

**Writing with Purpose:
A Cardinal Creative Writing Camp
Anthology**



SUMMER 2016

Summer 2016

Cardinal Creative Writing Camp
Saginaw Valley State University
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Dear Reader:

This year's Cardinal Creative Writing Camp (CCWC) saw its largest attendance in history. Thirty-two young and talented writers, who ranged in ages from 11-18, spent four days on Saginaw Valley State University's campus writing with each other, inspired by their camp leaders and the beautiful campus environment. What was even more exciting is that the writers closed the camp by reading their favorite piece for family and friends at our Open Mic event. This, like writing, is not easy to do, and the writers bore the pressure with grace.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of the Saginaw Bay Writing Project and of various departments and offices at SVSU, including the English Department, the Writing Center, the Office of Multicultural Services, the Office of Admissions, Zahnnow Library, and many individuals who supported the camp financially or through the generous donation of supplies for the campers. So much goes into the planning of the CCWC, and we are so grateful that we didn't have to do it alone.

What you will read here is a product of this support, the direction of the camp leaders, and the hard work of the writers. The theme of this year's camp, as indicated by the anthology's title, was writing with purpose. Writers were challenged to be thoughtful about each piece, balancing writing for pleasure with writing to *say something*. Each writer chose one or two pieces to have published; these are the pieces that they considered to be their best and most purposeful work.

Sincerest thanks to the writers for their efforts and the parents and supporters who encouraged their work. This publication is dedicated to you.

Enjoy!

Maria Vos
2016 Camp Coordinator

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The Ghost of Jerry Brick Lane: Chapter One

A'niya Coleman

Hi my name is London and I live on Jerry Brick Lane, and this is my story of the haunted house on Jerry Brick Lane.

One cloudy day, I was in my room on my black and blue bed. There was so much on my mind. I kept thinking of November 1, 2001. That's when my parents died in a car accident on the way to a parent-teacher conference. Ever since that day, I haven't come out of my room. I still go to school but only online. I now live with my grandparents on Jerry Brick Lane.

Ever since my parents died, I haven't been the same. I still talk on the phone with my friends but not as much as I used to. I did talk to my best friend Kayla yesterday. She told me that she had stopped by my old house and saw a shadow in the window. I've always wanted to go see, but I haven't really got over my parents yet.

It is now August 2, 2017. I have gotten over my parents, not fully, but good enough where I can get out of my room. Once I got downstairs, my grandparents ran up and hugged me so tight that I think they might have broken their bones.

They also started making my favorite meal: chicken alfredo. They were acting like it was my birthday. Once that whole party was over, I went outside to go see my best friend, Kayla. She was so happy to see me outside. After she talked to me for a half hour, we went to my old house. Once we got there, there were three boys who told us that the house was haunted by three ghosts. We didn't believe them because they're boys. Most boys are wrong. Plus, I didn't believe in ghosts. After all that we both went to my old room to see if anything changed, and we heard a big noise like someone dropped something.

We got so scared that we then started believing in ghosts. Then, I took a pole from the corner of the room and got ready to hit whatever was coming. Then—BANG!—I hit it. But when I opened my eyes, I realized I hit the wall and the ghost was right there. My nose was touching its, and then Kayla ran away screaming. When it talked to me, it sounded like a woman. I looked up and cried. It was my mom. Before I could speak, she told me I had to leave. I asked why, and she said the three boys that I talked to were coming in, and they are the ghosts who haunt this place. She said, "They're coming for you."

War

A'niya Coleman

I live in a world of war where there are fightings,
Killings, and, political adversity, yet in this war, it is me.
A war within, trying to discover: "Who is she?" She is me.
The struggle in my identity who am I to be with my natural
being and spiritual being at odds there still remains a battle I
must trust God in this war.

27 Things I Should've Learned by Now

Allison Southgate

1. You can't please everyone.
2. Don't worry about it.
3. Some things should remain hidden.
4. Don't worry about it.
5. They don't matter.
6. They have their own agendas.
7. Don't worry about it.
8. They are trustworthy.
9. They are not.
10. They just want you to fail.
11. But they want you to succeed.
12. Don't worry about it.
13. This one likes you.
14. This one doesn't.
15. Don't worry about it.
16. Words are knives.
17. Don't worry about it.
18. You've trained all your life to dodge them.
19. Don't laugh at funerals.
20. Crying is healthy.
21. Don't worry about it.
22. Open your eyes to those around you.
23. Don't worry about it.
24. Open your heart to those who need it.
25. People aren't like you.
26. People have their own stories.
27. It's ok to worry about it.

Why Can't They See?

Allison Southgate

Why can't they see?

Their thoughts are knives
Cutting through my skin and into my
Actions, voice, thoughts, words, personality, esteem, fears, loves, beliefs, emotions,
desires, dreams, nightmares.....

Why won't they see?

Why won't they see?

I know they can tell.
I know they can see,
but yet they are blinded,
Blinded by their own "heavenly" light that shines into their eyes,
Blinded, Blinded

Why do they see?

Why do they see?

Some of them have a light that shines from behind them,
A light that guides them, not blinds them.
Those who are guided,
Why do you see?
Why you? And not those who throw the knives?
Is it because you want, need, desire, achieve, gain something?
Or is it that you just see?
You just see.
You just see those who are cut so small by the knives you must look SO close to see who
they truly are

You see them and you love them,
You love them even though their scars will show forever,
Till the end of time.

But as you show them that your light is behind you,
Those scars will HEAL

Soul Searcher

Amariah Woodson

“Not so tight, please,” the boy tells the maid. “I can barely breathe!”

She wiggles one chubby finger in the space between the stiff dress collar and his neck to loosen it.

“Sorry about that. How’s this?”

“Much better, thank you.”

The boy turns to the mirror, not recognizing the young man that looks back at him. In the suit he looks mature, professional—completely unlike his usual self. The only familiar traits of this stranger are his dark brown eyes.

This is why he dislikes formal events. The suits available never truly represent him. Most men wear a dark gray or black suit, with the occasional white for weddings. He was the only one who picked the dark blue tuxedo.

He turns to his Companion.

“Well, Rist, how do I look?” he asks, straightening his collar and tie.

Rist, who had been trying various forms, settled for a moment to look his friend up and down.

“Professional,” he says, changing into a fox and turning back to the mirror. “It’s much easier for you Humans to decide what to look like. All you have to change is your clothing and hair. Us Companions must change our entire physical appearance.”

