

Philadelphia Stories JR.

a community of young writers and artists from the Delaware Valley



SPRING 2022

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Please visit our website philadelphiastories.org/junior-teen-all-issues/, which features BREATHTAKING work by Heidi Jacobs, Evan Wang, and LoRon Pearson, Nusayb McCain, Demar & Christopher Thomas/Cunningham, and Adaline Sand!

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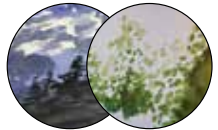
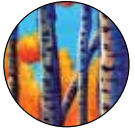
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Philadelphia Stories is a non-profit literary magazine that publishes the finest literary fiction, poetry and art from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware and distributes free of charge to a wide demographic throughout the region. Our mission is to develop a community of writers, artists and readers through the magazine, and through education programs such as writer's workshops, reading series, and other affordable professional development programs for emerging writers and artists. *Philadelphia Stories* is a 501c3. To support *Philadelphia Stories* and the local arts, please visit www.philadelphiastories.org/donate to become a member today!

GOOD NIGHT (EXCERPT)

by Demar & Christopher Thomas/Cunningham

"I'm...So...out...of...breath..." I struggle to say while being chased by loads of zombies. "My base is just around the corner..." Before I could even reach the corner, a zombie pops out and almost attacks me. "GAH!" I yelled, and I immediately punched it in its face and continued running, while still out of breath. I eventually made it home. "Ah, home sweet home!" I exclaimed in relief. I grab the wooden planks I got from some abandoned house across the street and nail them into my door, keeping the zombies out.

I look through my backpack for the food I took in a worn-out store, and I end up getting a can of beans out. "That's good enough. After all, I need to save most of my food." I put the beans in a bowl, and then put them in the microwave. While waiting for it to warm up, I run upstairs to my room and jump on my bed. Under the covers was my laptop. I don't really use it much, as it only helps me find more information about the infection...

But then, everything in my room started turning black and melting. "WHA-WHAT'S HAPPENING?!" I yell. I sprint for the door but that turns into black goo also. I go for the windows but that's blocked off too. Now, everywhere I look is just black..There appears to be no escape! But then something speaks out to me. Someone's voice...That I don't recognize...

"It's nice to finally meet one of the longest-living survivors of this infection.."

"Huh? Who's there...?!?"

An entity slowly appears from thin air...

Demar and Christopher are 12 years old and live in Philadelphia, PA. They like puzzles, art, architecture and writing. They're still cooking up something special for Ethan's continuation, stay tuned!

See full story at:

