



# *Charlotte's Web*

*The Literary Magazine of Ida Crown Jewish Academy*

2011

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*This foundation has enabled the students of Ida  
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literary efforts in a public forum. Thank you to the  
Aments for enabling young writers to shine.*

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### *Dedication*

Though we were never privileged to meet Mrs. Charlotte Rosenwald, a”h, it is in her memory that we dedicate Charlotte’s Web. We have heard about her and we understand that she was an extraordinary teacher; she inspired her students to think, write, create, and be proud of their own accomplishments. It is our hope that the words of this magazine will perpetuate her legacy, imparting that inspiration to this new generation

### *Editor’s Note*

Our Lives are an ever expanding web  
Made up of past experiences  
And of future dreams  
A web of  
The people we’ve known  
The places we’ve been  
And the places we’ll go

This book we present you  
Is our webs intertwined  
Combining our thoughts,  
Our feelings,  
Our minds  
We give you a web  
Threads of the lives we have led  
And invite you dear reader

Come, trace our paths  
Know our journeys  
Both the triumphs and dreads  
Follow our stories  
See those places we’ve been

Those places that define us  
Where our lives have been lived

These places hold our memories  
So close your eyes and see  
The depths of our stories  
And perhaps, our very dreams

We invite you dear reader  
To delve into our book  
Experience our journeys  
Take a closer look  
Dare to untangle  
This web that we weave  
And when you do dear reader  
It is our hope you’ll see

“Here is where I have been  
And now this is me.”

*Meytal Chernoff*

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2011

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# Identity



"I took the road less traveled by, and  
that has made all the difference."

--Robert Frost,  
"The Road Not Taken"



## Ode on a River Flowing Backwards

Baruch Weinberger

I see your waters,  
Rising and ebbing.  
They flow past me,  
Indifferent to us all.

But for all our strength  
Exerted upon you,  
You remain,  
Exerting your own force when given the  
chance.

Yet you're taken for granted,  
And not recognized,  
Despite the tributes to you,  
Still ubiquitous throughout our city.

You've been confined  
Dominated,  
Imprisoned,  
Breaking free violently on occasion.

Before we came, you were peaceful,  
Natural, alone.  
Flowing without resistance,  
Uncontrolled.

And no doubt  
We'll be gone soon enough.  
And you'll return to your previous state,  
Without us to tell you where to go.

All the while,  
I've done nothing,  
Only observed all we've done,  
Imagining your plight.

But you do not care.  
You do not feel.  
You will not be affected by,  
Nor remember me.

## "Feif it up!"

Adir Feifel

I was born a Feifel, my brother-in-law Elan married one, and we are both obsessed with my last name. It was only a matter of time until we thought up a way to show our love for the unique-sounding surname. Elan started to call my sister "Feif the Wife," and this became the inspiration for inventing my new slogan: "Feif it up" became a way of life.

I made sure that anybody who knew me would know my wonderful creation. Telling friends to "Feif it up" while passing by them in the hallways was only the beginning. "Feif" quickly became a noun, verb, adjective, and pretty much every other part of speech. Every popular song or slogan was a potential target to have "Feif" replace a core syllable of its identity. I was no longer just "Adir" or "Feifel." I had somehow managed to give myself a nickname—"Feif."

Admittedly, the initial reaction from friends over my newfound love was less than warm. I understood how this could make me seem somewhat arrogant and annoying, so I did not take

the more than occasional “Shut up!” personally. However, after a “Feiftastic” summer at Camp Moshava, my brainchild was finally accepted into society. Everyone was starting to catch on to just how “Feifsational” my idea truly was.

Pretty soon, other people were using “Feif” in creative ways that I could not have imagined. My invention had become a fresh piece of clay, available for anyone interested in molding my creation to their desire. I felt an unexpected sense of accomplishment when my older brother told me, “You know, Adir, you’ve definitely restored pride and meaning to the family name.”

Then, a new cheer developed at the annual YU Wrestling tournament in February. “Feif it up! Feif it up!” There I was, wrestling for third place, for my team and for pride. The match was deadlocked at the score of 4-4 with one minute remaining; I only needed to stand up to be awarded one point and the win. On cue, my teammates and family erupted into my chant—“Feif it up! Feif it up!” The gym got louder and louder as I stood up and took the lead. “Feif it up! Feif it up!” Thirty seconds. Twenty. Ten. “Feif it up! Feif it up!” I held off my opponent’s last-second shot, the buzzer finally sounded, and my tired arm was triumphantly raised in victory.

I never thought that incorporating my last name into a catchphrase would become such a core part of my identity. I “Feified it up” with my family, at Camp Moshava, in Ida Crown, and even during wrestling matches in New York. However, I do not foresee that this will be the end. Hopefully, my “Feifstyle” will continue in Israel, University, and all my many other future endeavors. What an awesome, crazy invention.

“Feif it up!”

## Memory

*Arielle Braun*

I remember May 10, 2009, as if it were yesterday. I still feel the soft touch of the red velvet curtains. The distinct scent of the theater returns to my nose every time I remember these 30 seconds in time. I hear the light, soft sound of my dance shoes brushing against the marble floor backstage. I taste the same air that many other performers have breathed in before a performance. My stomach turns and I feel the butterflies. Then it is time; time for me to let go of all the nerves and take a deep breath. I see the lights on the theater’s stage fade to a pitch black, and there is my signal. It is time for me to take the stage and shine.

At a dance show, the 30 seconds I wait backstage before my first dance are the longest 30 seconds of my life. The quiet around me leaves me all alone, with just me and my thoughts. So many different thoughts go through my head at once: my dances, the people watching me, and wondering what I would do if I “mess up”. Those 30 seconds that I am alone with my thoughts sometimes feel like hours.

Since I have been in many dance shows and competitions, people might think I would

not get nervous anymore. I would like to see them learn about ten different dances in all different genres, remember them all, and perform in front of many of their friends, families, and judges. I would like to see them do all those tasks and then tell me they were not nervous. It is almost impossible to avoid the nerves while standing backstage alone. I think about the dance, the costume, the people watching, the counts, and the steps. So many images go through my head: memories of learning the choreography and then the final piece. I remember the three hour rehearsals every night for the whole week leading up to the performance. All these crazy images and thoughts stop with one simple change in lighting. The darkness on stage signals to me that it is now my time to wipe away my fears and thoughts and just break free. Now it is my time to show everybody all my hard work. It is time for me to just dance.

I remember these 30 seconds so clearly. I think it is because I go through this same process of nerves and waiting to perform about five times a year. Dancing and performing have really helped me grow as a person. They have given me courage to face my fears and realize that although I might be nervous during those 30 seconds in time, within the next 30 seconds, I will be expressing myself without using even words. Once I get on stage, all my fears suddenly disappear, and it is so much fun!

## **A Rushed Accident**

*Jake Bentley*

Balancing myself forward, hunched over  
Pedaling ahead on my bike,  
The bright sun beams down  
On the tar road, and the lazy grass.

I am thin, curious and thirteen years of age.  
I am aware of the heat, and the puddle forming  
From a nearby hose.  
I am challenging myself, and the speed-breaking drag.

In my khaki shorts and black Star-Wars t-shirt  
I wonder,  
Just how long have I been riding my bike?  
But every time I come close, I forget the answer.

My parents are inside,  
Keeping two eyes on my younger brother,  
Probably playing with the longer end of the stick.  
But I understand.

I try speeding up,  
I try turning the curb,  
I rush to get inside, now fully aware of the heat,  
But I stumble, and fall off my bike, just to linger on the ground.

It's nearly four in the morning. I sit on my bunk bed in cabin G2 at Camp Moshava in Wild Rose, Wisconsin, with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* nestled in my lap. My head is spinning and my face is sticky with dried tears, yet somehow I feel this strange sense of elation filling my chest. It's the feeling of inspiration. After finishing a book so wondrous, I feel the need to create. So at four in the morning, I pick up my pen.

J.K. Rowling has always filled my world with enchantment. When I was little, she gave me some of my best friends. She created a rich world to which I could escape and games for my friends and me to play. I read and reread her books. I grew to love fantasy. I staunchly believed in her world, and was wildly disappointed that I was a Muggle and couldn't be a part of it.

J.K. Rowling was also my teacher. Because I fell in love with the *Harry Potter* series as a young and impressionable child, her books had a great impact on me, reinforcing with her characters and plots what my parents had taught me through words and actions: the values of kindness, courage, loyalty, strength, and friendship. It is because of these lessons that I befriend the new girl whom the "cool" kids shun. Because of these lessons I help a humiliated girl clean up after she falls in the mud. Because of these lessons I have the courage to speak out. J.K. Rowling has helped shape who I am today, and I am exceedingly grateful.

J.K. Rowling is now my role model. When I was younger, I borrowed her characters and her world and wrote fan fiction. Now that I am older, I realize that I want to do what she did for me. I want to create a world for some lucky ten-year-old to get lost in. I want to create characters that can comfort a teenager in a moment of sadness. I want to teach a child a moral without lecturing. I want to inspire. I want to write.

## Lost and Found

Matthew Silberman

I am from \$5 pencils, always lost,  
From only the best Colgate,  
From CDs, sitting pristine in multicolored  
cases.

I'm from "Look at this watermelon!"  
To "Check out these tomatoes!"  
My dad's voice rising from The Garden.

I am from "Clean your room!" and "Stop  
wasting time!"  
And from "You'll grow; just look at your brothers!"  
I'm from fights with Jason (the precursor to  
embrace),  
Donny with a look of disapproval,  
Ricky always on the fence.

I am from losing the underappreciated objects,  
And finding the long-forgotten treasures.

I am from hands held each Friday night,  
From matzah balls, and schnitzel, and brisket,  
and mashed potatoes.

I'm from waking up to my dad's singing, and  
walking to shul on Saturday mornings,  
And from dull, friendless Saturday afternoons  
at home.

I am from climbing every mountain,  
My four grandparents, the four Survivors,  
Always in my mind and heart.  
I am from Marisia Szul, who didn't turn away  
When other potential "righteous among the  
nations" did.

I am from Poland; I am from Lincolnwood,  
Illinois.  
I am from a family, lost in pictures,  
reduced to four grandparents and their children.

I am from Bar Mitzvah albums,  
From baby pictures in the hallway upstairs,  
Showing the evolution of four boys  
Who came from four grandparents  
And one Righteous woman.

*Based on "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid*

You can't stay up late; your sisters get to because they're older; when you're older, you can do what they do; you'll do exactly what they do; go to their middle school; go to their high school; go to their college; you're still a kid, so if we think you need to study harder because you're not doing as well as you should, you do it; don't let school get too much in the way of fun; But what if I don't want to do the same things as my sisters?; don't let anyone get you down; be yourself, even if that means being a bit strange now and then; you can be an odd bird, but make sure you're a nice one to have around; this is how you're read to; this is how you read; this is how you learn; this is how you learn to love learning; this is how to listen to daddy when he's giving you a long, intelligent answer; this is how you learn SAT words from your father's long, intelligent answers; this is how you drive a car; this is how you ignore four backseat drivers when you finally get behind the wheel; this is how to deal with everyone getting teary-eyed at how big you are; this is how you listen; this is how to feel like you don't have anything intelligent to say around a family of adults; this is how you speak up; this is how you impress the adults with what you say; this is how you work; this is how you ask for help; this is how you accept help, even when you feel you can do it on your own; you can't do everything by yourself; you're still a kid, you need some help sometimes; one day you'll be old enough to do more by yourself; But what if I won't know how to do it by myself?; You mean to say that after all that you plan on staying the baby after all?

**Berry Memories**

Tova Benjamin

When the sun starts to set  
Before darkness has crept  
I go to the park.

It is a special time;  
Bittersweet  
Leaving room for wanting  
The heat subsided, a cool breeze  
Rustling the branches the leaves and trees

The quiet sounds of another day ending  
Car doors closing

Children soaking in  
Those last few minutes  
I soak it in  
As I walk to the park.

And in the park, along the paths  
Are the trees  
The tall stately overseeing trees  
Casting twilight shadows  
While the wind whispers through their tangled  
branches  
Whispering secrets of this special time

I go to the hunched over tree  
Like a hunched over old man  
Wrinkled and weather beaten  
But like the old man  
This tree bears wonders;  
Sweet black mulberries

I pick off the ripe bursting fruit  
And blissfully eat  
Eating and eating the sweet tart fruit  
Feeling the lumps of berries littered under my  
feet

I could stay all day,  
Eating those delectable  
Delicious,  
Mouth puckering and soft berries  
But the park starts to empty  
And the night starts to settle  
So I leave.

As I leave I observe my hands  
Fingers stained  
With purplish bluish berry stains  
And my lips stained with purplish bluish berry  
stains

I think of things that are like berries  
Ripe and bursting, sweet and tart  
Gobbled in a moment  
Leaving behind a purplish stain  
And I think of memories

Memories of glorious days

Memories of loved ones far away  
Memories that fill my heart with joy  
Memories  
Bittersweet memories  
For they are long gone and over

The memories are short lasting  
But the taste lingers,  
Like the berry taste still in my mouth  
And the seeds stuck in my teeth  
And the stains on my palms

But even though the stains on my hands will  
wash away  
The memories I have will still remain  
Lasting like every sunrise and sunset  
Like the beautiful moment before the darkness  
has crept.

Death-eaters and Aurors fire at each other from behind bookends. Pirates scale the shelves, while Dracula stalks the Princess Bride. The door opens, I enter, and the bookshelves fall silent once again.

I grew up surrounded by bookcases where stories are crammed together and books are stacked in every corner. Their heroes remain with me in the ever changing pile beside my bed, in each new home, supporting me through every difficult day.

A stressful week in school calls for George R. R. Martin and his tales of seven warring kingdoms. The death of a friend called for Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban, a tale where no one dies and the good guy escapes into the night.

Books are both my escape and scrapbook. At times, I simply allow myself to fall into the yellowed pages of a favorite story and enter an alternative world. For hours, I remain in a world of magic and heroes, where good always triumphs over evil. Yet, at other times, books are my window to the past. Opening an old favorite, I am reminded of the sights and smells of the places where the book was opened last. I see myself reading with my uncle on my grandfather's peeling red dock or lying on the beach with my dad.

Scattered on my desk are my latest library finds; the products of time spent walking between the shelves in search of an author's latest release or a title that catches my eye. Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond, lies atop Vampire Hunter D by Hideyuki Kikuchi, in an eclectic collection that expands as I grow. Each book contains new knowledge to impart, each a new world to be explored.

As I have grown and changed, books have remained my constant: steadying friends when I need a comforting shoulder, and an escape from the world of limitations. I take comfort from their feel within my hand, the curled corners where I marked my place, and the crackle of a newly opened spine. They tie me to my past, even as I race toward an unknown future.

As I stand behind the curtains, waiting, I can feel the butterflies fluttering inside me and my blood pressure rise. The black fabric of the curtains tickles my face as I attempt to peep between them. I am trying to assess the audience. Behind me I hear “Break-a-Leg” and “Good show” but I tune them out: I have already transformed into my character. My heart beats all the way into my fingertips. The music has started. For the next hour, the people on the other side of this curtain belong to me and my job is to entertain them.

I always knew that I wanted to be a performer. I was the child who went to a show and noticed how the performer commanded the audience, how her expressions and her character melted into one. I noticed the way the actor rolled his eyes and how his shoes clacked on the floor with each word he spoke. So, when I landed a role in a play, I was not surprised. I knew that my character would become my best friend and be with me in my ups and downs on our journey together.

This is, in fact, what happened. I personified my character, discovering her likes, dislikes, her past, and her interests. In this way, I became closer to perfecting my role. During the process, obstacles were thrown at me, but they only made me a better actor. As I added my costume and make-up to my new persona, I became closer still to this new friend.

The moment I stepped into my place was bittersweet. My character was now closer to me than ever. We shared every limb in my body; we were one. As I stood behind the black velvet curtains, I knew that this was my moment. But I also recognized something else: Once the play was over, my character—now my friend—would be gone, added to a slew of other roles to come. At that moment, the overdone eye make-up and dark lipstick that I used to give me color onstage would not have sufficed to color my pale face. I wanted to step back, to prolong my good bye to this friend whom I had come to know so well. I took one more peek between the curtains at the faces of the people who would share this special experience with me. I realized that the show, like life, goes on. Memory is G-d’s blessing that will allow me to treasure this moment in my heart forever.



# FAMILY

**You are not the child of the people you call mother and father, but their fellow-adventurer on a bright journey to understand the things that are.”**

***--Richard Bach***

## **Welcome, Baby Sister**

*Shira Lebowitz*

Have you ever felt that light weight in your  
arms?  
You can only stop and stare  
Her delicate little limbs  
The red bow in her hair  
The way her mouth moves when she sleeps,  
So you know just what she is dreaming of  
You are careful not to make a peep  
You don't want to wake her up  
Have you ever felt that pride?  
You are holding a new life in your arms  
Just twenty-four hours old  
Promise you won't let her come to harm  
She sighs and you cuddle her close  
Of all the things you love in this world  
You know you love her the most  
Have you ever seen her open her eyes?  
A startling shade of blue  
She stares as if she could know  
There is something safe about you.  
You are overwhelmed with emotion  
You lean down to kiss her  
Whisper in a soft, soft voice  
Welcome, baby sister.

Across the table sits the lovable silver back gorilla, my Dad, a man with natural musical talents and a wild sense of humor. To his left sits his independent hippy soul mate, my Mom, who perseveres yet fails to sing with him on key. On his right side sits “Mr. Cool,” my brother Sam, with an appreciative smirk and a sharp wit. He, unlike Mom, contributes to the song with his smooth beat and table-drumming. To the left of the tone-deaf Mom-goddess, I sit impatiently, smiling, contributing harmonies and scats, and analyzing everyone simultaneously. Dad continues with his over-powering belting, Mom resorts to “listening,” my brother’s intense drumming spills the red wine across the pristine white table cloth, and I uncontrollably chuckle as they react to disaster. Yes, my every day family life is simply a screen play.