The boy rolls his eyes and looks himself up and down one more time before dismissing the maid. With a curt nod, she exits the room. The boy walks over to his bed then bends down on his hands and knees.

“Your knees will become filthy if you stay like that,” Rist remarks over his shoulder. Now in the form of a hummingbird, he beats his wings frantically. “What about this?”

The boy lifts the bed skirts and reaches an arm underneath. After a few moments of feeling around in the darkness beneath, he withdraws a satchel. It’s made of a rough tan canvas and has a short leather strap and gold buckle to keep it closed. A longer, thicker one with ends connected to both sides acts as a shoulder strap, with a larger gold buckle to adjust the length. Swinging this around one shoulder, he stands up and brushes the dust off of his knees.

“Are you sure you want to be so small?” he finally replies.

“How about this?” Rist asks as he morphs into an elephant, clearly annoyed. He scarcely fits in the room, and his back brushes against the ceiling. The boy backs up to give him space.

“Actually, the elephant form suits you. Can you change into a smaller one? A baby, perhaps?”

In moments, Rist is a small baby elephant, only about three feet tall. He walks around to get a feel for his new form.

“I think you’re right. This does suit me,” he says, posing with his front left leg bent casually.

The boy starts to laugh. Still smiling, he unbuckles his satchel and stuffs a bit of money, three books, a notebook, and a pencil into it. The first is titled *The History of Companions*, the second is *The History of Humans*, and the third is *Magic of the Soul*.

“I don’t understand why you carry those books around with you. You’ve finished them already,” Rist scoffs.

“I find the topics interesting. Besides, if I’m going to do research, I have to know the topic. What better way to do that than reading over the information in my spare time?”

Rist shakes his head then walks to the door with his trunk high in the air. Grabbing the handle, he opens the door and steps aside dramatically.

“After you, Mr. Watch,” he says, imitating the exaggerated way the gentlemen of the town spoke.

“Why, thank you, Companion Rist,” Watch laughs, in the same manner.

Lost Shadow

Amelia Beaman

Peter Pan has lost his shadow. He's not coming back for it. All the Lost Boys are snapped back into reality. I think Peter stopped believing, and with his age went his smile. The Peter we knew and loved is gone, working a 9-5 job working in a cubicle. Captain Hook finally won. Poor Peter wandering around with no shadow, now the Lost Boys have lost their smile, and Wendy is sitting in her bed hugging her teddy bear waiting for her smile to fly in through her window looking for his shadow.

He always told himself that as long as you believed you could do anything. But now we're believing that he will find a roof and do his own kind of flying. Falling down, would he realize that he left Wendy, Tink, and his family? Would he remember flying? Would he do anything to stop himself or would he just let go? The white sand beaches have now turned black, his green feather has turned into a tie, and his brown messenger bag full of Pixie dust has now turned into a briefcase. The memories are there, but it's up to him to remember them.

Wendy comes home every day to her white-on-white apartment with the same teddy bear she's had since she was five. She looks out of her window onto a busy street hoping he'll knock on her door and they will fly back to Neverland and never come back—see the mermaids that have now turned into accountants or the Lost Boys that have turned into white-collar businessmen. Wendy is faced with the two things she thinks about constantly. If she had stayed, how long would the smile have lasted? And why did she pick going home and growing up over Neverland? She loved Peter and Peter loved her; they both want to break free, yet they lay in their cages.

Captain Hook is a blue-collared man. His ship has now turned into a one-bedroom apartment with a mattress and no bed frame, kitchen and living room in the same spot, and a sweaty glass of rum on his bedside table. He is alone in a dirty town where steel is produced and smiles are not shown. His sword has turned into a lever he pulls in the morning to start the machine, coming home to a dinner provided by food stamps and government money. He's still wondering if living in this cage was better than letting Peter Pan win.

Lost shadows, lost smiles, lost hope. Nowhere to go and no place to call home. Afraid to sleep, afraid to walk out the door. Still trying to find his smile and his shadow in a big lonely world. His only friend was the man in the moon, and even sometimes he would go away too.

Before I Turn 90 Years Old...

Andrew Sahouri

1. I want to meet LeBron James.
2. I want to meet Stephen Curry.
3. I want to get married and have kids.
4. I want to go to college and graduate with a doctorate.
5. I want to meet J.J. Watt.
6. I want to become an ophthalmologist like my dad is.
7. I want to work at NASA and go to the moon.
8. I want to meet Ian Kinsler.
9. I want to meet Miguel Cabrera.
10. I want to meet Michael Jordan.
11. I want to meet President Barack Obama.
12. I want to meet Justin Verlander.
13. I want to meet Calvin Johnson.
14. I want to meet Matthew Stafford.
15. I want to go to one million MLB Detroit Tigers games.

A Made-Up Dream

Andrew Sahouri

A dream that I have had before is that I was in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), and I jumped off of the tallest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa. Then, while I was in mid-air, Superman saved me, but he got shot with a Kryptonite bullet, and he dropped me and I fell 1,000 feet and landed in a 75-foot deep pool. Unfortunately, the people that owned the pool were putting the cover over the pool, and I suffocated underwater. Luckily, I found a hole at the bottom of the pool, but the hole was too small to fit me through, so I punched the cracks open, and eventually the hole was big enough to fit me through it. I had to hurry, because I was running out of breath. As I went through the hole, I found a sewer, and I swam back up and got to breathe. After that, some guy started singing karaoke in the water next to me, and then Michael Jackson appeared next to me, floating on a cloud of spaghetti, and slapped me on the face. Next I woke up, and thought *that was the weirdest dream ever!*

The Climb

Ashley Bergmooser

As Ryan and Alex gripped the uneven face of the cliffside, the wind tore at their clothes and ripped at their bare skin, making it red. Nearly 50 feet above the treacherous waves of the ocean, Ryan and Alex desperately tried to keep their eyes up above so they didn't have to look down. The vicious, white-capped waves were like hands trying to rip them from the rock face. Alex gripped the rocks tighter, looking over at his companion, trying to communicate with his eyes that he was becoming extremely hesitant.

The water crashed against the rocks, smoothing them to a fine point, making them daggers. He knew that if he fell from his precarious perch to the unforgiving rocks below that would allow the depths of the water to devour him. He carried on, with a rush of adrenaline, despite the fact that his brain was yelling at him to go home. He knew that the rewarding feeling that would come with reaching the top would overrule any other thoughts. The vibrant grass was now only a few yards away, so close that he couldn't see where the side turned into the top. Ryan grinned down at Alex as they came closer and closer to the grassy field on top.

