The Pencil

GCS Young Writers' Magazine

Volume 2
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Goshen
By Rosco Schaer, 2nd grade

Great
Oh such a wonderful school
Super
Harmless
Excellent
Nice

Illustration by Madison Lowry, 6th grade

Teachers
By Riley Olson, 2nd grade

Tools
Each one is kind
At school there are teachers
Cool
Hard working
Education
Respectful
School

Rossbach
By Kendall Contadini, 2nd grade

Respectful
Outstanding
Spectacular
Spark principal
Best principal
Amazing
Considerate
Happy to have you as a principal!
School is Wonderful
By Haylee Papp, 2nd grade

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
School is wonderful
And so are you!!!!

School
By Nicole Robillard, 2nd grade

So nice to be in!
Cool things to learn!
How school was invented?
I don’t know.
School is so fun!
I don’t like weekends at all.
I love school so much!

Red and Blue
By Emmalee Harbert, 2nd grade

Roses are red, Violets
are blue. How many
things are you going
to do?

Pizza
By Elisabeth Leifert, 4th grade

Pizza is delicious.
Pizza is rad.
I think it’s yummy for who ever is sad.
Cheese is everywhere on your pizza slice.
But don’t let it fall or it goes to the mice!
**Pumpkin**  
*By Eva Geiger, 4th grade*

Pumpkins all shapes and sizes  
Unusual stems  
Moving the big ones are hard  
Pumpkins white, orange, small, and big  
Knowing to carve a pumpkin makes it easy to find the perfect one to get

In all different weights some easy to carry some hard to carry  
Know that there’s pumpkins maybe make some pumpkin pie

**Friendship**  
*By Aidan Scanlon, 4th grade*

Family and friends  
Respect for all others  
In a game, anyone is welcome  
Everyone is my friend  
Nobody is left out  
Don’t be a bully  
Some are nice, some are not  
Help everyone in need  
In a game none should be left out  
People always could have some help

*Illustration by Ivory Lambro, 6th grade*
One day at my Grandma’s house my Grandpa said, “Why don’t we go on my boat?”
I said, “Yeah!” My sister said, “Yeah!” too.

Then we drove over to where the boat is. I walked over to the dock with my Mom.
After everyone got on, we just drove the boat slowly for a little while. I played with Marlena’s Kindle.

Then my Dad went fishing on the boat. After a while my Dad finally got a fish! He let Abby and me touch the fish. It felt slimy and really weird. It was cool!

After a while my Dad went swimming with us. I was really scared, but my Dad encouraged me to swim and I did it! Someone said, “Time to go home.” I got off the boat and dried off. Then we drove to Grandma’s house. It was the best boat ride ever!!

The End
One day a Megalodon was swimming and found a crown. It was yellow. It had blue dots on it and he loved it.

So he swam over to the crown. He put it on his head, then swam away. He loved that crown as much as he loved eating fish.

He said, “All the fish need to listen to me. Swim into my mouth.” So the fish did as they were told.

“Oh no!” he shouted. A big gust of ocean water washed the crown off his head.

The Megalodon was very sad. Everything was back to normal.

The End
It Walks at Midnight!!!
By Cassidy Geiger, 3rd grade

“Come on Cassie!” screamed my brother. We were going to the costume store. He had been wanting to go since he had heard about it. "Ooooooh," he said. "I want that one!" So we bought the ninja costume that he wanted. Halloween was a couple days away and when it came around, we put on our costumes and went off trick-or-treating. Surprisingly, the neighborhood was pretty empty. In fact the neighborhood was empty!

I felt warm... there was something on my back. It kind of felt like warm wind. I could not stand it any more so I spun around. What I saw was a tall, fat, black figure. What it said was strange. It said one thing. It said, "I walk at midnight!" Then its teeth sank into my leg. I screamed! I found myself in the hospital. I am dying and if you ever find him tell someone. Be caref.....

----TO BE CONTINUED----

Illustration by Kay Strawson, 3rd grade

Rhode Island
By Chase Ciccarelli, 3rd grade

Once upon a time there was a family called the Ciccarelli family. They were going to Rhode Island. They packed their clothes and pajamas into their suitcases, then they put the suitcases into the car. They drove to Rhode Island and it took two hours to get there. The family finally got there.

It was two o’clock and they were going to go on the Polar Express Train. When they got to the train and got on, the trainman gave them a golden ticket. The family sat down in a seat and the train rode away from their car.

On the way to the North Pole, they had hot chocolate and cookies - mmmm! They sang songs and even got to get the first gift of Christmas from Santa!

The Ciccarelli family got back to their car and drove to their hotel. Our family enjoyed riding on the Polar Express Train!
The Santa Hunters
By Jazmin Sandefor, 3rd grade

Lea and Andrew were good friends. Lea always wanted to find Santa. At Goshen Central School, it was about to be winter break, 24 days before Christmas. Moms and Dads were busy shopping for presents. Lea and Andrew were making plans to hunt for Santa. Andrew set up a computerized Santa Tracker that was set up under his bed. Andrew asked Lea why they were hunting for Santa. She said, “To prove to all my friends that he really does exist.”

On Christmas Eve, when everyone else was sleeping, Lea and Andrew turned on the Santa Tracker and followed the sleigh’s progress. Suddenly, the Santa Tracker began beeping and the children heard the tapping of tiny hooves on the roof. The children ran to the staircase with their camera just in time to see sparkling light sweep down the chimney and light up the room.

The children suddenly fell into a deep sleep, just as Santa appeared in the room. Santa looked up the stairs and saw the children sleeping. He said, “That magical sleeping powder really works.”

When the children woke up, they found the room full of presents and Santa was gone. Lea said, “We will have to try next year to get our picture of Santa.”

The End

Why Cattails Grow in Ponds
By Elizabeth Watkins, 3rd grade
Written As a Native American Folk Tale

One day Little Johnny was supposed to go and plant very special seeds on the other side of the pond. But Little Johnny didn’t listen. He loved to play in the water, especially ponds. So when he was playing in the pond, his pocket broke and out scattered the seeds except for one. When he finally got to the other side of the pond, he found only one seed left in his pocket. Then he noticed his pocket was ripped. He planted the one seed and returned home.

