Mommy, come to the kitchen, mommy." So Ava did. She went to the kitchen, with a flashlight, and a pocket-knife.

When she got to the kitchen, the voices changed their message. "Mommy, look behind the carpet mommy."

The only carpet was hanging up on a wall. Ava used the pocket knife to pull it back slowly. Behind the carpet was a bloodstained door, leading to who knows where. "Mommy open the door mommy," the voices were getting louder.

Ava opened the door, her eyes half open, expecting something to jump at her. Nothing came out, but the door led to a staircase. "Mommy go down the stairs, mommy." The voices were nearly shouting at her.

Ava-Eve complied. She walked down the long and winding stairs. There were no railings, so she clung to the wall with her eyes closed, afraid of what would happen if she opened them. She felt her feet hit the solid floor. "Mommy, open your eyes, mommy." It felt like the voices were breathing on her.

Nothing was breathing on her.

Ava opened her eyes.

Ghosts can't breathe.

Ava stared in horror at the disfigured ghosts of dead children who must have been slaughtered in that very cellar. She stared at the skeletons littering the floor. She screamed. A

little girl's ghost walked to her. She looked to be about 4 years old. She was carrying an old tattered Raggedy Ann doll . "Mommy,"she whispered,"please save us."

That was the last straw for Miss Ava-Eve Williams. She ran as fast as her rather short legs could carry her, away from the children in the cellar.

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The rest of the night, Ava-Eve stayed at Miss Jillian's house. The next day, the police came and investigated the house, and found the remains. Ava-Eve moved out that very day.

I would very much like to tell you nothing more bad happened to Miss Williams.

But I would be lying.

Miss Ava-Eve did not notice that in her suitcase was a doll from no less than 76 years ago. She did not know it would bring about something horrible.

She wrote in her journal her last entry: *My brain is starting to become fuzzy. I can hardly recall my own experience at 934 Fellen Avenue. It's like it was all a bad dream, a dream that is beginning to fade from my memory. And I have an eerie feeling, like a prey being stalked by a predator...*

That night, as Ava slept in the Fleecy Barns motel, the doll, presumably possessed by the spirits of the dead children, crept up with Ava's pocket knife that she had just used the night before, the very same one she used to protect herself from harm, and put Ava-Eve Williams into an eternal sleep.

## The Dreams you forgot

Sam Selbee, Grade 7, Raft River Elementary

I hear a voice coming from behind me, I turn ready to run. I see my friend Joshua, waving his hand around in the air.

“Hey Daniel, wait up!” he said, chasing after me through the busy Vancouver streets. “Why are you in such a rush to get to class?” he said, catching up.

Joshua was the kind of kid you would see on the outside and say “ Yeah that's one of those athletic kids, ugh”, but behind the scenes is a geek and a nerd. He plays DnD, reads manga, and is great at math, that's probably why we get along so well, because we're so similar.

“Oh hi, what's up Joshua, did you catch the new episode of Tate no Yūsha no Nariagari?” I said, trying to change the subject.

“Oh you bet I did, that one fight scene was EPIC!” It seemed that he had completely forgotten about his first question, but the look on his face told me otherwise.

Once we got to school, Grade 10, we both drifted immediately, him to the jocks, and me to the weeps. After school I went home to my apartment, and I mean mine. My parents died when I was 7, I can't remember how though, and because I have no living family I was sent to the foster system, but after I turned 14 I requested to live alone. Since then I've been going

## The Dreams you forgot

Sam Selbee, Grade 7, Raft River Elementary

to school, studying, eating, watching anime, and playing games. I finish my routine and go to bed, just like every night.

I feel an ominous presence behind me as I go to bed, but I'm used to it by now. It's been like this for 9 years now, and I think I figured out why I feel it. As I doze off I...I don't know what to say here...I just...Forgot, but remembered? There's no way to describe a pure absence of memory other than, well, what I just said, but even through the haze of the night and my forgetfulness I remembered a face. The face. Every. Single. Night.

When I wake up the next day I get dressed, and get packed for school. Today I'm sure to wait for my friend Joshua. I don't want him noticing the bags under my eyes, like he always does. I'm always confused as to why I have so many symptoms of sleep deprivation, when I have such a normal sleep schedule.

“Hey Daniel, how you doing?” It was Joshua speaking. Said Joshua.

“Good, there's season two of Tate no Yūsha no Nariagari, it's really good” I replied, careful not to mention anything about sleepiness, or being fatigué as my class calls it.

“Oh, AWESOME, hey dude, did you see this new FMA merch I got? Pretty awesome right?” he said, pointing at his new hat, still with the tag on.

“You know that the tag iss still on right?” I said, pointing at his hat.

“Yeah, it's so it stays in ‘mint’ condition’,” he makes air quotes as he says “mint”, “If I lose interest in FMA soon, I can peddle it to weebz for twice the price I got it for!”