Throughout high school, I have kept a journal full of scenes of screen plays that I have written. Many of which have been inspired by real people and events from my life. From the day Dad bought twenty four boxes of cardboard cereal because they were on sale, to the time Mom locked herself in the bathroom for three hours, to the day we woke up to firemen and the smell of 5:00 a.m. burnt steaks, my adventures have been recorded. I often wonder what a successful television show my life would be. The only difference between my show, and the ones seen on television, is that mine would not require canned giggling. Rather, viewers would be howling at my experiences.

People aware of my interest in creative writing advise that I become a novelist or a journalist. Although these options are considerations, my stories need to be heard. Without humor, my writing as well as my life would be incomplete. I would like people to experience wittiness, and provide them with a unique way to approach every day humor and incorporate it into writing.

I was a smiley seven year old,  
happily running down the thirteen stairs that would lead me to my mother, on Mother's Day.  
It was a Sunday morning;  
the exciting feeling I usually got running down those stairs to watch Sunday morning cartoons  
was being replaced by the excitement I felt as I prepared to hand my mother  
the present I had made for her in school.  
My 2nd grade teacher told us that we had to keep it in a safe place  
and keep it secret.  
Being a seven year old with a big mouth, the moment I woke up that morning  
I sprinted as fast as I could to hand my mother the jar that I had filled, layer by layer, with  
brownie mix.  
The lid covering this jar was decorated in pink, with a note hanging from the side reading  
"Happy Mother's Day!"  
My mother gave me the measurements and ingredients to life, growing up, being a good person:  
½ a cup of bravery,  
½ a cup of responsibility, of independence,  
½ a cup of courage, of confidence,  
½ a cup of good judgment,  
And I gave her the measurements and ingredients to bake brownies.  
She gave me the ingredients for being a good friend,  
mix kindness, laughter, listening, maturity, and respect in a bowl,  
add in a pinch of drama, and a tablespoon of the knowledge needed to understand  
what a true friend really is.  
And I gave her the ingredients to bake brownies.  
She gave me the recipe for being happy,  
to knowing that it is not what is on the outside that counts,  
to knowing that it is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice,  
to knowing that true happiness, is being happy with what you have.  
And I gave her the recipe to bake brownies.

She threw in clothes, food, shelter,  
and the little things, such as jewelry, surprise trips to manicures,  
school supplies, that new, expensive thing that I just HAD to have,  
mixed it all up, just to make sure I remain satiated.

I threw in flour, sugar, cocoa, and chocolate chips,  
the ingredients to bake brownies.  
She adds her final ingredients and finishing touches,  
giving me all of her time, all of her advice,  
her shoulder to cry on, her hand to hold,  
her guidance, her direction, her love.  
And I gave her the ingredients to baking brownies.  
On the bottom of the jar that I handed to her that day was sugar,  
the ingredient that makes the lovable taste, the sweetness.  
Then came the cocoa, the part of the brownie that gives it color,  
gives it flavor, and gives it its name.  
Next comes the chocolate chips, the added bonus, a bit of excitement.  
Lastly, on the top, laid the flour,  
The key ingredient to helping the brownies grow, live up to their potential, and making them as  
complete and full as possible.  
While the brownie ingredients were in no way equal to what I receive from my mother daily,  
each ingredient represented something she adds to my life.  
She mixed everything I could have ever possibly asked for together,  
and truly instilled in me the ingredients to love, life, and more.  
I could not ask for a better mother...she truly has her own secret recipe.

## **How to be the “Middle” Child**

*Ariana Maeir*

When you are told you're taking a family trip, try to show excitement, even though that is the total  
opposite of what you are feeling.  
Tell your family that you feel the trip will be incredible, when in reality you know that it will be  
horrible for you.  
Listen to everyone else share their excitement, and tell yourself that you should be feeling that  
way.  
Cry inside, or out loud, because you already know that you will be left out.  
Go along for the ride, and hope that someone sees your sadness.  
Hope that they will try to make you feel better.  
Hope that it will be better than what you are expecting.  
Hold yourself together. Appear to be excited as well.  
Feel that you are a part of this new family, even though most of the time you feel like an out-  
sider.

Be happy for everyone else, that they will be able to enjoy their time away.  
Help everyone else pack, even though you are dreading it yourself.  
Discuss with your stepsisters all of the fun things you are going to do together, even if shopping and going to the spa doesn't sound like your idea of fun.  
Hold your mother's hand on the plane out of fear—fear of flying and fear of the trip beginning.  
Get off of the plane.  
Feel your anxiety for the trip go away.  
Realize that in a place like this, it can't be that bad.  
Honestly show your new found excitement to the rest of the family.  
Prove them wrong by showing them you won't be the one to ruin everyone's trip this time.  
Prove them wrong by showing them you can be happy.  
Have an amazing time during the trip, and don't even think about being in a bad mood, or being sad while on the trip.  
Return home, and realize that even though not everything on the trip had to do with you or what you wanted, you still had an amazing time.  
Tell everyone that you had the most amazing time, and that you can't wait for the next family trip.  
Mean what you say to them with all honesty.  
Unpack, and get back to normal life. Realize that while yes, you are the middle child, that doesn't mean you aren't loved. It doesn't mean that the oldest and the youngest are more important. Not everything has to revolve around you or what you want. And during the time when it does have to do with you and what you want, be happy, but then move on. Be happy during everyone else's time also, and try to have fun. Realize that there is no need to be afraid to try and have fun before you go, because you don't know what it will be like. It could be the best trip of your life. When you have realized all of these things that you have to do, and accept them, you have successfully become the perfect "middle" child.  
Welcome yourself home.

The shovel dug into the large pile of dirt. I tearfully lifted the dirt and gingerly let it fall into the grave of my bubbe. I was in the of the Milwaukee Jewish cemetery. The beautiful, green grass surrounding was decorated with gravestones of different shapes and colors, but they were all invisible to me at that moment. Closer to me, other family members were watching me, and waiting for their turn to assist the burial process. But they too were invisible. All I saw was the dirt falling into the grave, helping bury my bubbe in her beautiful wooden casket.

I didn't understand why my sorrow was so great. For a few years before Bubbe's death, we had expected her life to end. But she persevered, her continued life being a marvel as well as a blessing. 96 years old. 97 years. 98. Finally, in 2008, she passed away at the age of 99. I was 12 at the time, and I had never experienced the death of a loved one before. I had never been to a funeral that I could remember. Therefore, I didn't know the custom of family members helping to bury the dead.

When I saw my grandmother tearfully shovel the first clumps of dirt into the grave, I was confused. Why did the family members have to add to their grief? It didn't make sense to me. It also didn't seem fair that the last memory I have of my Bubbe is shoveling dirt into her grave. During the service, I didn't question.

A while later, though, I had to ask my mom what the purpose of this particular custom is. My mom told me that this is strictly a Jewish custom and that it is done for two reasons. First, the act of helping someone who you know can never repay you is considered the highest act of kindness. The reason that stuck with me, though, was the second. Personally burying a loved one finalizes the death. Nobody can fool themselves into believing that they will see their loved one again if they take part in burying them. Although it seems like a terrible thing to have to do, finality is needed to gain closure. The service soon ended, and we drove to my grandmother's house for dinner.

Today, the most recent memory of my bubbe is burying her. But I remember eating lunch with her at her nursing home. I remember how her face would light up when my siblings and I entered the room. I remember the 10 dollars she would give us every time we celebrated a birthday, and how she expected us to save it up for college. The funeral may be the most recent memory I have of my bubbe, but when I think of her, the memories of the amazing times we shared fill my mind.

I walked into her room; the room with the spotless, wooden floor. How she managed to keep it this clean I'll never know; my room always looks like a tornado hit it. By the door, I see her three pairs of Nikes that she uses to play tennis. Daddy always bought her the best and newest apparel for the sport for which they shared a love. I wish I had had something like that to bond with him.

Propped up by the wall was the broken mirror. I remember when our dog, Daisy, knocked it over; of course it was my fault for not having put her on the leash.

There on the desk are piles of homework assignments with perfect scores. Teachers are always surprised when, after teaching my sister, I'm their student and then I receive grades that are just average. Next to the homework assignments are her incense sticks. Set up so perfectly in that little jar, they always make her room smell so delicious and yummy. There is her Curel mega-size bottle of moisturizer that she puts on her tan skin in so that she should glisten and glimmer. And her aqua colored desk lamp with sections for office supplies, which she plays with for hours, organizing and reorganizing until she thinks that it is perfect.

On top of the desk, is that bookshelf crammed with books just waiting to be read, sitting there anticipating the day that she will pull them out to read, yet she never does because she's too busy with all of her drama and clothes. There sitting on top of the bookshelf is the big tennis tournament trophy. I remember watching her play, wishing that I could play alongside her, as if I was coordinated enough to walk in a straight line. Next to the trophy are her many CDs organized by artists. When she pulls them out to listen to them, I have to hold myself back from running in to dance with her; I know that she would scream at me if I did.

In front of the desk there's the blue swivel chair that I once threw up on after spinning on so many times. I had to scrub it clean by myself.

Across from the desk are her two dressers, not one, two. I only have one. One of her dressers is parallel to her bed and the other is in front of the window. The dressers have beautiful necklaces on top that I only wish she would let me borrow. When she wears them they sparkle and shine so much that I just want to grab them and run. On the other dresser, she has fragrance bottles, of all different colors, scents, and size. With one poof she instantly smells like a rose garden or an apple or lavender, depending on which bottle she chooses.

Her walls are the best, they are collaged with ripped out advertisements, inspiring pictures that she created, but of course, orange sticky notes with messages, and her graduation tassel. I remember the way Mommy looked at her, when she walked down that aisle in her long graduation gown. I would do anything to be looked at like that, with that much intense love and pride in her eyes.

And let's not forget all of her art supplies. Those beautiful copic markers neatly put in a container in the corner of the room. I remember, one time I really wanted to use them for my science project. I was told that they weren't mine to play with, but I couldn't resist, so I went into her room and took three of them assuming no one would notice. Within ten minutes the door of my room was thrown open. Of course! She was just about to use the sunflower yellow marker, when she saw it was missing. Boy, did I get yelled at for that!

I've always wanted to open that black notebook, sitting there at her bedside, placed next to her Timex alarm clock. She is constantly scribbling in there. I bet she is creating her latest ideas and projects in there, utilizing her brilliance. I once asked her if I could peek into it for just a moment, and she responded by explaining that it is not a book for immature minds like my own.

On the shelf, which holds her books, lay her Derwent watercolor pencils. I've dreamed about what it would feel like to hold those magical pencils that transform every paper they touch into a masterpiece.

I hear some talking outside, and push the white blinds to the side to see my mother talking to my neighbor. While she's talking she gently releases Daisy's leash, pats Daisy and tells her to go inside. Daisy makes a bolt for the door, and starts running up the stair to me. She leaps into the comfy, brown chair full of random clothes and two fuzzy designer pillows, as I run to guard the big hanging mirror, with the Amnesty International postcards taped to it. I don't want another broken mirror incident. I yell at Daisy and tell her to be careful not to knock over the puppet creation that my sister constructed three summers ago. With her head down to the floor Daisy turns to the door, as her foot tangles in the green headphones and the cell phone charger. Trying to set free, Daisy knocks over the clear, empty trashcan. I quickly pull the electronics off of her foot, put them back where they belong, pick the trashcan upright, and follow Daisy out of the room.

As I walk towards my room I see my sister walking out of my room. Oh no! What if she knows what I was doing? But wait what was she doing in mine? As she passes me, she pulls me towards her and whispers,

"You should only know how lucky you are."

*A work of fiction based on "The Lady in the Looking Glass" by Virginia Woolf*

Sugar, salt, pepper, and Papa's secret home-made-barbeque sauce--this is what I watched my Papa use to marinate his famous Fourth of July ribs. As I watched my Papa marinate the ribs, I blocked out the non-stop ringing of the kitchen phone and the swish of the wind shaking the back screen door. I was completely focused on one thing: my Papa's passion as he seasoned those ribs.

It has always been a tradition in the Witt household that, at the age of ten, a grandchild is allowed to take the food out to the buffet table at the start of our Fourth of July dinner. When I was in fifth grade, I had the honor.

There I was, feeling the heat of July but thinking only of one thing--eating the perfect ribs. While I waited for the ribs to be done, I talked with my Grandfather about life and crossword puzzles (which my grandfather is obsessed with solving). My anticipation grew. Finally, he opened the barbeque grill, and steam poured out. The ribs were done.

With the plate gripped tightly in my hand, I watched my Papa place one rib at a time on the plate. As each rib was placed on the plate, my mouth watered more and more. The plate was filled. Now it was time to do my job.

Walking up each stair of the back porch leading to the dining room, I grew more and more eager. I smiled at all of my relatives who had come for dinner, my eyes on their expectant faces. That is when it happened. I tripped. The ribs flew up in the air. I felt my face redden with shame as I fell. Even worse, the ribs were on the floor and could not be eaten. I had ruined an entire day of hard work, all because of my clumsiness.

I ran to the bathroom and started to cry. My Bubie and Papa followed me. "Don't worry, Arianna," my Bubie said. "Thank G-d we made chicken," my Papa said. When I could finally stop crying, I left the bathroom and went to get dinner, knowing that, sadly, ribs would not be on the menu.

This past July Fourth, my younger brother E.J. turned ten. Apparently allowing a fifth grader to serve the main course is not a Witt tradition anymore.

## **Family Photo**

*David Quintas*

I am on the porch of my family's summer home in Michiana. The black material of my brother's t-shirt contrasts with the white of mine. My shirt has an elaborate, doodle-like design on it, and the name-tag sewn into my collar is peeking out. My hair is longer than I can ever remember it being. I am sitting on the green and gray chairs we have placed all around our porch. My face is arranged in my best "picture smile" for my mother's camera. I am 15 years old, and I am mostly happy. Being myself has become very important to me, as well as having motivation and perspective. It is also very important for me to spend time with my brother before he leaves for Israel for the year.

Each summer, my family spends as many weekends as we can in our summer home in Michiana. We spend the days relaxing, playing games, and reading, until it is time to pack up and drive home. At this moment, my family and I had just sat down on the porch for a large barbequed family dinner. My mother interrupted our meal with her camera, wanting to preserve the moment. We all grumbled a little about having to stop eating for a few minutes, but we all smiled and put our arms around each other anyway.

After the pictures were taken, we all resumed our meal and conversation. I chose this picture, because although our smiles were prompted, they did not feel forced. This moment was one of the last meals my family ate together with all six members present, as my brother left for his year abroad a few days later. When I look at this picture, I wonder if my siblings and I will always remain as close as we are in this moment. Today my brother is in Israel and will soon go off to college, as will I and my other siblings. But I remember when we all lived together at home and would eat dinner together on our porch, watching the sun set while we talked and laughed.

## **A Change in Perspective**

*Meytal Chernoff*

Once I admired Peter Pan for his daring, black and white mentality, and refusal to age. Now as we sit on the peeling dock of my grandfather's home in the Laurentians, a place where family comes together yearly, I know better. Family is what Peter needs. There I tell him that villains exist so he need not hunt false pirates. I show him that family ties matter and people miss him, which I know having lost a best friend. Finally, one must grow up, and to make a difference, one must see the grey.

## Two Gift Certificates

Shayna Jacoby

I gave my mother two small gift certificates so that she could get a manicure. On a Friday afternoon I rode my bike to the salon and bought the thin slips of paper, each in a little envelope. You knew something was going on once I left. When I got home, I gave you the gift certificates. You gave me a hug, and we headed back to the salon and both got our nails done using the same certificates that I had just bought.

You gave me art supplies and two wonderful summers at camp so that I would be happy,  
And I gave you two gift certificates.

You gave me clothing so that I would look nice,  
And I gave you two manicures.

You give me a home and a freshly cooked dinner each night so that I will be comfortable,  
And I gave you two slips of paper.

You give me books and school supplies so that I will be prepared,  
And I gave you a chance to get your nails done.

You give me love and attention,  
And I gave you two manicures.

You gave me confidence and a love of reading,  
And I gave you two gift certificates.

But the truth is you can never repay your mother,  
For no matter how much you try, how much you give,  
She turns around and gives it right back.

Even though I gave you two manicures, you immediately gave one back to me.

## His Garbage and Our Hidden Treasure

Elana Perlow

I am now visiting my 134th great great great great grandchild's room. Let's see what this one is doing with his life. Hopefully it will not be as disappointing as the other 133.

As I slowly open the door, I see a large room, the walls all painted with images of a castle, the ceiling designed to look like a sky, clouds scattered throughout the room. This is something I could relate to! He has a mural on his wall. Did he paint this? If so, this grandson of mine sure is a good artist. He must have painted it himself on a lonely summer afternoon. He felt bold and artistic that day, knowing that his white walls were too plain for his introspective personality. He had not asked his mother or father, thinking then they would love this surprise. They had not. He obviously got his artistic abilities from my side. I was a wonderful artist of my time, always designing the covers for the Aron HaKodesh in our shul. There is no wonder why he painted castles on

his walls and clouds on the ceiling, a matching sky bedspread to travel along with his adventurous room. He is a worldly man, loving to travel with his suitcase and messenger bag at the ready. A typical Jew, always needing to be ready to leave our homes at the drop of a hat. But he wishes to see the world? He has two globes carefully placed throughout the room. One near his bed, the other by his desk for his day dreaming during his studies, most likely. Wait, what is this? This picture of him and his brother in the Israel, that has been made into a pillow. Is this my descendent, merely six generations after me, in Israel? Is he in the same land that Avraham was promised? The resting place of our forefathers and mothers? The ground where the Beit Hamikdash stood? Was he able to take this photograph in the land that the Jewish people prayed about for thousands of years, and put it on a pillow? Yet, here he is, smiling in the only country where Hashem's Shechina has ever rested. He stands with his brother in front of the only remaining wall of the Beit Hamikdash, the home of Hashem. Look at that smile across his face, I can see the Judaism that rushes in him and in his soul flowing freely in his life. He has made it into a pillow, using it dream at night. Come to think of it, what is a better place to rest one's head, than with your brother in the land of Israel?

