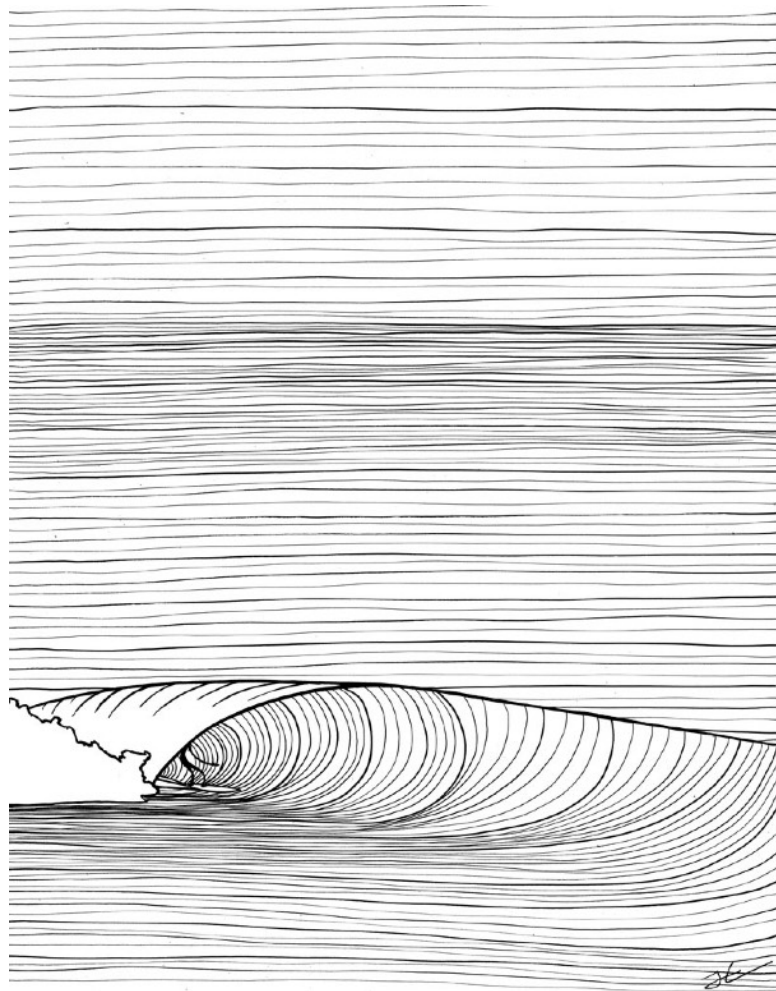


**BETHESDA ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL**

LITERARY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2018





Thank you to all of our contributing
writers!

The views expressed by the authors of
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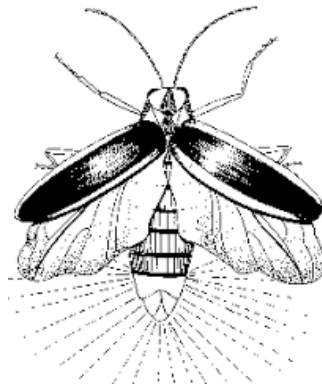
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Firefly, Firefly

By Anneka Hoek, Grade 3

Firefly, firefly, in the night
Firefly, firefly, just a little light
Firefly, firefly, fly up to the moon
Firefly, firefly, come again soon.

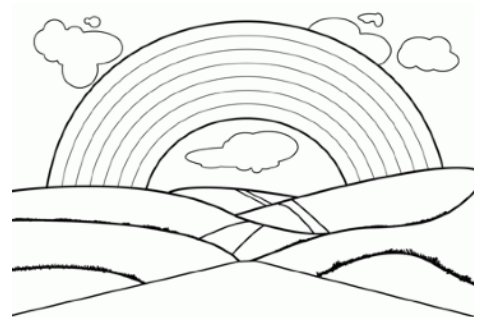


The Colors Inside

By Zola Welch, Grade 5

See that pink,
See that yellow,
Oh those colors,
So very mellow,
See that purple,
See that blue,
So many colors that describe....

YOU!!!



The Beach

By Kira Trabert, Grade 3

Where waves come crashing and splashing
You can jump in waves or run along the sand.

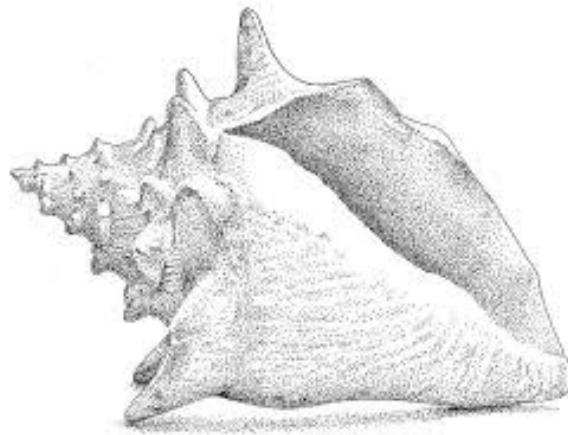
From collecting shells to swimming in the sea
the beach is fun for you and me.

We ride on rafts and boats
Sandcastles, digging with shovels and pails.

Bathing suits wet from head to toe
I see a dolphin! Two, no three!

I'm soaking, can we go home?
We'll pack up our towels and toys, our chairs and umbrellas.

Come along now - home we go!
Our day at the beach is over you know!



Rain

By Ryan Philip Wise, Grade 5

Dark clouds roll in,
lights turn on,
off in the distance,
blue sky disappears.

The rain starts,
the umbrellas go up,
the people go inside,
then the downpour starts.

It's raining cats and dogs,
everything gets wet,
everyone's still inside,
till it stops.

The downpour slows down,
the dark clouds roll away,
the sun comes out,
so everything can dry.

The lights go off,
the people come out,
to have some fun
and enjoy the sun.



Spring in the City

By Mayuko Mori, Grade 2

Cherry blossoms bloom pink and white

Everyone playing in the park

The air smells fresh

Birds singing with happiness

Bumble bees humming around the flowers

Lots of umbrellas going around in the rain

Leaves dancing and twirling in the sky

The spring is here.



A Great Jumbotron Moment

By Austin Barker, Grade 3

"Let's go Caps!!!" I said.