When he returned home his father said, “Did you plant the seeds?” And Little Johnny said, “I planted one.” His father said, “Where are the rest?” Johnny said, “In the pond.” That is why cattails grow in ponds.

The moral of the story is to not get distracted and do what you are supposed to do.

The Talking Pumpkin
By Kayleanah Hill, 4th grade

We planted a pumpkin, just my mom and me. We carved it into a funny face. It was so much fun. We put the pumpkin out the next day. When we closed the door, it said, “Hey! I want to come in. Hey! It’s freezing out here. Just let me in?” We kept the pumpkin, until it turned bad. The next day, we put the pumpkin in the ground. Then we went inside. When we started to close the door, I heard “Hey!”
One Cloudy Night
By Emma Blanchard, 4th grade

One cloudy night, Mr. Burg walked to his new house. It was an old, abandoned house. No one had even set foot in the house, not even 30 years ago. But Mr. Burg wanted to be positive. He thought that this house was his style.

His ex wife had died 3 years ago. He felt a little blank, even though they had divorced 20 years ago. He walked against the sidewalk, his large boots crunching, barely hitting the ground. He kept on walking.

Finally, he had reached the front steps of his new house. “Here I am at my new home,” he roared. “Time for bed!” he mumbled as he climbed the front steps of his house. How they creaked! “Creaky or not, I’m going to live here.”

When he opened the door he heard bells ringing quietly.

“What?” he cried. “No one told me this house was haunted.”

As he walked over to his fridge, he pulled out his burger from Burger King. “Burger King’s burgers will never run out of good taste,” he murmured. The bells kept on ringing.

“What?” he whispered.

Suddenly he felt weird, just standing there in the dark. As he backed into the wall, he heard loud screaming. He ran upstairs to see if the person had been all right. Right before him stood the ghost of his old wife!

The First Ever Talking Pumpkin!
By Zia Sandefer, 4th grade

Tomorrow is the day of the pumpkin-carving contest. Benjamin wanted to enter into the contest a medium sized, orange pumpkin with a thick stem. Benjamin wanted to farm where there was an old barn. He looked for a pumpkin for one hour. There were rectangle pumpkins, flat pumpkins, and round pumpkins. Finally, Benjamin found a round pumpkin.

Benjamin took his pumpkin home to carve it. First, he cut the top off of the pumpkin. Then he took out the seeds. He used a huge spoon to scoop out the seeds. Next, he cut out round eyes. After that, he cut out a happy mouth and drew stitches on its forehead and its cheeks. Benjamin glued black yarn on his pumpkin’s head. Finally, he cut out a triangular nose.

Benjamin did not realize that, after carving a pumpkin, it can talk! The next day, Benjamin entered his pumpkin into the contest. When the judges came upon the pumpkin, the pumpkin said, “Hello.” The judges looked at the pumpkin closely. Again, it said, “Hello! What’s your name?”

The judges quickly put the first place ribbon on Benjamin’s pumpkin. Then the judges ran out of the room without looking at another pumpkin!

Benjamin ran into the contest room. He looked around and noticed that the first place ribbon was on his pumpkin. He ran and got his pumpkin and walked out of the room. Benjamin’s pumpkin said, “Hello what is your name?”

Benjamin replied, “Benjamin. What is your name?”

The pumpkin said, “Frankenstein! Can we be friends?”

Benjamin replied, “Yes!”

After that day, they were best friends and enjoyed Halloween together.
Talk or Eat?
*by Mackenzie Robillard, 4th grade*

Would you rather not be able to talk during Thanksgiving dinner or not eat dessert on Thanksgiving?

Sniff, sniff my nose jumps for joy when I walk in the kitchen and set my eyes on cooling pies.

My grandma asks me if I would rather not be able to talk during dinner or not eat dessert? I answered to not talk!

I would write notes to my family, it would work just fine. I just can’t risk Thanksgiving without pie, it’s like Easter without finding eggs. It is the only time of year I get to eat lots of dessert. I would spoon millions of pieces of pie on my plate. Then I would make them disappear into my smile. Big slices of pie on my plate, waiting to be eaten! After that for the finishing touch I would scoop up all the crumbs on my plate then chomp and swallow to get every last morsel. That’s what I would do!

The New York City Road Race
*By Drew Lutz, 4th grade*

I remember my time in the New York City Road Race. It was a warm summer day at the Empire State Building. Everybody was lining up at the starting line.

Pink was quite sad because he was pushed back to the end of the pack. Pink has been training for years to be in this 26.2-mile race of champions! Pink thought, “I CAN FEEL THE GOLD, I CAN FEEL IT!” He was so excited. He was getting ready. BANG! The gunshot fired and they were off. Pink was zooming ahead, already in first place!

His good friend Evan was running in second place. Evan’s legs moved like a cheetah and his arms were like an ape.

When Pink got to about 5 miles, he lost most of his stamina. Pink was struggling to run but he was still in first place.

Pink noticed that his friend Evan fell behind him in second place. Quickly, Pink stopped in his tracks and turned around and saw if Evan was ok. Evan was fine, just a little scratch. But now Pink was in 9th and Evan was in 10th.

They kept on going but Pink got to 24 and a half miles and then Pink thought that he sprained his ankle. Pink was right.

Then it felt like it was World War II. Pink was limping but persevering through! Pink was saying in his head, “I will not give up no matter what! No matter what! No matter what!”

Pink was so happy when he saw the finish line, a grin came on his face.

1 HOUR LATER…

Pink said in his head, “No one got hurt and I helped someone out. So I say this was quite a good day.”
Pink turned on the T.V. to Wesel News to see who won the race on the T.V. The cameraman said, “I want to report that a kid named Pink Wright helped out another kid named Evan. For being helpful and wanting to help other people more than win a race, Pink wins a trophy!” Pink was jumping up and down and saying, “I GOT A TROPHY AND IT IS GOLD! YA HA!!”