philadelphiastories.org/junior-teen-all-issues

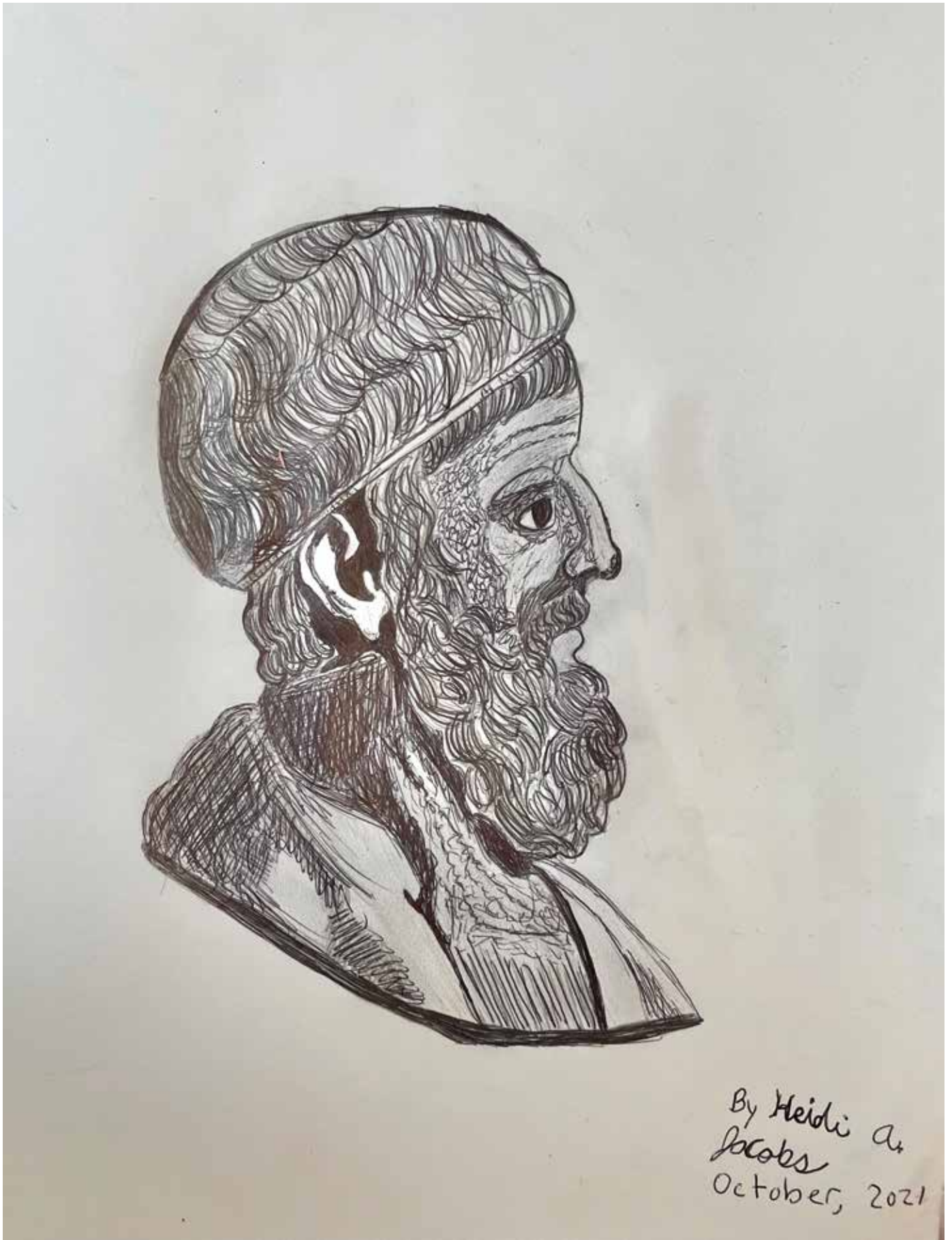


Majda Ftouh © 2022

WRITING PROMPT:

The Fortune Teller - Eyes On The Future

Imagine you have the ability to clearly see and predict what the future will look like 50 to 100 years from now. What will that future look like? What do you envision?



By Heidi A.
Jacobs
October, 2021

FOXTAIL HOLLOW

by Ada Busovsky

Eliana dashed through the forest and around the barren trees; thorns scratched at her legs. Her yellow rain boots splashed the puddles on the trail as she ran. Eliana put a hand on her dark, green hat as a big gust of wind whooshed past, nearly knocking her over.

A storm was coming and, in Foxtail Hollow, a storm was never a good sign. Every time there was a storm something horrible happened. The last time there had been a thunderstorm, three children

in the village had disappeared.

But storm or not, she had to face it. This was just like in her dream: the storm... the forest... The Fox. She had to believe that it would all work out and she could face her fear and get her spell book back from The Fox.

Eliana stopped for a moment and picked up a short and sturdy branch with a pointed end, and then continued until she reached the end of the path. She stood in a clearing in the woods waiting

for it. She clutched the sharp stick to her chest. She was ready.

Eliana took a deep calming breath and swept her wild, auburn hair out of her face. She closed her eyes. She had to do this. She had to face her fear. There was no other way. She took a deep breath and opened her eyes again, staring out into the endless inky forest.

"Fox! she called. "I know you're there, come out!" Her words echoed all around her.