I was very excited for the game. I was at a Washington Capitals hockey game against the Boston Bruins with my cousins, parents, uncles, and my brother. Some of them are Bruins fans. I was a Capitals fan. We got close to the rink and watched the players practice. We were cheering the Caps on as they practiced. I followed the Capitals a lot. They were my favorite team.

My cousins and I were cheering like crazy! "Let's Go!!!" we shouted. We wanted to get on the jumbotron. I had never been on the jumbotron before. I started cheering very loudly again. Practice was almost done.

Then, out of the blue the camera got aimed at me. That moment everything seemed to pause. Was I about to be on the jumbotron? I had no idea what was about to happen. But then it all happened. I saw myself on the jumbotron cheering with happiness. I don't know how but I was cheering on the jumbotron with a smile on my face. I didn't even know what I was doing. But I liked it. Then, suddenly my cousins came in too. We were all in the picture. We looked like what we were. A very happy family. We were smiling. The crowd roared. It felt as if we were being given a standing ovation. I felt so happy. It felt very fun to be on the jumbotron. I couldn't stop smiling. Nothing needed to be said. Nothing needed to be done. We just needed to be what we were. Family. And that's how simple it was. That was my best minute of my life.

I know how lucky I am. Out of thousands and thousands of people I was chosen to be on the jumbotron. But why me? I wasn't the only nine year old. I wasn't the only kid wearing a Alex Ovechkin jersey. Why me? There was about a 5% chance of me getting on the jumbotron, but I had done it.

"Oh my gosh, Austin!" my mom screamed.

"That was awesome!!" I said to my cousins.

"Definitely!" my older cousin shouted.

My mom had gotten a text from her friend Nicole. The text said, "Just saw Austin on TV!!!" I wasn't surprised. I had a feeling I was on TV. I was glad I was on TV. I had never been on TV either. It was a very good day. My grandma had seen me on TV too.

"What a day!!" I said to my mom.

"No kidding!" she said and gave me a giant hug.

I really had had a great time. I couldn't have gotten more than I wanted. I had done something I had always wanted to do and I had done it with my family. But that's just what family is for. Happiness. We high-fived each other. We had had an awesome time.

"Enough celebrations," one of my uncles said, "We have a hockey game to watch."

We all laughed. We had had a great time, and the game had not even started yet!



A Happy Gift For No Credit

By Annabelle Jayda Ham, Grade 3

It was the first day of fifth grade! I already had many friends. At school I saw a new girl who was struggling and had no friends.

Soon, we finished the first half of our day, so we went outside. I walked quickly to find that girl. As soon as I caught up with her, she looked away and walked faster. Click, click, click, went her shoes. Clank, clank, clank, went mine. I finally convinced her I was a friend. Then, we started a conversation.

"Hi my name is Flora, what's yours?" I asked.

"M-m-m-my name is Amelia," she said looking at the pale sidewalk. I looked at the sidewalk too and then I looked at Amelia.

"Amelia, I can show you around and I can be your friend. Maybe we could get to know each other better!" I said. Amelia lifted her face and I finally got to see her face. Her eyes were a sparkly hazel, her nose was small, her hair was brown, but best of all, even though, her lips were tilting downwards, I knew one smile from her would be so warm it would feel better than summer in L.A.! I wanted Amelia to smile. At recess, I showed Amelia around and while we were playing basketball, she took my hand and walked me over to the bench. She had tears in her eyes. We sat down.

Amelia then started talking about her life. "I think now I trust you as a friend to know these things. Last year, my parents divorced. They made me upset. Ever since then I lived with my mom. She married another guy I don't like, who has a boy. After the marriage, I cried every night, I missed my dad, my grades dropped, my friends stopped playing with me, and the boy, Samuel, kept on annoying me. I feel really bad." By then, tears were spilling out of her eyes but those hazel eyes kept on sparkling. I patted her on the back. Now, I understood the whole situation.

After school I made up my mind. I was going to help Amelia. Every day I would find ways to help her. I would show her how to learn better, how to make friends and how to stand up to enemies, how to fight bullies and how to make the

teacher proud. But, best of all, I'd comfort her and make her smile and laugh and forget her worries. This I did. I made it so she felt good. For hours, which turned to days, which turned to weeks, which turned to months, which turned to a very happy last day of school, I was her great friend.

The class was loud. My eardrums were popping. Kids were chaotic about the last day of school. Splat! A folder smashed to the ground. Then suddenly, the class grew quiet you could hear the papers in the folder touching the floor.

Just then, our teacher, Mrs. Elyn, stepped in. She had just arrived. She had a big "I'm-so-ashamed-in-you" face on her wrinkled face. Mrs. Elyn made everyone clean up until not a speck of rubbish could be seen. Then, she had a serious talk with us. The rest of the day was not exciting and Mrs. Elyn made sure no one misbehaved. Anyway, at the end of the day students rushed out of the school saying, "NO MORE SCHOOL!!!"

It turned out I had a great summer vacation but what seemed like a moment later I was in sixth grade.

After school ended, Amelia and I decided to go to the park. Amelia brought along a friend while we talked and played I realized the other girl (Madeline) and Amelia looked like they were friends. I felt hurt. I wanted to be Amelia's only friend. An hour later, Madeline and Amelia said that they were having a sleepover at Amelia's house. I watched as they walked and talked away. Then, I thought about it more. Now, I feel happy for them. I watched Amelia and Madeline walk into Amelia's mom's car. At least I made her life so much better, at least I dried her tears, at least I showed her how to make friends. I made her even more happy by teaching her how to make good friends and how to keep them. I was one of those friends. Madeline was too. I knew I would always be her friend but I also knew Madeline would be another great friend because of me. I smiled with a little bit of that hurt feeling inside. A happy gift needs no credit... and then I saw Amelia's mom's car drive away with Amelia, Madeline, and a mother inside. I waved goodbye, but nobody waved back.

THE END



A Dog Sled Race

By Abe Silverman, Grade 5

"3,2,1 mush." Then come on let's go and we sped off. So you might be saying to yourself "What? This is not how you start a story." Well, you are right. Oh, I am sorry I did not tell you who I am. My name is Aaron and I love dog sled racing. So let me tell you how I got here. I sadly never knew my Mom and Dad but I do know that they were amazing dog sled masters. They had always lived in Alaska. They actually met at a dog sled race, and then a few years later they had me, and after 5 years they went out on a sled race and I never saw them again.