But wait, what is this? There seems to be some type of advertisement for a film, an autograph in the bottom left corner, hanging next to his bed. Look! Here is another one, rolled up next to his dresser, filled with quotations, by what appears to be famous celebrities. Yet, none of the people whom he quoted have Jewish names. How could this be? A grandson of mine filling his room with posters of nonsense that could do no good to the neshama? Why would he hang this up on his wall? What is so significant about this film? Is the video even related to Judaism? Why aren't there any quotes by Rambam, Rashi, Or HaChayim on this poster? Who is this "Lil' Wayne," "Johnny Depp," and "Paris Hilton?" Are these the current poskim of his time? I must be missing something- this is inconceivable that my descendent would ever devote so much of his time to anything but Torah.

Yet, here is another object that seems to occupy his times, a ski helmet and ski goggles. I am surprised by this devotion to skiing. Who would have thought that he has enough time to spend sliding down mountains during the winter that he would buy a special hat and glasses for this activity? This seems like a joyful way to pass time, but where are his chumashim and his seferim? Where are all the books that he is supposed to be reading, the ones that I devoted my life in studying? Why is he not taking advantage of his freedom to express religion? I do not understand this dedication to sports. Why are so many of my descendants squandering their limited time on this earth by partaking in these physical hobbies or watching others play these sports? What is so fascinating about these games? Hashem told us clearly what he wanted us to do. He gave us the blueprints to the world, yet my children are not paying close attention to them.

Across the room lies a Cubs pillow, carelessly placed in the corner. Again with the sports!

Aren't the Cubs the baseball team who has not won the World Series in over a century? It seems to me that if he loves sports so much, then why is he rooting for this particular team that has never won in his lifetime, his father's lifetime, or his grandfather's lifetime? Regardless, I feel proud of my foolish descendent who has so much rachmanus and devotion for this poor, losing squad.

Next to the pillow is a garbage can, marked with his name by what seems to be a printing press. I find it quite humorous that his trash can is marked with his name on it. Not many would confuse my great great great great grandson's garbage with anyone else's. With his crumpled up drafts of essays and sketches that have minor mistakes, he throws all the imperfection away, wishing to cleanse himself of any bad.

Ah, but what is this? Finally, I see a true treasure in his room: a full set of the Mishna B'rura sitting right next to his bed. How lucky my descendent is to be able to have access to such extraordinary works. I can see that it is constantly used, finger marks that have smudged the ink, binding well broken in, with a tattered, comfortable look to the pages. This makes me happier than anything and I feel comforted that not all of my descendent have strayed from my path.

I feel the future reputation and name of this family is in good hands with him. Yes, it seems like he has interests that were different than mine, however, when comparing him to my other 133 great great great great grandchildren, he seems to have his head on his shoulders and the right priorities. Although, I would not mind seeing a few more books in his room and a little less American culture.

## **How to be a Good Sister**

*Hannah Otis*

When she looks at a brochure for her school in Israel, act excited, even though you wish she would never leave you.

Tease her a lot, saying how great life will be without her, with a joking smile. Try not to cry because of how much you know you will miss her.

Watch her begin packing. Give her something special for her to take with her to remember you.

Listen to her babble on and on about what a great time she will have and agree wholeheartedly; do not think about how lonely you will be without her. Savor every moment that you still have left with her.

Wake up at 4 a.m. to help her pack her belongings into the car. Ride with her to the airport and talk lightheartedly. Try not to wish she would miss her flight.

Hug her and kiss her again and again. Tell her that you love her. Promise to write her mails every day. Turn your face away, so she will not see the tears streaming down your face. Wave to her and watch as she passes through security and walks away, never looking back.

Turn back tearfully to walk back to the car. Call her as soon as she arrives at the school.

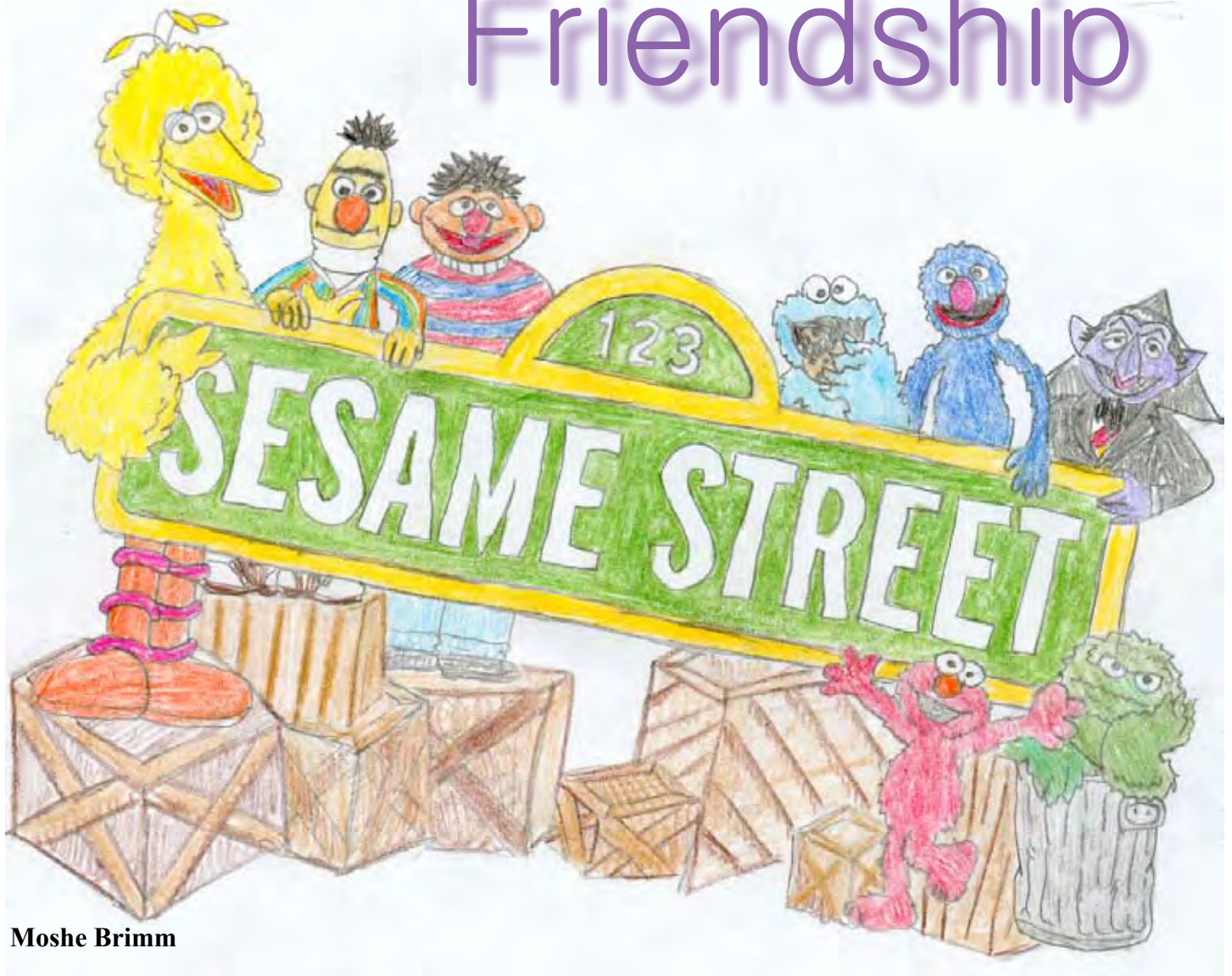
Wipe the tears away from your face. Try to become the older sister to your younger sister that your older sister was to you, knowing all the while that to do so is impossible.

I am from wool blankets,  
from Colgate and Stonyfield Farms.  
I am from the freezing basement that lures me in  
during muggy summer months.  
I am from the towering locust trees,  
and the speckled miscanthus, whose long, finger-like tips partially  
block the entrance to my home.

I'm from Ye Olde Fudge Shoppe and artistic ability,  
from Bob Stein and adopted cousin Gabriella.  
I'm from the planners and providers,  
from "Don't use up all the milk!" and "You'll thank me later."  
I'm from long, serene walks after the Shabbat meal,  
belly full but mind still hungry.  
I'm from America and Russia,  
spinach pie and chowder on Wednesdays.  
From a 92 year-old great-uncle residing in a retirement home, still using antique clippers,  
circa 1930, to trim a co-resident's hair,  
and my great-grandmother's small china figurine filled with silver bell candies.

Posted on walls,  
framed photographs of joyful family members doing mundane things,  
sometimes I wish I could travel back in time.  
I am the result of all these moments.  
Without them,  
I'd be nothing.

# Friendship



Moshe Brimm

“A journey is best measured in friends, rather than in miles”

—Tim Cahill

Truth. I get off the train at Union and go my usual way  
Up the escalator to the outside world via Adams.  
I know my purpose here and I show those who pass me by  
That I am important. I must walk briskly to my class at the  
Institute.

As I walk in this manner, I can't help but recognize the less  
Fortunate who would be overjoyed to attain the five one-dollar  
Bills that are deep in my pocket, and I feel that I have some sort of obligation to share them with others.

So as I walk across the bridge over the river, I see my first  
Opportunity. He is sitting in is permanent chair with sunglasses  
And holding his most prized possession: a cup, also known as a  
Collector. I practically run up to him, greet him cordially, and proceed  
To place a dollar in his cup.

I feel good. I have done a kind deed. But as I start  
To go on my way, I hear him yell out, "why thank you  
Kind friend." Then it truly hits me.

So every day for two weeks, as I walk across  
The bridge over the river via Adams, I see him sitting in is permanent chair with sunglasses  
And holding his most prized possession.  
I practically run up to him, greet him cordially,  
And then we would chat for a minute or two.  
Only after would I proceed to place a dollar in his cup.

He's gone now. I don't know where, I  
Don't know how, I don't know why.  
I surely do miss him, with his great smile  
And innocent personality. I also do remember  
The lesson he showed me, though not through actual  
Words. When life becomes rough, and for me it  
Definitely is, don't ever look down. Look straight  
Ahead and keep on going, just like my friend on Adams Street.

When you hear you are moving, do not complain. Focus on fitting all of your clothes into the boxes that fill your room. Leave your empty apartment for the last time and realize that the location is not what makes it your home. Say goodbye to your friends, not for forever, but just until you get the chance to visit. Find your seat on the airplane and read the notes that your friends have written to you. Realize how lucky you are to have them as friends. Start to wonder about your new school and how long it will take you to make new friends. Land on the tarmac and go to the baggage claim to retrieve the bags of stuff that did not make it into the boxes. Arrive at your new home. Try to organize your clothes, shoes, and jewelry, only to realize that there is not nearly enough room. Jump into the car and drive to Bed Bath and Beyond to buy some makeshift cabinets. Wake up the next morning. Go downstairs to get a bowl of cereal and realize that you do not have any milk. Instead, take a granola bar. Add “milk” to the long shopping list of things needed for your new home. Get a tour of your new school. Listen closely to your tour guide because this is the first thing you have heard about your new school. Try not to compare it to your old school. Imagine all of the good times you will have there over the next four years. When you meet new people try to make a good first impression, because they might turn out to be your best friends. Attend school on the first day. Follow the crowd and try to adapt. Realize when you’ve fallen into a routine. Return to where you used to live. Admit to yourself that now you are just a visitor. When you catch sight of your old friends, begin to run into the tremendous hug that makes up for the past couple of months. Catch up for a while. Say goodbye until the next visit. Go back to the airport. Board the plane. Say goodbye to the place that you once called home and depart to the place that now is.

I am sitting on the rocky gravel of the school steps, looking into the eyes of my best friend Elle, and seeing more than just two green irises. I hear the wind and watch it tousle the hair of the girls sitting a few steps lower. I watch as the wind plays with their soft waves and intricate braids. I feel the gravel protrude through the thin layer of my skirt, making a pattern of circular dots on my legs. I see Elle sitting across from me, Indian style. I see smoke coming out of the bowl she is holding, and watch the smoke ascend into wisps of nothingness. My stomach starts to lurch at the smell of the cafeteria concoction. She looks hesitantly at her bowl. Then, we both look up, and I remembered.

A year ago, in the summer, Elle and I had gone to a museum along with two other friends. Everything had been so colorful and attractive. I had felt like a child in a candy store. We were all exploring, looking for something new to put our hands on, and that's when I saw the mirror.

It looked rather ordinary, nothing special; but, this mirror was double sided and required two people to appreciate its effect. Elle sat on the red, circular stool closest to her, as I went around to sit on the other side. Looking into the mirror I saw what I usually see every day--my long wavy hair, my crooked nose and my piercing eyes. I figured that this mirror was just a hoax. But then I saw it! Our images blended, Elle's and mine. Our features merged becoming the creature in the mirror.

Elle and I have a resilient bond. I can recognize her emotions just as if they were my own. That day my theory surfaced to the physical. I saw myself in her.

**Teacher***Jackie Stelzer*

His tone-deaf twelve-year-old voice is frightening. Every five minutes there is a crackling because he is going through puberty. I, on the other hand, have set a precedent for him because I know how the notes are supposed to sound. We are learning the *Trope*, the vowels and tunes for his bar-mitzvah ceremony, the terrifying and holy day in which the entire Orthodox Jewish community expects him to miraculously turn into a grown man. It is eight-thirty on a Wednesday night, and we sit exhausted, at his kitchen table repeating each word and verse at least fifteen times.

"Taaah," I begin, and wait for him to repeat after me. As usual, he responds in a key that is too high for the *Trope*.

"Taaah," he answers. I smirk guiltily at him and he knows why. I point to the verse and he starts over.

This time he cannot pronounce the word anymore and cannot remember the words that proceed it. He looks at me in frustration and stands up from his chair. His sweaty, chubby cheeks turn red in anger. Then, he proceeds to throw a temper tantrum. My cold hand gently sits him back

down in his chair and he agrees to try one last time.

On his third try, he gets it! He is so pleased with himself after zooming through the final page (without any mistakes), that he eagerly turns back to the first page of the binder, and starts to chant the entire portion. Verse after verse becomes perfection. He even pronounces the difficult words correctly, and he successfully hits the major high note on the third page. His knees shake while I sit in awe of my soon-to-be Bar-Mitzvah protégé. For the first time, I not only consider what a success he has become, I feel accomplished myself.

I am part of a small Orthodox Jewish community: We all share in each other's events--attend weddings, funerals, Bar-mitzvahs, etc. We also cook for those who are sick, or have just given birth; we bring food for engagement parties, bridal showers, or Sheva Brachot--the seven nights of parties after a wedding. In my community, I am proud to wear the invisible "Mentor" badge on my chest.

I was faced with a difficult task, which was to tutor a twelve-year-old boy who had no Hebrew background and an attention deficit. We met several times a week, stayed up late at night repeating and chanting Torah portions and Tropes. Now, we have completed four full pages of what used to look like gibberish and created something beautiful. When he gets up on stage in May I will remember that I had a hand in his preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. In Judaism, those who assist others in their studies are granted special merits in the World to Come. My restless tone-deaf man-to-be has enabled me a share of those merits.

## **You Carry**

*Hannah Dimbert*

The space inside a coffin,  
An echo of the world's vast loss  
You hold all the words, light, and darkness;  
All these you keep within your heartbeat  
-You are the strongest person I know.

A fire that no tear can extinguish,  
Smile and laughter barely conceal  
A fierce loyalty called love,  
Called friendship, called family,  
And you carry it in your eyes  
-You are the best person I know.

## **The Bicycle**

*Aliza Jaffe*

*Based on "The Car" by Raymond Carver*

The bicycle with the broken front break.  
The bicycle with a hole in its seat.  
The bicycle with a broken bell.  
The bicycle with the twice-replaced back wheel.  
The bicycle I washed dishes for.  
The bicycle that sometimes played as my horse.  
The bicycle I wanted to trade in for a prettier one.  
The bicycle they rode into a ditch.  
The bicycle they kicked.  
The bicycle I kicked.  
The bicycle that accidentally left the drug store without paying.  
The bicycle that ran over the teacher's hat and kept going.  
The bicycle I abandoned in the lot.  
The stolen bicycle.  
Bicycle of my dreams.  
My bicycle.

I am sharing a chair with my best friend Maya, one of my bare feet supporting the rest of me. The trailer is small, the dining room table smaller. Dark wood panels cover the walls. The carpet is a deep orange color, and my feet sink into it as I go back to the kitchen for more Hopi bread. The three room house is dimly lit and full of people. An old Hopi woman stands over the stove, frying sweet bread. Her face is dark and wrinkled, her apron torn.

In the dining room, if it can even be called that, a young Hopi couple and their parents sit around the table, along with our counselors. The beautiful, dark, caramel colored skin of the Hopi people makes us seem plain and ugly. From behind me, I can hear Steven's laughter, Hannah's questions to Juanzo. His answers come in unfinished sentences, questions to the Hopi elders as to how to say certain words in English.

We had been on the Hopi Indian Reservation for a little over a week. Each morning, we would wake up, put on our hiking boots, and head out to wherever our assignment for the day was. There, we met all kinds of people. The Hopi people had questions for us, and we had an unbelievable amount of questions for them. It seemed that whoever we met, wherever we were, conversations always came down to one question, and one question only: "You never had Hopi bread?!" We smiled, and shook our heads, time after time, wondering what could be so great about this Hopi bread.

Our tents were set up just outside the Reservation, a five minute walk to the center of the village. One family lived in a small trailer just next to our campsite. Because our campsite was set up on some of their property, we decided to give them a hostess gift. It was the least we could do. We put together a box of the basics: flour, sugar, corn starch, a couple bottles of water, and a box of pancake mix. Maya, Phillip, and I were given the privilege of delivering the gift. Phillip knocked three times on the trailer door. After a minute or two, the door opened a crack. A young Hopi girl stood behind it, staring. We smiled, trying to show her that although our skin was a different color, we were all the same. She opened the door a little more, and called for her mother. A beautiful Hopi woman came to the door, a long, dark braid swung over her shoulder. When we handed her the gift, her face lit up. She looked down at her daughter and said something to her in Hopi. Her daughter nodded, and hugged each of us. The Hopi woman looked at us, and we could tell she was grateful.

The Hopi people are poor beyond belief. Food like this is needed. She said to us, "Tonight, you people come, I make Hopi bread. Thank you so much." We nodded and smiled, running back to our campsite to tell the others.