In this grassy field they could make out what seemed to be a quaint little village within the fog. They were smiling so much it hurt their cheeks, knowing the salvation that would come with standing on the steady ground would surely offer. Helping each other onto the grass, they could finally clearly see the beautiful view that had been awaiting them. There were mountains with huge forests surrounding them on all sides, their peaks poking the gloomy sky. They were excited at the prospect of returning to civilization, which at the moment, seemed to almost be a distant world.

Ghost

Ayanna Sowah

In the 1900's,
There was a picture,
There was a man,
There was woman.
The woman was a ghost.
The Ghost of Founders Hall.
I am a statue.
I can't move,
But I am a ghost.
The Ghost of Founders Hall
There is a man,
A human man.
I can move.
She can't.
She's a ghost.
I'm not.
I can walk.
She can't.
She can float.
I can't.
We are ghosts.
And human.

Beyond Our Race: Chapter One

Brandon Jorck

“Cree!” I yelled in trepidation.

I was looking for my tremendous feline, feeling horribly terrified to the bone of my short, muscled skin. I stopped and struggled in my heart, bursting with pains in my head not knowing where my kitten was. It was like a banshee in my head screeching wonderful, wonderful pain from a tube that led into my loving heart, trapping me from reality as well as looking for him. I rhythmically rewind time in my conscience to when I saw him last.

The park!

I stared into my own eyes feeling ferociously stupid. I lost my feline friend just last week in the park. I rewind time itself just to go back to when it happened. I tied my walking cat to the pole. Racing to the bathroom I was sick as well in the mind at the time. By the time I trembled out, I saw something terrifying. Nothing could describe it. I squinted at the night blue shade in the sky. It was a circular round floating ball I saw with my own eyes, glaring through the glass of the atmosphere, perhaps 500 million light-years away from our regretful world. I felt it in my lungs taking a deep remorseful breath into my own feeling of wondrous discovery. I decided to analyze it some more. While doing so, I saw that the beautiful glowing of the metallic vegetated green mixed with other colors strategically placed around its circle. Compared to the stars, it was huge. Could they see us? Is there life on this beautiful mystery world? I’ve never seen a planet, besides the two I’ve seen my whole life: the sun and moon. I agreed it was Venus and ignored its glory.

Then I made a painful yet confusing discovery: My cat was missing. It was as if aliens just took my family. I mentally detached my feelings that I felt had no promise or answer. I was trapped in my mind, scared and helpless at that time. I had nothing to say or hear. I was stumped. But not for long. The whole world stopped, as if it was I who had to save them. Maybe that was the case. Frightened, I was trapped in my own confusion in the membrane of my very soul. I realized my cat was missing, but something far more tempting and terrible lay here. It was like a phantom possessing me from another colorful universe, perhaps heaven. I stopped wondering and focused on the real problem—the one that changed my life.

The Game-Winning Shot

Carrington Pryor

As I am walking down stairs in my MSU gear to eat dinner, my parents look at me strangely. They ask, “Why are you wearing all of that MSU stuff?” I say, “Why can’t I?” I turn on the TV to an MSU basketball game, because I entered to get on the team. They look at me and I nod my head. They are very excited, telling everyone they know.

As I walk on to campus, I think it is huge. I transferred from SVSU, and it is nothing compared to MSU. Now I go to meet my teammates. I see Denzel Valentine and Bryn Forbes and Matt Costello. I am very excited and nervous. What will they think of me? Will I be good? Will I get kicked off the team? As soon as I step on the court they look at me and greet me and say what’s up and all of that. Then Coach Izzo shows me around and tells me what we do. Then I see my locker and I am amazed at what I see.

March 3, 2015. I am sitting on the bench. Coach Izzo says, “Carrington, you’re going in.” We are playing Michigan. It’s a tie game 89-89 with ten seconds left. I go in the game as shooting guard. I get the ball. Eight seconds. I get past half court. Five seconds. I look at the clock. Three seconds. I’m wide open, so I fire. Two...one. It’s over. WE WON! Now we are in the NCAA championship against North Carolina.

The BFG

Carrington Pryor

Boom Boom. Boom Boom. Boom Boom.

My heart races as I can hear the clicks of the track going up and up. Me and my friend Carmen had a fun day at the amusement park, and this was the last ride to top it all off. Carmen and I are nervous about the big drop. When we hit the top, I think I saw Jesus draw me into the light. We were so high up. I could see the trees with the green leaves swaying back and forth and the orange and pink sunset over the horizon. Then it happened. My stomach dropped, throwing my hands up in the air and Carmen's hair went up along with her hands. We were yelling and screaming. The wind was crushing my face because we were going down at a 90-degree angle at 80 mph. As the roller coaster came to an end, I wondered how would I sleep?

We walked back, because the orphanage wasn't far away. We talked about getting adopted. My parents named me Paris for no reason. Today was a wonderful day. We laughed and played at the amusement park. As I was getting ready for bed, I was excited. At least for a little while. I hugged my teddy bear as I sat with my eyes open and the light off. I heard little squeaky noises from under my bed. I am nervous. Then I see my light going on and off. Now I am scared. So I shut my eyes for the second time, and I regret every moment of it.

I see two arms and hands creep out from under my bed. His hands were ugly. His fingers were as long as my legs and his arms were dirty. His eyes were as black as a pitch-black sky. He has gray hair and a cape over him. Then he snatches me. My heart has now stopped. He is running away from the orphanage. Nobody can see me. He says, "I am the BFG." I think it means "Big Ferocious Giant." He laughs and says, "No, it means Big Friendly Giant." I breathe a sigh of relief.

As we go on catching more and more dreams, the BFG handed me a dream and I fell asleep. I could see water below me. I am standing on grass on a cliff with cracking rocks. I also see my parents. I run to them and hug them. They say, "Welcome home," and show me a huge mansion.

Shattered

Ella Wilkerson

Morgan

I felt like the chair was consuming me. I leaned back for a moment and looked up. The lights above flickered, threatening to burn out. The trees that surrounded the building swayed, looking like they're about to fall over. I see a few people walking around, their faces worried. At first, I don't understand their expressions, but when an earth-shattering boom shakes the building, I understand immediately.

The windows next to me crack, ready to shatter. I turn around and bolt, but a wall of flames drives me back. A scream lurches out of my throat. I'm trapped. The fear of death burrows its way into my brain. But in that moment I look at the windows. They aren't shattered, but I could easily break them if I wanted to.