## The Dreams you forgot

Sam Selbee, Grade 7, Raft River Elementary

Again, we get to school, split up, and go all the way through the day, when finally, it's time for bed. I settle down in bed, read issue 152 of Naruto, and close my eyes for bed.

I hear a voice coming from behind me, I turn ready to run. I see a face, THE face. I run, the image still flashing in my head as I move. I'm in an alleyway, surrounded by mirrors all pointing towards me, then every so often they flicker to show THE face. It's a blank slate of white, leaving a gap in your memory where you would think a face is. I can only remember the details when I see the face in the mirrors. I run, run, run, RUN as fast as I can, but no matter how far or fast I run it's always behind me... Then I hear it. Then I feel it. A small vibration in the ground. As I run farther down the seemingly endless alley, I see an end. A large obsidian-like slab was blocking my path. The vibrations were stronger here. I begin to hear the voices.

"There is nowhere to run now, is there?" It was the thing chasing me. I turn to face it for the first time, and see it has a body covered up by a suit. It reminds me of something, but before I can place where it's from the second voice starts.

"Hey Daniel just wanted to let you know, I'm coming over to borrow issue 32 of FMA, k?"

It was Joshua, but how.

The creature, the faceless slate, the blank in my memory pulls off it's glove to reveal claws on the tips of each finger. It slashes me, and tosses me to the side. It looks at the obsidian and walks. Straight. Through.

## The Dreams you forgot

Sam Selbee, Grade 7, Raft River Elementary

I wake up at five AM, and wonder what woke me up. I look to my nightstand and see one missed call from Joshua. I can't sleep, so I go into the hallway, to get issue 153 of Naruto.

I see Joshua's new FMA hat, stained with red. Was it juice? Pop? Either way it smelled bad, so I threw it out. Then I saw the claw marks. Only the deepest pieces of me saw, or noticed it, but that's the part that remembered the dreams from the last nine years. That part new the fact IT had killed him, just like my parents. The beast from the dreams I forgot will never stop. Even now it hasn't.

-Daniel age 62

A Street Cat With No Name

I stretched my limbs in the early morning as the heat of the sun gazed across my face. My whiskers fluttered over my nose, itching my snout. I strolled my slim body towards my food dish, hoping that even though they were sleeping, they might have left me something to eat.

“ Ugh,” I mumbled. “Looks like I have to go and catch my breakfast.”

The older I got, the less they fed me or looked at me for that matter. I strolled towards the hanging cat door and jumped outside.

I was that kind of cat that didn't need much and didn't care for much. I didn't have a name and I cared for only one thing: my friend Amy.

The street lamps were dimly lit as the sun was just breaking the mountains. I pondered the lifeless streets, looking for anything to satisfy my hunger. Suddenly a sleek voice broke the tending silence. “Out early again, Noname?” she purred. She was a sleek black cat with a ruffled appearance and a smooth meow. Noname was a name everyone called me because, well, I didn't have a name.

“Care to help me find something to eat?” I asked. Amy always knew the best spots to hunt. Out of nowhere, she took off and I followed. I knew what that meant, it meant that she had already eaten and was showing me her leftovers. Us streeties hid our leftovers for friends or for later.

After a few minutes of running against the sunrise, with a barely visible target in sight, I finally reached the spot. But, as soon as I turned the final corner into an alley, I heard a screech. A loud painful meow. It was Amy and the Pound had taken her.

The Pound worker was dressed in a horrible scratched up blue t-shirt and ripped jeans. She grabbed Amy mercilessly and threw her into a metal crate. I was about to run after her when I remembered the pack rule. Us streeties all have a pack and mine consisted of Amy, Oliver, Haidi, Jasper, Q.T. and I until Oliver and the rest were taken. Our pack code was: "One gone, rest of us left".

I knew better than to break the pack code but, there would be no one left, but me. I knew attempting to save Ams was practically suicide, but I did it anyway.

I jumped at the Pound worker and knocked the gruesome metal crate out of her hands. I went down to try and pry Amy out when a sharp pain hit the back of my neck.

"Merooooooww," I yelped, but it was too late. The Pound worker had me in her fiercely strong hands. She reached down, picked up the crate and threw me into it. My warm body hit Amy's shivering one. I stayed pushed against her as we were flung up and brought into a large white van. It was just then that I realized how desperately hungry I was.

3 months later

I was starving! Three months of grey gruel, murky water and nothing to satisfy my hunger. Amy and I shared a stall, which means we shared food. The workers came to check on me more and more everyday. Patrick, the tiny feisty chihuahua (the owner's dog), from across the hallway told me that if you become "unhealthy" or "feral", they'd kill you. When he spoke, my brain finally clicked, I would have to escape. Patrick told me they only come 20 times. I was on my 13th which meant I only had 7 more visits.

Devising a plan was harder than I thought!