Pink went to Evan’s house and with a big smile on his face, said, “Thank you.” Then he whispered, “Thank you.”

EPILOGUE

A day later, Pink was so sore that he was lying in bed all day. Some advice is: Never stop until you reach your goal, but if you are struggling, try not to stop. (But sometimes the after effects are not too pleasing.)

Trail Ride
By Lou Anderson, 5th grade

“Neigh!” I heard a winnie, it sounded like a pretty horse. I was right it was a pretty horse! It was the day I did my most favorite thing - RIDING! I thought that everything was going to go as planned and I could not wait.

Early that morning I was so excited to go riding and then three hours later I was! I could not wait for the trail ride at my mom’s friend’s barn and I thought, “When are we going to be there?” When we arrived at the barn I ran up to the ring to see the horses.

I saw so many horses like Quarterhorses, Thoroughbreds, Appaloosa, and so many more horse breeds. When they let us in the ring I went right to Mikie. Chelsea, my mom’s friend, said I was going to ride him.

We groomed the horses and tacked them up. When it was time for the trail ride they put me on Mikie and we were about to go, but suddenly they said that they needed to use Mikie for barrel racing. (It was kind of sad for me, because now I couldn’t ride him.) So they tacked up a different horse named Chunky Monkey, and put me on him.

We went to where the trail was and started on it. On the trail we saw so many things like herons, deer, and snakes.

When we got to a corner Chelsea yelled back to us, “Which way do you want to go?” I yelled back, ”Which ever way is longer?” That was right, so we went that way.

When we were done with the trail ride, I asked if we can ride around in the ring and they said yes! We go into the ring and ride around, then I asked Chunky Monkey to trot and he did! All of a sudden, my mom said it was time to go home so I got off and got in the car. Then in the car, I remembered all the fun times I had riding this afternoon, after all it is my favorite thing! Even though I did not ride Mikie, Chunky Monkey still made it fun!
The Doll Story
By Kyle Joray, 5th grade

Beep Beep! Sage and Carly are finally here! It took them an hour to get here. I mean they live right down the street.

As soon as they got here, we heard my mom yell, “Lunch time!” We ran downstairs like it was a big race. After that, we ate lunch super fast, but we did not choke.

When we were finished, we ran up the stairs very quickly. We all went in my little sister’s bedroom to play with dolls. I was fine with it at first, but when I found out what doll I got… it was ugly and all the others were pretty… I got so, so angry, I pulled the head of the ugly doll like it was an eraser cap on a pencil.

My little sister ran downstairs to tell on me. So I tried to put the head back on the doll. Sage and Carly were saying, “You’re in trouble!” They were no help to me at all!

Boy, did my mom yell! I had to go to my room for like 20 minutes. Good thing I had toys in my room, so I got to play with them. Finally, my mom called me downstairs. I was nervous. I wasn’t allowed to play with the girls anymore that day. I learned to never play with my sister and her dolls!

Not That Ride!
By Courtney Korner, 5th grade

“Let’s go mom!” I yelled as I ran out the door. I slowed down when I reached the first turn. Eventually my mom caught up.

“Slow down! I didn’t have my jacket on and neither did you, but I brought you one.” She was breathless from running after me!

“I can’t wait to go on all the big rides that no one will go on with me!” I exclaimed as we walked across the crosswalk and into the main gate.

I spotted Bri right away and ran up to her so we could discuss which ride we would go on first. My mom took us to the ticket booth so we could get our bracelets to go on rides. Once we had them, we made a beeline for the rides. Then, we walked around a minute to find The Tornado. Once we found it, we got in line and waited for the ride to stop.

When we got on the ride, my favorite song was playing. It started to spin faster and faster until I was glued to the wall. Bri and I scooched up in our seats until our heads were up against the ceiling.

The ride ended and we slid back to the ground. Then, we went on the bullet which is a ride with a cage on each end of a long bar. When the ride starts, it goes up and then starts spinning. It’s really fun because it is not too slow, but not too fast, either.

After that, Bri wanted to go on a ride that is like a ferris wheel but it goes upside down! I did not want to act scared in front of Bri but I did not want to go on that ride, either. I suggested we go on the big slide but Bri had made up her mind, she was going on that ride and so was I. I tried to think of an excuse but the best I could come up with was to tell her I got sick on those rides but I already told her I had never been on a ride like that.

Since I couldn’t think of an excuse, I decided I needed to buy myself some time so I said I was hungry and maybe we could go on that ride after lunch. I hoped my mom wouldn’t say something like, “You should go on it now, because you will have to wait awhile after lunch.” Luckily she didn’t.
We went to get lunch at this Sunflower Pizza place we all like. After lunch it was time for us to go on the ride, but I still was not ready so I said, “Oh, I forgot we should probably wait awhile since we just ate.” I suggested we go to one of the craft buildings because I knew my mom would find something she liked and spend the next hour looking at it. Finally, my mom agreed and we headed for Craft Center Two. When we got there, sure enough, right away she spotted a necklace she really liked.

Just as I said, about an hour later, she finally decided she would come back with Dad, so we left the craft center and headed back for the rides. I couldn’t come up with any more excuses, so I knew I had to either tell Bri the truth or go on the ride. The decision was easy.

We got in line and waited for the ride to stop. While we waited for the ride to stop, it seemed like I had one minute until my worst nightmare. I know I said I wanted to go on big rides but I didn’t mean this! It was really kind of weird looking. It looked like a ferris wheel but it had little cages and spun like a ferris wheel but also went upside down.

We stood in line for about ten minutes, then it was our turn to get on. When we got in we saw a wheel, we asked what it was for, but instead of telling us he reached in and spun the wheel we started spinning upside down with our faces spinning towards the ground with the cage door open and only being held in by the straps. I started having second thoughts but the guy had just closed the door and locked the cage. That was the first and last time I went on that ride!

Illustration by Remy Howe, 6th grade
The Trip to Aruba
By Jasen Meto, 6th grade

It was a few days before Christmas, December 22, 2012, my dad’s birthday (he was turning 50). The only thing he wanted for his birthday was a vacation and his wish came true. My mom and I both planned the whole trip to Aruba couple months back and we told my dad about a week ago. He couldn’t wait. But he didn’t know what was coming.