Walking into the trailer later that night, I was amazed at how poor the Hopi family was.

One boy, Juanzo, had come with us from the village. He told us that this was the richest family on the reservation. We were shocked. Even if this was the richest family on the reservation, they clearly needed the gift we gave them. Instead of keeping it, though, they fried Hopi bread for us. They wanted to show us a part of their culture, a food that every Hopi person knows how to make. We came to the Hopi reservation to help out, and to learn about the Hopi people. Their generosity is magnificent, their culture unthinkable. We learned as much as we could about their culture: the music, the food, the dances, and the ceremonies. Most of the Hopi people had never even seen white people when we came to the reservation.

Today, I wish I was a part of a culture as beautiful as Hopi. I wish I had as many names as women in the community, and a heart the size of Earth. I wish I lived in a place where it didn't matter the size of your house, or the clothes you wore, a place where I could understand that I am a part of something bigger than myself. I wish I had a soul that knew to share even when I truly couldn't afford to. I wish I knew how to truly respect the world in which I live, like the Hopi.

## **In Loving Memory**

*Chanan Bell*

Although you do not live, you are not dead  
Always remembered through the loving words  
said  
Through the memories, the moments you  
helped create  
Your warmth, your smile I could never repli-  
cate  
And through the tragedy that has changed us  
all  
I can't help but stand proud, stand tall  
To close my eyes, reach out to you  
Although you're not here I know you continue  
To maintain presence in this world you called  
your own  
Alive in every person, every breeze, every  
stone  
For I like to think you're in a better place  
Where there's no prejudice, one God, one race  
Where you can experience the happiness  
you've journeyed long to find

You deserve the balance for which your being  
pined.  
I know I'll never see your face again  
For they tell me you rest in a beautiful garden  
But in case you listen  
I want you to know  
That although you do not live you are not  
dead  
You'll always live on through the memories in  
my head  
Sincerely,  
Chanan Bell

*-In loving memory of Eitan Campbell and those  
that passed in 2010*



**"Coming Home"** Nirel Kakon



**"Eishet Chayil"** Ronit Miller



**"Sunrise Over Chicago"** Chanan Bell



**"Mountain"** Ariel Silverstein



**"The Vase"** Shayna Jacoby



**"Swan Lake"** Bayla Neren

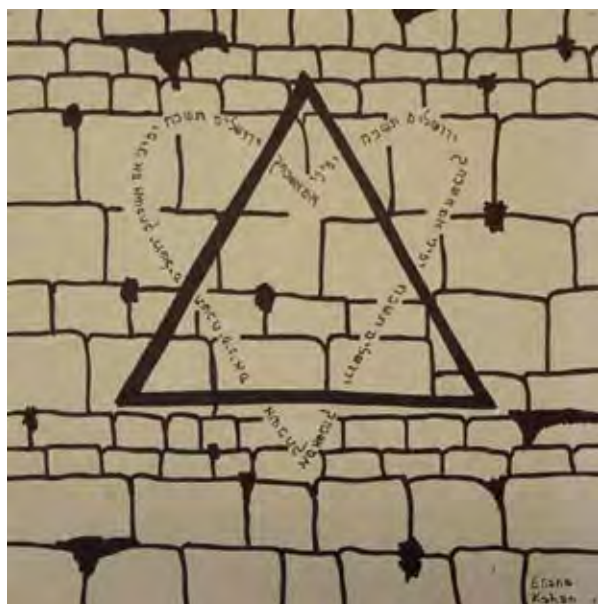


**"Friendship"** Adina Schreiber

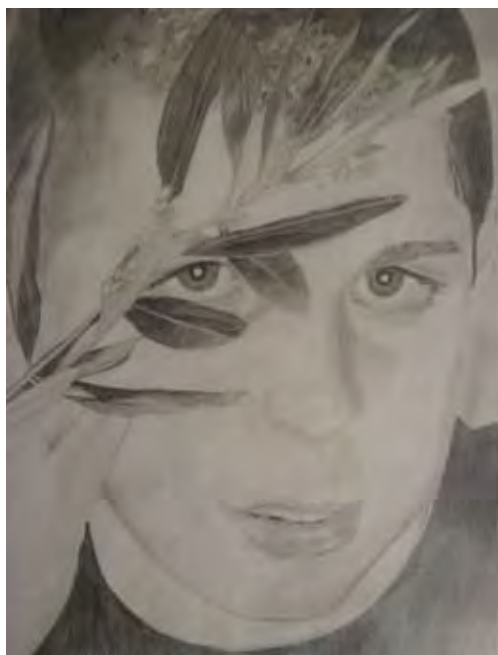


**"A Place that I Love"**

Ronit Miller



**"Im Eshkachech"** *Eliana Kahan*



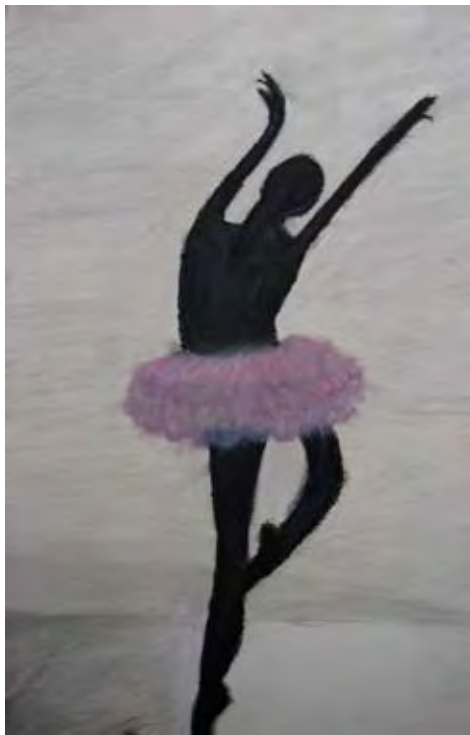
**"Gilad Shalit"** *Ronit Miller*



*Advanced Art Collective Project*

**"Itzhak Perlman"**

*Photo by Zachary Kramer*



**"Ballerina"** Arielle Braun



**"Sea of Reeds"** Sabina Hanani



**"Just a Dream"** Rachel Harris



**"Fall for You"** Sara Kahn



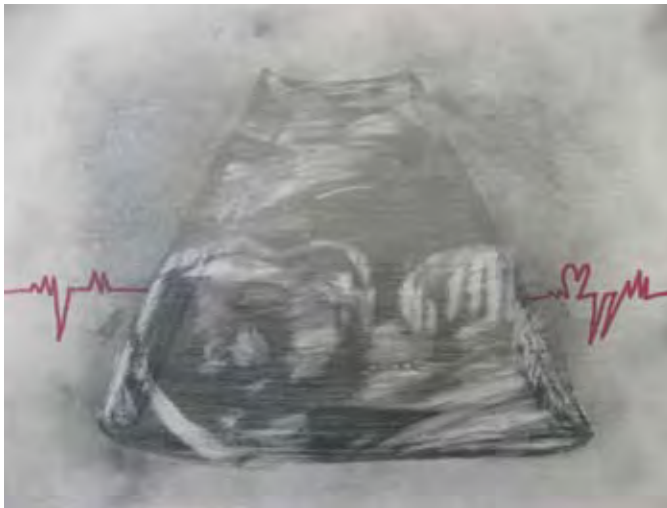
**"Georgia O'Keefe"** Ronit Miller



**"Bliss"** Adina Schreiber



**"Dunkin Donuts Bag"** Rani Silvert



**"A Symbol of Love"** Rachel Harris



**"White Winter Wear"** Jacob Weinger



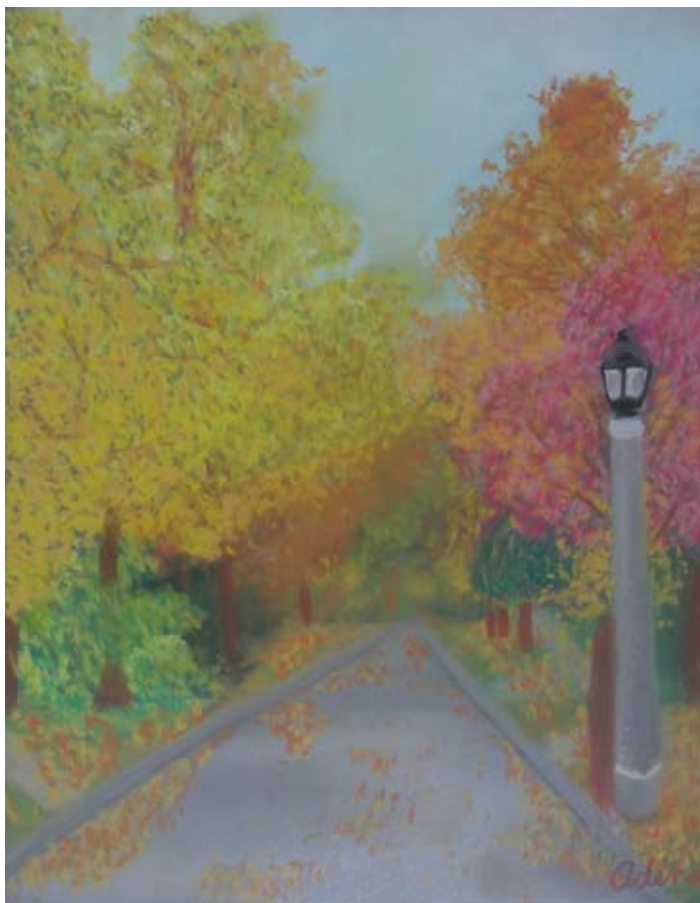
**"Autumn"** Shayna Jacoby



**"Lighthouse"** Barry Greengus



**"Emunah"** Moshe Brimm



**"A Walk in the Park"** Adina Schreiber



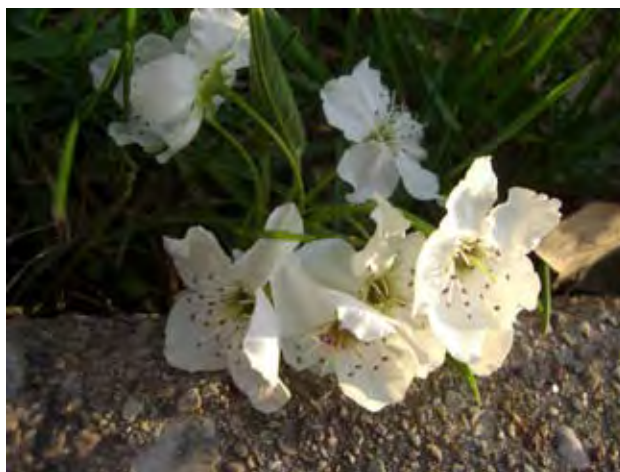
**"Carlos Santana"** Shayna Jacoby



**"Hawks Kay"** Jackie Stelzer



**"A Monument"** Merav Stein



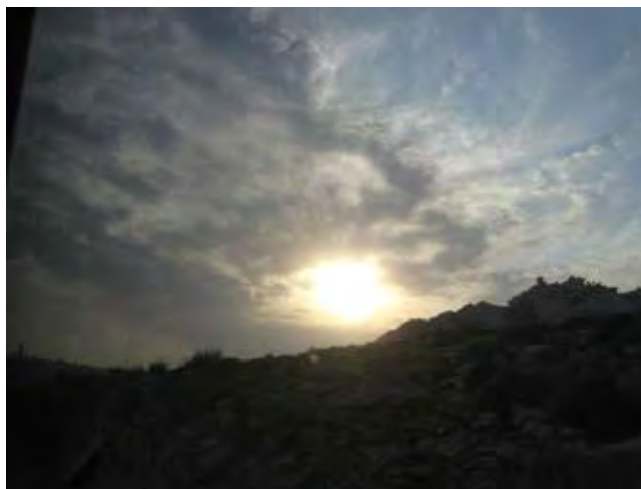
**"A Walk in the Park"** Elana Perlow



**"Faces of Ida Crown"** *Eliana Kahan*



**"Lunchtime"** *Merav Stein*



**"Land of Milk and Honey"** *Ronit Miller*



**"Point Setta Sunset"** Daniel Cohen



**"Perfectly Placed"** Eliana Kahan



**"Big City"** Sarah Dimbert



**"Airplane"** Rachel Davatgar



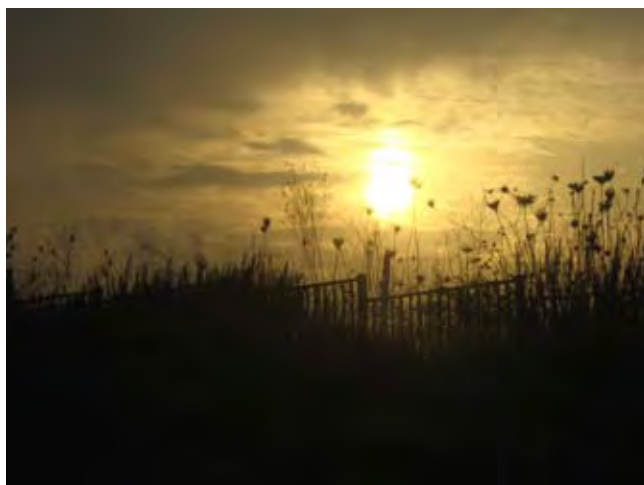
**"Water Hike"** Ronit Miller



**"The Piano"** Elana Perlow



**"Spotted: Flying Zebra"** Melissa Sirt



**"Me'in Olam Haba"** Ronit Miller



**"August Rush"** Melissa Sirt

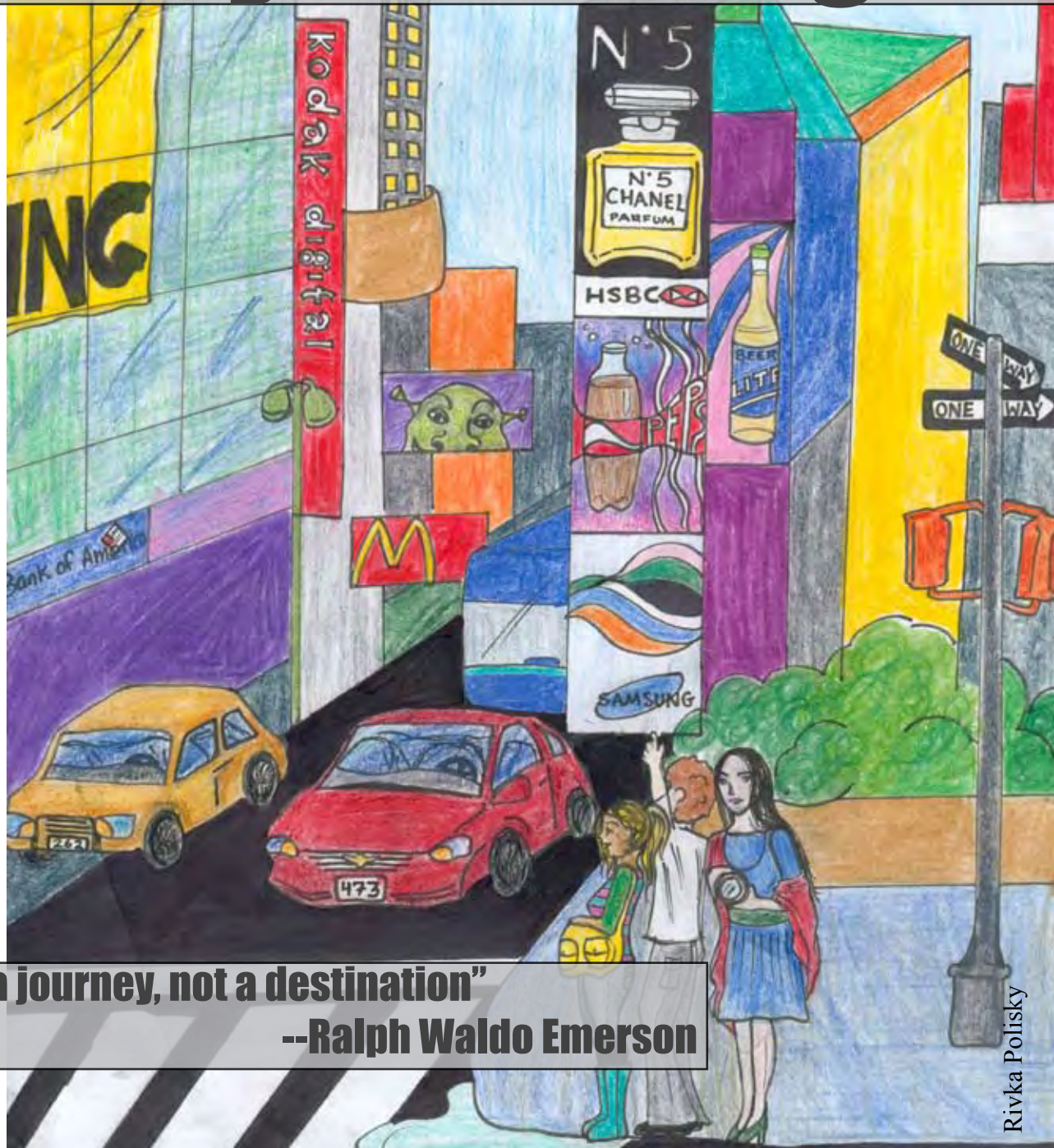


**"Desktop"** Melissa Sirt



**"Mirror Lake"** Jackie Stelzer

# Reality in Writing



**“Life is a journey, not a destination”**

**--Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## Memory

*Jessica Bokor*

Crashing waves, strong gust of wind,  
Feel your world start to spin.  
Dangle your feet; throw back your head,  
Lay super still as if you were dead.  
Ignore the boys screaming and laughing so loud,  
Close your eyes and breathe as you slip out of the crowd.  
Imagine yourself somewhere brand new,  
Keep everything out of your mind; everything but you.  
Don't think about what's hard, don't think about what's wrong.  
Just think about you as you sing the same song.  
Feel the chill down your spine, zero to the bone,  
Don't think about the time, or what's going on at home.  
Laugh to yourself as you start to calm down,  
As you hear someone in the background say they don't want to drown.  
Never forget this moment, keep it close to your heart,  
Although time passes on, memories never part.