I spent the next 5 visits watching the workers every move. This is what I figured out:

- Workers come walk down the hallway every 3 hours
- They inspect me at 5:00pm everyday
- They actually have good food, but they only give good food to nice looking animals and Patrick

The last one was irrelevant, but I was hungry! On my 19th visit I watched closely at the way a worker walked by, and at the way his keys bounced around. On cue, Amy started mewling, because they liked her more than me and actual people were visiting her, the worker bent over and I grabbed the key.

First round done!

On my 20th visit something horrible happened. It all seemed like a flash of a horrible dream. Ams and I were about to execute the final stage of the plan (also known as escaping) when: NEW PEOPLE CAME IN.

They came in and took her, took Amy! Amy meowled and scratched, and I jumped and hissed, but nothing happened. She was swept off her feet and shoved into a crate. I jumped on the man's feet and held on. Amy wasn't going anywhere I wasn't going.

Unexpectedly the new people gently moved me off their feet and parted for me to see a young boy. With a slight nod from what appeared to be his parents, the young boy waddled up towards me and with a jerklike motion, the tiny child picked me up by my ribs and pulled me to his chest. His mother then whispered, "Be careful with Skittles, Noah. I'm going to take Kitty to the car to get her cleaned up, then we will get them some toys."

"Yay," Noah responded, raising me in the air and we left the building and the rough streets once and for all.

#### Notes from Skittles

I decided to write this story to say that not all humans are bad. Comparing little Noah with a cruel Pound worker would be horrible. Kitty/Amy and I are doing really well and we have a full belly every night. I sometimes miss the sunrise breaking the mountains or the feel of a winter breeze, but I couldn't ask for a better life.

Hannah B  
South Sahali Elementary  
Grade 7  
Trapped and the Monster

Trapped

*Have you ever felt like you are trapped in your own home—a place where you should feel safe and not alone?*

*Have you ever felt the walls creeping in and you just want to hide away in a ball?*

*Have you ever felt like the ones you love should be there, yet they are not and you find that you just want to fly away like a dove?*

*Have you ever been in a place where you are walking on glass?*

*Have you ever thought it would be better just to let the pain encompass you?*

*That is how I feel every time I step into the house, I sometimes want to curl up like a mouse. Yet I know that if I did, The Monster would find me. The pain and suffering would creep up and attack me if I let it know that I was scared.*

*So I act like everything around me is filled with glee.*

*So now you know why I don't want to go home.*

*Because it is no longer that to me. Instead, it is like walking into the battlefield of Rome*

*So here I lay, trapped and alone.*

Hannah B  
South Sahali Elementary  
Grade 7  
Trapped and the Monster

The Monster

*He has long claws that could cut up your hopes and dreams in a second.*

*His words can shatter any b*

*As I lay here, I still see all the damage he made.*

*His eyes cut through anything like two sharp blades.*

*You can hear his laughter after every attack, it makes him sound like a maniac.*

*And yet I know it's all a lie, The monster is just a form of my problems.*

*He does not exist, unlike my obstacles, which are always there to cause a commotion.*

*If he is not there, then why am I still afraid?*

*Why am I still afraid to go home?*

*Why am I still afraid to go to sleep alone?*

*It's because I know that my problems will always be there when I wake.*

*When I start to stir, they'll be there lurking like a monster.*

The Heavy Heart  
Ryder D  
Grade 7  
South Sahali Elementary School

## *Prologue*

*This is my last chance. This is the final time I will be able to recount this neglected, decrepit tale. Harken with an open mind. Please remember this story, for it is my living essence, my soul. I am withering away, child. Keep this story with you as you grow. And remember, all the events are true.*

*Especially in the veil of the fog.*

## Chapter One

### *The Decision*

“Have we arrived yet, have we arrived yet?” my brother chirped from the inside of the superannuated, rotting bamboo pen.

“*Be quiet, Berk,*” I whispered, beckoning for him to shut his voluble mouth, as the ragged coachman glared at us.

The Heavy Heart  
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South Sahali Elementary School

I shook the small, decayed cage, but instead of breaking, the sticks started bending. I coughed, breathing in some of the airborne sawdust and hay, then glanced over at my wheezing brother. “Why did you have to ruin my day again?” I complained, awakening the lethargic boy from his hibernation.

“Have we arrived yet, we have arrived—” Berk chanted languidly.

“Quiet down Berk!” I yelled, covering his mouth.

“We have reached the realm, boys,” the coachman rasped from the front seat. “It is time for you to meet your maker.”

I speculated he meant we had arrived, so I started rocking the cage like a frightened animal.

“CEASE THIS MADNESS!” the coachman suddenly shrieked. “You two *must* allay this cacophonous sonority—before *she* decides for *you*.”

I shivered at the coachman’s sudden outburst, then wondered who he meant by *she*.

The coachman unlocked the unreliable cage and pointed in the direction of what seemed to be a colossal structure, floating on a *low-lying vaporous mist*.