The drive was horribly slow! “How much longer?” I asked my mom in agony.

“How about three hours,” she answered.

I looked outside and saw the highway packed with cars. In fact, I realized we weren't moving. Pretty much all the cars were honking their obnoxious horns (especially the blue Subaru). Oh great, it’s going to take even longer now, I thought to myself in sarcasm. It’s going to be more than three hours now, hooray!

I was staring out the window when, all of a sudden, the airport was in seeing distance. You could see all the planes lifting into the rainy sky and the enormous building hiding the rest of the planes. ZOOM - just then a plane was flying right above our car! (I think it was a Jet Blue.)

After a half an hour, we got in the airport. It was full of travelers from all around the world.

“It’s so big,” I blurted out. “So, where are we supposed to go?” I asked.

“Flight 2972, I think. Gate 3 possibly, but before that we have to go through security,” noted dad.

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“No,” he answered.

A half an hour later, we finally got to Gate 3 (Dad was actually right about the gate) and waited for the plane to come. During that time, I was looking at the TV that has all the flight information and it said our flight was delayed for an hour.

Were going to be in Aruba soon, just hold on a little more, I thought to myself.

After an hour, we finally finished waiting to start boarding and that’s when the tragedy began.

Like I said it was my dad’s birthday and 3 days before Christmas so what could go wrong? EVERYTHING!

What happened was when my family got to the booth where the employee takes our ticket, they said that someone had to stay behind because there were only two more seats left! Really, I thought to myself. All at the same time we all yelled, “I’ll stay!” but my dad knew that I couldn’t stay by myself and my mom would be worried and scared the whole time so he stayed. I still can’t believe that he stayed at Newark Airport on his birthday while me and Mom went to Aruba.

The flight was so annoying! It was four hours long and the whole time I was thinking about my Dad. I didn’t even know what the plane was. It was something called Luftanza.

After the four hours when we FINALLY got off the plane, I was so excited about seeing the hotel because on the computer it looked AMAZING! So we got to the taxi and started driving towards the hotel.

Later on when we got to the hotel, I thought to myself, I was right, it is amazing. The first thing I did was go to the hotel room, put my stuff in there then - ZOOM - I ran right to the pool.
When I was done swimming it was pretty late (maybe 8:00 pm), so I got out, dried up and went to my room. It's been a rough day, I'll go to sleep and see Dad tomorrow, I thought to myself, and went to sleep.

The next day, I woke up and went to the lobby to check if my dad got there and I was right. He was standing right at the check-in-counter. I ran to him and hugged him as hard as I could.

That was when I realized the most important thing in the world is family. Nothing else comes first.

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**Fly Away Another Day**
*By Veronique Kinser, 6th grade*

I cupped the baby robin in my hands, trying to calm the quivering bird. The poor thing had fallen from the low nest that sat on a rafter underneath my porch. It hopped on the grass near where I lay reading, its newly sprouted feathers looking more like tufted fur than fabric for wings.

He was not yet a fledgling and therefore unequipped to fly. A feeble flap or two, and then, *flop* – he fell over!

The parent robins had flown away from the nest – in search of food, I presumed. I gingerly lifted the frightened bird. Its body felt warm in my palms. “Don’t worry,” I whispered. I could hear the tiny cries of his siblings back in the nest, as though they were echoing my reassurances.

I placed the little bird back in his home, squarely between his two sisters, who nestled in their cozy chamber of thatched mud and grass. Then I backed away and sat on the cool lawn, next to the open book I had temporarily abandoned. In the book, a boy named Dickon could talk to robins and other creatures – they understood him and were not afraid. I, however, was afraid that this little bird’s mother and father would *not* understand. I had heard that parent birds would reject their young if they detect a human’s scent on them.

But were birds known for their highly developed sense of smell? No, I did not think so. I simply could not believe that parents would reject their young because of a flimsy superstition. If I walked under a ladder or broke a mirror, would my mother shun me? No, but she’d have a job on her hands picking up all the glass. Just as the baby bird’s parents would have a job protecting their son from predators if he had remained grounded.

But that is exactly what they did – protect him – for the very next day the baby bird tumbled out again. His parents swooped toward me whenever I ventured too close, as if to shoo me away. My parents would have done the same. But I was in no hurry to leave my own nest. Time spent lolling on the grass, reading about – and then observing – the natural world would dwindle once I left childhood. No, I’ll stay for a while, I thought to myself. I like it here.
Snow Day

By Amelia Girardin, 6th grade

Snowflakes fell from the afternoon sky, landing on my freezing face. My feet were buried deep under piles and piles of snow. Today was going to be the best day ever! Because it was a snow day, of course!

It all started with Abby yelling, “Hey lets go play in the snow!” She ran up her driveway with her boots clogging all along the concrete. We were all bundled up in snow pants, hats, gloves, boots, fuzzy socks, and lots of layers! It wasn’t the first snow day of the year, and hopefully not the last.

We grabbed a huge sled and a couple little ones. “I'll go first,” Abby was anxious to go down the hill. She leaped on her sled with a running start. She and her sled flew down the hill covered in white. She brushed past the tree, almost hitting it. Jumping off her sled with a huge smile, she raced up the hill as good as she could in all those layers.

“Can we go together on the tube? Please?” I begged
“Uhhh, why not?” Abby didn’t look so sure about this.

“Don’t worry, it will be fun!”

I got in the tube sled with Abby’s back to mine. I knew she was nervous, but trying to hide it. I was so excited. This would be the best sled ride ever! I pushed off a rock with my leg.

“Here we go!” I shrieked

“Ahhhhh!” Abby and I both yelled, as we spun round and round in circles. Snow sprayed our faces from beneath the tube. We went over bumps, and brushed past the big tree that split Abby’s and my yard apart.

We got to the bottom of the hill. “That was awesome!” I looked at Abby and she was smiling so big, her smile was big enough to fill the ocean.