Back To Earth

By Owen Perry

Coming back from the cosmos is a curious thing
As one gets used to the song of silence the stars sing
But infinity gets infinitely maddening with time
And life itself seems to lose its prominent chime
So I began re-entry, for my own sake
By diving down to the surface, cloaked in fire
In the process nearly lighting my own funeral pyre
Never once considering what would be at stake
Until ground approached, then suddenly things mattered
Before I could think, I landed, leaving my everything tattered
Yet, my heart still beat, and a thought came to me whilst I was downed
Finally, thankfully, I've returned to the ground
Step by step I got my bearings, like a phoenix picking up each and every feather
As I realized that even the worst times were times that I could weather
Taking in my second wind, I began to soar
Piercing the skies, living more
Soon, the ringing of school bells brought me out of the air
But the grin on my face replaced any care
For I knew one thing in this blazing rebirth
After all this time,
I've come back to Earth.

Owen Perry is a 15 year old sophomore currently studying at Lansing High School. He has a deep passion for all sorts of creative writing, and intends on making a career out of it.

Ceramic Body

By Evan Wang

now and then
i still find it hard to love
the mess i was born as
and have become
there i go again—

but this clay figure has already been molded
went through the roaring fire of a kiln
my body is made, can't be changed
wish i could break it, then replace it

fragile beauty crumbles to the touch
waiting for the set of hands
that would keep me tough
my ceramic skin is no less than a bluff
call it an exhibition for the hollow one

there's glaze for the cracks
gained not from old age
below my eyes, in the bags
i keep my sculptor heart there
pressed to change
any flaw is fatal
the louvre (cap L?) will be my final home
or else i'll tip myself over the shelf

and when i shatter
my skin would flake off
break off like puzzle pieces
then i start scrambling
to reach for the paint
reach for the clay
reach for the white cloth that hides the day

natural beauty, still a conduit of insecurity
no more tour, exhibition, gallery
hide me away
till i stop scratching at my new skin
because it pains the artist to see
pieces of me lying on the floor
when i've spent so long
piecing me together

Evan Wang is a freshman at the Upper Merion Area High School. After picking up the pen two years ago, he's never let it down. He currently resides in King of Prussia, PA with his parents who support his poetry despite not understanding a single word. Evan loves reading, listening to music, journaling, and diving into some watercolor and colored pencils from time to time. His biggest inspirations are Amanda Gorman, Savannah Brown, and his life.

The dead trees beside her cast a shadow like a spiderweb against the cool dirt.

"I said come out!" she shouted, her breath clouding in front of her eyes.

Suddenly, she heard the crunching of leaves under foot. Eliana squinted against the dim light cast from the sinking sun. Then, she saw it.

"Ahhhh!" Eliana shrieked, her voice cutting through the silent air.

"Shhh..." The creature soothed.

Eliana took a sharp breath in.

"But... but..." she stammered, staggering backwards until she hit the ground.

"You're not The Fox!" Eliana whispered, bewildered. Her chest tightened with panic.

The beast gave a cunning smile.

"I know."

Then the beast let out a guttural cry into the twilight and a blanket of darkness covered the world.

Ada Busovsky is thirteen years old and loves to write novels and short stories. She has been writing since she was nine, and is currently working on a novel that she hopes to publish one day. She also enjoys baking and doing gymnastics. Foxtail Hollow is her first published piece of writing.

Do you have
a story, poem,
or drawing
to submit? visit

[www.philadelphia
stories.org/junior](http://www.philadelphiastories.org/junior)



Kaleb Rowan © 2022

Older and Older

By Kayla Oliva

Right when I turned one
My life had just begun
Started doing things I had never before done

Started getting older and older
As my birthdays became colder
So much has happened, I can't even lie
But my heart gets stronger each day that goes by

I'm getting older and older
And everyday bolder
I know I can handle
Everything this world has put on my shoulders

Kayla Oliva is 12 years old. She enjoys softball, taking dance classes, hanging out with family and friends, and putting her thoughts to paper. She won the Young Authors Award and was published multiple times. Her motto is "always be the reason someone smiles today."