The Heavy Heart  
Ryder D  
Grade 7  
South Sahali Elementary School

“This is the entrance to the realm of the deity, the almighty, the creator—*what you humans call ‘God’*,” the coachman whispered breathily—making it hard to hear his voice. “Once you enter her palace, your fate is in her hands—*or rather your decisions.*”

I shuddered trying to understand what the man had just uttered to us—*or warned us.*

“Come now children,” the coachman ordered while walking towards the immaculate structure.

Inside, the ceilings formed a Brobdingnagian cylinder displaying many huge murals. At the center of the room stood a beautiful lady wearing a limitless flowing gown embedded with dazzling crystals and diamonds. Her hair was as extensive as her robe, and it seemed as if it was as light as a feather, blowing in the wind. The most peculiar thing was situated in the center of the immeasurable chateau—a small pedestal and scale prepared with what seemed to be a small, white feather.

“Greetings, children,” the pulchritudinous woman bellowed in her euphonious voice.

“H-he-hello mi-miss,” I stuttered, then quickly covered my mouth and dropped to the ground in an awkward bow.

“There will be no need for any of that lunacy,” the lady ordered, “*bring in their hearts.*”

The Heavy Heart  
Ryder D  
Grade 7  
South Sahali Elementary School

“*What?*” I inquired of the sovereign, to see if I had heard correctly.

“You two are *dead*,” the queen said blatantly. “I am here to determine where you will spend your afterlife.”

A second later, two men in large coats ambled into the room and to my horror, were carrying two bloody hearts on two separate trays.

“Oh no,” Berk sang, his voice echoing through the spacious palace.

“You two *perished* in an accident involving an expeditiously accelerating vehicle,” she paused before starting again in a sweet eloquent tone, “colliding with an edifice and causing *complete dilapidation* for the automobile *and the passengers*.”

I tried to speak but no words came out of my mouth.

“I cannot even process how you may feel about this devastating news,” the Goddess enunciated.

“But I have many more souls to attend.”

With a small waving gesture, the sovereign signalled for the first man to set down the tray on the pedestal. With a snap of her finger, she set the feather on one side of the weighing scale and

The Heavy Heart  
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South Sahali Elementary School

scrupulously placed the heart in the center of the alternative side. The heart was lighter than the feather instantaneously, leaving the Goddess elated.

“Berk,” the resplendent woman intoned, “you will be spending the rest of your afterlife in *heaven.*”

Berk didn't look pleased or surprised—and for the record, I don't think Berk had any cognizance or comprehension of what heaven *or* the underworld was.

The sovereign snapped her fingers again and repeated the same procedure as she had performed antecedently. My heart undulated both literally and figuratively, but subsequently, my heart was heavier than the feather. The Goddess made a flummoxed countenance.

“I don't recall any of your comportement to be belligerent or adverse...” she trailed off “...but psychostasia never lies. You are spending the remainder of your afterlife in the underworld.”

Behind the sovereign's throne, two enormous portals opened.

“Goodbye,” she said and pointed us in the directions of our portals, but before she said any last farewells, Berk scampered over towards me, grabbed my arm and flung the both of us into the portal to heaven. We were immediately plunged into a dimension filled with flocculent clouds and burnished buildings down on the ground below.

The Heavy Heart  
Ryder D  
Grade 7  
South Sahali Elementary School

“Why did you have to ruin my day again?!” I moaned at Berk, who was flailing around like a fish out of water.

We suddenly hit the ground with a *thud*.

I abruptly opened my eyes. Beside me was an unconscious Berk, resting on a velutinous carpet.

“Such an affable juvenile,” a voice spoke from the far side of the room.

I bounded to the far side of the room and stared at the individual.

“Who are you?” I inquired.

“I am an angel. You may call me Malchediel. You two are fugitives,” he said monotonously.

“You are going to send us to the underworld, aren't you?” I whispered.

“Quite the opposite,” he spoke plainly “I am going to help you.”

“How?” I interrogated. “There is no way out of here.”

The Heavy Heart  
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South Sahali Elementary School

“Not necessarily,” he said intriguingly. “Have you ever heard of the fog?”

*To be continued...*

(Title Card)

In 1914 ww1 broke out. For Four years, millions of letters passed between soldiers and loved ones. These are their words, thoughts, feelings and memories.

I am stationed in northern France in a town called Beaumont-en-Verdunois...

I am sorry I have not written in a while. I have no time to do anything other than fight and dig trenches. I have read all of your letters. I miss you.

I am so excited to fight for our country...for our cause. but I do wish I was in the comfort of our home.

Three of our chickens are dead and our cows are getting old and sick. When are you coming home?

I care about the men I fight with like they are family but I would much rather be at home with your yummy soup in my stomach.

You don't have to worry because I am taking care of myself with my work too. I am eating all my meals properly and doing my best to keep my spirits up.

Every day hundreds of solders die and it seems that no one around here cares...