I see a girl next to me, her eyes in a trance of fear. I remember her as the new accountant. "Reese, right?" I ask her. She nods. "Can you jump?"

Her eyes dart to the windows next to me, then to the wall of flames. "It's a five-story building! We'll die!" Her voice is tense. She really seems scared.

"The flames could be an option." I say. She sighs and walks up to me. "On three." I say, shaking. "One, two....three!" I run and we jump, the windows shattering on impact. As I fall I look over at Reese, her eyes are squeezed shut. I close mine too.

As we reach the ground, I open my eyes, thinking "I'm dead," but when I see my blood fall on the pavement, I know I'm not. I watch my blood fall, coloring the gray slab of nothingness.

Reese

I felt like the ground shudder as I hit the pavement. My muscles felt like poison had seeped into them. I didn't dare open my eyes, I didn't want to. Then I opened my eyes, but just for a second, and I immediately regretted it. Many trees were uprooted, and bodies were everywhere, dead. I cradle myself back and forth, traumatized. I feel something cold and wet fall on my arm. I stop cradling myself and look up, dark clouds loom overhead.

"Reese?" I hear Morgan's voice, breaking the sound barrier I have just made for myself.

"Go away," I whisper softly to myself, clapping my hands over my ears, trying to drown out her voice, but it doesn't work.

"We need to get out of here, find a car, something that we can use to leave this city."

I open my eyes completely and see Morgan lying on the ground, unfazed. Her eyes though, they do seem different; they are dull and lifeless.

“Where!?” I scream. I didn’t mean to yell, but I did it without thought. Maybe that jump messed up my brain a little bit. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean it,” I whisper, embarrassed.

She shakes her head, “We don’t have to look right now. We just jumped off a five-story building!” I don’t know why, but I burst out laughing.

Illuminant

Ella Wilkerson

A shadow of mist in the fiery light,
Something so strong and something so bright.
To the tallest tree to the darkness night.
Never forget about the light.
Always know that it is near,
Learn its voice and hear it clear.
It is always here.

My Crazy Dream

Emilio Coleman

One day I was walking in the road when all of a sudden a Teletubby hit me in my face. I fell head first into some toilet paper in the road. There was a trail of toilet paper leading to a porta-potty. I started walking towards the porta-potty, but the Teletubby started punching my ankles, and I started to run. Then, the Teletubby grabbed my leg and was holding on for dear life. I tried to shake him off but he wouldn't budge, so I had to drag him with me.

When I got to the porta-potty it started glowing. I started to get a little scared, but when I was reaching for the door—BANG!—went the toilet. Everything exploded. Then I found out it was another Teletubby that was using the bathroom, so I kicked the yellow Teletubby off and ran for my life. After that, I never used a porta-potty again.

you tell me

Faye Kollig

It will burn.

Not half as bad as four hours in the sun,

Twice as bad as a five minute stove.

It will stay.

Not unlike the scar you got when you were six,

Less transient than your iPhone 7.

It will diminish.

Not long after the vacuum ate the bugs on the windowsill,

But years before the window screen is taken out.

I do not wear them proudly

But I am not ashamed.

the grass looks different without you

Faye Kollig

It wasn't that I minded the empty backyard;
I just didn't know how to speak to the ghosts.
I tried to say so many times
that I missed them.
But somehow it's always I will—
until the sky is darkening and I won't.

"I'm not sure what to say,"
I mumble to the birches.

They don't respond like the quaking aspens did,
but I'm used to silence,
and the empty backyard
is full of memories that I haven't made.

"I'm not sure what you want to hear,"
I ask the planks of the back porch.

The spirits stir and watch the sun with me
until we're all enveloped
in the velvet of the Christmas dress I gave away.

Seagulls

Grace Heiden

Majestic. Beautiful. Tame. Those are not words you usually hear in reference to seagulls. You usually hear “bottom-feeders” or “flying rats.” And a few curse words if they just pooped on your dad’s car. But I have something to say that might change your mind.

You say seagulls are bottom feeders and flying rats because they steal food and are essentially the lowest on the bird food chains, right? But the seagulls get food from humans because they have to. Because of nature, and survival instinct, you know? Any animal would do the same in their shoes. So why discriminate against only seagulls? Why not say every single animal on the face of the earth is a bottom feeder and a rat because, and only simply because, it steals food?

Another reason people call seagulls flying rats is because if you see one seagull, there are a bunch of seagulls. So the myth goes. While different people think this is true or false, maybe if you look past the stereotypical and unfair name of a flying rat, you’ll see the seagull’s beautiful orange beak, prestigious white feathered head, and its glistening grey belly as it swoops down to land. So I guess if one seagull leads to a bunch, then you’ll have a bunch of beautiful birds in your yard!

Another thing about seagulls is their general personality. They are easy to scare, so it is incredibly easy to keep them away from your picnic, people! Also, when you compare them to other birds, especially geese and swans, they are incredibly tame.

All in all, seagulls are the most beautiful, calm, and placid little birds. Why anyone can call them a flying rat is a mystery to me. I hope you can see why.

Purple Mice, Google, and Terror

Hannah DeRuyter

I sigh as my show flips to a commercial. It is trying to convince me to switch to some kind of fancy shampoo. Glancing at a couple of my split ends, I shrug, knowing that they will only get worse. It's an awkward color, my hair, stuck between brown and blonde—unsure of itself—too nervous to be blonde but too adventurous to be brown. In this way I suppose it's perfect for me. Quickly I become distracted from my awkward hair, refocusing on the TV. I snuggle further into the fluffy blanket that is already wrapped around me, leaving only my head and hand available for eating popcorn. There is a very high chance that I look like a T-Rex.

Thursday evenings like these are my absolute favorite, with both of my parents working late, my cat and my cable are the only company I desire as I rest up for a very social weekend, while also recovering from the majority of another hellish school week.

The doorbell rings and a familiar twinge flares in my stomach, as it does whenever I have to open our stupid lilac door, especially when home alone. It irritates me to no end that our front door is purple. My mom is such an oddball. She insists that because our house is “boring white” we have to at least have a unique door. I have reached the door by the second ring, peeking through the side window, probably far less subtly than I would prefer. Standing there with hands rested on his belt and one foot on the step up to my door and another on the porch is a very creepy looking guy in plaid. The fact that he has a beard immediately raises suspicions. It's curly and brown and I do not trust it.

I open the door, my gut pinching with nerves.