That day, my uncle picked me up and I said "Dogs, dogs." Then my uncle said, "Fine, if you can take care of the dogs you can bring them." At that point in my life I had already known I wanted to be a musher like my mom and dad. One month after my uncle had taken me in, he had me working on his ox farm. When I was 10, I started practicing for the dog sled racing. It was what I always had dreamed of since my mom and dad had given me my dog sled. I practiced on the path they were doing the race on December 10th so when the mushers and the dogs got back it would be Christmas. On the race day, I was pumped. I had a big breakfast and all of my dogs were waiting at the front door, so I got all of my stuff on the sled and we headed off to the starting line. Then back to now we zoomed off.

A few hours later we arrived at the first checkpoint, and we headed off. The road was smooth, and then out of nowhere a blizzard started. It got hard to see then I blacked out and I heard growling that woke me up. I did not know where I was but I saw my dogs trying to keep animals away from our food, and I jumped up and howled in pain. I fell to the ground my leg was broken. It was still snowing so I got on the sled to find a cave. Ten minutes later I found a great one. I set up camp and I made a splint for my leg. Then I took my sleeping bag out and fell asleep.

I woke up to the warm feeling of licks on my face. All of my food was gone except some bread that I fed my dogs for breakfast. It was still snowing and the ground was covered in ice so we could not try to go home. I realized my sled was broken in the front. I guess I had not seen it in the heat of the moment. A few hours later the blizzard stopped. I saw a big tree had fallen.

It was going to be perfect for fixing the sled. I took out my tools for fixing my sled. Three hours later of cutting and nailing the sled was complete, I packed up and put my stuff on the sled and headed off.

Five hours later of looking for a town the sun started to set. I set up a makeshift tent and set up camp. It was getting dark. I took out my sleeping bag and went to bed for what felt like a two second rest. I felt like I was under snow. I think the wind had ripped a hole in my tent and snow had gotten through. I jumped up and shook the snow off because I was freezing. I could not feel my toes for a second. My dogs were pawing at the food bag so I poured them each a bowl of food and ate some bread. Then packed up and headed off. 6 hours later we stumbled upon a town. I parked my sled and unharnessed my dogs and we walked in. I saw a sign that said annual dog sled race. Then "beep beep" it was all a dream. Aroooooo, yep, I am a dog named Aaron.



The Night of the Broken Glass

By Elizabeth Daly, Grade 5

Anne looked carefully out the window to the Nazis marching across the road. They had overtaken Frankfurt, Germany where Anne lived. Except, she wasn't living in the open. She was hiding from the Nazis in a secret annex in an old building. Before the Nazis came, school was the highlight of Anne's day. She loved to learn. But, recently, when the Nazis came, everything changed. She was called rude names and felt humiliated. Now, she could not go back to school because Jews were banned from public schools. Last night, her father had been negotiating with some family friends, the Schmidts, to hide from the Nazis in the secret annex in their house. They agreed and Anne and her family moved in. Now, as they walked into the secret annex, Anne was appalled because it was musty, cold, and mouse infested. She felt a chill coming from a crack in the wall. Suddenly, there was a knock on the secret passageway leading to the annex. It couldn't be the Schmidts, they were off at work and her parents were downstairs. Anne peeked through the peephole and saw a grimy boy with a blue armband with the yellow star of David. She almost walked away but then she saw the look on his face. It was tear-streaked, but his eyes were empty of all happiness, joy and hope. She reluctantly opened the door and quickly shut the door behind him.

"Who are you and why are you here?" she hissed. She was scared to death of this stranger, but she made herself look fierce, although she was trembling. David looked as if he was about to cry, but he told his story anyway.

"A couple weeks ago, my parents and I lived here. We are a happy family—that is until the Nazis found our hiding place. Your annex. I had crawled into a nook in that night and was not seen by the Nazis. Unfortunately, my parents were. They were taken away and I have not seen them since." As Anne heard his story her eyes softened. She wanted to give him a big hug. He explained to the Schmidts and Anne's parents and they took him in. They happily had dinner and talked. That night when Anne had almost drifted off to sleep, she heard a large bang, and the door to the annex fell down. Behind it was a dozen Nazi soldiers, fully armed with heavy guns and gas masks. They arrested Anne and her family, the Schmidts, and David. They gave each person 5 minutes to collect their belongings. Anne ran into the annex, gathered her clothes, her drawings, family pictures, and her journal. She was the last one down and was almost left to die, for the Nazis had ended their time 2 minutes early, just because they wanted to. They did this to show them how much power they held.

Anne, David, and everyone who was young, sick, or weak rode in the bus to the death camps with them. Anne recognized the landscape. It was the old tunnel passage near Poland's border with Germany. The Schmidts and Anne's parents were forced to march to the campsite, which was miles away. When they arrived at the camp, they were shoved into a camp with roughly 200 other children. Some of them looked half-dead and others looked like they were about to cry. There were whispers of different languages, but most people were in shock, thinking about what the Nazis might do to them. She heard an old woman say "Spokoynyy, rebenok." The child responded, "No ya boynus' mamy." She turned around to see to children talking together. The girl said, "Wir müssen stark sein, Peter." The boy whimpered and said, "Ich kenne Milia, aber du vermisst Mom und Dad." Anne saw them start tearing up and walked straight ahead.

Anne took one look at the camp, and realized that they had to get out of there- fast. So, in the next two days Anne and David lived their miserable lives at camp, but were actually coming up with a plan. Anne had a pen and paper and started their escape plan. It showed where the soldiers were and where there were possible exits. Anne knew that there were tunnels under the camp, because she had been in them with her uncle. She found a spoon, and dug under the gritty soil until she hit metal. She dug and dug, until there was an opening. She called David over and together, they crawled through the tunnel. They crawled for what seemed like hours until they saw a light at the end of the tunnel. They excitedly hoisted themselves out of the tunnel, and looked around. They looked around and realized they were miles away from camp. They saw that they were in a small town but were far away from camp. Anne and David were overjoyed, but the town looked poor and had nothing to spare. They went to houses knocking on doors trying to get scraps of food. When they reached a blue door, and the owner opened it, David's face went chalk-white. He asked the woman in a language Anne didn't know, "Pani Lena, czy to ty?" She smiled and said in Hebrew, which Anne understood, "Yes, David."