## Sunday, October 17, 6:27 P.M.

*Yacov Greenspan*

Sitting cross-legged on my bed,  
Brainstorming how to balance my chumash test  
And tons of other homework to boot.  
I am just over 15, and I am relatively short, a little rotund.  
I can feel a thin beard slowly growing.  
I am aware of my uncombed hair, my aching back,  
And the cold air in the room that whispers "turn off the fan."  
I am challenging the urge to totally disregard all of my work and waste time.  
I am wearing my usual American Eagle blue jeans and belt  
With my typical black T-shirt, to show that to-day is a normal Sunday, with nothing exciting.  
I am thinking about dinner and whether or not I should go make something to eat.  
My parents are individually doing their own thing, each hoping that I get all of my work done.  
My mother is off at the Pollak-Schakowsky debate, embracing her love of politics.  
My father, having just come home from work, is doing his usual meandering around the house.  
Embracing time without a purpose.

## **The Meaning of Courage**

Ezra Kapetansky

Surely every man knows what courage is. It is the cowardly lion's signifying badge. It is the willingness to make a daring statement, wearing a pink tie to a black tie event. It is the sprawling on top of an explosive, diving in front of a bullet, or crashing into the ground to save someone who is in danger. It is the ability to stare death in the face. It is the will to confront a bully. It is the bold addition of thick gravy to a light fluffy cake, flaming hot sauce spread on a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, fresh salad dunked in a deep fryer, or eating an emulsion of all the leftovers in the fridge. It is a cat chasing an intimidating dog, a grandma crossing the busy street, a pawn attacking the king, or a driving instructor getting in the car with a new student. It is mortal Batman, and tiny Spiderman. It is the one White among all Blacks or one Black among all Whites. It is Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Muhammad Ali, Martin Luther King, and Elie Wiesel. It is the Pilgrimage to the New World. It is the Jews in the concentration camps who continued to practice Judaism in secret, with full recognition that they could be beaten, starved, or murdered. It is the strength to deviate from the norm. It is the power that destroys fear.

## **Advanced Placement**

Hannah Dimbert

*Based on "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid*

Put an MLA heading on every paper; use one inch margins and Times New Roman, size 12; put the page number in the top right corner; use blue or black ink only, no pencil for English or History; only use pencil for Math; spelling always counts; your essay should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion; answer to three decimal places exactly; this is how to use transition words; this is how to improve your level of language; this is how to develop syntactic fluency; this is how to write a rhetorical analysis; this is how to write a literary analysis; this is how to make an outline; this is how to make a bibliography; this is how to make a concept map; this is how to write a DBQ; this is how to research a topic; this is how to write a persuasive essay; this is how to prepare a powerpoint presentation; is it true that you didn't finish your homework due today?; this is the difference between honors and AP; this is the dedication that you need; this is the difference between an essay scoring eight and one scoring nine; you must finish your homework if you wish to succeed in life; this is the proof for the formula; this is the diagram; this is why your answer is wrong; but how can I finish my homework when I'm so overwhelmed?; these are the formulas you must memorize; these are the Latin names you should recognize; these are the events to be organized into a timeline; this is the prompt; eat lunch in the library when you need to study; skip lunch altogether when the work is important; this is how to ignore your friends; this is how to spend the weekend working; this is how to stay up all night working; this is how to sleep in class; this is how

to fail; this is how to cry about it; this is how to pretend you don't care; correct your mistakes and ask questions if you ever are confused; this is how to ask for an extension; this is how to turn in work you aren't satisfied with; guess whenever you can eliminate at least one choice; you have forty minutes for this essay; you have twenty-two and a half minutes for this essay; these problems should take you two to three minutes; you have fifteen minutes to read the documents; make your mark heavy and dark; is this test really the culmination of my entire year?; you mean to say, after all that, you were here for any reason besides scoring a five?

### **Was it Worth the Cost?**

*Shira Lebowitz*

The loud bang of gunshot  
The stamping sound of feet  
The cheers of pride and honor  
The drummer's wartime beat.  
Young men in khaki  
Standing tall and proud  
Mothers silently crying  
Good-byes called out loud.  
Getting in the train car  
Going far away  
Traveling to training  
Then to where the trenches lay.  
Laying underground  
Sharing a bed with lice and rats  
Cannot get clean  
Drinking dirty water out of dirty vats.  
Boom across the no-man's land  
Boom across the field  
Men dropping all around  
Neither side will yield.  
Back inside the trenches  
Waiting for command  
To try to fight once again  
To gain a little land.  
Only some survivors  
Despair in the heart  
How could this ever be  
A good way to play your part?

Machine guns spewing bullets  
Day and night, Day and night  
It seems never-ending  
Wouldn't it be more prudent to end the fight?  
The first dead were lucky  
To escape this grime  
To never have to endure  
The death rate's rapid climb  
Each left behind cries to themselves  
How could we let them go  
In what fit of deluded thinking  
Could we let them fight our bloodthirsty foe?  
Men too old to fight  
No longer want to wield  
The weapons that the young men hold  
Across the battlefield.  
War seems a futile effort  
Since neither side can prevail  
Since it is very unlikely  
That many will live to tell the tale.  
The war efforts in general  
Start out in glory and cheers  
And become in short time  
Times of many fears.  
And when the war is over  
When so many lives are lost  
All we can do is ask ourselves  
Was it worth the cost?

When Caroline, an 11-year-old girl with cerebral palsy, rode into the show ring at the Illinois Special Olympics, her NARHA riding instructor Nicholas Coyne cheered her on. The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) is an organization that promotes therapeutic riding all over the world. The NARHA serves people of all ages with physical, emotional, and mental challenges through therapeutic riding.

Therapeutic riding is a form of therapy used for the physically and/or mentally handicapped using horse-back riding. It causes the rider to go through movements which consciously and unconsciously use all of the body's muscles, improving balance, posture, and muscle control. It also helps riders develop concentration, self-discipline, and self-confidence.

Mr. Coyne is the founder and president of Horsefeathers Therapeutic Riding Center, which provides therapeutic riding as a center for the NARHA. He is a certified NARHA instructor and teaches about fifty riding lessons a week. "The horse's movement helps the muscles. It builds up the rider's confidence and their strength, and it helps with low self-esteem," says Mr. Coyne. He uses the English riding style for therapeutic riding because it requires more awareness of the horse's movements. He starts teaching children to ride with a saddle, then switches to bareback (riding without a saddle) to increase the benefits of therapeutic riding. "We'll start with a saddle and go to bareback as soon as the kids think they won't fall off the horse. When you're riding bareback, you can really feel the horse," he explains.

Mr. Coyne enjoys his job working with and helping children through a passion of his own, namely horse-back riding. "These kids have to go through therapy after therapy. But when they come here, it isn't therapy, it's a riding lesson," Mr. Coyne says. "It's quite a passion." Caroline's passion showed through when she rode into that ring at the Illinois Special Olympics: She threw the reins over her horse's head, stood up in the stirrups, and waved her hands in the air. "The horse didn't care. He didn't bolt or anything. I just handed her the reins and got her set up again," Mr. Coyne recalls. She went on to compete in the walk/trot class, the most basic level at the Special Olympics. No one laughed at her, there were no hushed whispers of "What's up with that girl?" Mr. Coyne attributes this to the friendly environment therapeutic riding provides, "It's a very forgiving form of riding. At a normal horse show, people would say 'What's wrong with that kid?' Here, people just say 'Wow! That kid can walk and trot!'"

To some children with disabilities, horse-back riding is freedom. "We get some kids who can't walk, and to them, riding is flying," Mr. Coyne says. Depending on their condition and the individual, children who take therapeutic riding have characteristics associated with their disability that may actually help them ride. For example, Mr. Coyne has found that autistic children easily assume the correct riding position, even if they have never been on a horse before. Beginner riders

without disabilities may need months of instruction to learn the correct riding position at various gaits (horses' paces). "Most beginners use their mind. They're thinking about what they're doing. These kids, they're finding their center. They can ride the horse at any gait, but when it comes to using their hands at steering, they can't comprehend it," he explains. There isn't anything Mr. Coyne dislikes about his job, "We have a very good job. It's a very humbling experience, too. You see how lucky you are, count the blessings you have. It's hard to have a bad day when you're hanging out with such happy people who appreciate what they have."

Mr. Coyne got involved in therapeutic riding through the barn where he was boarding his own horse. The barn had a NARHA program that was going to be shut down. To save it, Mr. Coyne had to quickly get certified as a NARHA instructor. He kept the program running for eleven years. He left that barn, thinking it would be better for the program, and moved it to Liberty Barns, where he founded Horsefeathers in 2003. Although it does not own the barn, Horsefeathers does own their own horses, which are picked for the best quality required for their job. "The horses have to know what's going on," Mr. Coyne explains. "They seem to be sympathetic to their riders. They take care of them and they're very patient." Horsefeathers leases its riding arena from Liberty Barns, so they have their own space to work in.

Horsefeathers is a not-for-profit organization. "We never turn anyone away for the services we provide," says Mr. Coyne. "People who can't afford it pay what they can. We find sponsors, our fundraisers are very humble little things. People donate. It's very lucky we were always able to stay afloat." The program also depends heavily on volunteers. "The volunteers do everything," Mr. Coyne emphasizes. "They feed and groom the horses, during the lessons they lead [the horse] and side-walk to ensure the rider's safety." Of teaching therapeutic riding he says, "There are no words for how good these things are. The little progress you have with some riders makes you feel very very good."

## Ode to the Car

Chad Simon

Vroom, Vroom.  
You grunt as your engine sparks to life.  
Wake from your deep sleep  
And breathe in and out of your exhaust pipe.  
(Sometimes your lungs are so immense you  
have  
Two exhaust pipes.)  
You open your metal arms  
And gather us together,  
Four or five at a time.  
Taking us places,  
Rolling along on your rubber treaded shoes.  
On hot summer days we slide along  
Your splendiferous, sun-soaked hood  
While we call, "Shotgun!"  
Usually, you let us take off your hat  
And open your eyes,  
To let the wind blow through our hair.  
You drive next to your kinsmen:  
Jaguar,  
Porsche,  
Ferrari,  
Mercedes,  
BMW,  
And more.  
Once we finish our errands  
You stand up from your spot  
And take us home to our family and yours.  
You take your place next to  
Mom, the minivan,  
And your dad, the truck.  
You are so talented at what you do.  
Not only do you lug us along,  
But you do it with style and grace.

You ensure our safety  
From newer cars that crash  
And damage their grille.  
And then they have to make an appointment  
With the dealership dentist.  
But Car,  
It's not what is on the outside,  
It's the inside that matters most.  
Leather seats,  
Stick shift,  
TVs,  
And our favorite,  
Seat warmers.  
Car, you are perfection!  
You create balance  
And make us look superb.  
You bring us places faster  
Than our legs can go.  
But sadly,  
We have to wait until we are fifteen  
To drive you.  
So Car,  
Can you make me a promise?  
Wait for me!

The morning was crisp and the sun was bright on the Sunday that Bob disappeared. It was a Sunday like any other one for Bob and Jane. Promptly at 11:15 AM, the happy couple jumpstarted their daily routines. Jane sat back in her massage chair and texted her sickly mother in the hospital, while Bob fetched his car keys. He plugged his destination into his GPS. According to the map on the screen, the Starbucks was only 0.2 miles away. Getting into his Suburban, and pulling out of his driveway, Bob sent his wife a kissy smiley face from his BlackBerry, with the message that he should be back in approximately eight minutes, if the line for the Drive-Thru was not too long. Jane promptly responded with a heart. Bob felt an instant rush of love for his wife, and knew that he was the luckiest man in the world. Beep! Beep! The screen filled with the notice that his inbox and outbox were full. The only way for him to receive or send any messages was if he went back and deleted the old messages. Bob made a note on his BlackBerry to call the company later and complain about this.

At the stop sign on the end of his street, Bob followed the voice of the GPS, which directed him to turn right. According to the screen, there were only 0.07 miles to go. But then the unthinkable happened. The screen of the GPS went black.

Slamming on his brakes, Bob pulled over to the side of the small road. Bob picked up the device with both hands. Slowly and deliberately, he pressed the power button. Nothing happened. Again and again he pressed it, but to no avail. He shook, hit, smacked the GPS, but it remained unresponsive. Sighing, Bob unlatched his BlackBerry from the case attached to his hip. Logging on to the Internet, Bob searched on MapQuest for his destination. A sense of relief overwhelmed him as the page began to load. On the screen the word "Loading" appeared in big, black letters. Bob's ease soon turned to frustration and worry when after 30 seconds the page did not change. Closing the frozen page, Bob punched out a plea of help to his wife with extra caps and exclamation points. He pressed "send." An uncomfortable heat began to crawl up his neck as the ominous beeping of the BlackBerry reminded him that he did not have any texts left.

Grumbling under his breath, Bob logged back onto the Internet, when suddenly a low battery alert popped up, and the BlackBerry died. With two electronic corpses on his lap, Bob's heart began to race. His sweaty hands reached to his ear to switch on his bluetooth for his flip phone. His stomach lurched. The bluetooth was not there. Fumbling through his pockets, Bob realized that his bluetooth must have been left behind. Bob was paralyzed with fear. His knuckles turned white as he clenched the steering wheel, and his temples throbbed more and more as the minutes ticked by. His coffee. He needed it. Now. Yet, Bob did not know what to do. He did not have the number of Starbucks programmed into his phone - the Yellow Pages in the glove compartment

having been long ago forgotten - and he would never even think of asking a passing car for directions.

Ten minutes passed, twenty, thirty. Bob's eyes turned bloodshot as his head pounded from lack of caffeine. An hour passed, two hours, three. The Suburban flashed a warning for low gas. Bob sunk lower into his chair, realizing his helplessness.

Coming up with no alternative, Bob decided to do the inconceivable. Slipping the sleek, black phone out of his jeans pocket once more, he flipped open the top. Taking a deep breath, Bob looked up 9-1-1 in his contacts. Hesitantly he reached for the call button. Just as he was about to press the green button of total vulnerability, the cell phone vibrated and powered down. Bob's eyes bulged and his jaw dropped. With a racing pulse he pressed the power button once more, only for the cell phone to light up and turn itself off again. Bob's eyes began to fill up with tears, when suddenly his engine sputtered and died. A surprised, agonized wail escaped Bob's lips. He was ruined. There was no hope left.

Meanwhile, Jane was in the middle of exercising with her new Wii Fit. After finally beating her high score from the day before, she took a long, hot shower and proceeded with her daily routine. She got the mail, shared some pictures with her neighbor, bought the groceries -- all online, of course. She was in the middle of getting dinner ready, when she asked the Papa John's employee to hold on while she asked her husband what toppings he preferred, just like she asked him every day. Covering the receiver of the phone, she called up the stairs for Bob. When no response came, Jane rolled her eyes, assuming that he had the TV on too loud in the bathroom again. She told the employee that a deep-dish pizza with extra cheese would do, and gave him her credit card number. Now that dinner was ready, Jane went upstairs to reprimand Bob for taking too long in the bathroom. Yet, Bob was not there. Sighing, she texted him, but no response came. She even called him, but his phone went straight to voicemail. Shrugging, Jane assumed that Bob had some business that he had forgotten to tell her about and continued with her routine. She made a note in the To-Do list on her laptop that she should find out where Bob had gone and to make sure that he is fine. The hours passed and nighttime came. Jane could not stop thinking as she went to sleep -- thinking about all the items on her To-Do list that she did not finish. Tomorrow, she assured herself, Tomorrow.

Tomorrow came, and the next day, and the next. The days turned into months, and the months turned into years. While constantly busy, Jane never left the house, and never finished her To-Do list. Bob, forever slumped over in his Suburban, remains within a block of his home, a victim of his complete withdrawal -- from caffeine, technology, and the world.

## Babysitter

*Eliana Block*

Be charming, pretend that the father's attempts at jokes are hilarious, commence meaningless conversation; Take down the emergency contact information, ask the parents for bedtimes; tell the children an earlier time and "reason" to extend their bedtime back to the original bedtime; Bring arts and crafts activities. When they spill permanent paint all over you, tell them you didn't like that shirt anyways; promise to read chapter one, yawn at chapter three, finish chapter five; This is how you put a five year old to sleep, this is how you put a five-year-old and a seven-year-old to sleep, this is how you put a five-year-old, a seven-year-old and a baby to sleep, this is how you put them all back to sleep when the baby wakes up crying ; attempt homework, open textbook, turn on tv, close textbook; don't watch anything too mature in case the children wake up, scuttle around the creaky hardwood floors, take cautious steps, check every fifteen minutes to make sure the kids aren't suffocating under their layered blankets; answer the phone when it rings, say your lines like a pro- "No, it's no problem if you stay out a few extra hours," take up the parents' offer to "help yourself to anything in the kitchen," imagine a video camera is secretly recording your every move; don't imagine any external noise; don't fall asleep, don't fall asleep, don't fall a..., don't act surprised when the parents find you asleep; look at the crisp bills as twenty dollars you didn't have before not five dollars an hour; check your "one new message," read "hey, can you baby sit again next week?"

## Influenza

*Chanan Bell*

Sickness blinded all my senses  
my smell was blurry  
my hearing pungent  
my sight monotone  
I couldn't feel, I resorted to touch  
I longed, not to live, but to survive.  
I walked through heated hazes  
stumbling into occasional darkness  
on my living room couch  
where I, tucked in a hand-knitted blanket,  
accompanied by a cup of tea,  
would travel different outposts of the dark  
the deep  
the endless void

that is what my dreams are.  
tumbling  
stumbling  
mumbling incoherently, my life broke down  
right in front of my paralyzed eyes  
and I sat, in my sickly sleep, and saw it all  
four days  
in and out  
until the morning the fever broke  
and I opened my eyes  
to see again, for the first time  
a world that was new.  
I had survived.  
Now I could begin to live.