We started a garden of potatoes in the front yard for the war effort. Here at home, we pray for the fighting to stop every day. We check the papers to make sure your name is not in them. How are you keeping over there?

There's never really any sun light. It seems it's always dark over here these days...

(Larks flying over bombed buildings pic)

I have not seen your father in a while but I just know he is still alive...he's a strong fighter. I check in with a sergeant from his regiment every few days and I am kept posted on his location and movements. I try not to worry. I hope you can do the same.

We just survived a massive shelling that carried on for days. I am still trying to get over the shock but I am relieved to be alive...

I try to make friends but they seem to get killed as soon as you make them out here. I am just trying to hold on until my next leave.

It was hard to walk through the mud this week. It was so cold, wet, hard and thick...

It's been a while since I've written to you but I'm writing to you now to let you know that I miss you lots and I dream of the day the shelling stops and the war is over.

It was a great relief that we were able to find that I'm now aloud to write to say I'm in good health as a prisoner of war. So far I am still alive so do not worry for me.

We work under pressure of taking care of all military soldiers who are injured. We have to work every day and stay on our toes. We just have a little time, so I thought I would utilize it to write letters to you. I don't get tired much because I am in a noble profession and working for this country and it's my honour to serve.

We are moving to the front line so I am writing just in case I don't make it back.

It has been practically raining shells since we got here....

I have been fighting stronger to get to you. My days have been horrible and long without you... (Wedding shot)

I am proud to be doing what I'm doing but, at the same time I wish I was at home with you.

I remember when we were little and you would dig up worms in the garden then you would put them in mother's shoes. How we laughed when I told the men that story.. We need to laugh out here to stay alive.

Joe died after getting shot seven times, we tried to save him while rushing him to the nurse. I just cannot lose another good friend. I got shot in the wrist but I am alright, so don't worry for me.

Thank you for all the socks and care packages; they really help. I go through four pairs of socks a day out here.

We have food but can you call it food? We've been making tea from the water that runs through the machine guns. it's not too bad...

I wanted to write to you because it will be harder for you to receive my letters once we go over the top tomorrow. I'll be thinking of our song as I go.

We had a coward today that ran from the battle that was shot by our own man. I don't know why he did that.

I love helping protect this country. I just have one secret....but the censors will not allow me to tell you...

I'm afraid that the military Authorities will have you know that I was missing on June 28. We were captured by the Bosch, but managed to escape. We're back in our trench, safe and sound... for now...

It was November 11<sup>th</sup>. In the crowd of men I heard one solid voice over the crowd screaming, "Don't Shoot After Eleven!"

I was walking through the thick mud. I saw one lone poppy. How could it grow there, in the middle of all that horror?

It was November 11<sup>th</sup> and I was all geared up, but the breeze was too strong so we all stayed tight and as my friends and I were out smoking cigars I saw it...A bright Red...Poppy.

Final title card:

Wilson T A Class, Summit Elementary, Letters Home: A Film Script

Over 17 million people died in WW I. It is still considered one of the deadliest wars in history. 12 million letters a week passed between soldiers and loved ones at the front. By 1918, over 2 billion letters were sent and received carrying messages of love, hope and a call for peace around the world.

Visit [barktoschool.ca](http://barktoschool.ca) to see the award winning film, Letters Home.

The sun shining on my hot face, and the small bead of sweat on the bridge of my nose where my sunglasses sat. The sound of laughter and yells of delight. Even the faint music of the icecream truck. All the perfect sounds of my perfectly imperfect day at the perfectly imperfect park.

I sat on the beach blanket my mother insisted I bring on my way out this morning. I also have my paints and small travel sized easel and four canvases. Today I was going to try to capture the sound of joy in a painting. It will be a challenge but I mean, what's the point of living life like everything is given to you on a silver platter? I set up my easel on the soft green grass and slip off my pink flip flops to feel the lush grass on my toes. I giggle.

Then I close my eyes and listen, really listen to the music of everyday things, like the honking horns in the distance, a group of teenagers skateboarding in the skate park, the soft sound of an ice cream truck passing by the beautiful trill of a child's laughter.

It was all so strange and pretty.

I open my eyes and start to paint.

The green of the grass shows up in the tree trunk that I paint, the bubble gum pink of the music note leaves, the yellow of the flowers, and the deep blue of the perfectly imperfect sky. I just set my hands free, it was amazing how they glided across the bumpy canvas. So smooth it could be gliding across a lake full of liquid glass. A lock of my golden hair flew into my face and it tickled a little. I brushed it away softly. I stopped painting and looked at my masterpiece:. It was a tree with soft pink music note leaves, and bright yellow flowers, andwith a sky blue so deep it could be the ocean.