Elle and Leo: A Fairytale

By Hanna Solovy, Grade 5

Once upon a time there lived a royal tiger family. There were many many rules that they had to follow, such as sit up straight, tie your napkin around your neck, tuck in your shirt, and most important, never ever marry somebody that is not your species.

Prince Leo Tiger always obeyed his mother. Except the one time when he was six and he wore a short sleeved shirt to the table. That did not please his mother one bit. Nothing had happened since then, until...

"Mother, I am going out to the frozen lake." said Leo Tiger. "Ok then, don't get hurt." Leo Tiger hurried out of the grand castle. His paws were as cold as ice and his head was covered in a soft hat with emerald outlining the top. The lake was far and he was tired and cold. He spotted a warm fire down a shoveled path which he followed. He put his paws over the fire and sat on the bench.

"What are you doing here?" The voice of the creature startled Leo tiger.

"I am sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." The soft voice said. Leo slowly turned around to notice an elephant. She had a pink top with a brown skirt, but she had no blanket nor hat to cover her blue skin.

"Hi, I am Leo. I am sorry to disturb you."

"No harm done. This is my home." Leo Tiger and Elle talked, talked, and talked until dark. Every day, Leo would stop by Elle's house and talk. They would talk about life and how his life was so much different than Elle's life. Leo Tiger enjoyed visiting Elle. She always made him laugh.

That evening Leo Tiger's mother called Leo to the dining room. "I have to talk." Leo's mother had never called Leo to talk. "Where have you been running off to these days? The lakes are frozen, the restaurants aren't open, the trees don't have apples, and the cherries aren't ripe." the Queen said with an unpleasant look on her face.

“Mother, I have fallen in love with a towns’ maiden. She is beautiful and stunning, and delicate and nice.”

“I must meet her this instant. Bring this charming tiger to me,” the Queen said.

But Leo tiger knew there was just one problem. She was not a tiger. But as his mother insisted, Leo brought Elle the elephant to his mother.

“Will she like me?” Elle asked. Leo did not answer. This made Elle feel nervous. Elle stepped slowly into the castle. The queen was standing at the doors. “Who is this disgusting creature? Get her out!” Elle was staring directly into her eyes. She turned away and ran down the steps of the castle.

Prince Leo was furious. “Mother!” He ran after Elle and found her on a bench. Leo Tiger sat next to Elle. “It doesn't matter what she thinks. I think you are beautiful and smart and that is all that matters.” Leo Tiger reached into his pocket and pulled out a diamond ring. “Will you marry me and make me the happiest tiger alive?” Elle looked at the ring and then looked directly in Leo’s eyes. She wiped her eyes and with a big smile on her face she said, “Yes.”



Inspired by: The Day the Crayons Quit By Drew Daywalt

Duncan just wants to color. But when he opens his box of crayons, he finds only letters, all saying the same thing: His crayons are ready to quit! Read the letter below, submitted by Grant Hernandez, to find out why one of the crayons is ready to make the leap.

By Grant Hernandez, Grade 1

Dear Duncan,

It is green crayon here. Listen. I am tired of you coloring me out of the lines and you peeled my clothes off. Now I am naked and embarrassed to leave the crayon box. All of the other crayons make fun of me. It makes me feel sad. Besides, it hurts my feelings. How would you like to go to school naked?

Sincerely,

Green Crayon



The First Time I Landed a Backflip on a Trampoline

By Max Lindelow, Grade 5

My palms were sweaty, I could feel my heart beating, beating hard enough to fall right out of my chest. I had the sensation of freefall in my stomach, then... I did it.

I was in my backyard kicking a soccer ball around on the concrete next to our trampoline. There was a gentle breeze in the warm, summer air. My friends Yuma and Oliver had come to my house because Yuma was moving back to Japan that day. They were jumping around on the trampoline. "Hey, Max!" I was a little zoned out so when Oliver started talking I was startled.

"OLIVER! Next time you can maybe give me a warning!" I exclaimed.

"Okay, okay, sorry! But Max, I literally just landed a backflip!"

I stared at Oliver with a sarcastic look said, "Oliver, do you actually think that I believe that..." I didn't believe him because he had never done a backflip before!

"What, why don't you ever believe me!" he shouted in an annoyed tone before I had completed my sentence. Looking down at the ground, I started thinking of the time when Oliver and I were out on the trampoline for hours, just trying to learn new tricks. I had gotten so close to landing a backflip that day that I almost pulled my hair out in frustration.

A bead of sweat fell from my brow and hit the rough pavement, snapping me back into focus. I looked up at Yuma and asked, "Yuma, did Oliver actually do a backflip and land on his feet?"

"Yeah, he did!" Yuma replied.

Well, he seemed serious enough. "If you can actually land a backflip, then why don't you do one right now?" I said obnoxiously. I gave Oliver a smirk because I was almost positive that he was lying.

Then, to my surprise, he said, "Okay." He started bouncing. It took him a few minutes to get the right bounce, and I just stood there, still as a statue... watching. All of a sudden, he did a backflip. He flung himself backwards, and then landed on his feet.

I was stunned. After a few moments I realized that my mouth was hanging open and then I quickly closed it. "What-h-how-How did you do that!" I stammered.

"All you have to do is let your body loose and don't tuck!" Oliver answered.

Running over to the trampoline, I scrambled up the three step ladder. My adrenaline was escalating because I was thinking of how it would feel to land a backflip. I walked over to the edge of the trampoline and started bouncing as high as I could. Time seemed to slow down and every leaf that fell from a tree seemed to fall in slow motion. My mind started racing, my palms started to sweat, my heart started pounding! Then... I went for it. I flew backwards faster than I had ever spun in a backflip. In the air, I asked myself, "When am I going to hit the mat?" After what seemed like an eternity, my feet hit the trampoline and I slipped backwards. I landed on my back really hard but I instantly stood up.

Oliver stared at me. "Oh my gosh! You were so close to landing that!" he said in astonishment.

I had almost forgotten that Yuma was there. His face spread into a huge grin and he started bouncing like crazy. He was flailing his arms and started yelling, "What! You guys can both do a backwards flip!"