## **In This Very Minute**

*Tova Benjamin*

In this very minute  
I sit  
I wonder about  
The world around me

Out the window  
A storm rages  
Across the ocean  
the sun shines

Right this very minute  
a baby is crying  
Somewhere in the world  
An old man is dying

In this very minute  
I watch  
Millions of people  
Swarming around me

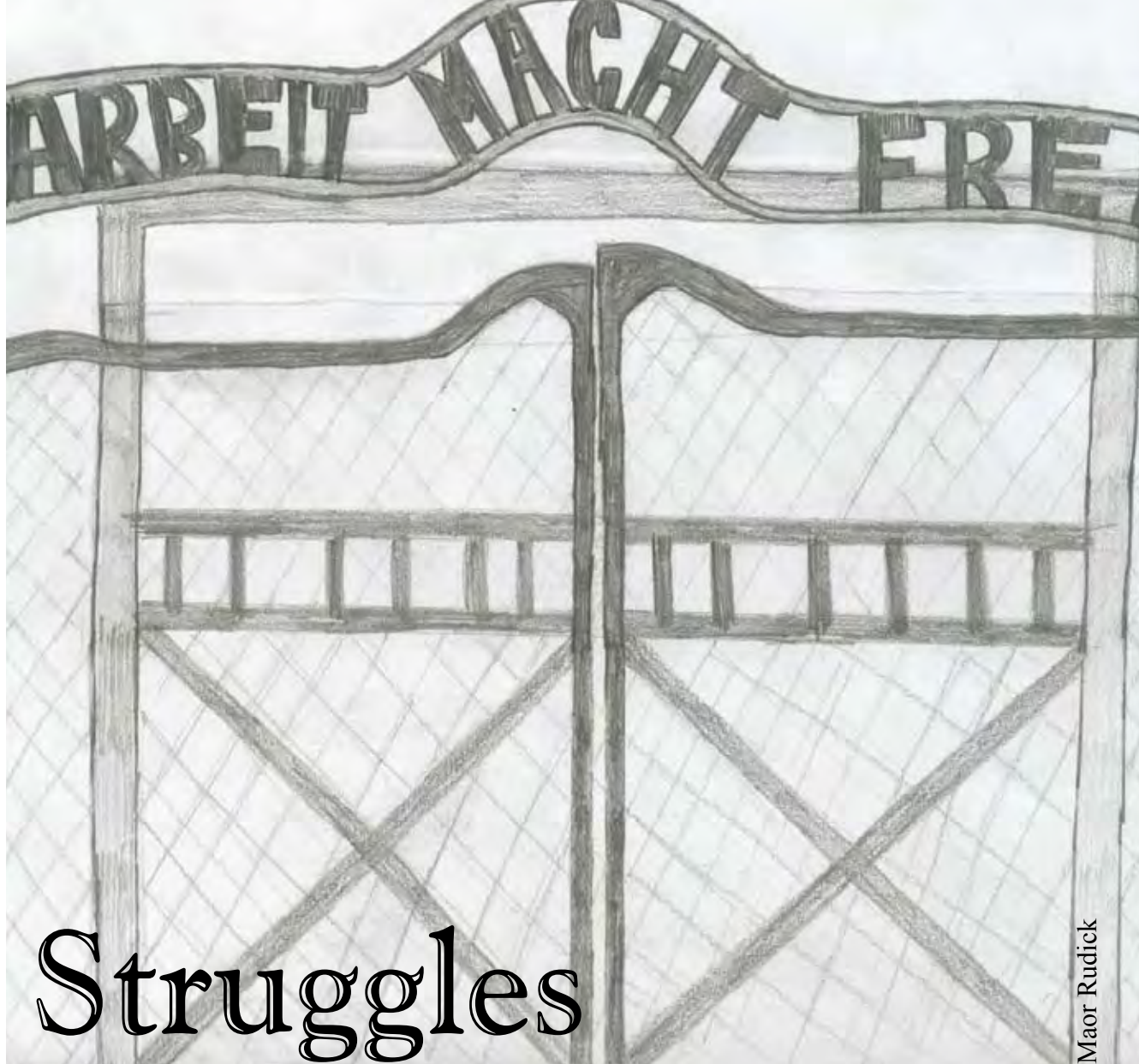
Down the street  
A poor man begs  
Millions are hungry  
Cold and shivering

In this very minute  
thousands are crying  
around the world  
thousands are dying

And I sit  
watching the storm rage  
thinking about the world  
I sit and watch

Adrenaline rushes through me  
I get up  
Resolving to do  
Rather than watch

In this very minute  
I stand  
thinking how we need not  
wait a minute  
before changing the world



# Struggles

Maor Rudick

“Never say that this is the end of the road. Whenever a drop of our blood fell, there our courage will grow anew...Our triumph will come and our resounding footsteps will proclaim ‘We are here!’”

--Hirsh Glick, “Partisan Song”

Based on “Girl” by Jamacia Kincaid

Set your alarm for 4:00 in the morning; do not press the snooze button and fall back asleep; wake up and get ready for school; sit down to do the homework you still have left over from last night; do not do your homework before you get ready so that you miss the bus; e-mail your work to yourself at 7:00 a.m.; shut down the computer at 7:05 a.m.; take your bag and books into the car; ride to the bus; get on the bus no later than 7:15 a.m.; find an unoccupied seat; tightly hold the books that do not fit into your bag, so that they will not fall onto the dirty floor; pull out some more work to do; do not waste time—you have an hour to do work; do not talk with your friends for a long time; do not fall asleep; do not let yourself be distracted by the screaming eight year olds sitting two rows behind you; but I don’t waste time on the bus and never when I have other work; this is how you wait while the bus stops at two other schools before yours; this is how you try to warm your numbing toes; this is how you quickly exit the bus when it arrives at your school; this is how you do not trip on the ice on the way in; this is how you take your *Siddur* quickly and rush to *davening*; this is how you are late anyway, because the bus did not arrive until 8:15; this is how you daven with concentration, even when you are tired; this is how you finish up the last bits of work during breakfast; this is how you go to class; this is how you take good notes when you are somewhat interested; this is how to take good notes when you are not interested at all; this is how you take good notes when you are wholly interested; this is how you hear the bell ring; this is how you hurry to the opposite corner of the school for your next class so that you will not be late; this is how you eat snacks during class when they are allowed, so you won’t waste time during lunch; this is how you grab a computer in the library before they are all taken, and in this way not waste time, like you are so bent on doing; this is how you staple and hand in your paper; this is how you are thankful that you had enough time to finish up your paper; this is how you rush to your teacher to ask her a question with enough time to walk downstairs and enter your next class before the bell rings; this is how you participate in class; this is how you learn; this is how you do not waste time when class ends, like you so obviously want to do, but instead go straight to work; this is how to leave your books next to a computer when you go down to mincha so that you do not lose what you are working on; this is how to find a quiet place to read for class; this is how you despair because it is impossible to find a truly quiet place in your school; this is how you find a friend to work with; this is how you stay on topic and do not waste your time, like I warn you against doing; this is how to take a test; this is how to ignore the fact that the sky outside your class’s window has turned pitch black, and that you are still in school; this is how to hurry out to carpool, so that you can arrive at home by 6:30; this is how to arrive at home at 7:00 when there

is an accident or construction or snow; this is how to arrive at home at 10:30 when you have an extracurricular activity; this is how to start the homework due the next day, instead of wasting time reading or watching TV; this is how to watch the hours go by slowly as you begin your work; this is how to watch them fly by after midnight when you want to sleep; this is how you get up and do a few minutes of exercise every few hours so you do not get too tired; this is how you work at the table, so that you do not fall asleep and waste time; but what if I'm too tired to work?; do you mean to say that after all of these years you are really going to be that kind of student who does not care about her future enough to stay up?

### **My Grandfather's Bar Mitzva**

*Meytal Chernoff*

Ashes were his confetti  
As he walked the path between the barracks  
Tattered Stripes were his suit  
He prayed not to be called up to the platform  
This is where my grandfather became a man

Here in this place of endless rows of brick  
Under the gate with its cruel lie  
The space between gas chambers was his playground  
He lived under a green metallic sky  
Here my grandfather learned the way of the world

His teachers lacked all patience  
And the penalty for an offense was death

My grandfather woke to the sound of human suffering  
The acrid smell of ash filled his nostrils with each inhalation  
In this place my grandfather matured

Even his name was taken  
Replaced by black numbers on his arm  
In this place a name is merely another possession  
To be thrown away or sorted with suitcases, teeth, and hair  
This was my grandfather's passage into adulthood  
Arbet Macht Frei

### **Nature's Laugh**

*Jeremy Trubnick*

It comes at the end of every year  
You know it's coming; try to prepare  
But it still bites you every time.  
It takes leaves off trees,  
Ceases plant growth,  
And turns the air into a freezing wake up call  
each time it is touched.  
It sends white stuff from the sky

At first we think this snow is a blessing,  
But it keeps coming and it has its laugh.  
The snow is no longer a blessing but a curse  
One needs to move it and is now reluctant to go outside.  
But this time of year can be overcome with heart and perseverance  
My friends, brace yourselves, winter is upon us.

## Sunflower Sentry

*Eliana Block*

I never really thought about why sunflowers are my favorite flowers, but one thought comes to mind, when I think of a sunflower: Bubbie's house. My Bubbie Sandy lives in Baltimore, and because most of my family resides there, that becomes my family's frequent traveling destination. As I pulled up in front of her house, I was greeted by a spinning sunflower windmill mounted at the very top, on the small hill in front of the doorway. When I think back about that house, my mind is suddenly filled with memories all rushing like geysers, all overflowing at the brim. I remember her bleach white carpet and how my very presence would mysteriously conjure purple popsicle stains that resurfaced with each visit. I remember my Bubbie crouched on the carpet scrubbing until no end with stain remover in hand. I remember her cushy white stuffed dog that sat endlessly on her white couches in her white walled living room. I remember how open and continuous the earth in her backyard was. I remember watering the flowers and making sure the tomatoes had enough to drink in the heat of the sun. I remember rainbow fish watching me through their jelly eyes as I watched them swim in their confined vase with flowers. I remember feeling totally at ease in my second home, where I was unreachable to the hovering world which could not penetrate my bubble. Most important, I remember that house, that foundation of brick and configuration of family, made that way because of my Zaidee. That house had a sense of presence, of his presence. My Bubbie moved out from that house, and now takes residence closer to my aunt and cousins. Her new house is renovated and modernized, but I genuinely miss her former house. Each time that I left her old house, I waved good-bye, and that same sunflower windmill that greeted me, that waved eagerly, stood helplessly on the lawn as I said my final goodbyes.

## A Promising Circle

*Maor Rudick*

Broken promises, they hang around us like  
invisible threads,  
Dancing a lazy dance around and around.  
Taunting and laughing,  
they worm their way into the brain,  
reminding of what never was.  
They glow with the fiery knowledge of one's  
faults.  
The words cut deep,  
deeper than knives can go.  
Wrong decisions made,  
a wrong path taken.

Each one unknowingly giving off a world of  
pain.  
The threads are tinged with reds and oranges,  
glowing from a fire within.  
Most of them had their intentions right,  
but the little threads swam away before they  
could be grasped.  
These broken promises, they hang around us  
like invisible threads,  
Dancing a lazy dance around and around.

*Inspired by the sculpture “Looking Through” by Joseph Agati*

Rasif could not believe he had been framed. The Royal Treasurer, long envious of Rasif’s powerful position as head of the Jewelers’ guild, had finally found an excuse to get rid of him. Still, Rasif had a reputation for being an honest and upstanding trader. How could the Judge think that Rasif would ever steal jewels from the royal treasury?

Rasif shuddered: He could have sworn he heard rats scampering about in one corner of his cell. But it was so dark—Rasif’s keen eyes could not discern any of his surroundings. He carefully crawled over to the opposite corner of the cell. Shivering violently, he wished the thread-bare prison clothes afforded him more protection from the cold, winter night. Rasif lay his head down upon the frigid stone floor and fell into a restless sleep.

Rasif awoke with sunlight streaming down upon his face. Light! He searched the walls of his chamber, but could not find any windows, no source of this blessed light. Finally, as he slumped back into his corner, he noticed a slight chink in the wall on which he had been resting. This humble hole provided light to the entire room. Rasif sighed with relief.

Around midday, Rasif heard a crowd milling about outside. He peered through the hole and found himself looking at the city’s Market. He could see his stand, decorated with an official notice from the palace publicizing his shame. Thieves freely piled his jewels into their large pockets—the local police watched the theft with a studied ignorance. Obviously, the king would do nothing to protect the livelihood of Rasif’s family. He called out, but nobody seemed to hear him. Rasif pounded his fist angrily against the wall.

Soon, Rasif heard the heavy footfalls of his guard tromping up the prison stairs to reach his cell. One flight, two flights, three flights of stairs...he was on the fourth floor, where they kept their maximum security prisoners! There could be no hope of escape.

The guard brought him his meal—a rough fare of coarse bread and a filthy mug of water. Without saying so much as one word to Rasif, the guard departed. Apparently, he was under orders not to converse with the traitor. Rasif moaned: He did not know how he was going to survive his five year sentence. Whom was he going to talk to? How was he going to keep himself from going insane?

Rasif ate his unsavory meal in silence. He had not eaten a meal alone since he had wed twenty years ago. The ungodly quiet disturbed him—he missed the sound of his loud, boisterous family. He pined for his family: his wife, his two sons, and his newborn daughter. His children would be grown up by the time he comes home.

Over the next five years, Rasif ate every meal alone, shared every thought with only him-

self, and wept in lonely silence every night as he fell asleep. His one solace was his crack in the wall, his window to his old life.

Every day without fail, Rasif looked out at the world through his hole in the wall. He watched his sons struggle to maintain their father's prestigious jewelry stand, trying to support their family. He saw customers take advantage of the boys' relative naiveté. Rasif watched despairingly as his old rivals convinced his sons to make detrimental business transactions.

He looked through the crack and watched his wife, sitting alone upon a nearby bench. He saw her gaze forlornly at the prison, wishing to be united once more with her beloved husband. An anguished expression constantly adorned her beautiful face.

He looked through the chink and watched his oldest son fall in love with a strange girl. He watched the boy—a man now, he supposed—propose to the girl. His son ran joyfully to his mother to tell her the happy news. Rasif saw a blissful smile momentarily light up her face, but—all too soon—the pained expression returned. She had realized that the boy's father would not be able to attend the wedding.

He looked through the opening and watched his younger son become apprenticed to the local silversmith. He watched the boy become stronger, more skillful. His son's coming of age ceremony came and went, and the boy languished without his father's blessing.

He looked through his crevice and watched his daughter take her first steps and speak her first words. His daughter grew older and became a beautiful young girl. He wept when he realized the girl knew only her mother, and would not even recognize her father when she saw him again.

Rasif yearned for the five-year sentence to end—he longed to see his family in person rather than from afar. Finally, the day of his liberation arrived. His jailor unlocked his door, and Rasif climbed slowly down three flights of stairs to his freedom. He felt slight trepidation—would he still know his family? Would they know him?

His family awaited him in the Market —his wife, his daughter, his two sons, and his new daughter-in-law. For a moment, there was an awkward silence between them. Then his wife and two sons embraced him and wept with happiness. His two daughters—the children he had barely met, but somehow knew—soon followed suit. To his delight, Rasif realized that he knew every single one of them. He was thankful for that humble hole in the wall that had allowed him to look through.

The sculpture this is based on represents the need to create and maintain a connection with the outside world, despite present suffering. By preserving this tie, the sufferer is able to see the bigger picture. He will not wallow in his present misfortune, but rather prepare himself for the future. Then, when his suffering ends, he will be prepared to live normally once more.

## Emma

Barry Rosenblum

Emma came and Emma left  
She had reason to be here  
Emma was young and Emma was strong  
She became known and everyone's prayers  
could be heard clear  
Her family said everything was going to be  
okay and well  
They appeared strong to the community even  
though we know they were going through hell  
So we ask "Why?" Why G-d? Why?  
Why did young, strong Emma have to die?  
Emma came and Emma left  
She had reason to be here  
Emma was young and Emma was strong  
She became known and everyone's prayers  
could be heard clear  
In the hospital she fought,  
And the next morning after she had passed  
Her family slowly and mournfully took apart  
her crib they had bought,  
This process was very slow very rough nothing  
to rush.  
Emma came and Emma left  
She had reason to be here  
Emma was young and Emma was strong  
She became known and everyone's prayers  
could be heard clear  
She was only eight months old,  
So difficult for one's mind to fathom,  
The week she died the Shul was quiet and  
cold,  
As the whole community was in a tantrum  
Emma came and Emma left  
She had reason to be here

Emma was young and Emma was strong  
She became known and everyone's prayers  
could be heard clear  
Although she is gone her presence is still felt,  
Like the fine leather of a tight belt.  
And although she will not be seen again,  
She is watching over us and will swell up our  
tears and our pain.  
Emma came and Emma left  
She had reason to be here  
Emma was young and Emma was strong  
She became known and everyone's prayers  
could be heard clear  
10/11/10

## Midnight Wishes

Hannah Dimbert

Beneath a lonely lake imprisoned by sparkling  
ice--  
The water is still.  
Now and always, nothing will change.  
Magic flows freely but cannot reach the swim-  
ming deeps.  
Discarded music echoes with a despairing  
tone.  
What is trapped can only wonder with wide  
eyes;  
Midnight wishes will never come true.

I am in my living room, kneeling on the big armchair that my mother sits on every Friday night. My pajama bottom clad knees are digging into the material and my head is bobbing above the top of the chair. I am gazing at my sister who is playing games on the computer. The sky is dark outside. It is almost my bed time. I am bored. I do not have anybody to play with, so my mind is leaping. I think about my relationship with my sisters, who are my half sisters, and my relationship with my mother, who is my mother, but their stepmother. I think about Deb, their mother who died, about whom I do not know much, except that from the pictures she was pretty.

I come to a conclusion, and without thinking, I say that in a way, it was a good thing that her mom died because otherwise I would have never been born.

Silence follows. Suddenly, the loud sound of wood scraping against wood crashes into my ears as my sister gets up from her chair. She comes over to me and begins yelling, with anger and sadness blended in a shrieking medley of pain. I do not remember her words. I only remember the emotion in her voice and the knowledge that I had done something wrong.