The Brand New Seat

By Umme Orthy

For five years in Bangladesh, I attended a private, coed primary school. Every day when I came to class, I sat at the back with all the other girls, while the boys sat in the front row. Girls were given the old textbooks, whereas boys were given new textbooks. Also, when girls raised their hands to answer a question, most teachers would not call on them to respond.

The unfairness of this two-tiered system was lost on me at the time. As a girl in Bangladesh, I understand this not as inequality, but as a conviction. It is an accepted practice to discriminate against girls regarding many issues like education, health, and economic opportunities. I did not have the faintest idea that girls were marginalized in many aspects of life in Bangladesh. We were made to believe that it is okay for girls to have fewer opportunities. I was taught that I can't have the same freedom, resources, and opportunities as boys can have. As a result, a kind of inferiority complex took hold of me.

A few years later, after arriving in the United States, I enrolled in school. When I walked into the classroom for the first time, I lowered my head, found a place in the back of the room, and sat on the floor. I shuffled timidly and looked toward Ms. James. She pursed her lips and frowned. I panicked. Did I do something wrong? Was I disrespectful? Did I obey the rule? My mind was racing.

"Umme, what are you doing?" she asked calmly.

I didn't respond.

"Come sit at the front, next to Jack, okay?" She smiled and reached out her hand, pulling me forward and leading me to the first row to sit next to a boy, something I would never dream of doing back home.

There, sitting at the front of the classroom, I felt an excited tingle in my stomach. This is where I wanted to be, this is where I belonged. At the front of the classroom, besides the boys and, of course, the girls.

That brand new seat made me more confident and more motivated to face challenges and opportunities that in my homeland I was made to believe were meant for boys only.

Umme Orthy is a graduating senior at Science Leadership Academy at Beeber in Philadelphia, PA. She is headed to Haverford College this fall. She loves traveling, art, spontaneous weekend outings, and music.

Home is...

By Drew Feldman

Home is—a place
Behind the stained glass doors
The entranceway with stacks of shoes
The rug caked with the dogs' DNA
The kitchen where food crackles and pops like laughs at the dinner table
Crash! Smash! Dad breaks another personal weightlifting record
Sitting together as the movie opens
Snuggled under blankets by the warmth of the fire
The ominous creak as you walk up the stairs
The scars on my bedroom door from dogs' scratches
The bedroom that has kept me safe and harbored me for so many years

Home is—community
The smell of taco steam wafting from the corner restaurant
My school since kindergarten, just blocks away
Pillow polo with the same gym teacher for the past nine years
The talent show, being a safety patrol
The park where countless pickup basketball games have been played
My closest friends' houses like my second and third homes
The UPenn college campus where my dog and I roam
The water oasis only three blocks away—summer joy swimming with friends

Home is—a feeling
Love, comfort, support, courage, resilience
The love of licks and cuddles that my dogs give unconditionally
The comfort of laying on my sister's cloud pillow
The support from my mother when a school assessment nears
The courage my 75-pound dog gives me when she goes outside at night
The resilience my dad inspires when I get injured playing sports

Home is—activities
When the ping pong ball drops after the sweep of my racket hits it over the net
The bounce of the basketball against the cold stone patio, then the swish
The pitter-patter of my feet in the hall as I practice fencing advances and retreats
My fingers slamming against the keyboard - I am alive, I am dead, I am respawned
The beep of the oven, the cinnamon sugar aroma, snickerdoodles ready to devour

Drew Feldman is an 8th grader at Penn Alexander School. He lives in West Philadelphia with his sister, parents, and two dogs. Drew is a competitive fencer. In addition to writing poetry, he also enjoys filmmaking and editing, as well as coding. In the future, he hopes to become a software engineer or a lawyer. Next year Drew will be attending Friends Central School.

www.philadelphiastories.org/junior

A FOX, SNOW LEOPARD, AND IPHONE 13 (EXCERPT) *by Nusayb McCain*

A snow leopard, named Snowy, lived in the Himalayan mountains while a fox lived deep down in the grasslands. The fox, named Nick, traveled up to the mountains. Once at the top of the mountain he saw the snow leopard. The fox at first was surprised and nervous but after Snowy smiled and growled at Nick, they both burst out in a huge laugh. They quickly became friends and

decided to travel to New York. They started their journey by packing huge nutritious lunches.