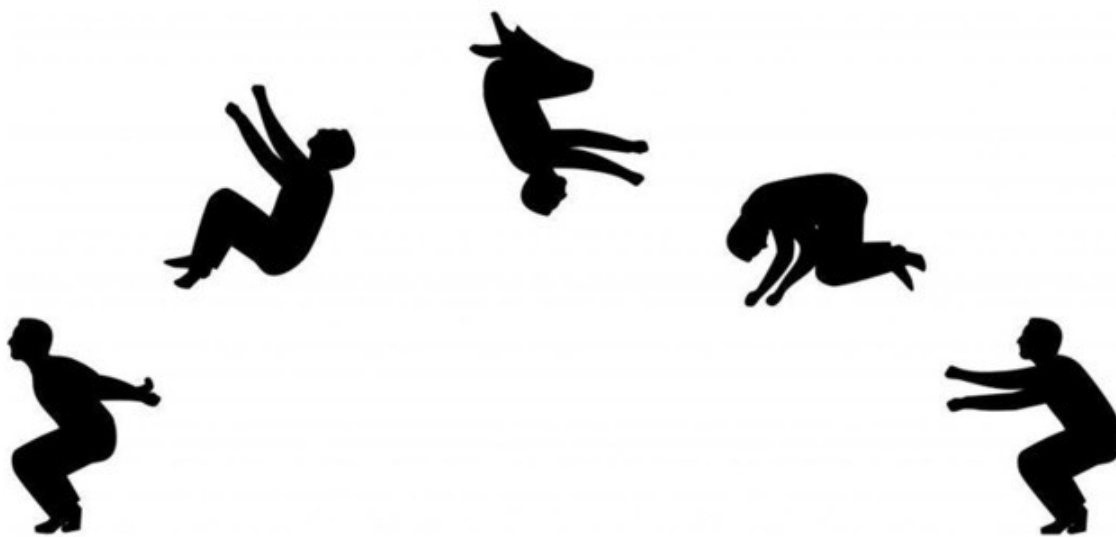
Oliver and I came to a silent agreement that we had to practice until we could both land a backflip. I tried, and tried and after five tries, I landed a backflip! I was so happy! Then something caught my attention. It was a car horn. I took me a moment to realize and when I did, fear flooded me. Yuma was probably getting picked up!

My mom walked out of the back door and said calmly, "Yuma's leaving."

"Okay," I said sadly.

We walked to the front yard and we saw Yuma's mom. Oliver and I hugged Yuma and took some pictures together. We said our last goodbyes and Yuma got in the taxi with his mom. He waved goodbye as I thought of all the good memories I have had with him.

Some months have passed and now I still keep in touch with him by email. I miss him and I hope to see him again one day soon.



The Big Ghost

By Max Randazzo, Grade 3

Once upon a time, there were 5 kids named Max, Jason, Asher, Andrew and Zach. On Halloween night, they walked to get candy from a very scary house. They thought the best looking house would have the best candy, so they obviously went in but, apparently, it was the scariest family that ever lived. Since it was the middle of the night, there were no parents even close to them. Well, the closest parent was like a mile away, and it wasn't even their parent. The family was all ghosts and there was this one BIG GHOST. Everybody ran away but Max, and Max got the best candy that ever lived. He got 5 big bowls of candy. It turned out, the people were just dressed up as ghosts.



Don't Let the Pigeon Watch a Scary Movie

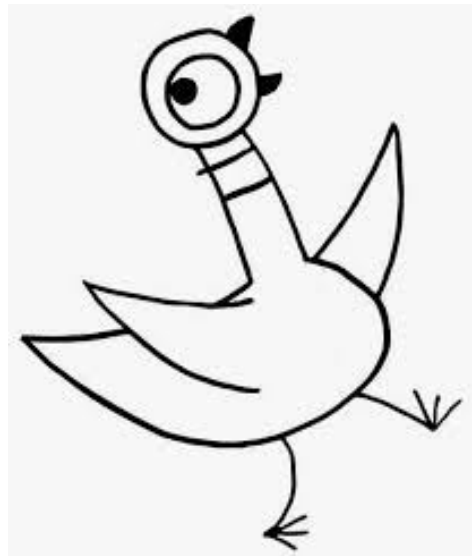
By Madeline Smith, Grade 1

Hi, don't let the pigeon watch a scary movie at bedtime or during the day thanks! Hi, I'm going to turn on the TV. Oh, I'm going to watch a scary movie about monsters. EEEEEK! Does that couch have a monster sitting on it? Oh, it's just a stuffed animal.

OK it's bedtime. The pigeon hid under his blanket frightened because of the movie. EEEEEK! I'm super scared! That tree has lots of spikes on it, it might be a giant claw trying to get me! Ahh, I'm hungry and the lights are off but I'm scared of the dark. The pigeon walked down the stairs frightened with his flashlight. He opened the fridge to get some cookies and milk. He walked upstairs super scared because his flashlight ran out of batteries! He got into his bed and hid under the blanket. What's that noise? DRIP DROP DRIP DROP! He listened very carefully. Then he looked out the window super, SUPER frightened. And what's that noise like WHOOSH? Oh, it's just the rain and wind. He was crying because he didn't listen to his owner. I shouldn't have watched this scary movie! It's really bad and it was rated PG-13 and I'm only 7.

Then he heard the key and some knocking. The doorbell rang. He heard footsteps in the house. He heard people walking up the stairs. When the door opened and he saw the owner, he said, EEEEEK that's the monster. And then the owner turned the lights on. I'm just your owner. I'm sorry owner but I watched a scary movie! It's ok, pigeon. Now I'm super frightened. It's ok, it's not true, said the owner. Thanks, said the pigeon!

The End



The Big Move

By Neela Wadhwa, Grade 4

Chapter 1

It was morning. I could see the light that shone through my window. It was beautiful. I knew that I would have to treasure the moment, because I would leave my hometown, Warwick, Rhode Island to move to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I was moving for three reasons:

#1. My Dad was getting a new job offer.

#2. My older brothers (Nick and Miles) and I needed to expand our soccer career.

#3. Our little loft apartment was too crowded.

I took out my flashlight from its box and glanced around my room. It was empty except for my pink bed and a few hooks and wires hanging on the wall. It looked so different without all of my soccer posters and soccer medals hanging. I would be going soon, and it wouldn't be a happy moment.

Chapter 2

Ring, ring, ring! My alarm went. Oh right, I had finally fallen asleep after I had scanned my room.

"Kylie honey, come down," Mom yelled.