I sigh, I loved this painting like all my others, but this one seemed a little different and I think I successfully painted the everyday sounds into music. I lay onto the soft blanket. It was the most relaxing thing with the hot sun beating down on my arms and legs, and the chirping of a bird somewhere off in the distance. I sit up, and slip on my pink flip flops, and walk down the small concrete path, leaving my painting and blanket right where it is. I stroll happily on the path, hands in the pockets of my ripped jean shorts, probably with a little paint on them and maybe my face as well. As I walked I saw a young couple sitting on a light yellow blanket much like mine and the girl laughed outright at something the boy said. I smiled and could see the love in their eyes. I wondered if I would ever find someone like that and I could feel my smile turn sadder as I kept walking along the grey path.

Flip, flop, flip, flop, was the sound that my flip flops made. I looked down at them; it was a nice sound and a comforting one as well. I smile again, feeling the sun on my hair turn warm again. And that's when I see the blonde haired, blue eyed boy with a little yellow paint stain on his jean shorts and a little bit of deep blue paint on his cheek. Our eyes meet and my heart jumps a little. I feel my insides tie a happy knot and my breath catches in my throat.

I walk towards him, we are six feet apart. He starts walking towards me. Then it's only two feet apart, and then there's a mere inch between us. I stop. I'm breathing so fast.

He smiles "And what is your name, fine lady" he says with a musical voice. My breath catches as I say my answer.

"Lemon, and what about you, fine sir?" I look at the blue spot on his cheek.

"J-" and I wake up with a start, an ache in my chest, I almost cry out it hurts so much.

Then I decided to go for a walk to get my mind off of this beautiful dream boy. I gather my paints and I wear my blue jean shorts and a yellow and white striped shirt. As I walk out the door my mother presses a soft yellow beach blanket into my arms, I smile gratefully and head out, slipping on my pink flip flops. Just outside I walk to get onto my bike, so I can get to the park. wWhen I see a boy,, Hhe smiles and I walk to him, heart beating. Hhis blue eyes and blonde hair almost sparkle in the sunlight.

We are only an inch apart and he says “and what is your name, fine lady?”

I smile and giggle a little. My heart was beating straight out of my chest. My breath catches a little as I replied with “ Lemon, and what might yours be, kind sir?”

He smilesd and comescame even closer and tellstold me, in his musical voice, “Jack.” Then he scooped me up off my feet and leaned in.

I gazed into his questioning eyes, and smiled in return, and then without thinking I kissed him. It was perfectly imperfect.

Now we're that beautiful couple sitting on the bright yellow blanket in the park.

Ashlee Crawford  
Westmount Elementary  
Grade 7  
**Scrap of Memories**

It started out with one slip of paper. Just a scrap of blank paper lying on Annie's desk. At the start, that one piece of paper was ordinary, meaningless. It was a part of her messy room, the room where countless other scraps of paper were strewn about.

I remember the day clearly. Sunny, humid, and bright. One of those days where you're outside for so long that when you come in, it's as though the room is clouded with darkness. I was heading over to Annie's house on my bike, swerving back and forth across the empty streets as I made my way through her neighbourhood. I had parked against the side of her house and entered through the door without knocking. She always knew it was me.

"Miley!" she exclaimed, sliding across the smooth living room floor and embracing me tightly. When she pulled away, I couldn't help but smile broadly back at her. Her curly blond hair bounced around her rosy cheeks and, of course, her brightening smile that could cheer up anyone's day.

"Just a gift, to show how great you are," she said with a little shrug, handing me a silver chain-linked necklace. A little heart gem hung at the end of it, embroidered with little golden beads.

"You deserve much more than that." She giggled, stole the necklace from my gentle fingers, and undid it, draping it around my neck. I watched the heart fall on my chest before meeting her gaze.

For the rest of my time that day at Annie's house, I tried to think of ways to repay

Ashlee Crawford  
Westmount Elementary  
Grade 7  
**Scrap of Memories**

her. She was a much better friend than me, but how was I to show her how much she meant to me? I pondered that question all the way until after dinner, when it was time for me to go home.

Annie was out in the living room waiting to wish me goodbye. I was gathering my bag from her room when I passed the paper sitting on her desk. I stared at it for a couple seconds as my idea processed through every inch of my mind. I leaned over, snatched the nearby black pen also lying near the paper, and wrote a simple note saying, *The necklace means the world to me. Thank you.*

From that day forth, I thought about the paper. I wondered if Annie ever read it, if she'd written back. A week later, I visited her home again. I immediately rushed to her room to see what she'd written back. *Check the closet.*

I obeyed her note, and in the closet was none other than a small book cloaked in black leather. I scooped it out of her closet and flipped it open. Inside were photos of us and they were all laid out, one photo per page, in exact order of our years together. I smiled, stunned at the same time, as I realized that she had come together with this in a week.

I left a note saying, *Thank you again for the gift. I owe you.*

Everytime I went back to her house, the paper would always be there. A message would always be waiting. Annie never mentioned the paper or the messages through words. Neither did I. I wondered if she'd ever bring it up, if she'd ever remind

Ashlee Crawford  
Westmount Elementary  
Grade 7  
**Scrap of Memories**

me that after all the heartfelt gifts she gave me for just being her best friend, I'd have to repay her. We didn't need words, though.