Snowy said good-bye to his family and Nick wrote his family a good-bye letter. They were almost to New York when in Pennsylvania, an angry mob of Earth ponies ambushed them. The ponies appeared extremely angry and

Nick and Snowy had no idea why. A pony named Hitch chased them to New York...

Nusayb, age 8

See full story at:
[philadelphiastories.org/
junior-teen-all-issues](http://philadelphiastories.org/junior-teen-all-issues)



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JUST A SMALL TOWN (EXCERPT)

by Adaline Sand

The dark clouds boomed loudly, making a thump. I ran quickly into the gas station, splashing water into my shoes. The bell rang as I walked into the candy-filled store. Finally, a familiar face! "Uh- Aira! Didn't know I'd see you..", she looks down at the register. Blue shuffled awkwardly, putting her hands behind her back. I looked down, grabbing a white chocolate Hershey's bar. I didn't want her to feel awkward. I pull

out my small pocket book, meticulously counting every coin. I'll have to have ramen again tonight. Blue comes back from behind the counter. "Is that all?", she asks, "Sure."

I walk back outside into the rain, my apartment is just across the street. I run across, looking quickly for any cars. I glance behind me and see a shadow slipping into the darkness. The Ring doorbell, bright blue light, makes me remember I forgot my keys. Oops. Buzz. "Who is it?"...

...Could this day get any worse? I scroll on the radio, finding nothing on the FM channel. "AM it is". Static. When I was just about to turn it off, I heard a voice.

At first it was just static, going in and out. "In-the-apart-306". That's my room number. I listen, furrowing my eyebrows. "Sir? When are we going to take her?". I turn up the volume. "We'll decide later. How much will we get, Blue?" Blue? Blue, that's my only friend! The only person who had been nice to me. The only one. "4 million, Sir, from dad's-", it cuts off. I click the button to turn the radio off, with tears in my eyes. I would never think anyone would betray me like this. Oh God, what do I do?...

Adaline Sand is a 12 year old from West Philadelphia. She is in seventh grade at SLA Beeber Middle School in Philadelphia, PA. She has been an active Mighty Writer since September of 2021.

See full story at:
[philadelphiastories.org/
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Titleless Suspense

By Anthony Wallace

As I crept in the night,
I heard a creature tiptoeing up the steps.
I heard its heart beating, oblivious and unsuspecting.
Tha-Thump-Tha-Thump...
Ignorant to the dangers that lurk in the dark.
In particular,
ME.

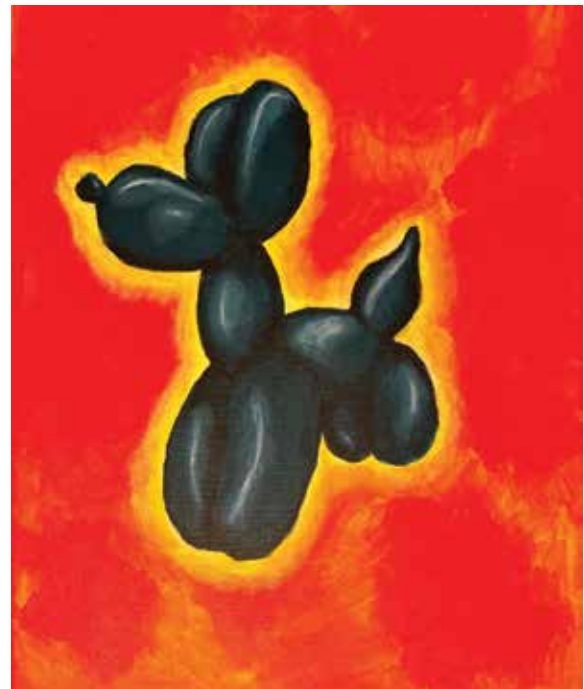
Sixteen stairs for them to climb,
And one by one they go.
So amusingly incognizant.
Tha-Thump-Tha-Thump...
And as they get closer to the top,
They just don't know
It's About To Go Down...