“Hi ma'am,” I watch his beard move up and down, “Any parents or homeowners around that I can talk to?” His voice is deep and he looks like he just rolled all over a forest floor. Filthy. There are twigs stuck to his pants.

I hate this question.

“Nope,” popping the “P.” “Dad's in the bathroom. Won't be out for a while,” I tack on the lie.

“Alright, well I am with Gimlin Tree Services. Have them give me a call if they need any trees removed.” That explains the twigs.

Tree killer hands over a business card.

“Kay,” I lie again, swiftly shutting the door and throwing away the card. Ignoring the fact that there aren't any trees in our yard.

Plopping back down on the couch and spilling some popcorn in the process I applaud my timing as the last commercial ends. Noticing the screen however, I frown. Why does *Grey's Anatomy* look exactly like *Tom and Jerry*?

Did you sit on the remote? my brain inquires.

I glance around, spotting the remote on the table. Pushing the buttons does nothing; frozen still on the cartoon, my TV remains adamant that it will not change channels. Quickly whipping out my phone I search “How to fix a remote that isn’t working” and “why isn’t my tv changing channels.” Results from the latter claimed that weather was one possible explanation, and ruling out the other options, I shuffle up to the window by the stupid lilac door. The sky is dumping buckets of water from its angry, dark clouds.

“That came out of nowhere,” I mutter to my cat, who looks surprised that I spoke.

I sigh, resigning myself to my TV and Cartoon Network, deciding that *Tom and Jerry* was better than nothing.

There is a knocking at the door.

The Pink Bracelet

Hannah DeShone

Hi, I'm Mary. I am a *Titanic* survivor. I currently live in New York City, where I landed in my lifeboat. I was on with my little sister Alana. When I was in panic, I gave her to the second lifeboat, just so she would survive. Later, I found out that the girl that I gave my sister to was named Presley Rodriguez. My sister didn't survive. Since she was only three, she died of the cold. But I need to thank Presley for trying. It has been two years, but I need to meet this generous lady that tried saving my sister.

Finally, it was the day I would get to meet this wonderful person. Just two hours away I'm starting to get anxious nervous and worried—just a mix of emotions all at once. I got there around 1:30. She will be here around two. What do I say? Hi? Hello? Well, I'm glad you're not dead? Who knows what she will say? Will she be mad? Happy? Sad? All three? I wonder if she is as anxious or nervous as me.

Finally, there was a knock at the door. I crossed my fingers and urged my hand to grab hers to shake it. As she walked in, the first thing I noticed was her brown curly hair that hung only to her shoulders and the red barrette that pinned the bangs back and out of her face. As she walked closer I started to smile. I put my hand down and began to hug her. She handed me a small box covered in black leather. I opened the box, and inside was Alana's light pink bracelet with only one purple bead left on it. I put it back in the box and felt a tear run down my face. She hugged me again.

Who I Am

I'laya Harrison

I shine bright like diamonds in the sky. The night sky is pleasant. It feels like night is almost over. I'm not a toy. I'm human. Wind crashes in my face. It feels like winter is almost here.

Grapes grow on vines, and apples grow on trees. It's a difference. I read books, but I don't like mean looks. I have many dresses, but I don't like messes. I have a turn, but I got to learn. It's prime time, not tea time. Love people that care about you, not the ones that don't. You can have friends, but not mean ones. I like to laugh. I like to laugh at funny jokes. I watch scary movies. I'm not scared of anything at all.

I love both of my parents, and they love me back. Last week, I found out that my best friend's cousin is my cousin. I was shocked that day. I love reading. My favorite books are mystery books. I like writing poems. I have jackets, but I don't like packets. People sing out loud. I'm so proud. My shoes are blue, but I need some glue. I live in a house, but a cat was chasing a mouse. I walk upstairs, but I can't fly in the air. I look cute. I play the flute. I don't like green, but I am mean.

The End of Me

Ja' Angelo Jones

The end of me is coming. I died with my first love.

July 4, 1997: The date I was born. The blinding lights and voices all around me making me confused and sad.

February 21, 2003: I'm pushing the pedals on my brand new bike. My parents are watching me and chanting.

October 16, 2006: I'm having a special dinner with my mother and father. We are all trying new Italian foods. "I love lasagna!" I tell my parents.

July 4, 2010: That day, I had another birthday, but this birthday was my 13th. My family and friends were all congratulating me on becoming a teen.

May 20, 2013: The family reunion had just ended. Then my parents gave the heartbreaking news to our whole family. "Hello everyone," my mother began. "I know this is probably a bad time, but we both—have cancer." The family gasps. "And—" she does not finish her sentence because she has started to cry in my father's arms.

June 27, 2014: I walk into their hospital room to find them not breathing and holding hands. My knees give out and I fall on them. I stare at my mother's and father's hands. Their hands were so tightly held together. I wondered why I did not cry. About 4 hours later after walking my dog, it happened. The tears started to rush out from my eyes. A waterfall of tears splashed onto the hardwood floor.

March 10, 2015: By that time, I had pushed all who loved me away except my favorite German shepherd, Sparky. I started to curse at those who didn't feel my pain and tried to make them feel the everlasting pain that I felt.

April 10, 2016: I was enlisted in the army. The sergeant's and general's training was grueling. At least I knew I was changing. Besides, that is why I enlisted. To change my ways and to finally recover from my parents' death. The next day, I met a girl that made me laugh for the first time in 2 years. Her name was Monica Jefferson.

June 4, 2017: Monica and I have finally become sergeants. After 40 missions, 246 kills, and 54 vehicle kills, we are happy to be finally giving out orders.

July 3, 2017: It's almost been a month since Monica and I started dating. After our last mission of the day, she wanted to tell me her darkest secret. Monica told me that she was attacked by her uncle and then rescued after 3 years. At that moment, we had truly connected while trading secrets.

July 4, 2017: There was a kamikaze attack helicopter headed for our base. Me and Monica were the only ones left in our squad who knew how to change advanced autopilot controls. We soon landed and changed the controls, but the farthest place we could take it so it couldn't cause any casualties before it explodes was in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

1 minute till nuclear explosion: Monica tells me how scared she is as we arrive in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

30 seconds: Monica starts to cry.

20 seconds: I go to hug and comfort her.

10 seconds: She says that she loves me.

5 seconds: I tell her I love her too.

0 seconds: The nuclear bomb exploded.

The end of me had come. I died with my first love.