“Uhh, Amelia?” I looked to Abby. She was looking at me.

“What’s wrong? You didn’t like it did you? Dang, I was hoping you would love it!” I kept ranting on and on.

“AMELIA! We’re in the prickers. In a blown up tube.” I looked at her confused. “Put two and two together Amelia, we popped it!” I looked at her with a frown on my face (also big enough to fill the ocean).

This was supposed to be the best snow day ever! I felt so bad! We sat there silently, sinking down into the deflated tube. Out of the blue I said, “I'm so sorry Abby, are you mad at me?”

She shook her head no. I got out of the tube, Abby following me. We picked up the tube together with our wet gloves and brought it back to the garage.

This little incident didn’t stop our fun, though. We kept sledding all day until dark and hoped school would get canceled again tomorrow.

All and all, we had a fun snow day. Even though we popped Abby’s one and only tube, I had the idea and took the blame. I learned a very valuable lesson that day. Before trying to get a friend into something, make sure its safe, although Abby and I laughed pretty hard about the whole thing. This truly was the BEST snow day ever!
Scraping your knee on a dirt road with lots of rocks hurts. Trust me, I know. I was crying my eyes out when my mother cleaned out my wound. I should be scolding Wilson, not pitying him. I know now why my mother doesn’t want to take the dogs on a walk. I really should have thought it through before the walk happened. And I looked back on how this all happened. Yes, I thought to myself, I can remember how we got out there in the middle of Fall. Oh, yes, I remember.

It all started with Mom yelling at us. “You guys need to get outside,” Mom complained, “and I need the mail. I’m kicking you out.” So there you have it folks, we officially got kicked out of the house. At least I was with my two older sisters, Annabel and Sarah. But even better, we could take our dogs, Maggie and Wilson.

“We should hurry up. The cold is bothering me.” Sarah grumbled, angry with Mom for making us “hike” our road. Sarah HATES the cold and almost always wishes to be indoors. I can’t exactly say that for myself, though. The treat in my pocket is getting cold, too, I thought, it would be better in Wilson’s belly. I snapped it in half and snuck it to him. Sarah says we should only give our dogs a treat if they do something good, like listening to a command. Honestly, he was doing something good. He was listening to me and he wasn’t pulling on the leash, he was the greatest dog ever… until we were going home.

We strolled up the large hill, kicking pointed and jagged pebbles. Autumn leaves fell gracefully to the ground, making the shuffling of our feet louder by the minute. I held a blue dog leash in my hand, an 80-pound dog attached. Annabel was the mail carrier. While Sarah took Maggie and I took Wilson, she took the mail.

Maggie and Sarah were racing down the hill, Sarah laughing, Maggie panting and howling along. Maggie’s brown splotches glistened in the afternoon sun, her white fur looked off white compared to the clouds. However, Wilson’s fur looked yellow compared to the puffy clouds; not to mention the snow, too. Maggie and Sarah were having a race and Wilson noticed, ears perked up and tail high. Monkey see, monkey do.

Wilson charged down the hill, taking a shocked human half the weight of him with him. My mind collapsed and my senses shut down. For a split second, my senses came back the moment I saw the beeline I was making straight for a sharp rock. Pain slipped through me, so easily at first, I didn’t even know it was there. These were the moments where I wished the universe could slow down, eventually taking a stop. Then I could cry all my tears, heal all my wounds and say everything was fine. I knew life didn’t work that way.

“Oh, what happened?!” Mom hurried over to us. Sarah holding two leashes, and me in Ann’s arms. With all my sobbing, Sarah had to explain. Wilson slumped onto his bed after the whole family scolded him. I felt the worst. It wasn’t his fault, it was Maggie’s - no Sarah’s. She was the one racing Maggie. And she knew what would be the conclusion. Whatever the reason, I knew it was Sarah’s fault. No doubt about it.

The pain was still stabbing at me, but I didn’t care about that, I cared about Wilson. I wanted to comfort him and tell him that everything would be all right and that he was a good boy. And again, I knew life didn’t work that way. When someone does something bad you’re supposed hate them for day or two (maybe longer), but not in my life, and not with Wilson.

If this was the first time the incident happened, everything would be fine and we could take as many walks as we wanted. But it wasn’t our first time. It was our second. Mom refused to
let us take walks with the dogs again, and for that, we will never take walks again, except around
the house and in the electric fence. So folks, the lesson here today: Don’t let a dog twice the
weight of you pull on the leash. Or maybe it’s: you should think about what you are going to do
before you do it and prevent the consequences. Either way, follow both of them. You never
know what lies ahead.

Lake Compounce: Expedition Skycoaster
By Jessica Manchak, 6th grade

“Come on Dad!” I shouted with excitement. “We are going to be late!” I was trying to
run ahead, but my dad had to stop me, otherwise I was going to get “lost.” I’ve been going here
ever since I was little. I know my way around, I thought to myself. When we got there, I didn’t
even know what I was rushing for. I was petrified.

We were at Lake Compounce for the ESPN picnic. My Dad looked a little worried too, so
that made me feel better. However, I realized he wasn’t worried to go on the ride, he was worried
because he had left the tickets in the camera bag which we had lost. Well not we, he. Way to
make me feel good, Dad.

I thought my Dad was going to have to argue with the guy, but no. He just let us right in.
I was kind of happy but kind of not. We were going to be able to go on the ride and all, but
considering I was scared half to death didn’t help much. I did go on this ride before and wanted
the image to just go away. But, it didn’t. It couldn’t. It was just locked in my mind. Haunting me
for a whole year.

I totally regretted rushing my dad. Maybe it wouldn’t have been so bad if we missed our
ride of a lifetime. But, here we are. Waiting. I was hypnotized by the people swinging back and
forth, hanging by the cord. I just had to rush him. So many thoughts were rushing through my
mind, the suspense rushing through me, as if I were hollow.

A totally different man called us up. Finally! We can get this over with. That was just me
not paying attention that well, because I finally realized that neither of us had our harnesses on. I
guess I was so scared that my brain wasn’t working quite right.