"Coming," I said. I threw on my robe with soccer balls on it and my matching slippers. I tiptoed through the hallway and down the stairs. I took my seat at the table and my mom pushed a bowl of apple-cinnamon oatmeal towards me. But I was too nervous to eat. I would miss my boyfriends. Not saying that I go on dates or anything like that, but I'm way too sporty for the girls so I play with the boys. I would miss Conner, Alex, and Ben. I knew that they would miss me too, and thinking about that made me feel better. They drew me a soccer poster (not saying that they are the best artists but I liked it anyway).

"Kylie," I heard my dad say, "Can you change into some clothes, I'm planning on hitting the road at 7 o'clock sharp?" I walked up the stairs in slow motion. I didn't want to go to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. What if I didn't like it?

Chapter 3

We were in the car. I was squished in the middle of Nick and Miles.

"I'm boooooorrrrrred," I complained, whining.

"How about we listen to some music?" said my mom.

"Fine," I grumped. We rolled over a bump. I was thinking of complaining, but I had already whined way too much. About food, sweat, and anything else that had to do with complaining. You name it. I had done it all. My mom pressed the radio button and immediately a Taylor Swift song came on. It was "Shake It Off." I knew all of the lyrics. I sang:

"Because the players are gonna
Play, play, play,
And the hater is gonna
Hate, hate, hate,
And I'm just gonna shake, shake, shake--"

"Can't we listen to some rap?!" Miles moaned, rolling his eyes and putting his hands over his ears. I think Mom heard him, but she didn't respond. After listening to all three of us groan the whole trip, she needed a break. Finally, after hours of driving, we pulled up in front of a white and gray house.

"We're here!" Mom singsonged. Nick hopped out of the car as soon as it stopped and started kicking his ball against the steps of the house. Miles followed. I walked as slow as a turtle to the front door.

"C'mon honey!" my dad said, as he opened the front door.

Chapter 4

When we got inside, I ran up the stairs and opened the door of where I knew my new bedroom would be. I put my suitcase on the floor and hung all of

my soccer medals on the walls. I had never really realized it before, but I had a ton of soccer awards. Medals, trophies, and certificates were the first thing that I hung on my new white walls.

Then I decided to see where Mom went. I wanted to group MMS Ben, Conner, and Alex. As I was walking through the hallway I noticed that Mom was not in her bedroom. I even called out "Mom, Mom--" but then Dad interrupted, "Mom's outside talking with the new neighbors." I walked outside and I saw a woman that looked a little older than Mom but not by much. There was a girl that looked the same age as me. (ten)

"Oh Kylie, I was looking for you. This is Caroline. I heard that she likes soccer just like you," my mom said.

"Hi," I said quietly.

"Hi," Caroline said, "Do you want to come over to my house?"

"Sure," I replied.

At dinner that night my family was eating with Caroline's family. Over my spaghetti and meatballs, I realized change was not so bad, especially since I had made a new best friend.



Eric

By Sebastian Feifer, Grade 5

Eric was a boy of eight. He was a homeless boy, and his family desperately needed food and money. He lived with his parents in the vast city of New York. But he was not able to enjoy the beauty of the skyscrapers looming above him. Nor was he able to enjoy the delicious food people were selling in the shops. Or the sound of clinking money, as it was being handed out to the people selling things.

Right now Eric had to focus on waving cardboard signs that they had found in the dump where they lived. His family hated stealing so there were rules about it, and if he did not follow them, his parents would not be happy with him. But Eric had to admit that stealing would make their life a lot easier.

They were out on the crowded New York streets waving their signs in vain. Very few people stopped to hand them food or money. So they were left hungry at the end of the day. And their prayers had done nothing. Nothing yet. But today was a new day, and Eric kept his hopes up for a stroke of luck.

It was in the morning when his luck started. As usual, he walked with his parents toward the street to wave their signs. But this time Eric noticed a 50 dollar bill, there in the dump! He could hardly believe his eyes!

"Mom, Dad!" he shouted!

His parents looked at the bill in awe.

"Where did you get that, Son?" his father asked him.

"I found it in the dump," he answered.

"No way," his mother answered.

And his luck continued when they walked through the dump to the alley where they had left their cardboard boxes. "Look," Eric shouted. For right there was a nice plate of bacon, toast, and eggs.

"Look!" Eric shouted. The family gaped at the delicious breakfast.

"Fresh!" said his father.

"Someone must have given this to us," said his mother, thinking about it.

"This is getting better and better," Eric said. The very happy family headed to the streets to join their homeless friends.

"Remember we have to share," Eric's mother said firmly.

"Aww," said Eric. The families met up and shared the food.

"We will give this part of the money to your family, and this part to yours," Eric's father said.

"Hey Eric!" said two excited voices. It was Tim and Julian, Eric's two best buddies.

"Hey guys!" said Eric.

"So where did you get the money and food?" Tim asked.

"Well, I sort of found it," said Eric.

"What!" the two boys said at the same time.

"How?" Julian asked.

"In the dump," Eric said. The two kids gave him puzzled looks.

This will be a day that I will always remember, Eric thought to himself. For the fifty dollar bill and the food were not the only things that appeared in odd spots. Many other fifty dollar bills and plates of food, with forks and knives, kept appearing all over the place. And Eric's family was not the only family getting things. Pretty much every homeless family they knew was getting the same things. Eric never found out who was giving everyone all these things. But whoever did was a hero. What a day he thought, oh what a day.



Bob and The Waterfall

By Tomy Sabella-Capuano, Grade 4

One day, Bob was hiking in a national park called Yellowstone National Park with Joe, his cool 11 year old brother, his dad Jim, who was 53, his neighbor John and John's dog Popsy.

It was cool and crisp out. Joe yelled, "Look! A river with rocks in it!" Bob looked and saw a blue river with shiny rocks in it. Popsy looked too but was too busy secretly eating doggie treats (from John's bag) to her delight. Bob and Joe ran off to start jumping from rock to rock. Joe dared Bob to put his foot in the river. His sunglasses slipped a little. His green shirt moved in the wind. His grey-brown shorts made noises with coins in his pockets. He was smart so he carefully put his shoe in, but he slipped and started rushing through the water like a dead log. He was yelling loudly while Joe ran to get the others. Popsy was running like crazy to get to Bob. Bob looked in front, then to Joe. His eyes screamed, "WATERFALL!!!"