Spills on My Hands

Ja' Angelo Jones

Spills on my hands. Spills on my feet. Oil in my hair. Oil on my body. There have been oil spills a lot since 1928. I look like a beast with all the oil on my body. One child screams. Each person who goes in the water comes back with the same oil all over their body. The boss of the oil looks down on us from his own home. He does not move to help us.

Home

Jacob VanHove

This place looks old on the outside, but new on the inside. This place feels warm and comforting. This place is all silent but for the voices of those you love. This place smells like nothing but the air itself, for after all your time spent there, you forget about the smell. This is a place of togetherness, forgiveness, and love.

THIS PLACE IS HOME.

Life of a School

Jacob VanHove

Every day, hundreds of children walk through my doors and disrespect me. They write on the stalls, chairs, and spit their gum anywhere they please. They come to me to do something constructive, to learn, but all they do is destroy. The adults that teach them try to control them, but the Lord knows they can't. If I could, I would tear myself apart brick by brick if it would end my suffering by these creatures.

Letter to Fuhrer

Katy Schuler

1941, Eastern Poland

Dear Hitler,

I suppose writing this letter is foolish, for you will never read it. I have but one scrap of paper left, so I must take full advantage of it. Not for you, but for me.

I expect someone to find us any day. We have come so far, journeyed for so long that I have forgotten how it feels to go to sleep at night without feeling fear. I was so young, so innocent that a tarnished grade was my most horrifying encounter. Now I know how ignorant I was to think such useless thoughts, so much time wasted.

I am tired, Fuhrer, so very tired indeed. You have sucked from me the life, the joy that once coursed through my veins like a drug. If I had known then what I know now, what would I have done with the rest of my numbered days? Something extravagant and unheard of, no doubt.

Some mornings I get up and wish that you would have snatched me up back in Western Poland. Now I am in Eastern Poland, and I fear the fate I will receive from the Russians is far worse than anything you could have possibly done to me.

Rumors spread like a sickness, how you will take the Jews and gas them, burn the piles of their emaciated bodies, and then use the ashes as soap. I cannot bear to be your soap.

I do not know what I did, Fuhrer, I just do not know. I loved my country; my family lived every day with Polish pride. Now you say because I am a Jew I cannot live?

I am still so young. Don't you see? My face will forever be marked by worry lines and fear. I cannot escape you, Hitler, I cannot win anyways. If I live through this, you will be with me forever. Is it not enough for you to see me suffer for the rest of my life, must I die for you to be truly satisfied? I want it to end already.

Well, Fuhrer, I must now bring this letter which you will never receive to a close. Whether it be by you or by Stalin, my last moments will go down in pain, fear, and ultimately, death. See? No need to worry, mighty Fuhrer, you will have your way in the end, you always do.

I hope to die with my family, but I know I may not be so lucky. I have seen how they split you up, divide and conquer, like animals. I will go left, too young and useless to work, and my family will go right with the rest of the capable adults. I will die alone and scared, only accompanied by the pain you have inflicted upon me. Yes, I will die with your ugly face looking down on me, with you being the only person left to remember

who I was, who I could have been. I hope that you are satisfied by your murders. Let it not be for nothing, I suppose.

Goodbye to you, Fuhrer, and may the fires of Hell welcome you home with open arms.

Yours truly,

A Jew with no name, no face, and no future

I am...

Katy Schuler

I am from hands-on learning, pushing our minds to imagine what we cannot see.

I am from silent streets that wind beneath a grassy canopy of leaves.

I am from the sound of children playing in the fields of towering corn.

I am from my grandma, always cooking, cleaning, and spreading her love and wisdom.

I am from the idea that every day is a pool day.

I am from “books can take you anywhere, with books you are free.”

I am from happiness that only a family who has known struggle can truly appreciate.

The Lost Princess

Lauren Camese

Hand and hand, eye to eye, no one will ever die. That's what I thought. Now I lay here stranded on this beach ever since a shark dropped me here when it was a baby. It's where water washes against the landscape and the land is dry when nothing grows so you have to hunt. I guess you can call it home.

Seventeen years later...

I thought I was alone but there was a boat that came to me. Old men come out with a woman and man who had a crown. He was yelling her name. "Kaya! She is alive!" he said.

He said, "Don't kill me. We are your mom and dad. Come with us to celebrate." Then Kaya came and sniffed the air one more time. Oak tree. She said, "I going to miss it. I am going miss going to the water, and the sand, and animals. But I found my family."

One day, Kaya heard a scream from Prince Dexter, who was getting chased by a shark. Kaya stabbed the shark and saved the prince.

"Thank you," said the prince. That's how Kaya and Dexter fell in love.

Motherhood in Flint

Malique Forward

We are paying for water our babies can't drink
The lead is altering the way they think
Futures gone in a blink...

My children dying in my arms
I have lived a long and tiring life
And now a water crisis?
It just isn't right
We have to fight!

That's why I'm raising warriors
Only with the 810 running through their veins
Training them to step up to the plate
And do nothing less than swing
But first, a goodbye kiss because you never know
The dangers of Dayton could evaporate their lives just like mist

810 Children

Malique Forward

They say pick your poison
According to Snyder's actions it has been chosen
Now everyone is talking about movin'

From the 810 to the DMC and back to the 810
I've been through it all
But when I fall I don't stop,
I start to crawl

My Sad Story

Max Olivarez

I woke up late in the afternoon about 2:00 pm. I had slept in because I had got home at about 7:00 am from dropping off my mom and dad and brother at the airport. When I got home from shopping, my brother called. What I saw and heard was the end of me...

It was about 5:00 pm when he called. I knew something was wrong because he was on a plane with my parents. They were heading to New York, so when my brother was talking, he was very frantic. I kept on saying, "What's wrong! What's wrong!" He said someone had hijacked the plane.

I will never forget that day. September 11, 2001. I knew something bad was going to happen to them. Right away, I said "I love you, Peter." He said, "I love you too, Alex." Then I told him to go to mom and dad's seats so I could tell them I loved them. When he got to my mom and dad's seats, I could hear my mom crying, so I told Peter to tell her I love her. When my mom heard me, she responded, almost yelling, "I love you so much, Alex! Never forget your dreams! Keep on doing piano! Never lose your will to succeed." Then I talked to my dad, and he pretty much said the same thing, but he was angry because he said he will never get to see me fully grow up, get married, and have kids. He mostly was angry because he will never get to be there for me when I need a fatherly figure in my life.

I turned on the TV, and the plane that my mom, dad, and brother was on was on national news. I was only 18 at the time. I had no idea how to deal with the fact that my mom, dad, and brother were going to die today. I was crying so hard. Then, I started screaming in total anger. "Why me! They were all I had!"