I was raised in a home with complicated relationships. My two sisters lost their mother at a young age. My father married my mother about a year and a half after. About a year later, I was born. My sisters treated me with the same love, care, and ridicule that is part of a typical little sister relationship. I never considered my sisters to be only “partial” family. However, sometimes it became difficult to distinguish between who was a mother and who was a stepmother. This confusion is what prompted me to share my offensive comment about Miriam and Ruthie’s mother.

Even though I was young, I should have known better. Since I was young, I have possessed the ability to think before I act. However, I did not always exercise that ability as I should have. I am not certain whether my sister remembers this encounter. She has never talked about what happened and it certainly has not placed any barrier between us. However, this memory has always been skulking back of my mind, occasionally weaving its way through other recollections until it arrives at the front of the line, at which point I think about it for a little while and then it journeys back to where it started. Recently, this memory has remained in the forefront. It has helped me understand the importance of keeping some of my thoughts inside my head. What I said to my sister may have been a rational conclusion for a four year old. My words

hurt my sister, and that pain was real, unaffected by the fact that I had no bad intentions.

Thankfully, my sister does not blame me for what I said to her that night. However, to this day, over ten years later, she clearly remembers the cruel words that were hidden behind the facade of youth and colorful pajamas.

## **How to Win a Wrestling Match**

*Gal Gurvich*

Watch your weight a few days in advance. Eat one bagel for breakfast instead of two. The night before, put on a heavy sweatshirt and go running for forty minutes. Finish the 100th push-up. Sweat your lungs out. Check your weight and make sure to rehydrate before bed. The day of the match, monitor everything that comes into your mouth, no matter how tempting it is. Exercise self-control.

Check your weight every hour. Run around a little if you need to.

Be ready to grab your gym bag and rush to the bus when Mr. Harris calls down the team.

Feel your heart pounding as the bus leaves the school. Share the anxiety with your teammates.

Gape at the size of the opponent school. Walk through the halls and feel intimidated by the unfamiliar faces.

Step on the scale. Pray that you make weight. Feel the relief at the sight of the right numbers on the scale.

Stuff your pre-match snack down your throat while putting on your singlet, warm-ups, and wrestling shoes. Watch the opponents do the same. Feel the increasing anxiety.

Hope your coach tells you that you have a match and that you didn't come hear for no reason, but feel nervous at the prospect of the hard fight.

Warm up with the team. Drill the moves. Internalize the pep talk the captains are yelling at the top of their lungs.

At the team bench, watch your teammates' wrestling while running through the moves you will execute during your match in your head. Feel your hands slightly tremble as your match approaches.

As the match right before yours winds down, take off your warm-ups. Show up at the head table ready to wrestle. You've begun to sweat, and the match hasn't even started.

Banish your fears as you step on the mat with the thought: "my time to shine". Smile as your coach and teammates show support from the bench.

Shake your opponent's hand while he fruitlessly stares you down in hopes of invoking fear.

Hear the ref blow the whistle. Attempt to remember your plan of moves. Analyze the situation.

Determine the move with the highest probability of success. Do it.

Attempt to discern what the coach is yelling at you to do. Catch a glimpse of your teammates' apprehensive looks while getting pancaked, crossfaced, and thrown by your opponent.

Hit a defensive move. Counter the breakdown. Escape to neutral position while your lungs are exhausted, your muscles are worn-out, and you're sweating like you've never sweated before.

Gain the lead. Look at the clock and wish the seconds would tick by faster. Think you cannot go for another minute.

Hear the buzzer marking the end of the match with a glad heart. Go home, eat, and rest.  
At the YU tournament, pin your opponent for the trophy. Enjoy the glory of getting your hand raised by the ref.  
Receive the trophy with pride. See your coach smile at the sense of satisfaction at the fruition of his work. Be surrounded by your teammates congratulating you. Feel accomplished.  
Sadly realize that the season is over, but know that much must be done in the off-season to see improvement. Be excited for next year, but appreciate the progress and success of this year.

## **Human**

*Eliana Kahan*

Mortal soul--I'm told am I  
Limits--I know well  
In a world beyond me  
I must learn to tell  
  
Divine within- a physical trap  
Purpose- struggle toward  
Find it- my reach cannot  
Must I- or must I not  
  
Logic- such a clever tool  
Though often times unwise  
Must I understand  
Or is all beyond my eyes.

## **A Darker Shade of Black**

*Meytal Chernoff*

Tonight the stars lost their glimmer  
The sky seemed all the more black  
On this night,  
The moon itself sheds a tear  
A wind blows cold  
While the lone wolf howls  
One long, low note  
Just for one night,  
The world shall mourn  
Come morning,  
The sun shall rise  
Same as every day  
Birds sing, the usual happy tune  
Nature moves on easily  
Morning always comes  
And the darkness of night is forgotten  
Fickle nature,  
Always changing its mind  
In a mere twelve hours  
Darkness shall fall again

## **The Sewing Machine**

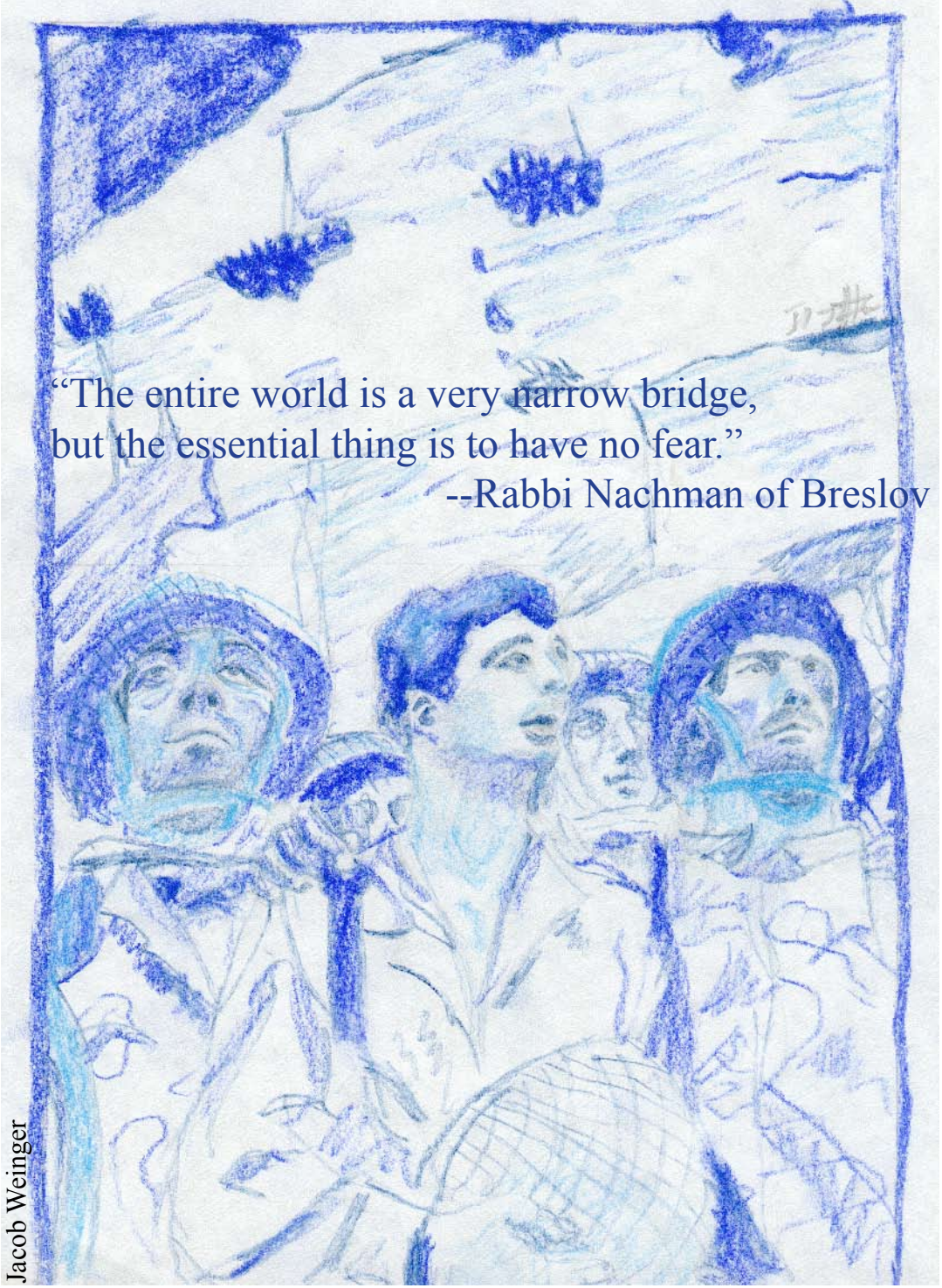
*Chad Simon*

I gave my mother a new sewing machine.  
She gave me food on the dinner table every night.  
She gave me snacks, treats, and ice cream.  
My mother gave me nourishment and refreshment,  
And I, in return, gave her a sewing machine.

My mother gave me toys and action figures  
And she even called them action figures and not dolls.  
She gave me Legos and K'nex.  
She gave me basketballs, baseballs, footballs, and soccer balls.  
She gave me a basketball hoop, hockey sticks, and rollerblades.  
She gave me a bike and a helmet to keep me safe.  
And I gave her a sewing machine.

My mother gave me love and affection.  
She gave me joy and laughter.  
She reprimanded me when I was naughty.  
She ingrained in me a sense of right and wrong.  
She gave me happiness.  
And I gave her a sewing machine.

My mother gave me a wonderful education.  
She gave me guidance in life; she is my life coach.  
She gave me hugs and kisses.  
And I gave her a new sewing machine.  
Now I know a sewing machine isn't enough repayment,  
So I also gave my mother...  
A keychain.

A blue-toned sketch of a group of people looking up at a narrow bridge or path in a landscape. The scene is rendered in a sketchy, expressive style with visible pencil or charcoal lines. The figures are in the foreground, looking upwards with expressions of awe or contemplation. The background shows a narrow path or bridge stretching into the distance, flanked by trees and foliage. The overall mood is one of spiritual journey and faith.

“The entire world is a very narrow bridge,  
but the essential thing is to have no fear.”

--Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

# F A I T H

Tears start to stream down my face as I lay in the hospital bed. Only an hour before I was a regular teenager at wrestling practice, going through my daily routine, unsuspecting of anything out of the ordinary occurring. Suddenly, there was tremendous pain in my back and breathing became extremely difficult. Before there was time to understand what was happening, I found myself on the operating table in the emergency room with a collapsed lung and a doctor sticking a tube into a chest. Unable to receive anesthesia because I was not breathing properly, the pain that the insertion of the chest tube caused, I was told, was essentially the equivalent of getting stabbed. The pain increased exponentially when I was told that my senior season of wrestling would end before it ever began. At this moment, all my championship dreams abruptly came crashing down. My father was told to sit down because of the danger that he might faint seeing his child in such an agonizing state. Everything was happening so fast, and I was no longer a seventeen year old young man; I was instead quickly beginning to feel like a vulnerable little boy.

However, I refused to allow myself to become overwhelmed, helpless, and hopeless. Instead, with all the tumult around me, all I could concentrate on was the Song of Ascents from Tehillim, which somehow stumbled to the front of my stream of consciousness. Despite being in excruciating pain, I managed to quietly squeeze out the words which I had sung so loudly every Shabbat at Camp Moshava the last two years.

*“Esa einayim el haharim, mayeyin yavo ezri? Ezri mayim Hashem, Oseh Shamayim Va’aretz. Hiney lo yanom velo yishan, shomer Yisrael.”*

*“I raise my eyes upon the mountains; when will my help come to me? My help is from Hashem, maker of the heaven and earth. Behold! He neither slumbers nor sleeps—the guardian of Israel.”*

Never before in my life had I said words of the Torah with such emotion and meaning. Here I was, looking up my own daunting mountain that seemed absolutely insurmountable, and I too was calling to my guardian Hashem for salvation. The low point I had reached that traumatic night could have easily made me focus on how unfair life was and lose faith in the beliefs integral to my Jewish identity, but instead my religious conviction emerged. I would come out of the hospital one week later with three scars and sixty staples in my lung, but importantly than that I left with the knowledge that in challenging times I will ultimately turn to Hashem and Judaism, integral principles of my life that I will never lose faith in.

The sky opens up and rain pours down. Waves rise up and crash down on the sea below. A man stands at the edge of the ocean. He takes one last breath and is swallowed up.

A ray of sunlight shines upon calm waters. The water swirls leisurely with few signs of life visible. There is a rhythm to the flow of the water; the heart of the sea beats slowly. The water swirls faster, and a man, a life, rises up from the depths of the ocean. He approaches the surface, and with his last ounce of energy raises himself up over the top. Air fills his lungs as he breathes in. The air circulates his body. His life has been returned to his body.

My life was in the hands of the doctors and G-d. I was born three and a half months prematurely, and my lungs could not perform their simplest task without the aid of advanced machinery. Instead, I had a respirator breathing for me. The doctors wanted to give me a chance to breathe by myself, and they took me off the machine. My immature lungs were not strong enough, and I could not supply oxygen to my body. I came within milliseconds of death. Luckily, the doctors were able to revive me. The doctors as well as G-d gave me a chance to take a second breath. Again, I was taken off the respirator. Again, death stared into my small, sickly, and sallow face. I was brought back from the realm of death only to enter it over and over again. Over the course of a few weeks, I became stronger, and G-d preformed a miracle through the hands of the neonatologists. He gave me the ability to breath on my own.

Breathing, like many bodily functions, is often taken for granted. Every healthy person and many unhealthy people have the ability to breathe without any aid. It is so hard for most people to value something they do subconsciously. They need to appreciate the fact that they are able to take a second breath-- that they can continue living. Each breath gives people an opportunity to do more than they have done before.

With new life flowing through the man's veins, he kicks his legs and moves his arms through the water as he tries to make it back to shore. He pulls his head out of the water and breathes in, and then continues to make his way back to the shore. His heart is beating hard, supplying blood to the rest of his body as it propels him forward.

Exhausted, he reaches out and can feel the sand calling him back home. He hoists himself up and falls into the sand. As he lies panting on the shore, he thanks G-d for giving him the opportunity to take a second breath.

## Echo

*Hannah Dimbert*

One echo in the palace,  
That place. Sound used to float freely there  
Unencumbered, as it were, like light.  
And a tenuous strand would descend from the throne—  
That place. Higher, it was a different palace,  
Of beings many; they were like light.  
More brilliant, perhaps.  
A resounding sound would descend:  
That place.

And now it echoes.  
Fire has whispered its song here;  
In the palace, it floats freely,  
Cries until the walls are no more.  
It is a fabric torn, and yet it bleeds,  
The tenuous strand is not broken.  
The place does not stand but in memory of the throne,  
Of a Being, One.  
And a sound resounds,  
An echo of this place.

## Early Morning Light

*Chanan Bell*

a gentle light shines through the open window  
embracing all as a quiet wind blows  
washing out the entire room  
knowing we must arise for our day soon  
but for this moment- right now  
there's a tranquility only G-d could endow  
it's calm before the storm of the every day  
when the conscience is tugged at from every  
which way  
and balance seems so impossible to find  
for there's far too much happening inside your  
mind  
your loves, your fears, your irritations, your  
desires  
all of the dreams that you aspire  
your entire human experience bottled in your  
head  
all the things you regret having done and said  
but with each hectic day comes a morning new  
when the colors of your mind can return to  
their hues  
and all of reality shifts back to where it started  
as if the sanity of life had never really parted  
the world acquires balance at least once more  
stitches are made in the holes consciousness  
tore  
and we can fall in love again with this world  
we call home  
never more shall we have to aimlessly roam  
sit back-enjoy the calm of the early morning  
light  
for this morning will never happen again.

## Wiped Out

Barry Rosenblum

Death spreads like wildfire,  
All you need is one to start the direction and  
than it's on its route.  
So now a days it feels like everyone around us  
is dying,  
Like a tidal wave, the ones we lost were wiped  
out.

We know of nothing until it's gone,  
Learn this lesson before it's too late to compre-  
hend.  
Although the words might sound wrong,  
They will be truly valuable in the end.

Death spreads like wildfire,  
All you need is one to start the direction and  
then it's on its route.  
So now a days it feels like everyone around us  
is dying,  
Like a tidal wave, the ones we lost were wiped  
out.

Do not underestimate what you have,  
For it can be gone tomorrow.  
When it comes time for this to happen,  
All you will need is your neighbors to at least  
try help ease the sorrow.

Death spreads like wildfire,  
All you need is one to start the direction and  
than it's on its route.  
So now a days it feels like everyone around us  
is dying,

Like a tidal wave, the ones we lost were wiped  
out.

We might not understand the concept of  
death,  
But it is not for being associated with the Angel  
of Death dressed up in a dark purple dress.  
As she takes away our final breath,  
She may show hospitality and take you in as a  
guest.

Death spreads like wildfire,  
All you need is one to start the direction and  
than it's on its route.  
So now a days it feels like everyone around us  
is dying,  
Like a tidal wave, the ones we lost were wiped  
out.

Like twigs in a fire,  
Easy to control,  
The decision of death,  
Is for G-d to control.

Death spreads like wildfire,  
All you need is one to start the direction and  
then it's on its route.  
So now a days it feels like everyone around us  
is dying,  
Like a tidal wave, the ones we lost were wiped  
out.

We will still suffer pain,  
As our loved ones are slain.

If we assemble our hearts as one family,  
Our tears in heaven will be heard as a beautiful melody.

Death spreads like wildfire,  
All you need is one to start the direction and  
than it's on its route.  
So now a days it feels like everyone around us  
is dying,  
Like a tidal wave, the ones we lost were wiped  
out.

## **The Sukkah Song**

*Elana Perlow*

I am in my sukkah, surrounded by ten of the main influences in my life, the eleventh still on my mind while he is studying in Israel. The weather that fall was perfect for Sukkot, not too cold or rainy, with the right amount of breeze--a rare occasion for our typically cold outdoor holiday. I am in tenth grade, glad that eleven out of twelve of my family members are blessed to spend another holiday together.