BOO!!!!

Its heart races at the speed of light.
Terror engulfs its face.
It cries and screams in terror,
And then I turn on the lights...

"What's up, sis?"

Anthony Wallace is 14 years old with a wide variety of interests. Along with writing, his interests include reading, aerospace engineering, playing basketball (and burying his opponents 100 feet under), cooking, and "being the best me that I can be".



Riley Dinnerman © 2022

THE TALE OF THE TWO LOVERS

by Nahla Colon

She deserved the world. She deserved me, he told himself. His love for the girl was beyond the heavens and earth, the stars in the galaxy - infinite. He craved her, she was everything he wanted and more; her smile was soothing like the ripples of the ocean, and her eyes resembled sweet honey nectar. They lived in the woods, in peace, the voices of the birds heard as they soared through the sky.

They were alone, with not a single being to be witnessed. The naked trees that guarded the woods could be seen through the dark hole of the window as the gaps of moon light peered in. "I love her, she needs me, and what I did was good for her. She's happy now, peaceful," thought the boy. He knew that the girl lived an unfortunate life. Everyone would say how good she was, how beautiful she looked, how funny she could be, and yet they'd hurt her and

led her astray. He wanted to be the one to love her and put her out of her misery.

He held her hand, his was endowed with warmth while hers was cold as ice, "I want to take you somewhere special," he whispered to the girl. She was silent and he took that as a yes. As he entered the woods, the night air carried something vile. He carried the silent being he loved most in the world as the cricket's melody filled the air. Trees greeted them while the stars lit the two love birds through the darkened woods. The boy, madly in love, allowed his lungs to be filled with the moist, crisp air. He took the girl to the river near the stranded walnut wooden cabin. He always wanted to take her there. It was beautiful, bewitching, and angelic just like her. He viewed her striking features once again. He listened as the river crashed against the rocks.

He held the girl close to him and gave her a kiss on her cheek. The moon hovered over the two and watched above as they held hands once again, his were warm while hers was cold. He simply couldn't let go yet he knew it was for the best, "At last you shall be free," he said to the girl as her hushed rotten corpse sank along the river stream. She was truly free....

Nahla Colon is an inspiring writer and poet with an eternal passion for literature. She uses her imagination to escape to a world of her own and simply adores Mother Nature and all of her hidden beauty. She involves herself in hobbies such as traveling, writing and reading. She "longs to live in a field of flowers with the one she loves most and write away her feelings as the sun kisses her skin and the earth neighbors her".