Weeks turned into years, and in no time we were halfway through high school. Once a week and every week, she would give me another creative, brilliant gift to show her appreciation towards me. Year after year, though, even after graduating high school, I couldn't figure out a gift to give her in return. I could never form the words to express how much I wanted to thank her.

Soon we were each twenty years old and Annie had moved into her own home. Time was flying too fast. I still had no gift. When Annie moved into her new apartment, I found her dresser, with the paper and pen sitting there with a message saying, *The move has been great; I have a gift for you on the balcony.*

We never grew apart, even though at parts in our quickening life, we had some major disagreements. The weekly gifts soon became monthly gifts as Annie and I found families of our own. We married, had kids, found new homes, but whenever I went to Annie's home, the paper and pen was always there waiting for me.

In the blink of an eye, my kids were graduating. The splendor of life and all the gifts I'd accepted and received were beginning to hit me hard. The pang of guilt constantly shuddered in my chest every month when I'd arrive at Annie's home and see the messages, all aimed at a new gift.

Ashlee Crawford  
Westmount Elementary  
Grade 7  
**Scrap of Memories**

The day came when Annie was diagnosed with lung cancer. It was instantaneous. I could hardly believe I was sixty years old, firstly, and so the news was even more unbelievable.

I showed up at her hospital room when I received the news that she had little more than three months to live. I was shocked to see the paper and pen, the paper now crowded with messages, on the table next to her.

Guilt consumed me. I'd never given her a gift, after all these years.

I approached the table and read the final message she left me. It read, *None of my gifts can show how much you've meant to me. Thank you for this wonderful life. The only gift you can give me is forgiveness, for leaving you so soon.*

All I could reply with was, *No, thank you, Annie.*

I looked down at the heart necklace still resting on my chest, glanced at unmoving Annie, and left the room with the scrap of memories in hand.

1

Ella Conn

Grade:7

Westmount Elementary

### **C13's Back Story**

Hi my name is C13, as you can tell it isn't a real name that's because I was raised in a lab. If you are wondering what I look like I have black and red hair, wolf ears and a tail. One of my eyes is reddish purple and the other is red. I wear a black shirt, brown belt, jeans and a shock collar.

Today I thought it was going to be a normal day where they would take me for experiments, but instead someone who I didn't recognize came in. "Hello I am Dr. Drew." His eyes gleamed in the small light in my cell. "You must be wondering why you've never seen me before. Well I've seen you grow to be a very strong girl." *Wha.. how does he know me? He's seen me grow up? I'm so confused.* He had an evil smirk, and then everything went black. When I woke up I was in a strange room. Dr. Drew came in. "Hello C13" he grinned. "What do you want from me?" I said. He came closer and held my head up with his hand, leaned so close to my ear I could feel his warm breath against my cheek and whispered, "To be my slave." I pushed him away and yelled **"I AM NOT GOING TO BE YOUR SLAVE!!"** Then he laughed and pushed a button. My shock collar went off. I dropped to the floor and tears started to run down my face from the electrical pain running through my body. "Now tell me what are you?" "Y-your slave" I said quietly. *Why is he doing this? I don't want to be a slave.* "Good you agree with me. Now put this on." He handed me a brown dress and left the room. After I got dressed I knocked on the door.

Later in the car I was very confused as to where we were going and why I had to wear a dress.

We continued to go with an eerie silence, Dr. Drew staring at me with the vilest smile I've ever seen (and I've seen a lot of evil smiles throughout my life trust me). Then the car stopped. "Well

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Ella Conn

Grade:7

Westmount Elementary

**C13's Back Story**

it looks like we're here." said Dr. Drew. We got out of the car and a crowd came out of nowhere.

They started asking questions like, "What is it like being a hybrid?" "Do you like the lab?"

There was one that caught my attention "What is it like being the doctor's girlfriend?" I tried to

yell I'm not his girlfriend but nothing came out. Then someone said, "Kiss!" Then he leaned

over, held my head up with his hand and kissed me. I felt like crying or pushing him away but I

didn't because I was scared of the punishment for doing that. Later in the room he left me alone

so I decided to look around. It was a small room with a bookshelf, a small bed, and a night stand.

*Might as well see what books they put on the shelf,* so I started looking through the books. They

were a bunch of books about other "experiments." Some were so old that they were falling apart.