Joe yelled at Popsy, "Rescue Bob!" But Bob had already fallen down the waterfall.

"Bark, bark!" Popsy barked when he found Bob.

"Bob! Are you okay?! You gave us all a heart attack!" said John.

Joe said, "So true, John!"

Jim was so scared that he didn't say anything. John checked Bob over with his paramedic equipment. John said, "Bob, you just have a bruise, and that is it!"

"Thank goodness," said Bob.

"Holy cow! I think he broke his back, John," said Joe.

Bob said, "One, I did not land on my back, and two, I did not slide down Niagara Falls without any pillows whatsoever."

Jim said, "Joe, you are grounded for a year for daring Bob."

Bob said, "Maybe he will have time to plan another dare..."



The Big Wave Disaster

By Benjamin Trackman, Grade 3

I was boogie-boarding at Ocean City N.J. and had just ridden a huge amazing wave that super-pushed me to shore. "Nice wave!" I said to my sisters who were also boogie-boarding. I was also boogie-boarding with my Grandpa. I was excited to ride another big wave, so I waded back out to the ocean to boogie-board some more.

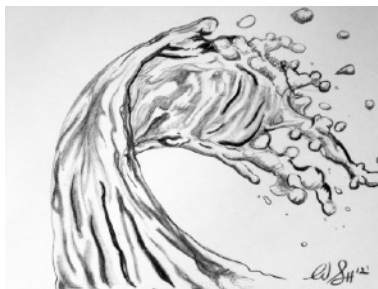
The next wave looked bigger than the wave before it. Sometimes I was thrilled to ride it, but sometimes I wasn't. This time I was thrilled to ride it. However, I was too close to it. It loomed over me, casting a large shadow like a huge sea monster. I trembled under the wave's dark glare. It looked as big as ten elephants put together. "Watch out!" my sisters yelled, but too late. Time seemed to freeze, me under the wave and the wave poised feet from my head but on top of me. Then all of a sudden...BAM!

In seconds, feet turned to nothing and the wave crashed, casting huge foam over the surface of the water. I was thrown under the water but I didn't struggle. The seaweed was all over me, but the water wasn't very deep and I kept telling myself it would be over in a few seconds. I hugged my board very close to me indeed. After what seemed like hours, my head finally broke the surface of the water next to my grandpa.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

"Y-y-y-y-es-s," I spluttered, struggling for air. "Whoosh!" went the super strong saltwater, fizzing out of my mouth. "Can I warm up on the sand?" I breathed to my grandpa, as I was still weak.

"You can go to the sand," my grandpa answered me. As I lay down on the sand, I knew I would remember this moment for a while.



Always In My Heart

By Max Esfahani, Grade 3

I walked out into my neighborhood, and I was sad because the public library was closed for renovation and my favorite bookstore also just closed FOREVER. I loved to go to the library and bookstore to read and look for new books.

I passed my favorite Japanese restaurant near where the bookstore used to be. Then I saw a person, but he wasn't a real person. He looked like an illustration from one of my favorite series of books. It was Greg Heffley, the Wimpy Kid! Greg said "I'm still here." I couldn't believe it!

Then I walked to my favorite ice cream place. Sitting at a table were Jack and Annie from the Magic Treehouse series! Jack and Annie looked up from their ice creams and said, "We're still here." I smiled.

After I got my ice cream I went to the bike trail. As I walked I heard a little squeaky voice say "I'm still here," and then I saw a little mouse speed by riding a motorcycle! That's Ralph the mouse on his motorcycle, I thought to myself, thinking of the latest book I was reading.

I jogged through the bike trail to my favorite fast food restaurant for a drink. I heard a whoosh come from the sky. It was Harry Potter on his broom and there was something shining in his hand! It was the golden snitch! "I'm still here," Harry yelled to me.

After my drink, I walked back to where my favorite bookstore used to be. Instead of the fountain that was usually in front, the Statue of Liberty was standing tall with her torch up high and her tablet. I had just read about the Statue of Liberty in the What Is series. Ms. Liberty smiled at me, winked, and said "I'm still here." How did The Statue of Liberty get to be here? I wondered.

Then I realized that even though the bookstore is closed and the public library is closed for renovation, all my favorite characters from all my favorite books are still in my heart.



Stella's Script

By Stella Schreiber, Grade 4

Marisa: Today, I am going to interview Stella about America's Olympic Ice Skating Sweetheart. Who is she? What has she been doing since the Olympics?

Stella: A two - time Olympic champion, Michelle Kwan, has won more medals than any other American figure skater. She won 9 National championships and 5 World championships.

Marisa: So, let's start from the beginning. Where and when was she born?

Stella: (smile) She was born on July 7, 1980 in Torrance, California.

Marisa: Torrance, California, Hmm. I see. Where did she grow up?

Stella: Oh, she grew up in Southern California, Palos Verdes, just outside of L.A.

Marisa: When did she start skating?

Stella: She started skating when she was five at Rolling Hills Estate. Her older brother, Ron, was playing ice hockey and got her and her sister, Karen, interested. Her parents would not let her skate at first, but she finally persuaded them to let her. Before long, she loved it.

Marisa: How did she get inspired?

Stella: When she was 7 $\frac{1}{2}$, she watched Brian Boitano win the men's gold medal. He was so elegant and disciplined. She vowed that she would go to the Olympics.

Marisa: Wow! What was her favorite move?

Stella: Her favorite move was the triple Lutz. Her least favorite move was the triple toe loop.

Marisa: Did she have a motto or life lesson for us to learn? If so, in what ways did it help push her through life?

Stella: She has always tried to remember the motto that her dad taught her when she was little. "Work hard, be yourself, and have fun." It is all her parents have ever asked of her. When they were little, she and her sister skated on Christmas Day instead of getting presents. She would sometimes stand there on the ice shivering and feeling sorry for herself, but she always told herself that she was there only because she wanted to be. When she was 11, she wanted to go to the 1994 Olympics, so, against her coach's wishes, she secretly took the Senior test and she passed. She went to the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics as a backup. She then skated in the 1998 Nagano Olympics and won silver. She skated in the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics and won bronze. She became the elegant disciplined skater that everyone looked up to. She was just like her favorite person in the world, Brian Boitano.

Marisa: Did Michelle and her family have to make any sacrifices?