So, now I am 100 years old here telling my life story before I die. It has been 82 years since that horrid day. The worst part was when I saw the plane crash into the Twin Towers. That was really the end of me.

I was born February 6, 1983. I have seen lots of things. As you know, I am 100 years old. Since September 11, 2001, my life has really gone downhill. I never really wanted to live 100 years. So the rest of my family that was still alive was in shock that something like that could happen. All my extended family were calling 24/7 about how bad they felt for me, but I had decided that day that I wasn't going to let this bring me down and that I was going to move on with my life and not let this take my dreams away.

My Fake Dream

Mit Foley

My dream was more like a nightmare. It was so bloodcurdling! Here's how it started:

It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon, and I was just minding my own business playing basketball outside, when a massive, tempting orange portal appeared right in front of my curious face.

Before I could even blink, I got a very forceful push into the portal.

Soon I found myself in a strange world. "Where am I?" I thought to myself. "Will I survive here?" I had at least one hundred questions to ask. Everybody in this strange world looked the same, except me. Suddenly, I got a hair-raising jab in the stomach out of nowhere, and the next thing I know, I got thrown into a really small jail cell.

"Baz Wack!" was what I heard from one of the alien-like people who threw me in the jail cell. What did that mean? It smelled like stinky farts in there. Believe me, it smelled really bad in there. "This is so scary," I thought to myself.

After about a lonely hour of weeping, I started to get really mad. "This was the warmest day of the year and now it's ruined! I decided to look for something to help me bust my tiny jail cell open. Eventually I caught a glance of a strong looking sledgehammer, camouflaged against the cold, sad-looking wall. With the useful tool, I busted open my jail cell without even using much muscle, and then I snuck out of the gloomy prison.

Next, I had to find my portal to return home, and finish the great day. I could see the bright orange portal from a distance, but there was one problem. The problem was that there was a muscular looking alien by it. So I decided to come up with a plan.

The plan was to throw a rock far enough to grab his attention, and run into the portal as fast as I could. I took a deep breath, and then I threw the rock in a good spot, and the alien went to see what it was. I easily ran into the portal and arrived home at 4:00 sharp. What a dream!

A Place That Means a Lot to Me

Mit Foley

A place that means a lot to me feels like a large cozy place. It sometimes sounds like wind blowing. It's located underground in Saginaw, Michigan. It smells clean and just makes me happy. I see lots of pillows and blankets. The meaningful place tastes like wood and cotton. This place that means quite a lot to me probably won't mean a lot to anyone else in the world.

Basic Kurt Wellington

Nico Batkoski

Kurt Wellington had his day planned out like any other day. Wake up, eat his scrambled eggs, read the daily newspaper, and go to his job at the bank. Sadly at Kurt's expense, his day will go horribly wrong.

Kurt woke up at 7:00 a.m like he did every day. Kurt then looked out his window only to see the end of his normal life in Fresno, California. The police were parked outside his home. "Oh shoot, how did they find out?" Kurt thought to himself. Kurt then remembered his vacation to Cancun, Mexico. Halfway along his drive there he was stopped by 10 bikers. "You're coming with us amigo," one of the men said. "What do you mean, fellas?" Kurt responded happily. One of the bikers then knocked him out and took him to a warehouse. "What do you men want?" said Kurt in a worrisome voice. "You're going to drive back to America with 50 kilos of heroin in your car, and you are gonna give the drugs to Angelo Gutierrez. Comprende?" said the biker.

"What's in it for me?" Kurt responded. "One hundred thousand American dollars and if you don't we are gonna have to kill you," the biker said. So Kurt did the job and got paid.

With the police at his door Kurt began to worry. The doorbell rang and he went to the door. "Oh, well, good morning, officer. What can I do for you?" Kurt said. "Kurt Wellington we have reason to believe that you smuggle 50 kilos of heroin to Angelo Gutierrez," the officer responded. "I have never done such thing in my entire life. When I went to Mexico I drove straight to Cancun without stopping," Kurt said.

"Oh well, um sorry to bother you Kurt. Have a nice day," the officer responded with a questionable tone in his voice. The officer then left Kurt alone, but out of fear that his life in California was over, Kurt decided to pack his things and move back to his home state of Virginia.

On Kurt's trip he decided to stop and visit his ex-wife Carrol in Texas. Kurt arrived at Carrol's house in Houston. "How ya doin, Carrol?" Kurt said gleefully. "What do you want, Kurt?" Carrol responded. "Oh, I was just driving through the country so I decided to visit!" Kurt said. Just as he said that Angelo Gutierrez walked in. "Hello, Kurt." Angelo said. "Oh, do you two know each other?" Carrol asked.

"Kurt handles my finances," Angelo responded. "Y-yeah. Carrol, can I speak to you in private?" Kurt said as he pulled Carrol aside. "Carrol. This man is a Mexican drug lord and a dangerous man," Kurt whispered. "Oh, Kurt, you're just jealous," Carrol whispered back. Both then stepped back in the house. "Kurt, would like to meet for a drink later?" Angelo asked. "Oh, no. Kurt doesn't drink," Carrol answered. "Actually, yes, I would," Kurt chimed in.

At 8:00 Kurt and Angelo met at the bar. "You know the police questioned me about our deal last Tuesday morning," Kurt said. "Oh, now I have to kill you as well," Angelo

responded. "What? No, you don't." Kurt said. "The police questioned the bikers and so they won't talk I killed them," Angelo responded after taking a sip of his drink. Kurt then bolted to his car and speeded to his cousin Rob's trailer in Georgia.

When at the trailer, Kurt explained what happened to Rob. "Rob, you have to help me. You are the craziest and have the most guns!" pleaded Kurt. "Sure thing, cousin! We'll get that Mexican!" Rob said. For three days straight Rob and Kurt sat at the windows with guns waiting for Angelo. Finally, someone arrived but it wasn't Angelo. Kurt busted the window and shot the guy in the knee cap. "WHAT WAS THAT FOR!?" Rob yelled. "What? D.T.A. don't trust anybody! That's what Stone Cold Steve Austin taught me." Kurt said. "THAT WAS MY HUSBAND!" Rob screamed. "You're gay?" Kurt said. "No, idiot, me and Wyatt there are married for financial reasons to get money from the government." The guys pulled Wyatt back into the trailer and propped him up by the window.