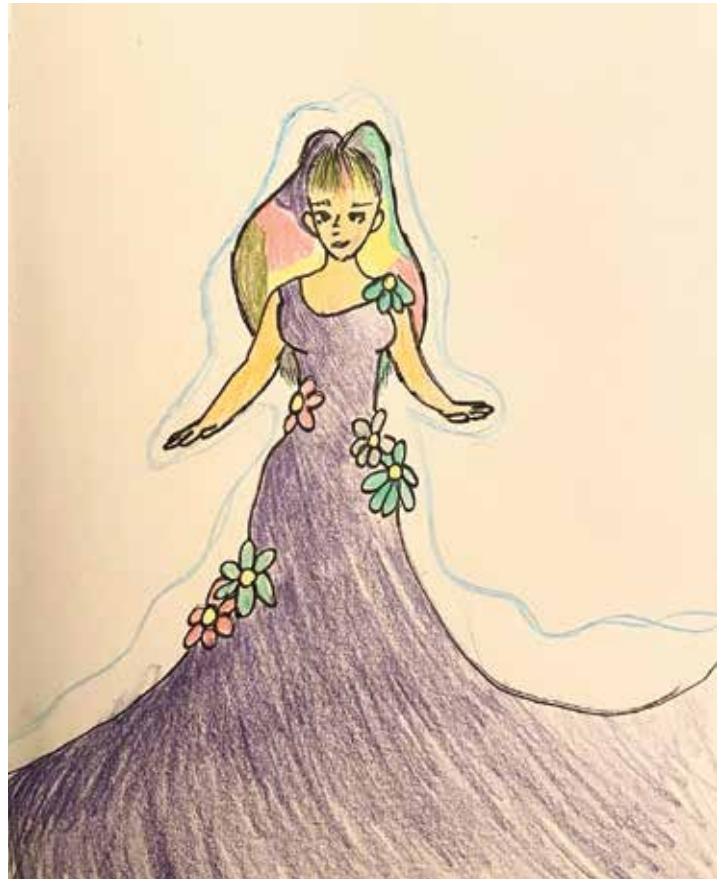
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Majda Ftouh © 2022



Elle Morgan © 2022



Elle Morgan © 2022

The Place To Be

By Tobi Gonzalez

Home. The feeling of home, the smell of home is wonderful. You smell your mom making homemade food. You feel the soft blanket on you while watching a movie. You smell the fresh air through your window and feel the cold air on your face. It smells like the park you played in with your friend or the feeling of playing in the snow. But even though you have fun being outside, you still remember home.

There are a lot of different things that families do at home. Some like to spend time with each other while others go on their own paths. Some like to clean their home every day while some clean whenever people come over. Some decorate their home every holiday while others don't. It doesn't matter, it's still home.

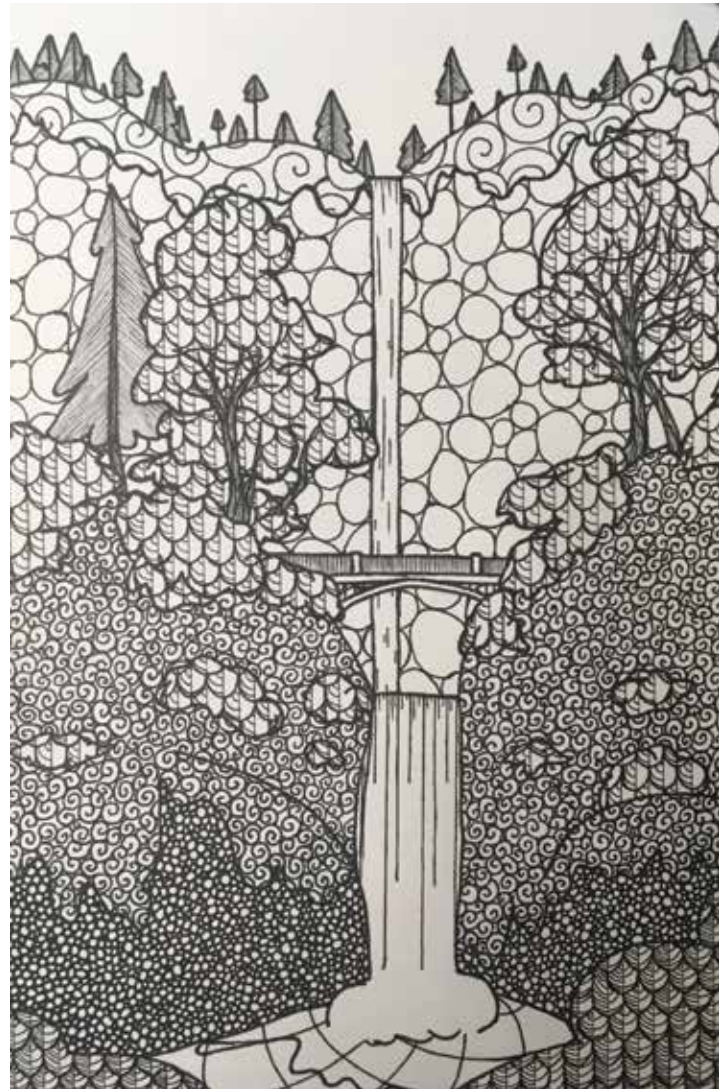
Many memories are made at home like welcoming home a new family member, having parties with friends and family and playing games and watching movies with your family and friends. No matter where you go you bring these memories with you. You may get homesick and when you do, you can go home.