I was just about ready to go to the door when the guy said “Ok, you two can sit back
down.” So close, yet so far. All of my worries came back. I was so happy that we would be able
to go on the ride but, NO!

Finally, we actually got to go on the ride. We walked up this concrete path and into a blue
box. Kind of like the ones construction workers use when they fix power lines, but a little bigger.
Anyway, we walked into it and got raised up, so we could get attached to the clip. When
we got in I remembered what my dad had said to me before. “Do you want to pull the ripcord?”
he said (the ripcord is the thing that lets you drop eighty something feet).

“Are you sure?” I said, my voice shaking, making it hard for me to talk. “I mean I did it
last time...”

“I’m positive,” my dad replied, cutting me off. I didn’t want to argue.

Since we were almost ready to get hooked up I asked, “Are you sure you don’t want to do
the honors?” I had some faith that he would say yes.

But I guess I shouldn’t have expected that, because his reply was as simple as this: “No.”

When they hooked us up, the girl told us to step on this white bar. Then she warned us
that we were going to fall forward. I, for one, fell gracefully, while it looked like my dad
smashed his face on the floor of the box we were in.
More importantly, I felt like I was going to puke, that’s how scared I was. The box started to lower and now we were just dangling. All of a sudden, we were being raised up. My heart was beating a mile a minute.

All of a sudden, my dad burst out saying, “This is great! This is just great! Aren’t you having great time?”

“Dad, please stop. You’re making me nervous.”
“Ok, sorry.” About two minutes later, guess what I heard.
“This is fun! This is so much fun! Isn’t this fun, Jess?”
“DAD! STOP! You’re making me nervous!!!”
“Oh. Sorry.” That’s when his voice got quiet. I felt bad and I was about to say something, but that’s when we stopped. We were just dangling again, except we were really far from the ground.

My mom was smiling at us and I thought, How could you be smiling at a time like this? When we stopped, we kind of tilted a little forward. I was so scared and felt like I was going to fall right out of my harness. I was failing to find my ripcord. After a moment of struggling, I had found it and I clutched it hard in my hand, kind of like I was savoring the moment. Kind of like I was happy to be there, even though I was not. I yanked it out to the side.

Then we dropped. It didn’t feel like we were dropping at first, but then I felt the wind rushing through my face, my eyes closed tight. We dove down and swooped up and then back. I stuck out my arms like I was flying. I was actually having fun.

“We made it! We actually made it!” I sighed with relief.

After that my dad and I were told to grab this loop and we were back in the same box we started in with the same lady. The same guy took our harnesses off.

Right before we left, we got a stamp on our hand. I studied it for a moment and smiled. It said FUN.

“Did you have a good time?” My mom asked me.
“Yes. Yes I did.”

Finally I realized that I shouldn’t have been that scared. It actually wasn’t that bad. Sometimes the things you think are bad (or in this case, scary) don’t turn out that bad at all. Until next time...

Illustration by Danielle Joray, 3rd grade
My First Race
By Robin Wright, 6th grade

The wind rustles my hair back. The air fills in through my lungs. I breathe. I see it freeze in the air for a millionth of a second. I shiver. As my hair blows back in the wind so do the passing corn fields and the dead trees. The few ice pieces below crumble as I march over them. I see people behind me ready to pick me off like a wolf would pick off his prey, and as prey becomes dust, it becomes lost in history….

Two weeks earlier I sat on my chair in the living room contemplating the decision that would either way, I thought, haunt me for the rest of my life. The lighting made people look evil, especially my father, because he was in the darkest corner of the room with the fireplace two feet away from him. “I’m sure I want to do this,” I said, and I was certain.

“Ok,” my father said. I wanted to do the Turkey Trot.

Just last night my father said, “Go upstairs and get your running clothes on your bed for tomorrow.”

“Ok,” I said. I went up and put my Merrel shoes, soccer shorts from when I was 6, and a light t-shirt on the bed and went to bed. Early in the morning, I was woken by my father. After a hearty breakfast, I went to the race grounds, which happened to be the Goshen Fairgrounds.

“If you don’t want to do this that would be fine,” my father said.

“I want to,” I replied.

When we arrived at the racecourse, I got my number and lined up for the start. I could feel my heart pumping as rapidly as a wild giraffe runs. The cold compels me to go and get wrapped around in my father’s jacket and say, “I won’t do this,” but I resist that urge and stand steady, almost as if I’m frozen. I shake myself up and give myself positive thoughts.

“ALL RIGHT!” says a man in a very loud voice through a microphone. “There will be two commands,” says the man with the microphone. “Get set, and go,” he says again.

“Get set….GO!” This time when he said, it I didn’t listen very much. I just ran. I sprinted out to try and keep up with the people that were going to win this race. For a flat second, I caught up with them. Then I got tired, and realized the fact that I thought that I would actually be one of the first people to come in. I knew that was a fantasy then. But I didn’t care, I had an affection for things that weren’t real, like this. At first, this was just something I didn’t think I’d pull through with.

Less than halfway through the race I thought of a city, how books and movies always described the life there like rats bustling to win, but I thought this was more like that, not that I had such low regards for the people running the race as to compare them to rats.

I jog over plains of corn and wheat. But a thick frost covered them and they were harvested. I was not familiar with these back dirt roads, but even if I was, I’m sure that I would still be as intrigued by its beauty. I had given up, then I remembered that there had been the turn to do a four miler instead of a six miler back two miles ago. I wanted to strangle myself. You idiot, I told myself. Then I was glad, because I hadn’t gotten the chance to do something that would get in the way of one the most glorious days of my life. I couldn’t put another wasted day in my life book, there were already too many in it.

I was close to the finish. There wasn’t much tension now, just the fact that I was going into sleep mode. I ran with whatever I had left. Around the bend, music rang in my ear (you do not want to run a race with a song stuck in your head). I sped in for the last hundred yards. Some pass me that have been creeping up behind me, and some don’t. I cross the finish line with pride,
Migration
By Veronique Kinser, 6th grade

Summer.

The worst thing on Earth.