Five days later Angelo showed up. "THEY'RE HERE!" Wyatt shouted. The guys then unloaded their weapons at Angelo and the cars, and Angelo's men did the same. Soon, both men were out of ammo. Wyatt and Rob then threw two Molotov cocktails at the vehicles blowing them up. All that was left was Angelo. Rob and Wyatt rushed Angelo but Angelo shot Wyatt in the other kneecap and shot Rob in the shoulder. Then, Angelo and Kurt had a standoff. Angelo shot Kurt in the knee bringing him to his knees. Angelo then put the gun in between Kurt's eyes. "Say your prayers, Kurt," said Angelo. Out of nowhere Angelo was shot dead in the back. It was Carrol. "C-Carrol?" said Kurt. "I'm sorry, Kurt," Carrol said. "W-what?" Kurt responded. "I married Angelo to kill him, take his money, and kill you as well. Goodbye, Kurt," said Carrol as she shot Kurt right in the chest. Kurt didn't know if he was upset that he was gonna die or that his favorite yellow sweater vest was ruined. "Oh, sh-shucks," Kurt murmured before he gasped his last breath.

What a strange and odd way for basic ol' Kurt Wellington's story to end.

Best Friend

Salman Alani

I have a best friend. We met on the school playground. I felt bad for him because he usually got in trouble with the outside staff. One day, I decided to cheer him up by being kind to him and saying something nice. I walked right up to him by the fireman's pole on the tallest part of the playground and said "Hey, don't feel bad." Then I introduced myself and asked if we could be friends and he said "Sure." We weren't in the same classrooms together, but we became best friends, and we've been friends ever since.

Nightmare

Salman Alani

My worst nightmare is when a mall locked me in with my family. I had no idea what city I was in or how I got locked in. I felt like the mall was haunted. And I mean really, really haunted with bats, spiders, zombies, skeletons, and killer bunnies. I started touring the mall. Suddenly, an alarm went off. I ran for the entrance and all the doors started closing. I went looking for my dad, but I couldn't find the rest of my family. Then, I woke up. I was back in San Diego, and the rest of my family was there, safe and sound. It was just a dream.

Summer the Strange Princess

Sonya Buckley

Summer is my name. It was given to me by my mother and forefathers. Generation through generation, they waited for the golden child, when finally my mother gave birth to me and my twin brother. Technically, my brother came out first, but I'm still the best.

I am 25,000 years old. On earth, you would probably think that's weird, but I don't live there. I live on Zygone, the most amazing world in my opinion. A lot of supernatural creatures originate from here. I was named Summer because it was told that I was going to be the one to bring all the different kingdoms together. I was named after the season, which my brother thinks is hilarious. I'm warm and happy, but if I get too mad I could make you explode, literally.

I forgot to mention I'm from the best kingdom of all witches and wizards' kingdoms. My brother Dylan is just as powerful as me. We do everything together. We always get in trouble together. Yesterday, we were playing football and I crashed it into the window. Dylan decided he wasn't going to catch it. When we ran to get into the house, I ran into the door and it broke.

I have a scar on my cheek from when I was a baby. There was a festival going on that day. I was only one year old and left in my crib. So was Dylan. Dylan, being stupid, threw the ball out the door and it landed on top of a pit of fire with a slab of wood on it. None of the servants or bodyguards saw me leave the castle, so I got out without trouble. I ran to my ball and almost fell while getting it. I was dangling on the edge of the wood when fire blew up in my face. That's when my mother saw me. I could hear my father's footsteps running. A second later I saw his eyes staring back at me. He grabbed me and held me tight. "Don't ever leave again," he whispered as he rocked me. He wouldn't leave my side for a whole week.

10 Things I Should've Learned

Starr Clark

1. How to spend my money.
2. How to save my money.
3. Forgive for yourself, not for people.
4. Don't worry about what people say.
5. Always do what's right.
6. Be a leader, not a follower.
7. Don't be a bad example, but be a good one.
8. Take good risks.
9. Don't do stupid things.
10. Put all your faith and trust not just in people, but in God too.

The City of Saginaw

Starr Clark

People that are not from Saginaw, or that never lived in Saginaw, say it's one of the most "ghetto" cities in Michigan. I thought so too because I'm from Tulsa, Oklahoma, but I moved from Oklahoma to Michigan.

I have been living in Saginaw for five years and I noticed that Saginaw is not even a bad city. Yes, bad things go on in the city but no city, state, or country is perfect. It's not Saginaw's fault that people are homeless and have no food or jobs. In Saginaw, we try to do what we can do to help our own. We have a soup kitchen to feed the hungry, we have clothing donations to give people clothes, we have "Michigan Works!" to help people find jobs, missions so people have somewhere to sleep for at least one night. Saginaw just doesn't go around taking people's homes, jobs, and food. "Life is an experience, so if you want to have a good experience have a good life." You choose to be homeless, starving, and jobless. You could've had a terrible childhood, and you probably weren't wealthy while you were growing up, but you didn't choose to get help. Saginaw may not be perfect, but it's a great city. So if someone says Saginaw is a terrible city, come down for yourself. You'll be pretty surprised.

My Place

Veronica Burton

When I'm mad I go to my special place. Do you have a special place? My special place is my safe place. The grass is greener there. There are a lot of trees, and the flowers are blooming. There is a gentle wind. You can smell fresh waves. It feels like I can escape the world around me. Only I have a key to this place. When you're there it feels like walking on a beach at sunset. When I'm there it feels like no harm can get to me. It smells like fresh bread out of the oven. It sounds so quiet; you can only hear the waves and the wind. It feels like time has stopped around me. When I go back to reality I can't wait to go back to my special place.

NBA Draft with Me in It

Yousef Alani

I was waiting for the draft to begin. It has been a long road, but this was it. This moment would show that everything that I've worked for has been worth it.

“With the first pick in the NBA draft, the Phoenix Suns select Jaylen Jay from Wisconsin College,” said the announcer. I saw how happy my friend was, because he was jumping for joy. Then it came to me. I would not see him for a long time, so I told him, and we said our goodbyes as he walked off to join the NBA. Then the announcer stated what team had the next pick, and that was the Detroit Pistons.

It was tense when they were picking who to draft. It was like that for every undrafted player. Then the Pistons chose who they wanted to draft as the announcer called “With the second pick in the NBA draft, the Pistons select the 6’7 small forward from Michigan State University, Yousef Alani.” When I heard this, I went to go hug my family and then went up onstage, got my jersey, and whispered to myself, “This is just the beginning!”