Home. It's a shelter. It's family. It's a memory. It's love. It's the place to be.

My name is Tobi Gonzalez. I'm 9 years old. I'm currently in 4th grade at George W. Nebinger Elementary School. I live with my dad, mom and toddler brother in South Philly. My favorite subject at school is math. I also love to do art and to write. I mostly make abstract drawings and paintings and write realistic fiction stories. I'm a person that likes to make others laugh and be happy. I draw pictures and text inspiring quotes to my friends and to my family to make them smile.



Majda Ftouh © 2022



Riley Dinnerman © 2022

Three Stages of Lifetimes

By Laniyah Emile

The red brick row home
Here the sun shines through broken glass windows
The silent cries of rising yellow crescent sunsets
Sound still foreign to me
Here is the row home
Rebuilt
Reborn
Three stages of lifetimes
Three roads watching Dorothy walk by without her ruby slippers
Is there a place like home?
Blood of open wounds traveling down the wooden staircase
There is no place like home
Flying monkeys eating through the gas stove
Gasoline smells throughout the house
Bottles throughout the rooms
The Tinman may need a body
Gasoline cans won't hold him much longer
Living room bare
The shine of the silver moon
Brings spirits dancing around

Laniyah Emile attends Franklin Learning Center High School in Philadelphia, PA. She started writing poetry during the pandemic while the world was silent. She wrote loud and passionate words in her notebook during her free time, and those lovely moments paid off.

Home is Me

By Maxwell Corcoran

Whether it's the November chill clutching onto my cheeks, clawing its way down to my thighs as I hear the salty waves crash onto shore - or it's the warmth of my bedroom, rain pattering on my windows, music transporting me to another world... Home is where I feel safe, where I can be who I am and not feel judged or afraid. Home is wherever I decide it to be, and that's better than any house, any skeleton of a building that I merely occupy. Home is wherever I am, wherever I blossom, wherever I grow, wherever I learn.

Home is me. I am my home.

Maxwell is a 7th grader in West Philadelphia. In his spare time, he likes to write, make music, and draw. His biggest inspiration when making all kinds of art is what he sees around him and events going on in the world.

An Ode to My Journal

By LoRon Pearson

Characters turn into words,
Turn into lines, turn into stanzas.
Letters hum in a phenomenal symphony
Orchestrated by a composer of much experience.
The beauty of it cannot be described or obtained,
Only viewed.

Creativity flows through my veins
Like blood as I attract
Pen to paper, a relationship unmatched by others.
As I scribe your presence, you start to fade from my memories,
Now only commemorated on a thin, vulnerable sheet.
With your appeal, you draw me in
and allow me to express my perspective whether I choose to or not.

You're the catalyst of my reflections,
The canvas for my masterpiece.
The home for my thoughts.
The mirror to my reality.
You highlight growth
That simply would've been overlooked
By my blind, ignorant, human eyes.
You never judge or criticize me and my abilities,
Only act as a support system.

You make me proud of my accomplishments.
You make me proud of my writing.
You make me proud of me.
You make me "Me".
You are me.

LoRon, age 16



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- 64,000** canisters of formula
- 3,000** boxes of groceries
- 10,000** packs of baby wipes
- 1,000,000+** diapers

We have eight sites

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