It beats down with unbearable heat, droplets of moisture hanging in the air, making everything sticky. That’s Florida in summer: hot as a cauldron. Many people in Florida practically live in the ocean during this season, but some aren't so lucky.

Like the animals of the Miami Bay Zoo and Aquarium. “Top Predators of the Arctic,” reads the zoo plaque outside the polar bears’ concrete enclosure. If only they knew... thinks one of the bears as she stares blankly at a shallow pool of stagnant water, a cavity hardly bigger than the bear herself. There is nothing to hunt here. She and her fellow bear inmates have no purpose, no reason for life except to sit and look amazing for the tourists.

Our polar bear rolls over on her back, staring at the hazy sky. This sow is smaller than her companions, not as big and muscular as the boar polar bears, but good enough. Her fur is choppy and ragged, as well as pitch-black on her left ear and part of her face. She rolls back onto her stomach, the blistering sun glaring down at her.

She glumly listens to the Man's voice talking animatedly to a group of sweltering tourists. "...And meet Night, our belle of the ball – or, rather, zoo!" The tourists laugh at the corny joke, and the Man continues: "You may have many questions about her, but there’s one we cannot answer – why she has black fur. She was born that way. Genes? Yes, but how? We're not sure. And over in the corner is Nisa!"
Night sighs. They were done talking about the belle of the zoo. No one really cares about her or the other three bears in the pit for more than a few seconds. *If only they could understand what it feels like to be us. They haven’t a clue.* That’s what Taquik always said. He was the smartest bear Night ever met. She missed him. After Taquik’s passing, only four bears remained. There was Nisa, the kind, two-and-a-half-year-old bear, not yet an adult. And there was Amarok, a strong, muscular boar with only half a brain in his head, but it served him well. Lastly, there was Eretak, the smartest three-year-old polar bear you could hope to meet. He and Nisa adored each other.

The heat pounds down even harder as midday approaches. “Why can’t we be put in a metal bird and flown to somewhere cool?”

Amarok hears that, then growls. “Hold your tongue, Night. We have a good life. Food, shelter, and comfort.”


Amarok makes an exasperated sound. “I know you don’t like summers, but they aren’t all that bad.”

Night gets to her feet, teeth bared. “Summer is longer and hotter in this place. Every day in this wretched season is horrible here, every night a relief! Seals my point.”

“Seals...” Eretak mutters sleepily. “Seals are food. I’m hungry. Seals...”

*********

Lucy looked down over the glass railing and into the gray pit. She was ignoring the guide’s boring description. Instead she studied the four polar bears in the pit. One was a large male and had a grayish black muzzle; the second, a small male, sported some fluff on his chest; the third was a young female with no distinguishing marks; and the fourth bear was a strangely beautiful adult female, a patch of black covering part of one ear and cheek – the one the guide called Night.

Lucy sighed. We’re the same, she thought, looking down at the bears lying in the intense heat and humidity. We’re both not where we belong. Twelve-year-old Lucy had just completed seventh grade when her parents announced the “wonderful” news. Her six-year-old sister Christina had been delighted, running around their old house screaming, “We get to go to Disney World everyday now!” No one had the heart to tell her they weren’t moving to Orlando, but to Miami instead. Lucy, on the other hand, was devastated. She had to say goodbye to everything – her room, her house, the forest behind their yard, and her best friends Charlene and Amanda. Also her sister’s goldfish Samuel Adams – Lucy had to say goodbye to him, too, because Mom doubted he’d survive the flight. He was given to a family friend. At least Lucy didn’t have to say goodbye to her dog Athena and two cats Misty and Juniper. They accompanied the family south.
Lucy tarried, resting her forearms on the zoo railing. From her perch she watched the polar bears laze or lumber listlessly in their small dwelling. What if I can help them? Lucy suddenly thought. She ran back to her mom and Christina, who was sucking on a panda-shaped popsicle and clutching a plush lion cub.

“Hey Mom,” Lucy said, with a tap on the shoulder. “Can I ask you something?” Lucy’s mom looked up from the zoo map in her hands. “Sure, honey.”

“Can a zoo animal be taught to live in the wild again?”
Mom thought momentarily. “Of course! Don’t you remember Elsa and Christian?” Lucy nodded, remembering the two famous lions that had been raised by humans and then successfully returned to the wild. “Thanks, Mom!”

She turned and ran off, pointing to a building 20 yards ahead and calling over her shoulder: “Meet you back here in 10 minutes – I’m just going to ask the zoo operators something!”

Lucy’s mom watched her daughter’s receding back with a quizzical smile. “What on earth is that girl up to now?”

*********

“So? What do you think?”

Lucy was sitting in the stuffy, wood-paneled office of Mr. Adam Joylin, the president of the Migrating Zoos Project, or MZP. Lucy had contacted Mr. Joylin through the MZP website. One of the zoo operators had kindly (and confidentially) told Lucy about MZP the day she visited the polar bears.

The man across the desk from her pursed his lips and fiddled with a pair of eyeglasses that lay on the smooth, tidy desktop in front of him. Next, he ran his fingers through his hair, brown waves drowning in an ocean of gray.

“Well, you see here, Miss Wallace, Miami Bay Zoo has to agree to this first,” said Mr. Joylin, squinting his eyes and then blinking several times.

“But we can’t just let them stay there!” Lucy cried. “The conditions those animals withstand are horrible!”

Mr. Joylin furrowed his brow. “Miss Wallace, please understand that we cannot just take the bears and ship them off to Alaska. The zoo has to agree to it. We can buy the bears, of course, but replacement polar bears are hard for zoos to come by.”

Lucy crossed her arms. “It’s even harder for the bears. You can’t do this to them.”
Mr. Joylin tapped his glasses against the mahogany desk. “Miss Wallace, please don’t tell me what I can and cannot do. But we’ll try. I’m going to phone up Mr. Traver right now. In case you didn’t know, he runs the Miami Bay Zoo and Aquarium.”