It is a clear night, the sky a beautiful shade of dark blue, and we all sit in our homemade, tenuously standing, temporary dwelling in our backyard, aware of Hashem's protection. Looking up, I see the stars peaking through the bamboo schach. The taste of holiday food lingers on my tongue. Baked chicken, oriental broccoli, pea soup, challah, all satisfying. Outside of our sukkah I can hear a rustling in the bushes, of local chipmunks and squirrels making themselves comfortable in our yard. I am wearing my favorite crimped tan skirt, a warm dark brown cardigan, and worn out, slip on gym shoes. My younger siblings are all bundled up in their pajamas and sweatshirts, while my older siblings are inappropriately attired in their newly laundered white dress shirts and ironed skirts or slacks, as they lean back in their dirty lawn chairs.

Every year when fall rolls around, the holiday of Sukkot is celebrated by Jews across the globe. During this holiday, it is a mitzvah to spend as much time as possible in the sukkah, a temporary dwelling, partly opened to the sky.

It was the second of the eight nights of Sukkot, and we had all just finished dinner and were beginning dessert. My eldest brother, fresh from Israel, asked if he could teach us a new song or *zemer*. We agreed and he began singing the song, instructing us in its melody, and then letting us join in with him when we felt steady with the catchy tune. This song was more of a ditty than a *zemer*, but soon enough we were all singing along, having fun with the beauty and simplicity of

the tune. As the mood heightened and the enthusiasm rose, the lyrics to the song were dropped and we were all singing along to this new tune.

A few minutes into our fun, my dad put his hands up. His palms were facing his family, the known indicator that he had wanted our attention.

“Hey guys, what do you think of this: we’re going to go around the table, oldest to youngest, and everyone will sing this tune while either imitating an instrument, animal noise, or a funny sound. After each new person is added, we go back to the previous people and everyone will to finish up that verse with the chorus.”

Although it took a little clarification and a few more explanations we tried out his new idea, beginning with my oldest brother who had originally introduced the tune to all of us.

“Meow, meow,” he began, singing the tune with the voice of a cat. At the end of his verse we all joined in, belting the chorus. And so the song went, being played with whistles and electric guitars, mouth popping and sheep baaing, and even the names of the ushpizin that my mom attempted to fit into the tune of the song. After each round we would all join together again in song, coming together as a family.

As we all sang together and belted out the tunes on a late weeknight in the middle of Northbrook, I remember thinking how much I love being a part of my family. I felt the importance of them in my life and how they were and are a constant part of my world. I also wondered what would happen to us later in each of our journeys in life and what the future would bring. Would we all be here next year to celebrate this holiday together again and would things ever be the same after this year? As much as I felt invincible, I also felt the fragility of life. I was scared of the fact that this night had to end; that the song had to end.

Today, I still love being a member of my family and I know that I can never recapture that moment in time, but we still have the opportunity to create great new harmonies when we all get together. Sometimes the melody might be discordant for a short period of time but we are fortunate enough to work together and compromise to find the appropriate key.

Unfortunately these moments are currently few and far between. Although I have grown and become more serious since the time of this special moment, I am still the same person that enjoys these simple pleasures that we all take for granted. I look forward to the time when I can ignore the outer world around me and just enjoy the people, the time, the place and the ability to sing with those that I love, in the safety of Hashem’s hands.

## The Meaning of Judaism

*Eliana Kahan*

I have been asked by Mrs. Goldstein to explain “The Meaning of Judaism”. As a student, I have no choice but to complete this assignment and it is as much a pleasure as it is an annoyance to do so.

Surely a Jew knows what Judaism is. It’s a gaze upward. It’s the why in every question. It is the intuition that there’s more than we can see. Judaism is something that at least 600,000 people have experienced, but has no proof. It’s the idea that proof is not necessary. It’s the holy in holy land, the is in monotheism. Judaism is the feeling of belonging when learning Gemara, the feeling of intimacy during prayer. It’s a kosher Dunkin Donuts. It’s walking backward away from the Kotel. Judaism is the wisdom of a young child and the last wish of an old man. It’s the connection to something invisible. Judaism is something to depend on and something that depends on you. It’s a room full of silent people asking for the same thing. It’s the tradition in tradition soup. It’s the smile that lies between the two perfectly curled payos that frame a boy’s face. It’s the ability to question something without ever doubting its validity; it’s the need to question. Judaism is not knowing exactly what to say when asked to describe something intangible, but more importantly it’s why I haven’t given up on describing it.

## Prayer

*Tova Benjamin*

With bent knees

I pray

I pray for clarity

The cloudy gray areas

turned to a patchy black

The breathtaking life

I’ve forgotten how to appreciate

With bent knees

I pray

I pray for hope

The twisted vines of doubt

strangled my trains of thought

the seed sprouted in my soul

disintegrated into dust

With bent knees

I pray

I pray for miracles

Wondrous flashes of light

transitions beyond imagination

rich lives filled with loveliness

mind blowing miraculous happenings

With bent knees

I pray

I pray for unity

My contradicting thoughts leave me undecided

I no longer can tell

Which way to turn

With bent knees

I pray.

# Hopes & Dreams



**"The longest journey is the journey inwards. For he who has chosen his destiny has started upon his quest for the source of his being."**

**--Dag Hammarskjöld**

## Happiness

*Arielle Braun*

Happiness is strength  
Strength is work  
Work is hard

But can happiness really be defined?  
Is it inner strength?  
Or the strength to ignore what people really  
say?

Happiness is laughter  
Dancing in the rain  
Letting loose of all worries

But can troubles be completely forgotten?  
Can happiness overpower grief?  
Or do you have the ability to tell yourself  
you're happy, when in truth you're hurting?

Happiness is strength  
Strength is work  
Work is hard  
But hard work strengthens happiness

## Sunrise-Sonnet

*Eliana Kahan  
Talia Molotsky*

A drop of light breaks through the chilly night  
The sky turns pink then pale the dawn arrives  
As hope returns and does away with fright  
All can be seen and light reclaims our lives  
But oh the sun shines bright and even blinds  
The heat is strong and cannot be controlled  
Around the trees and hills the sun's light winds  
And leaves us begging for the night the cold  
With light comes truth and pain follows behind  
This is the curse that plagues the human mind

## Warmth

Chanan Bell

Wearing warmth where whispers cold and calculus come to freeze and frighten.

What warmth is this?

steaming streams of sun shine shimmering, surrounding my body as I sway in the breeze. Sufficiently safe from harm in the arms of the flowing liquid light.

You sail on by in your ship so high as I am swimming to the shore, distantly diminishing into the haze of the horizon.

Longer I linger in timeless tides of light, the wandering waves separate significantly into colors cold and careful, commanding consciousness and characteristics, commandeering our breezy boat.

Violent violets vivify veracious, voluminous rainbows reverberating randomly.

Enter your eyes in entirety, enlighten, pointing the precious path to intertwining souls, yours and mine.

Indistinguishable intellects as well as bodily manifestations merge totally together to experience enlightenment, existentially seeking sublimation.

Honed happiness happens here, in our connection

where we close our eyes, channel the world absorb and absolve the energies of everything.

As we drift, content in the still tide of sunlight, watching life mature into moonlight.

All passes eventually.

## Nightmare

Hannah Dimbert

When I awoke from the night  
*(the dead)*

a scream was fighting out my lungs, panic and I knew not my name nor my place mindless.

When I awoke from the night  
*(home, it's okay)*

I placated terror, soothing whispering words of psalm and praise meaning.

When I awoke from the night  
*(i feel it)*

each word held allusion, bolted to me seventy bricks to make a straight wall memory.

When I awoke from the night  
*(i was there)*

the connection passed through me glowing bright strings like the stars in the sky melancholy.

Every little girl grows up playing with dolls and eventually puts them away to store in the attic. In a certain sense, I never put mine away. My years of caring for my “dollies” led to an eagerness to teach children. At 14 I began volunteering at a local preschool, and I have continued to work with children ever since.

When I am working with four-year-olds, I feel at most in my element. One day at the preschool, during a free moment after snack time, I pulled out Dr Seuss’s *The Cat in the Hat* and asked out loud, “Who wants to read with me?” Immediately, two-dozen tiny hands dropped their building blocks and Barbie dolls, as their owners raced toward me. It was as if I had a magnet pulling them closer.

I sat in the middle of this large gathering of squirming bodies. There was not a lot of wiggle room. Unfazed by the lack of personal-space, I excitedly dove into the story. I began reading slowly as the kids hung on every word. At each page I turned the book toward the kids, pointed out pictures and asked questions like “What do you think will happen next?” Or, “Who else likes dressing up in silly hats like the cat?” The kids giggled and commented on each page and picture.

These are the moments for which I live. I have a deep appreciation for the innocence and pure way of how children look at the world. I find that kids are extremely observant and are quick learners if they have the right teachers. Being that teacher is my “something.”

It is part of the Rosh HaShanah experience.  
Opening the box.  
Taking out the tin.  
Smelling the smell.  
I can't wait to eat it.  
Eagerly awaiting Rosh Hashana day.  
Breakfast time is a joyous occasion.  
I get a slice of honeycake with my cereal and milk.  
The delicious aroma fills the air.  
Like cinnamon and honey and the product of true love.  
True love that prompts a package to every son and daughter as Rosh Hashana approaches.  
I can't wait until next year when I get to taste tangible proof of her love again.  
But it won't come this year.  
The sender can't deliver.  
She's gone on to another place now.  
A better place they say.  
But who will make my honeycake?  
I will make the honeycake this year.

I will mix all the ingredients with care in an attempt to get it right.  
I will scrape every last drop of dough off the side of the bowl, just like she taught me.  
I will put it in the tins.  
I will place it in the oven.  
I will wait in anguish for it to be done.  
I cannot expect it to be as good as hers.  
After all, her expertise in baking is the product of many, many years of practice.  
But I hope it can measure up.  
This marks a new beginning.  
I will carry on the legacy.  
Her memory will reside in me.  
Her love exists in my heart.  
Her reminders guide my hand.  
She will make sure it comes out right.  
Thank you for your everlasting love.  
Thank you for never getting angry.  
Thank you for showing me how to follow in your footsteps.  
My dream is to be just like you.

As I was playing in my room with my dolls, I could not help but look out my window into the bedroom of my neighbor. Her curtains were pulled back revealing her big white room. There was a big white desk with books piled so high that I was surprised that they had not fallen. I bet she is smart. She probably knows different languages and reads big people books like Mommy and Daddy. Next to the desk there was a pink and white garbage can filled to the top with crumpled papers. She is probably a writer too! Maybe some of those books that were on her desk were books that she had written! I bet that her books are about her travels around the world to places I have never heard of. She has a flag with a blue star on it that I do not recognize on the wall. A flag of some exotic country far, far away. There is a dresser on the other side of the desk with a jewelry box and nail polish and sparkly headbands.

She must be the princess of the exotic country! I have always dreamed of being a princess. They always look so beautiful in their long gowns walking down the front steps of their castles. She probably goes to balls and sits on her royal throne and she comes here only for vacation. Her bed is white with light pink bedding and many pillows. There are dresses laid out at the foot of her bed and dozens of shoes scattered across the floor. She must be preparing for a party of some sort for very important people. I am sure that she is the guest of honor. An alarm clock is sitting neatly on her dresser. It reminds her to get ready for the special events. Mommy bought me an alarm clock for my first day of kindergarten. It scared me when it woke me up so I just stayed under my blankets until Mommy came in to tell me to come down to the car. I was so sad that I was late to my first day of school and I do not use that alarm clock anymore. There is a beautiful, fluffy, white carpet covering the whole floor. The room looks like a castle on a cloud. It reminds me of the pictures in the storybook that Daddy used to read me when I was little. I dreamed of living in the sparkly kingdom with the chirping birds and twinkling stars.

There is also a basket of clothes in the corner along with some open photo albums. The pictures that I can see from my window do not look like pictures of a princess. The pictures look like my school pictures and pictures from family vacations and events. The clothes look a lot like my clothes. She actually looks a lot like my sister and me and less like a princess. She looks like a friend. Now that I look closer, those books on her desk look like books for school. And those papers in the trash might be old homework and flyers. Is my neighbor just a normal girl? I suppose open windows can be deceiving. Maybe she would like to play princess with me one day...

Dear President Abraham Lincoln,

My life has been irrevocably changed by your “Gettysburg Address.” It helped me deal with my grief at the loss of my grandmother, it helped me select a vocation, and it changed my views about death. Yet, I do not think I could have fully understood its message had it not been for the death of my beloved grandmother.

My grandmother was a warm, helpful person. Through her charity work, she helped the refugees, the injured, and the sick. Even more importantly, she was “Mother” to her whole community, listening to and helping people with their problems. She worked for peace and happiness within the home and the community.

When I was eight years old, my grandmother died. Over 500 people came to her funeral. Many were saddened by her death, but I was devastated.

Diagnosed with Stage IV Glioblastoma Multiforme, she had not been expected to live more than a few months — most victims of this cancer do not. Instead, she survived for over a year-and-a-half. I still cherish those extra months.

After her diagnosis, my grandmother’s health declined rapidly. Within weeks, she could not sit up on her own or even talk clearly. Because of the severity of her situation, most surgeons refused to operate on her; they told us that she had no hope for survival. Finally, a surgeon at Northwestern Memorial Hospital agreed to perform surgery.

The surgeon removed 95% of my grandmother’s tumor. After recovering from the surgery, my grandmother seemed almost healthy for close to a year: she was able to walk again, talk again, laugh again, live again. Of course, we all knew that she was not completely cured—that one day soon she would lie dying in a hospital bed. All that I cared about was that she was living. I knew that without the surgeon’s help she would have already passed away.

She did get sick again. I remember missing school for a few days near the end of her life. I wanted to be with her, even though she was too far gone to acknowledge my presence, with the exception of an occasional, faint smile. I remember rubbing her hands with lotion to make her feel more comfortable, willing that she get better a second time. She did not.

Shortly after my grandmother died, I became fascinated by your life, President Lincoln, and by what you stood for. I particularly loved your “Gettysburg Address.” Although I was never required to memorize this speech for school, I recited the words over and over, memorizing them, engraving them in my mind. They inspired me: “The world...can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.”

I realized that people often do not have time to achieve their goals before they die. Neverthe-

less, if a person truly believes in a cause and works for it with all of his heart, it is up to the rest of society to continue to advance that cause, to pick it up where he left off. In this way, his efforts can live on forever.

When I read your speech, I thought of my grandmother. I remembered her essential role in her community. I remembered all of the good that she had strived to accomplish during her life. Somehow, I wanted to further her cause. But how could I possibly ensure that her beliefs and goals would not perish with her death? I thought about all the other grandmothers and grandfathers, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters that pass away every year. Who furthers their righteous causes? How could I?

Then I thought of the surgeon. I remembered what he had done for my grandmother: she was given an additional year to live, to share her values, her hopes, and her dreams, a year to pass on knowledge and love. I wanted to be like him. I wanted to help give people time to advance their own causes. My doctor had helped give her – and give us – time. I resolved to become a doctor, to keep alive the causes that a doctor nobly struggles to maintain. I knew then that I wanted to give families a chance to live and laugh and love, even after tragedy hits. I wanted—I want—to give them time.

I know that added time means the world to those who lack time to fulfill their dreams, to people who can feel time slipping through their grasping fingers.

Thank you for the inspiration,  
Hannah Otis

## Flash

Zach Kramer

Flash. A camera takes a picture. A moment fixed in time. I am eight.  
Family surrounds me. I blow out candles. Taste white icing in every spoon full.  
There's laughing. Not a care in the world. Someone asks, "Hey, what do you want to be?"  
Whatever that means.

Flash. A camera takes a picture. A moment fixed in time. I am twelve.  
Preparing for my Bar Mitzvah. I'm supposed to be a man.  
My mom is screaming. I'm practicing. I'm practicing.  
Eighteen months of lessons. Memorization. Frustration. Determination.  
Triumph. Now what?  
What will I be?

Flash. A camera takes a picture. A moment fixed in time. I am fourteen.  
I graduate from Middle School. My blue cap and gown are itchy and uncomfortable.  
The theater is packed. Proud parents, excited students. We sing Hebrew songs.  
We parade across the stage one by one. I take my diploma. I shake hands. Someone hugs me. The audience looks blurry and black.  
I start to think. Time is moving quickly.  
What will I be?

Flash. A camera takes a picture. A moment fixed in time.

I'm a sophomore in high school. Surrounded by my friends. Time to pray – again. Study gemara, chumash, navi. I'm tired. It's hard. I have ten-hour days. I think about Israel. Have to focus on chemistry, math and writing. When can I exercise, breathe fresh air? Not just wondering what I will be. Worrying. Every minute.

## Real Fantasy

Chanan Bell

Deep into the heart of twilight  
as nothing stirs and there is no sight  
ideas come out to congregate  
theories arrive to demonstrate  
spoken words take bodily form  
unexpressed emotions create a tumultuous storm.  
Juliet appears, sees her Romeo die  
the headless horseman starts his nightly ride  
and all of literature comes out to act  
as well as oral tradition, fictional and fact  
everything inanimate is soon set free  
dancing together celebrating individuality  
in the most secretive ritual of the night  
when the world's opulence reaches its highest heights  
only to flee before the rising of the sun  
for no man can know of the gathering done.  
But when night returns once more  
as humans slumber, unaware of what lies in store  
every imagination of the mind will meet  
as all of reality gathers outside in the streets.

## **The Best Present I Ever Gave my Mom**

*Chaim Chernoff*

I gave my mom a jewelry box.

My mom gave me protection when I was a baby crawling on the ground.

And I gave her a jewelry box for Mother's Day.

My mom gave me a soft place to fall when I first learned how to walk.

And I gave her a jewelry box that my second grade teacher helped me make.

My mom gave me new clothes when I first went to school.

And I gave her a jewelry box shaped like a heart.

My mom gave me advice when I was having trouble in my classes.

And I gave her a white jewelry box.

My mom supported me as I struggled to learn for my bar-mitzvah.

And I gave her a jewelry box with a picture of her with outstretched arms ready to give me a hug.

My mom gave me the strength to go to high school.

And I gave her a jewelry box the size of her palm.

I know the jewelry box doesn't compare to what she gave me, however I know that she will love it.

It represents the greatest gift I could give her, a loving son.

That is why my mom gave me a person who will listen to everything I say.

And I gave her a jewelry box.