Stella: She and her sister had to make some sacrifices, but not as big as the ones her parents had to make. They sold their house and they moved to their grandparents' house. Her parents had to each work multiple jobs and work nights at their grandparents' restaurant. Michelle and her sister Karen had to share tights, wear hand-me-downs, and make homemade costumes. They had to wear skates that were custom made for other girls. They were not shaped to Karen and Michelle's feet, but Michelle got to the Nationals in them.

Marisa: After her debut in the Lillehammer Olympics, she was favored to win gold at the 1998 Nagano Olympics. What did she feel like when she did not win the gold at the 1998 Nagano Olympics?

Stella: She was very upset and felt awkward standing up on the podium with the silver medal over her head. She wept backstage, but she learned an important lesson that night. "You can train your hardest, you can try your best and have no regrets -- and still not get what you want." Michelle told an audience at the Aspen Idea Festival. It was a hard lesson for her to learn in front of millions of people. She still had a very successful career after the Olympics in diplomacy.

Marisa: Her later career sounds interesting, too. What were her contributions after the Olympics?

Stella: In 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice appointed Michelle Kwan as the first American Public Diplomacy Envoy. This role will help promote cross cultural dialogue with international youth and to increase understanding of America. "As an athlete, I have always been proud to represent the United States around the world," she said. In 2012, she was employed by the U.S State Department at the Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau where they focus on exchanges, building mutual understanding between countries.

Marisa: What words can you use to describe her since she is so unique?

Stella: She is brave, strong in the heart, strong in the mind, positive, and extremely nice. Some people say that the only word to describe her is "exquisite". She is very talented and an excellent student. I think that her motto, "Work hard, be yourself, and have fun," has served her well. She was America's figure skating sweetheart as well as an excellent leader in diplomacy.

Marisa: Wow, her whole career sounds very interesting. Thank you, Stella, for sharing all this information, I thought I knew a lot about Michelle Kwan, but I guess I did not really know that much about her career especially after ice skating. She has been a champion on and off the ice.



Braden's House

By John Duffie, Grade 5

One cold and cloudy day last winter, we were bouncing along the stone road to my best friend Braden's house. When we got there, we said hello to each other. A while later Braden said, "You want to go get firewood because the pit is running low?"

"Why not?" I said. So a little while later we were off on the road to his uncle's sawmill to get firewood for his family's fire pit in my Kubota. As we were driving along, I could hear the roar of the engine that sounded like a chainsaw. I could hear a woodpecker pecking. I could smell the air, which smelled like gasoline and exhaust.

Before we got to the sawmill, I said, "Look!" We had seen a ten point buck cross the road.

When we got to the sawmill, Braden handed me a bunch of firewood and opened the tailgate and said, "Here, pile these in the back."

Shortly after that we were on our way back to Braden's house. When we arrived we put the firewood into the fire pit (very carefully), then we roasted hot dogs and marshmallows. Both of them tasted great. After that, we played with his dog, Max. Max felt like a pillow when I touched him. He was so happy to see me! We also played a game called Crashletes (where you get on a bike and try to make yourself crash, it doesn't hurt) on his driveway. When we fell, Braden and I were laughing so hard. In addition to that, we played a game called Bike tag and soccer. (Bike tag is when the person who is on a bike and the rest of the people playing have to try and not to get tagged.)

Suddenly, Braden asked "You want to go see something?"

I said "Why not!" So we drove up to his grandparents' house, and I said "Wow!" He had a Yerf Dog go kart that was powered by house light switches. I asked if this was new. Braden told me it was for his birthday. I said "That's a good birthday gift". So we drove back and played with Max some more. Then it was time to go. We said bye and I loaded my Kubota onto the trailer. It was a great day at Braden's house.



Closet World

By Abigail Diamant, Grade 4

Chapter 1

"Goodnight Tommy," I heard my mom say. My eyes were closed though. I was pretending I was asleep. I heard her footsteps walking out of my room and down the stairs. Finally, after a minute or two when I was sure she was gone, I slowly got out of bed, tiptoed across the room, and walked into the closet. Inside the closet, I pushed the clothes aside so I could see the crack in the wall. I pulled the wall out where the crack was. The wall on the other side had a golden button. I pushed the button, and very slowly I began to fall down. I shut my eyes as tight as I could, and tried not to scream. My adventure was about to begin.

Chapter 2

We had moved into this house yesterday. The former owners of this house had a kid. The kid was a couple years older than me, but I don't remember how old or the name of the kid. All he had told me last night when we were moving in and they were moving out was, "Push the wall behind the shelf out of the closet." Big help. I literally had no idea what he was talking about. But when I thought about it, it kind of made sense. There was something behind the wall that I had to find. I knew I would do it tonight.

Chapter 3

So anyway back to the closet. I thought falling into the closet was pretty weird. More frightening actually. After I fell, I felt like I was floating. For like, five minutes, then I finally started to go down quickly. I landed on the top of a tree, and bounced four times.

"Hey!" I heard a voice shriek. "This is a protected area! You're doing something illegal! Now I have to put you in jail!" I looked around myself. About fifty feet away, I could make out a very small person. About two feet tall if I had to guess. But it had sounded like an adult voice. Oh yeah. I wasn't in my normal world. I was in the world of my closet.

Chapter 4

The voice who had yelled at me was walking towards me. It looked like a man. I jumped down from the tree.

"Hello," I said, nodding in the direction of the man.

"Don't try to change the subject," he squeaked. "You're still going to jail."

"I'm really sorry," I said, "I promise I won't do it again."

The man sighed. "I guess I can make an exception for you. Where do you come from? You look very tall." I shrugged. I didn't know if he would know what or where the United States of America was. I started walking around the city I had landed in. All over, the people were small. Houses, buildings, flowers, and people, all had the same features as at home. Just on a smaller scale.

Chapter 5

The news that a giant was here came fast. Not that I was a giant. I was just so much taller than all of these people. Everyone wanted to meet me. I thought they would be scared of me since I was so much bigger, but they were actually really nice and friendly. But too soon, I realized I was going to have to go home. I needed to get back into my bed before my parents woke up. I said goodbye to all of the friends that I had made. But I knew that I would see them again soon. I climbed up the tree that I had landed in before, and the wind slowly carried me back to my closet. I walked into my bed. That was fun, I thought, Maybe I'll do it again tomorrow night.