Mr. Joylin set down his glasses and picked up the phone. He dialed a series of digits and waited. Silence, muffled voices, then, “Hello Mr. Traver? This is Adam Joylin from the MZP. I have a proposition for you. No, no. MZP is not a fight-dog club. That’s right, we’re the other MZP. Yes. Anyway, I wanted to ask you if you might be willing to sell your four polar bears to us so that we can return them to their natural habitat.”

Lucy waited several minutes as Mr. Joylin listened to Mr. Traver speak on the other end, nodding now and then. “Yes, of course, that’s understood. All right, we’ll send you the paperwork straight away. Thank you.” Mr. Joylin hung up the phone. “It’s your lucky day, Lucy. Mr. Traver agrees to our request. He says the zoo was looking to replace the bears, anyhow – with hippos.”

Lucy beamed and shook hands with Mr. Joylin. “Thank you!”

*********

Night chewed on a mackerel, watching the sun set and the tourists disperse. Amarok tossed a small, silver fish at her. “C’mon, why the long face?”

The fish hit Night right between the eyes. “Knock it off, fish brain,” she retorted.

Amarok frowned.

“Oh Amarok, I’m only joking,” said Night, “because I thought you were joking, too. Why so serious all of a sudden?”

“Who are those people?” Amorok asked with a stony face.

He was staring up at the top of the pit. Five men wearing black clothes and helmets were climbing down the stairs the Man always descended when he gave the bears food. Each man held a dark stick.

Nisa whimpered, and Eretak put a protective paw around her. Amarok stood in front and roared a warning.

One of the men raised his weapon. A small, neon green dart sprouted out of Amarok’s shoulder. The great bear crumpled to the ground. Night panicked, but her motherly instincts took over – she ran in front of Nisa and Eretak. But she was too late for Eretak. He was already slumped against Nisa. Seconds later, Nisa was out cold too. Night roared, and then she felt a little pinch on her paw. She looked down and saw a tiny, pink feathered dart. Her vision grew blurry, the world grew dark, and she knew no more.
Night awoke in a dimly lit metal box. The box rattled, shaking Night out of her daze. She frantically sniffed for Amarok, Eretak, and Nisa.

Amarok spoke first. “Night?”

“I’m here,” she whispered, her voice weak.

“Nisa and I are here too,” uttered Eretak’s soft voice.

“What are we inside?” Amarok asked. “The box-that-moves,” an unfamiliar, raspy voice replied. A gray muzzle appeared. “I’m Sivudlit,” the muzzle said. “The young’un next to me is Kisaut. The old grump on the left is Ningartok, and the female is Anana. We’ve been traveling a long time. Anana here is from so far away she had to ride in the belly of a metal bird to get here.”

“Where are we going?” Eretak asked. Sivudlit leaned forward. “The Great North.” He sat up higher. “Where our ancestors were born, the home of the great Nanuk! My name, Sivudlit, means ancestors in the ancient language of the polar bears.”

Ningartok grumbled. “Stop filling the minds of the young’uns with your silly tales, Sivudlit.”

Sivudlit huffed. “No wonder your name means angry,” he snorted at Ningartok. He suddenly brightened. “You guys didn’t tell us your names yet!”

Night did the honors: “The big oaf next to me is Amarok. The young female is Nisa, and the small male is Eretak. As for me, my name is Night.”

Sivudlit crossed his forelegs. “Did you know that in the ancient language of the polar bears Eretak means feather, and Amarok means wolf? Cool, right? And Kisuat means anchor, and Anana means beautiful and—”

“Enough out of you!” Ningartok roared. Suddenly, the back doors of the box-that-moves opened wide, the men shot more darts, and all the bears were knocked out cold.

When Night awoke again, she was in a new cramped box, surrounded by blackness. She felt very, very cold. A chilly wind blew in through small holes, making her shiver. “Amarok? Sivudlit?”

“I’m here!” Amarok roared from a few feet away. Sivudlit called too, shouting, “Here! Eretak and Ningartok are next to me!”

“Nisa, Anana and Kisuat are here too,” Amarok responded.

“Ready?” an unfamiliar human voice shouted.
“Yeah!” another one called.

Just then, Night’s cage opened, and without hesitation, she dashed out, running faster and faster. She saw Amarok run up next to her, followed by the rest of the bears. A little ways off, all the bears stopped to rest.

“Whew.” Kisuat fell on his side.

“What a day,” Anana cried.

“Yes. What a day,” Lucy replied, as though she understood the bears.

It was a journey that neither Lucy nor the bears would ever forget.

 Epilogue

After Lucy and the MZP zoologists returned from their Artic mission, Night and the rest of the polar bears learned to live in the wild. But unlike polar bears born in the wild, the bears who’d been freed from the zoo traveled in a group. Night and Amarok had two cubs, after which Amarok stayed with Night, instead of leaving, like normal boar bears do after mating.

All the bears are still alive and well, except for Ningartok, who passed peacefully of old age a year following the bears’ release. Life is good for these bears – even though they live in a melting world – the great Nanuk has looked over them all, guiding them, with Ningarpok, from the stars.

Author’s Note: All characters in this story, bear or human, are fictional. The Miami Bay Zoo and Aquarium is also fictional. The bears’ names, however, are drawn from real words spoken by Inuit people in the Artic.
Animals
A Word Search
By Julia Churyk, 6th grade

Monkeys
  Cats
  Dogs
  Platypus
  Pigs
  Fish

Pandas
  Seal
  Tigers
  Sloths
  Elephants
  Birds

M O S U D S F U S K H G P B U
X M X R D S I X I J R E K L N
O U F R E X S T L Q O A C U H
R X I A S G H G W Q V L Y Q H
U B W Y H I I A P N L L H N D
K L D P N E M T D Z Z F L V V
U N I L N O L E H O Q W Q P Q
Y G G Y N S O E R T G R C L B
S U G K O H N B P M W S N A L
N L E E M T O A Q H W J W T J
G Y T G U O L F F E A O A Y K
S W V O K L C A T S O N D P R
A Z K Q D S U R A Q R W T U Y
P X L T Q R R P T I P I F S O
S A D N A P A C I L A E S I S