I decided to read one about a half dragon half human. Their name was T19 and they had been

here for four years. I read until I fell asleep. In the morning someone brought breakfast for me. A

little later Dr. Drew came into my room, "Good morning C13, how was your sleep?" I just

looked at the ground to avoid eye contact. He continued talking, "Today it will be the normal

routine. You will go for your tests like always." So then the scientists did the normal routines. I

saw some other people getting their test as well. A couple of weeks later I was looking through

the books and found a map of the lab. *THIS WILL HELP ME GET OUT OF HERE!!!* I quickly

hid it under my bed. Later on after my tests I decided to look to see if there was a way out of

here. After looking through it, I found there was a secret door under the bed. During the night I

looked under the bed and found a trap door. I opened it and found a long dark tunnel. I grabbed

some of the books from the shelf and went down the hole. *How long is this thing? I think I've*

*been walking for hours! I wonder if I'll make it out before the scientists find me?* I shivered at the thought of it so I went faster. A little later I saw a light and I quickly ran to it. Then a ray of light hit my face. It felt nice to be out after all the years in the laboratory. I started to explore the new place. I blocked the tunnel so no one could find me. I saw a bunch of things that were tall brown and had green stuff on top of them. Also things of water running through the ground and also a tunnel in the rocks where I decided to live. In the morning I went off to find food. *Let's see where to look for something to eat.* I wandered around for awhile until I found a town. *I could look for food there.* Before I went to the town, I hid my red eye, tail, and my ears. The town was very peaceful. I went to one of the stores even though I had no money. They were nice enough to give me some food. After eating I went back to my new home but this time something was different. There was no noise like the birds or animals. Then I heard a snap in the bushes.

A World In Flames

Olivia Harris

Westmount Elementary

Grade 7

The moon was centered above me, its mild gleam shining down, extenuating the pale hue of my skin. My grin seemed to be drawn on my face, seeming as though it had never faded or changed. This night was incredible. It was unlike anything I had seen in my whole life.

Crickets chirped from the forest behind me, and the waves crashed in from the beach I was sitting on. It bewildered me, how there wasn't a single plastic object in sight.

I remembered my grandmother telling me about when she was a little girl. She had said that there was barely any plastic, and global warming was just a spark in people's minds. Now, global warming was a roaring flame, threatening to never cease.

Abruptly, a small voice woke me. My eyes fluttered, refusing to open wide enough for me to see clearly. The only thing visible was the orange sunshine that shone through my drapes.

Finally, I opened my eyes and sat up, taking off my oxygen mask and flinging my legs over the side of my bed. My mother was leaning against my door frame, smiling joyfully at me. I brushed my black, bedhead hair out of my eyes and stood, feeling my soft rug beneath me. I walked over to my drapes and closed them only slightly so that the sunlight was minimal. This early in the morning, my eyes couldn't take the blazing sunlight, especially just after I had awoken. My mother nodded down the hallway, telling me without words that breakfast was cooking.

I opened my window, expecting to breathe in somewhat refreshing air, but instead, I got two lungs full of smoke. I backed up, coughing into my arm. Closing my window, I went to the dining room and grabbed a plate.

A World In Flames

Olivia Harris

Westmount Elementary

Grade 7

“I heard you coughing upstairs,” Mom started, “Another fire in Australia last night. It’s recommended to stay inside today.” That explained why the air was smokier than usual. At this point, Australia was now predicted to never stop burning. It had been in roaring flames for over thirty years, its smoke travelling all over the world at impossible speeds.

“It would have been nice to know that before I stuck my head out the window and inhaled half of it.” I complained, rubbing my neck, trying to sooth my raw throat. Walking over to the cupboard, I grabbed a glass and filled it with water, gulping it down and praying that it would refresh me to the point where I would forget that I had ever inhaled poison.

After I had completed my breakfast, I went back to my bedroom and opened the curtains wider, my eyes ready to begin the day, not that it was much of a day, though. While eating, mom had told me about how school had been cancelled and how we would be spending the day locked inside our prison of a home. It was a rarity that this occasion would occur, but when it did, my house became a prison to me.

Unlike other kids my age, I thoroughly enjoyed spending my time outside, rather than hiding behind a screen. Besides, nothing online was new or interesting. It was all about, ‘A World In Flames’, as journalists called it, and I was sick of it. Everyone knew that the earth was an immense sized ball of poison, waiting to burn into ashes. Everyone knew and no one needed a reminder.

Just for the sake of it, I put my oxygen mask back on. It was worth getting clean air while it was still available. I laid down on my bed, letting the soft mattress consume me and take me

A World In Flames

Olivia Harris

Westmount Elementary

Grade 7

back to the previous night. I closed my eyes and pictured the bright moon and crashing waves. If only life was like that now. If only the world we lived in was a safe, peaceful place where you could go more than twenty four hours without putting an oxygen mask on because your lungs couldn't take the smoke. Problems of the century consumed me, and I felt a small tear trickle silently down my cheek. I couldn't even imagine what life would be like for my children.

Then I thought of my dad. The dad who had died fighting fires in Australia. The dad who had cared so much about a clean planet that he sacrificed himself for others to live a healthier life. But none of that had worked. He is gone and only very few actually care enough to continue his legacy. I wished for him to be in my dream. To be in a wonderland full of happiness as he watched over me and mom, making sure that we were happy.